PRIMARY PREVENTION OF VIOLENT EXTREMISM: A QUALITATIVE ANALYSIS OF CURRENT PRACTICES, FUTURE DIRECTIONS, AND THE ROLE OF COMMUNITY PSYCHOLOGY

A Dissertation Proposal submitted to the Wright Institute
Graduate School of Psychology, in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the Degree of Doctor of Psychology

by
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There is increasing consensus in the international community that security-based strategies have not been sufficient to contain the continuing threat of violent extremism (The United Nations, 2015). However, despite calls for an increased focus on prevention in strategies to counter a variety of extremisms, there continues to be a dearth of empirical studies on preventative interventions (Christmann, 2012). Further, existing studies are dispersed across various fields of study, with little integration of best practices. Finally, despite the compatibility of community psychology principles with prevention efforts, community and applied psychologists have been largely absent from this area of research (Clinch, 2011; Drancoli, 2011). This study seeks to integrate the current knowledge-base on primary prevention of violent extremism, and to explore the potential role of community psychology in the development of preventative interventions. To these ends, a qualitative analysis of a multidisciplinary range of expert interviews was undertaken. Eight experts were interviewed regarding five domains: drivers of violent extremism, primary prevention, current practices, the role of community psychology, and future directions. 16 total themes emerged that spoke to challenges (e.g., goals of existing programs are poorly defined), and corresponding best practices (e.g., programs should identify a clear mechanism of change) with respect to prevention efforts. Suggested best

practices aligned with six central principles of community psychology: primary prevention, an ecological approach, risk and resilience factors, community-oriented interventions, participatory research, and empirical grounding. It is suggested that future research apply these principles to the continued empirical study of preventing a variety of violent extremisms.

DEDICATION

To Amma and Appa

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Chapter I: Introduction

Overview

This study seeks to integrate the current knowledge base on interventions aimed at primary prevention of violent extremism, and to assess the potential role of community psychology in the development and implementation of these interventions. The study aims to address these issues through a thematic analysis of a range of expert interviews. There is a dearth of empirical research dealing specifically with primary prevention efforts in the area of violent extremism (Christmann, 2012; Liht & Savage, 2013; Pratchett, Thorp, Wingfield, Lowndes, & Jabbar, 2010). Moreover, though researchers from a wide range of disciplines—from education to counterterrorism—have developed and implemented preventative interventions with varying degrees of success and empirical support, there have been few efforts to consolidate current knowledge on effective practices and lessons learned. Finally, applied psychologists have been conspicuously absent from preventative efforts (Drancoli, 2011; Jones, 2006; Wagner & Long, 2004). Community psychology in particular shares many of the core principles and research methods that have guided recent studies (Clinch, 2011; Engelberg, 2015; Higson-Smith, 2002), and its involvement, therefore, bears further inquiry. A qualitative, multidisciplinary approach is most appropriate to address these questions. Using such an approach, this study analyzes perspectives from the fields of social psychology, political psychology, education, applied criminology, international development, global security/peacekeeping, nonprofit program development, and community psychology in an effort to integrate existing findings and provide a framework to guide psychologists who are interested in the prevention of violent extremism worldwide.

Statement of the Problem

Violent extremism—including related processes and behaviors such as radicalization, fundamentalism, and terrorism—is a major global problem (Ackerman, Start, Gen, & Béen, 2013; Executive Office of the President, 2011; Federal Bureau of Investigation [FBI], 2016; Kruglanski et al., 2014; Marty & Appleby, 1995; Orlina & Desjardins, 2012; Schwartz, Dunkel, & Waterman, 2009). A number of recent events—including the attacks of September 11, 2001, the wars in Iraq, attacks in London and Madrid, the Arab Spring movement, the Syrian war and refugee crisis, the rise of the Islamic State (ISIL), and recent attacks in Paris, Nice, Brussels, Manchester, San Bernardino, Orlando, and New York City—have brought increased media attention to Islamic extremism in particular. However, violent extremism of all kinds (right-wing extremism, hate groups, Islamophobia, and various religious fundamentalisms around the world) present a continuing threat to global social and economic stability (Neumann, 2013; Orlina & Desjardins, 2012). The Global Terrorism Index (Institute for Economics and Peace, 2015) reports that, since the turn of the century, deaths from terrorism have increased nine-fold—from 3,329 in 2000 to 32,685 in 2014. The report also found that, though the majority of terrorist activity was concentrated to five countries—Iraq, Nigeria, Afghanistan, Pakistan, and Syria—most of the 162 countries studied experienced terrorist and extremist incidents of some kind. Extremist violence is increasingly targeting private citizens. It is a major driver of refugee displacement, and the global economic cost—in security efforts and in the direct cost of attacks—was estimated to be over $100 billion US dollars in 2014 alone.

The increased attention on violent extremism since the 9/11 attacks has brought with it a wealth of research and action on the subject (Christmann, 2012; Savage, 2011; The United Nations, 2015). Scholars from such diverse areas as political science, social psychology, sociology, theology, criminology, law, education, and philosophy have contributed to this area of study. They have proposed theories to explain the genesis of extremist behavior, models that detail paths to radicalization, and interventions designed to deradicalize extremists. Counterterrorism and national security experts have enacted various security strategies and measures to combat violent extremism globally. However, there is increasing consensus internationally that these security-based strategies have not been sufficient to contain the spread of extremist ideology and terrorist acts (The United Nations, 2015). In fact, the United Nations (2015), as part of its most recent plan of action to prevent violent extremism, has called for "a more comprehensive approach which encompasses not only ongoing, essential security-based counter-terrorism measures, but also systematic preventive measures which directly address the drivers of violent extremism" (p. 2).

But despite a manifold increase in scholarly attention on preventative measures in recent years, there continue to exist serious deficiencies in the literature. After a systematic review of the literature on preventing violent extremism, Christmann (2012) detailed a number of critical issues and limitations. These included a lack of scientific rigor, disagreement on terminology, a singular focus on Muslim communities, and a penchant for scholars to propose "impressionistic" theories without any empirical basis.

Christmann (2012) also specifically looked at the existing evidence base for psychosocial and community-based interventions designed to prevent violent extremism

in vulnerable communities. A number of such programs have been developed and implemented, the vast majority focusing on Islamic extremism. Of these programs, Christmann found only two—both based in the UK—that had been thoroughly evaluated at the time of writing. Christmann writes:

> The review found that the evidence base for effective preventing violent extremism interventions is very limited. Despite a prolific output of research, few studies contained empirical data or systematic data analysis. Furthermore, although a growing body of literature investigating the radicalization process is emerging, the weight of that literature is focused upon terrorism rather than radicalization. As such, the evidence is concerned with that smaller cohort of individuals who, once radicalized, go on to commit acts of violence in the pursuit of political or religious aims and objectives. This introduces a systematic bias in the literature, away from the radicalization process that precedes terrorism, including radicalization that does not lead to violence. (p. 4)

Thomas (2010) notes that preventative interventions often fail to employ culturally sensitive methods or account for the heterogeneity of populations that are vulnerable to recruitment. Thomas gives the example of the British government's prevention efforts, which he describes as having "a monocultural focus on Muslims [that] is in stark contradiction to the overriding policy goal of community cohesion, whilst its implementation has provoked accusations both of surveillance and of engineering 'value changes' within Muslim communities" (p. 442).

In line with these observations, Christmann (2012) found that, when interventions were successful, they employed culturally responsive methods and engaged the wider community.

Since Christmann's systematic review, additional interventions have been developed with more scientific rigor and cultural sensitivity. Notable among these is Liht and Savage's (2013) *Being Muslim, Being British* program that focuses on "enabling participants to maximize a wider range of their own values as a means to increase their complexity of thinking about issues of potential cleavage between Muslim and British/western identities" (p. 44). Initial evaluations of the program using pre- and post-test data are promising. Interestingly, the evaluation showed that program participants demonstrated increased value complexity and resilience toward extremist rhetoric at post-test while also showing increased value placed on religious traditionalism. Such data demonstrate the complex forces at play in communities exposed to extremist rhetoric, and draw attention to the importance of differentiating extremism from traditionalism or fundamentalism (see Definition of Terms).

The above studies demonstrate the need for additional literature on interventions aimed at preventing violent extremism. However, they also highlight another notable gap. Preventative interventions have been developed and implemented by social psychologists, theologians, educators, criminologists, government representatives, counterterrorism experts, and political scientists. Yet among these varied disciplines, fields of applied psychology are conspicuously absent (Clinch, 2011; Jones, 2006; Wagner & Long, 2004). Psychologists have been involved in related areas such as counterterrorism—most notoriously in the interrogation of terror suspects, as detailed in

the Hoffman Report (Hoffman, 2015)—risk assessment, profiling, and counseling of terror victims (Drancoli, 2011). But these have largely been reactive rather than proactive efforts, focusing on responses to existing conflict and security threats, not prevention. The American Psychological Association's (2014) "Guidelines for Prevention in Psychology" clearly state that "[t]he contributions and leadership of psychologists are critical in implementing a prevention focus" (p. 287). Wagner and Long (2004) contend that psychologists "are well-qualified to explore the key questions concerning the 'prevention and mitigation' of terrorist behavior" (p. 209).

Community psychology in particular—perhaps more than any other field of applied psychology—shares many of the core principles and research methodologies that have guided recent research into preventing violent extremism (Clinch, 2011; Engelberg, 2015; Higson-Smith, 2002). For example, Christmann's (2012) finding that successful programs benefitted from active involvement of the relevant community during the development and administration of interventions is in line with the community psychology principle of participatory action research (Clinch, 2011; Dickens & Watkins, 1999; Kloos et al., 2012; Nelson & Prilleltensky, 2010). Likewise, core community psychology values such as primary prevention and an ecological approach to understanding problems align well with much of the empirical research on preventative interventions (American Psychological Association [APA], 2014; Clinch, 2011; Liht & Savage, 2013; Nelson & Prilleltensky, 2010).

Rationale and Contributions

As stated previously, the purpose of this study is twofold—to integrate the current knowledge base on primary prevention strategies targeted at violent extremism, and to assess the potential role of community psychologists in the development and implementation of preventative interventions. A qualitative approach is appropriate for this topic given that empirical literature on the subject is limited, and that existing knowledge is spread across multiple disciplines. Qualitative studies can provide a rich—though not necessarily generalizeable—understanding of a topic, and can provide a basis for future empirical research. The current study aims to achieve this through an analysis of expert interviews. Experts can serve as a crystallization point for knowledge concerning a certain population or practice, and, due to their insider knowledge, can function as surrogates for a population—in this case violent extremists, or people who are vulnerable to extremist rhetoric—that would otherwise be difficult to access (Audenhove, 2007; Bogner, Littig, & Menz, 2009; Christopoulos, 2009). Although this study will strive to identify effective practices in prevention that can be applied to any type of extremism, the fact remains that the vast majority of current, empirically evaluated interventions have been implemented in Muslim communities. These are the interventions that will be reviewed.

The United Nations (2015) has called for the development of a global framework to not only combat, but to prevent violent extremism. Contributions of this study to that end include a fuller understanding of the factors involved in successful primary prevention strategies targeted at violent extremism worldwide, and a preliminary exploration of how community psychologists can help to advance this important interdisciplinary area of research and practice.

Definition of Terms

Extremism. The term "extremism," in the absence of further qualification, is notoriously difficult to operationalize (Sotlar, 2004). It has been used—in both the scholarly literature and in popular media—to refer to a broad range of behaviors, ideologies, and processes. Further, it is a relative term that carries with it the dominant values and norms of a given culture and context. Sotlar (2004) notes that a particularly problematic aspect of defining extremism is that it is an invariably pejorative term, whose definition most often affects "people, minorities, marginal groups...that [do] not have any substantial social, economic or political powers" (p. 6). Nevertheless, it is still helpful to venture a definition of extremism if only to differentiate it from related but distinct terms such as "fundamentalism" and "violent extremism."

Given the broad range of constructs related to extremism—including splitting (from the psychoanalytic tradition), black-and-white/dichotomous thinking (from cognitive behavioral therapies), fundamentalism, radicalization, and low integrative complexity, among others—it is useful to define extremism in an inclusive yet specific way that both acknowledges the linkages between the various terms and provides a valid and useful construct. To do this it is necessary to review the various levels at which extremism has been defined.

Extremism has been defined variously at the societal and political levels. Orlina & Desjardins (2012) define political extremism as "political ideologies and methods that oppose a society's core values and principles and show disregard to the life, liberty and human rights of others" (p. 6). Radicalization has been defined as "the process by which

individuals come to believe their engagement in or facilitation of non-state violence to achieve social and political change is necessary and justified" (Orlina & Desjardins, 2012, p. 6).

At the group and interpersonal levels, extremism has been described in terms of fundamentalism—a strict adherence to the principles of a belief or religion—and out-group dehumanization (Harris & Fiske, 2006; Haslam, 2006; Haslam & Loughnan, 2014; Maoz & Mccauley, 2008; Marty & Appleby, 1995). At the individual, intrapsychic, and cognitive levels, extremism can be seen in the ideas of splitting and projection—primitive defense mechanisms in which a person's unwanted thoughts and feelings are attributed to others, and in which others may be seen as either all good or all bad (McWilliams, 1999); the cognitive distortion of dichotomous thinking (Hayes, Beck, & Yasinski, 2012); and the construct of low integrative complexity, or low-complexity reasoning (Conway, Gornick, Houck, Towgood, & Conway, 2011).

Though distinct in important ways, all of these concepts are characterized by a rigidity of thought that can lead to maladaptive behavior from interpersonal, social, and humanitarian perspectives.

Violent extremism. The Federal Bureau of Investigation (2016) defines violent extremism as "individuals or groups attempting to advance social or political beliefs through force or violence and in violation of federal law" (p. 5). Internationally, most definitions contain two elements—the use of ideologically motivated violence, and the attempt to further political, economic, social, or religious ends (Orlina & Desjardins, 2012; USAID, 2011). The key difference between extremism and violent extremism is the use of violence.

Radicalization and involvement in violent extremism (RIVE). A concept used by Liht & Savage (2013) to describe the process by which vulnerable populations are recruited into extremist ideology and acts.

Terrorism. There is no broad consensus regarding the precise definition of this construct. Schwartz, et al. (2009) describe terrorism as "the deliberate targeting of civilian sites for attacks designed to result in destruction of those sites and/or the injury and death of noncombatant civilians" (pp. 537-538). They go on to describe four subcategories of terrorism: (a) "terrorism carried out by native insurgent groups as part of a religious and/or ethnic conflict within a nation"; (b) "terrorism carried out by international groups seeking to influence the outcome of such conflicts or to wage their own terror campaigns for the purpose of influencing geopolitical conditions more broadly"; (c) "state-sponsored terrorism carried out by agents of a national government"; and (d) "terrorist attacks that are the work of isolated individuals unaffiliated with religious and/or ethnic groups or movements" (p. 538).

The present study, like that of Schwartz, et al., will primarily concern itself with the first two categories. Thus, for the purposes of this study "terrorism" will be broadly defined as the use of violence or intimidation against civilians by non-state entities to achieve political or religious ends.

Religious fundamentalism. A strict adherence to the principles of a belief or religion. Liht, et al. (2011) describe religious fundamentalism as "[a] personal orientation that asserts a supra-human locus of moral authority, context unbound truth, and the appreciation of the sacred over the worldly components of experience" (p. 1). It is

important to note that fundamentalism is not in and of itself necessarily violent or extremist.

Radicalization. "The process by which individuals come to believe their engagement in or facilitation of non-state violence to achieve social and political change is necessary and justified" (Orlina & Desjardins, 2012, p. 6). Radicalization is another term that is bound by culture and context. The Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (2014) notes that, at various moments in history—slavery and suffrage are two examples—radicalization has been a force for positive change.

Mobilization. The process by which radicalized individuals or groups prepare to carry out ideologically motivated violence (FBI, 2016). The act of preparing and putting into readiness for action.

Integrative complexity or values complexity. Integrative complexity (Suedfeld & Tetlock, 2014) is a construct used to assess the extent to which discourse may limit an individual's ability to consider and prioritize competing personal values related to a subject by emphasizing one value to the exclusion of all others. It is thought that when competing values cannot co-mingle, extremist rhetoric results. Evidence suggests that in international conflicts, high-complexity thinking precedes peaceful outcomes whereas low-complexity thinking precedes violence (Conway et al., 2011).

Primary prevention. Efforts to prevent a social problem that target the widest relevant group—many of whom will not show signs of the problem—and aim to build resilience while reducing stressors (Liht & Savage, 2013; Prilleltensky, 1990). Nelson and Prilleltensky (2010) note that primary prevention aims to reduce the overall

occurrence of a problem prior to its onset, whereas secondary prevention, rather than actually preventing a problem, seeks to detect it and intervene early on.

Community psychology. This field of applied psychology focuses on the relationship of individuals to their communities and to society at large (Kloos et al., 2012). As opposed to other paradigms of applied psychology, the individual is not the sole focus of intervention. Community psychology also emphasizes collaborative research.

A Note on Definitions

Ginges, et al. (2011) warn that the words and definitions surrounding violent extremism are inextricable from the perspective and judgment they carry. "[A] terrorist is despicable," they state, "whereas a freedom fighter may be a hero. Suicide is anomalous and an act of desperation, but religious martyrdom is an act of meaning and may be noble. How acts are categorized goes a long way toward determining how they are understood...[O]ur argument is that pluralism of perspectives is likely to lead to better insight into human motivation and behavior than any single perspective" (p. 507).

In this study the researcher sought to be mindful of this warning, and attempted to explore multiple perspectives when operationalizing key terms and themes. Doing so was essential to assessing the value and possible future directions of interventions aimed at preventing violent extremism.

Chapter II: Literature Review

Overview

This literature review presents an overview of current research and theory relevant to the primary prevention of violent extremism. The review is organized into three sections: First, the review addresses the current literature on the causes of violent extremism. This research is organized based on Bronfenbrenner's (1977) ecological model, an approach that considers the multiple levels of analysis reflected in the breadth of the literature. Second, the review presents the current research on specific interventions aimed at the primary prevention of violent extremism. This literature includes empirical studies on interventions developed by governments, social psychologists, educators, counterterrorism experts, and others. Finally, the review moves to the question of psychologists' involvement in primary prevention efforts. This section includes a discussion of psychologists' present role in efforts to counter violent extremism, as well as a brief overview of the central principles of community psychology and how these principles are applicable to primary prevention efforts.

An Ecological Approach to Understanding Violent Extremism

In the aftermath of the attacks of September 11, 2001, scholarly focus on violent extremism increased dramatically (Christmann, 2012; Executive Office of the President, 2011; Ginges et al., 2011; Levant, Barbanel, & DeLeon, 2004; Neumann, 2013; Orlina & Desjardins, 2012; Stevens & Neumann, 2009; USAID, 2011). This research began by using a largely individualistic approach (Clinch, 2011; Savage, 2011). It sought to identify a terrorist profile in the form of individual pathology and demographics.

Ultimately this approach has failed to predict which individuals will become radicalized, and further, which of those individuals will go on to commit violent acts. Savage (2011) notes that the common perception that violent extremists come from a more traditional religious background has not been borne out in the research. She notes that, in fact, "one of the few recurrent findings is that those who engage in extremist violence usually have little if any traditional religious background," perhaps because these individuals are more readily taken in by a more literalist view of religion (p. 137). Similarly, attempts to attribute vulnerability to violent extremism solely to psychopathology—including psychopathy, deficiencies in moral reasoning, and authoritarianism—have also foundered (Clinch, 2011; Orlina & Desjardins, 2012; Savage, 2011; Stern & Berger, 2015). Correlations between these factors and fundamentalism have been shown to be negligible. In fact, fundamentalists seem to enjoy many of the same mental health benefits as others who are religious—a greater sense of meaning and purpose, resilience to depression, a sense of belonging and community, and a more optimistic worldview.

In light of these findings, it has become clear that the path to violent extremism is multiply determined. In addition to individual processes, interpersonal, group, community, and political processes also play significant roles in radicalizing, and ultimately pushing an individual to violent extremism. As Savage (2011) puts it, "fundamentalism and radicalization have turned out to be flames arising from more complex, shape-shifting wholes, rather than properties of deviant individuals" (p. 135).

More recent efforts at understanding the genesis of violent extremism have taken into account various contextual factors. Social psychologists have focused on group processes (Conway et al., 2011; Liht & Savage, 2013; Liht et al., 2011; Marty &

Appleby, 1995), political scientists have focused on macro-level geopolitical factors (Bouzar, 2016; Hoffer, 1951; Mishra, 2012), religious and counterterrorism experts have focused on community and spiritual practices (Christmann, 2012; Khader, 2015; Rashid, 2013; Thomas, 2010), and educators have focused on school contexts (Clinch, 2011; Davies, 2014; FBI, 2016). In her 2011 thesis on preventing violent extremism in British secondary schools, Amy Louise Clinch emphasized the importance of the multiple levels of analysis reflected in these various disciplines when trying to understand the causes of violent extremism. Clinch employed Lewin's (1951) field theory and Felner et al.'s (2000) transactional-ecological model to guide her study and bring together these various levels of analysis. Field theory and transactional theory see behavior as a function of the bi-directional influence between individual and environment. However, Clinch (2011) notes that transactional theory is not sufficient, as "there are some contexts that influence behaviour with which the individual has no direct contact or influence" (p. 6). To gain a fuller picture of the various contexts that influence students' vulnerability to extremist rhetoric, Clinch turned to Bronfenbrenner's (1977) ecological model.

Bronfenbrenner divides his ecological approach into five levels, with each forming a progressively larger sphere around the individual (see figure 1). The five levels—apart from within-person factors—are the microsystem, mesosystem, exosystem, macrosystem, and chronosystem. The microsystem represents the person's immediate context—such as family, workplace, or school; the individual has direct interaction with these contexts. The mesosystem represents the relationship between each context in the microsystem—for example, parents' relationship with schools. The exosystem forms an extension of the mesosystem and represents social settings with which the individual is

linked, but over which the individual may not have influence; these may include religion, as well as legal, educational, and political systems. The macrosystem describes the cultural context in which the individual lives—the attitudes and ideologies of a society, of which the micro-, meso-, and exo-systems are manifestations. The chronosystem describes an individual's development—and the development of surrounding systems—over time, as well as sociohistorical context.

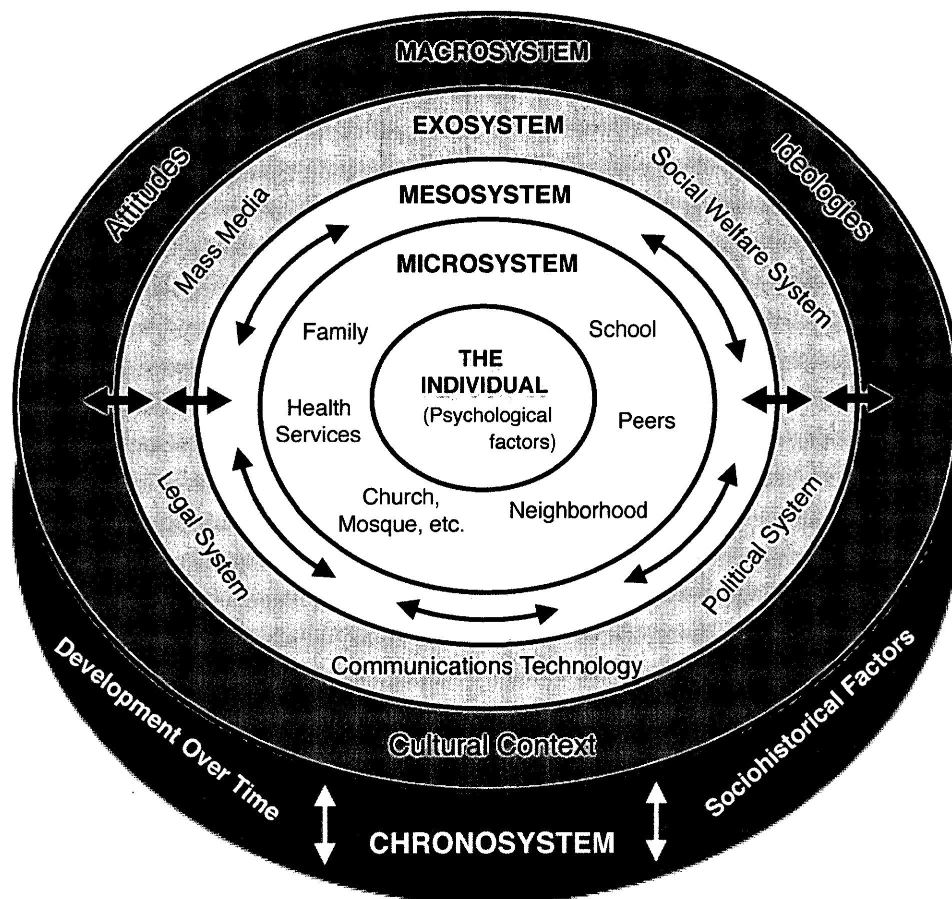

Figure 1. Representation of Bronfenbrenner's ecological approach. Adapted from "Ecological systems theory," by Wikipedia.com, 2016 (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ecological_systems_theory). In the public domain.

Bronfenbrenner's ecological approach provides a comprehensive and sensible framework with which to understand violent extremism. It is also central to the approach of community psychology, and therefore dovetails nicely into an exploration of psychologists' involvement in primary prevention. For these reasons the following review of the literature on factors involved in violent extremism is organized according to the ecological model.

Within-Person Factors

Psychopathology. The theory that extremism (specifically, terrorism) is the result of psychopathology—commonly blamed disorders include antisocial personality disorder and borderline personality disorder—is controversial, and has been extensively refuted (Clinch, 2011; Cottam, Dietz-Uhler, Mastors, & Preston, 2009; Savage, 2011). Savage describes how some of the earliest studies on fundamentalism were carried out in the US on Protestant Christian fundamentalists. These studies "sought to explain fundamentalism through individual deficiencies, such as lower levels of moral reasoning, greater punitiveness, prejudice (in regard to race, gender, political or sexual orientation), authoritarianism, dogmatism, and occurrence of mental health problems" (2011, p.135). Savage observes that this push by scholars to define fundamentalism and extremism as a problem of the individual represented its own kind of polarized mindset—the need to separate "us" from "them," and "good" from "bad."

It has since become abundantly clear that extremists are seldom created in a vacuum. However, individual and intrapsychic processes still play an essential role in extremism and therefore bear discussion. In his psychoanalytic exploration of religious terrorism Jones (2006) discusses two key psychic processes that might be at play in the

mindset of religious terrorists—shame and splitting. Jones notes that, by holding on to an absolute, perfect ideal of the divine, mortals inevitably fall short. He gives examples of the oft cited latent humiliation felt by the Arab world (Jones, 2006; Mishra, 2012), as well as specific shaming rituals performed by the cult responsible for sarin gas attacks in Tokyo.

Theorists such as Fairbairn and Klein have written extensively about the psychoanalytic dynamics of splitting (Jones, 2006). Splitting is a process characterized by "all-good" and "all-bad" thinking, and is common in pathologies such as borderline and other lower-level personality disorders. Jones writes that splitting is common to all extremist religious movements and can be seen in "their apocalyptic vision of a cosmic struggle of the forces of the all-good against the forces of the all-evil" (p. 170). Nowhere is this "apocalyptic vision" more apparent in current affairs than in the rhetoric of the Islamic State (Stern & Berger, 2015).

Outside of the psychoanalytic tradition, terms such as "black-and-white thinking" or "all-or-nothing thinking" reflect the extreme or polarized patterns found in extremist thought. Cognitive behavioral therapies use the term "dichotomous thinking" to refer to a type of cognitive distortion that can occur in a variety of disorders including anxiety, depression, and obsessive-compulsive disorder (Beck, 1974; Oshio, 2009).

Uncertainty, terror management, and the search for significance. Existential perspectives on extremism have focused on extremists' reaction to existential uncertainty and their search for personal significance (Hogg & Blaylock, 2011). Landau, Rothschild, & Sullivan (2012) propose that extremism is a form of fetishism that is used as a defense against existential anxiety and uncertainty. Another theory is that the quest for personal

significance underlies extremist thought and action (Dugas & Kruglanski, 2014; Kruglanski et al., 2014). These models are an extension of Terror Management Theory, which proposes that a belief in life's significance allays existential anxiety and the fear of death (Arndt, Landau, III, & Vess, 2013; Greenberg, 2012; Landau et al., 2012; Pyszczynski, Solomon, & Greenberg, 2003). Landau et al. distinguish "normal" defenses against existential uncertainty—which involve investing faith in culturally sanctioned routes to personal significance; examples given include a Thai tribal ceremony to call in good spirits and social psychologists "whittling their days away staring at a computer screen" (p. 132)—from "fetishized" defenses. Landau et al. define fetishism as the imbuing of meaning into narrow aspects of life, such as other individuals, ideologies, or groups. They state that "[b]y fetishizing evil in the shape of a group scapegoat, people (falsely) view the source of their existential uncertainty as external and eradicable instead of internal and abiding" (Landau et al., 2012, p. 136). This is similar to the idea of projection from the psychoanalytic tradition. What is less clear from Landau et al.'s analysis are the mechanisms that might cause one individual to resort to "normal" defenses, and another to resort to fetishized, or extreme, defenses.

Threat and dehumanization. Both threat and dehumanization have also been explored individually in the psychological literature as factors related to extreme thinking (Donegan et al., 2003; Esses, Medianu, & Lawson, 2013; Fiske, 2009; Harris & Fiske, 2006, 2011; Haslam, 2006; Haslam & Loughnan, 2014; Maoz & Mccauley, 2008; Tullett, Prentice, Nash, & Teper, 2013). Dehumanization is cognitive process related to social identity, and describes how individual members of an "in-group" tend to dehumanize members of an "out-group."

Maoz & Mccauley (2008) proposed a two-factor model that explained support by a sample of Israeli Jews for extreme, aggressive state action against Palestinians. The study found that two distinct but related factors—threat and dehumanization—significantly explained Israelis' support for retaliatory policies ranging from forced displacement to torture. The results were significant even after controlling for respondents' hawkishness and socioeconomic status. These findings support Haslam and Loughnan's (2014) view that dehumanization increases when people feel threatened. At the individual level, this cognitive process of dehumanization has far-reaching consequences, including reduced moral judgement, increased antisocial behaviors, and reduced prosocial behaviors.

Integrative complexity. Integrative Complexity (Suedfeld & Tetlock, 2014) is a construct used to assess the extent to which discourse can limit value-tradeoffs—the ability to consider and prioritize competing personal values related to a specific subject (for example, religious traditionalism versus cultural integration)—by emphasizing one value to the exclusion of all others. It is thought that when competing values cannot co-mingle, extremist rhetoric results. Evidence suggests that in international conflicts, high-complexity thinking precedes peaceful outcomes whereas low-complexity thinking precedes violence (Conway et al., 2011).

Conway et al. demonstrate the relationship of integrative complexity to extremism by evaluating the underlying structure of extremist rhetoric rather than its content (Conway et al., 2011, p. 156). Conway et al. note that, not only does extremism reflect an inability to consider alternate points of view (referred to as reduced dialectical complexity), but that it also leads to an increasingly complex defense of one's existing

views (referred to as increased elaborative complexity). Conway et al. point out, however, that although extremist rhetoric is characterized by reduced dialectical and increased elaborative complexity, terrorist rhetoric displays a reduction in both areas. This finding further illustrates Christmann's (2012) caution to researchers to distinguish between those who display extremist thought, and those who ultimately engage in violent acts.

Neural substrates of extremism. Neuroscience provides some valuable clues to the threat-based thinking in situations ranging from terrorism to Islamophobia, and to how threat and fear can subordinate reasoned thinking at a neural level. A number of neuroscience studies have explored the effect of threat and anxiety on cognition (Donegan et al., 2003; Robinson, Vytal, Cornwell, & Grillon, 2013; Tullett et al., 2013). Robinson et al. (2013) conducted a series of experiments using the threat of shock paradigm and the Stroop test in order to tease out the various effects that anxiety has on cognition at the levels of perception, attention, learning, and executive function. They note that both dispositional (temperamental) and state anxiety (threat of shock) promote harm-avoidance mechanisms across multiple levels of cognition (Robinson et al., 2013). However, these mechanisms come at a cost to such essential functions as working memory. Further, they note that, in a state of anxiety, threatening stimuli are "privileged at all levels of cognitive function" (p. 2). Forbes, et al. (2011) found that even simplistic fear-relevant images capture attention preferentially over fear-irrelevant images.

Across the literature, the amygdala has been strongly implicated in threat-based and extreme thinking (Adolphs, 2010; Donegan et al., 2003; Pessoa, 2011; Vizueta et al., 2007; Wallentin et al., 2011; Zaretsky, Mendelsohn, Mintz, & Hendler, 2010). This brain

structure, responsible for negative emotional states and threat appraisal, has been postulated to be hyperreactive in those diagnosed with borderline personality disorder (Donegan et al., 2003), a disorder characterized in part by all-or-nothing thinking. In his book *The Fundamentalist Mind* (2007), neuroscientist Stephen Larsen states:

> Input through afferent (incoming) channels to the brain in a state of fear hit more primitive structures like the amygdala and trigger fight-or-flight or primitive thinking. When the person is calmer, the information passes instead through the ascending tracts of the thalamus, which receives it in a more rational state. (p. 28)

The phenomenon of dehumanization has been explored from neural and cognitive perspectives in the social neuroscience literature (Fiske, 2009; Harris & Fiske, 2006, 2011; Haslam, 2006). The theoretical basis for many cognitive analyses of dehumanization is the Stereotype Content Model (Harris & Fiske, 2006). This model proposes that group stereotypes exist on dimensions of warmth and competence. When an out-group is perceived as both cold and incompetent—Harris and Fiske use the example of homeless people—dehumanization tends to occur. Neuroimaging studies have consistently shown that these apparently low-warmth, low-competence groups fail to engage social cognition networks of the medial prefrontal cortex (mPFC) in their observers. Instead they elicit disgust in structures such as the insula. This suggests the importance of social cognition and its affiliated brain structures in the genesis of extreme thought and action.

The amygdala and areas of the prefrontal cortex (PFC) are also implicated in low-complexity thinking. Ackerman, Start, Gen, & Béen (2013) found that

> 'sacred' values thinking...activated the amygdala. This is important for understanding the link with integrative complexity, as the limbic system has only a limited range of basic categories with which to parse the social world, such as predator, prey, mate, offspring, parent. It makes sense of the known connection between fear and cognitive constriction. (p. 77)

They also note that "resilience to threat"—seen in higher activation of the left PFC and corresponding inhibition of amygdala responses—is essential for increasing integrative complexity. They state, "It is not possible in the short term to 'think more complexly' when in the grip of the amygdala's fight/flight/freeze response. Threat to important values needs to be avoided, and that is assisted by developing the neural pathways that build resilience in the left PFC" (p. 78).

Evolutionary theories such as Error Management Theory (Forbes, Purkis, & Lipp, 2011; Haselton & Nettle, 2006) point to the human bias toward negative cognitions in the face of uncertainty. The theory proposes that, when appraising uncertain stimuli, the cost of a false positive is less than that of a false negative. For example, the cost of believing that a sound is simply the wind rustling through the grass when it is in fact a predator is far greater than the cost of believing the sound is a predator when it is only the wind. This theory could be applied to the polarized thinking seen in cases of Islamophobia. Regarding the role of uncertainty and personal significance in religious fundamentalism, Landau et al. (2012) state, "urges to concretize the abstract and find clear paths to self-value...have fueled destructive forms of extremism" (p. 144). Once again, the amygdala is implicated in these patterns of thought. Pessoa (2011) describes the amygdala's vital role

in ambiguity processing, or as he puts it, "going from 'What is it?' to 'What's to be done?'" (p. 318).

Micro- and Meso-Systemic Factors

The enclave and social identity. Political and social psychology have drawn from social identity theory (Cottam et al., 2009) and the anthropological construct of the enclave (Marty & Appleby, 1995) to describe groups that perpetuate fundamentalist thinking. The enclave is described as a social context in which the group boundary is insecure (Marty & Appleby, 1995). Fear of losing members and a lack of coercive power over group members causes the group to resort to rigid moral persuasion. Thus, a polarized "inside-outside" definition is developed, with the outside being portrayed as a dangerous, polluted, subversive force whose very *raison d'être* lies in the corruption of the enclave.

Social Identity Theory describes intergroup conflict in terms of "in-groups" and "out-groups" (Cottam et al., 2009). The theory posits that we form our identity based on group membership, and that discriminating against out-groups increases one's sense of in-group identity. By this rationale, the enhancement of self-image drives polarized, "us vs. them" thinking. Brandt and Van Tongeren (2015) found this to be the case with religious fundamentalists. Their study was based on an analysis of data from the American National Election Studies (ANES) of 2012 as well as a community sample. Participants from the ANES (N = 5,255) as well as the community sample (N = 241) were administered a measure of religious fundamentalism and a measure of religious and political dissimilarity. Participants also rated similar and dissimilar social groups (Muslims, Catholics, liberals, conservatives, feminists, illegal immigrants, etc.) on a

"feeling thermometer," where a higher temperature represented warmer feelings toward the group. The study found a correlation between high measures of religious fundamentalism and colder feelings toward dissimilar groups. Blogowska and Saroglou (2016) take this theory a step further and hypothesize that fundamentalists' prejudice of out-groups can vary based on the nature of the religious texts they have been exposed to. The study found that associations between fundamentalism and prosocial attitudes became negative after reading violent biblical texts, and positive after reading prosocial texts.

Schools and education. Education plays a crucial role in both the rise and prevention of violent extremism (Clinch, 2011; Davies, 2014; FBI, 2016; The United Nations, 2015; Tiflati, 2016). The Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI, 2016) describes schools as "potential nodes of radicalization or recruitment hubs for violent extremists" (p. 4). Education involves complex micro- and meso-systems, including childrens' interaction with educators, educators' involvement in developing curricula, and educators' interaction with family members. Preexisting risk factors such as developmental vulnerability (detailed in the section on chronosystemic factors) may be exacerbated by the social demands of school. In this environment, extremist ideas can proliferate and take root.

Prisons. Research has shown that abuse at detention facilities can play a powerful role in the recruitment of individuals to extremist groups (The United Nations, 2015). Inhumane treatment, corrupt staff, overcrowding, gang activity, solitary confinement, and poor living conditions are among the host of factors that can cause detainees to seek protection and comfort by joining groups with concrete ideologies and strong bonds of

affiliation. The United Nations counterterrorism strategy specifically calls for the upholding of international standards and human rights in prisons and detention facilities as a means of reducing violent extremism.

Exo- and Macro-Systemic Factors

Economic, structural, and geopolitical factors. Bakker and Kessel (2012) drew on the work of Tore Bjørgo (2011, 2013) to describe various economic, structural, and geopolitical factors at play in the rise of violent extremism and terrorism. They divide these factors into structural causes, facilitator causes, motivational causes, and triggering causes. Structural causes are macro-level causes—such as "demographic imbalances, globalisation, rapid modernisation, increasing individualism" (Bakker & Kessels, 2012, p. 91)—that affect people's lives in ways that may not be readily apparent. Facilitator causes are those exo- and macro-level factors which enable violent extremism without themselves being prime movers. These may include media and weapons technology. Motivational and triggering causes are exosystemic issues that directly motivate and spur an individual into action. Examples include repression by colonial powers, social injustice, economic marginalization of immigrant groups, and specific events such as attacks or even peace talks that may be cause for revenge or other violent action. Many of these factors have sociohistorical antecedents and will be covered in the section on chronosystemic factors.

Canetti, Hall, Rapaport, and Wayne (2013) propose a model of political extremism that originates with exposure to political violence. They state that long-term exposure to political violence causes increased psychological distress, and that this

distress "in turn evokes stronger perceptions of threat that foment political attitudes eschewing compromise and favoring militarism" (p. 263). Canetti et al. use the Israel-Palestine conflict to illustrate how extremist attitudes can be shaped through prolonged exposure to political conflict.

In a 2010 study Krieger and Meierrieks (2010) detailed socioeconomic factors as they relate to the rise of violent extremism. Specifically, they assessed social and economic policies and their effects on homegrown terrorism in Western Europe. They found that "higher social spending in certain fields (health, unemployment benefits, and active labor market programs) is associated with a significant reduction in homegrown terrorism, while spending in other fields (e.g., public housing) is not" (Krieger & Meierrieks, 2010, p. 902). This finding seems to indicate that economic variables greatly impact individuals' potential disenfranchisement and subsequent turn to violent extremism. Moreover, the study suggests that specific social policies—particularly welfare-related policies—may help to ameliorate terrorist activities. In line with this finding, the United Nations (2015) found that a lack of socioeconomic opportunity—indicators included poverty and unemployment—was a major driver of violent extremism in westernized countries. They note that oftentimes individuals find extremist groups appealing solely due to the opportunity for a stable and decent income.

Cultural factors. Among the cultural factors that have been cited as drivers of violent extremism are clashes of worldview dimensions such as individualism and collectivism, and styles of perceiving social change (Moghaddam, 2004; Moghaddam & Marsella, 2004; Schwartz et al., 2009). Moghaddam (2004) argues that it is the cultural and collective level that provides the most useful means of understanding terrorism. He

proposes that a cultural examination allows for the development of a cultural profile that is most likely to create the conditions in which terrorist groups evolve and thrive. Moreover, Moghaddam proposes that a central feature of this profile is the culture's style of perceiving societal change. Specifically, this style includes the perception that the present society is neither just nor legitimate, and that radical social change is needed. Moghaddam states that, although there are basic differences in the behavior of terrorists around the world—Islamic and Jewish groups in the Middle East, and Catholic and Protestant groups in Northern Ireland to name a few—the stated cultural preconditions are nevertheless the same.

The Internet and social media. In a multidisciplinary white paper on the role of the Internet—or cyber-based communications technology (CBCT)—in the development and mobilization of extremism, Orlina and Desjardins (2012) note that rapid advances in technology have provided a "a cheap, accessible conduit for propagating ideas, innovations, and movements" (p. 44). As such, the Internet has emerged as a powerful platform for extremists to influence people across borders and cultures. Perhaps most relevant to the spreading of extremist ideas is the opportunity the Internet affords for people to explore identities in an anonymous forum (Davies, Neudecker, Ouellet, Bouchard, & Ducol, 2016; Stevens & Neumann, 2009). However, Orlina and Desjardins note that CBCT rarely contributes to the radicalization or mobilization of an individual in a linear fashion. They state that "[i]t is more likely that the various modes of CBCT interact with shaping factors and transition factors to produce psychological and behavioral outcomes" (Orlina & Desjardins, 2012, p. 44).

Neumann (2013) argues that among the ways of dealing with the proliferation of extremist ideology online, restricting freedom of speech and removing access to material on the Internet is both the least desirable and the least effective outcome. Instead, Neumann recommends a broader-based approach that aims to reduce the demand for online extremist rhetoric by promoting awareness and educating youth.

Chrono-Systemic Factors

Developmental theories. Social Identity has also been linked to developmental theories such as Erikson's Psychosocial Stages (Erikson, 1959). For example, according to Erikson's theory adolescents must negotiate the crisis of identity versus role confusion. It is precisely during this stage that people are most vulnerable to recruitment into extremist ideologies that offer a strong sense of membership and belonging (Maalouf, 2012; Spitaletta, 2014). Thomas and Sanderson (2011), however, counter the notion of identity confusion in adolescence leading directly to extremism. They focus on the UK's so-called Community Cohesion policy of the early 2000s that focused on Muslim youth and the perception that they lived alienated lives—without a clear national identity—in parallel and opposition to British values. The study used a qualitative approach with 54 Pakistani and Bangladeshi youth from Greater Manchester. Methods included interviews, word associations, and questionnaires. While the vast majority of participants identified most strongly with their religious identity (as opposed to national identity), they also routinely endorsed such themes as "I am proud to say that I am British" (p. 1032). The authors use these data to suggest that claims of a deep confusion between Muslim and British identities in Muslim youth have been exaggerated. Nevertheless, various recent

studies (Liht & Savage, 2013; Savage, Khan, & Liht, 2014) have shown the effectiveness of promoting resilience to extremist rhetoric in adolescents by exploring individual and group identity, and related personal values.

Sociohistorical theories. In his exhaustively researched book, *From the Ruins of Empire*, Pankaj Mishra (2012) investigates the far-reaching effects of the colonization of Asia by western powers. A section that focuses specifically on the rise of modern Islamic extremism in the form of extremist Wahhabi and Salafi ideologies provides a sobering example of the long reach of history. In it, Mishra describes the events set into motion by the Soviet-backed communist regime in Afghanistan during the late 1970s. This regime

> tried to modernize hastily and brutally what it saw as a feudal and backward society, uprooting people from their traditional cultures and forcing them into Western-style cities and occupations. There were many who resisted, and within just a few months, 12,000 people considered anti-communist, many of them members of the country's educated elite, were killed in Kabul alone...The subsequent backlash from radical Islamists was supported by the United States, and turned, with the help of Pakistan's Islamist dictator General Zia-ul-Haq and Saudi Arabia, into the first global jihad in Islam's long history. Wherever there were Muslims, Saudi petrodollars underwrote Wahhabist mosques, madrasas and clerics. Victory against Soviet Communism—a godless ideology of the amoral West—emboldened radical Islamists, and expanded their anti-Western agenda. (pp. 277-278)

Similarly, Stern and Berger (2015) describe the multi-faceted sociohistorical roots of the Islamic State. This history involves everything from competition for oil and natural

gas in the Middle East, to poor governance, to the rise of social media, to the United States' own attempt to combat terrorism beginning with the 2003 invasion of Iraq.

Radicalization, recruitment, and mobilization theories. A number of theorists have proposed models to attempt to explain the processes that lead from political activism to radicalization, and eventually to mobilization to violent acts (Ackerman et al., 2013; Moghaddam, 2004; Moghaddam & Marsella, 2004; Neumann, 2013; Orlina & Desjardins, 2012). Most of these models, including the widely used Two Pyramids Model (McCauley & Moskalenko, 2017; Orlina & Desjardins, 2012) and the National Counterterrorism Center's (NCTC) radicalization framework (see figure 2) highlight critical points in an individual's escalation from activist to radical to violent extremist. According to these models, various psychological, interpersonal, systemic, and political factors can intervene at these critical moments to either inhibit or push an individual further down the path to violent extremism. This multi-factor model is reminiscent of ecological approaches, and though the focus is on secondary and tertiary prevention (intervening once an individual shows signs of radicalization or mobilization), the framework itself is highly compatible with the guiding principles of community psychology. The NCTC framework, for example, proposes that violent extremists progress through three phases—radicalization, mobilization, and action—in their path to ultimately committing violent acts. At each stage of this progression, various factors can function as catalysts or inhibitors. Orlina and Desjardins (2012) write:

> These factors range from personal-level factors to the political and social context within which individuals find themselves. The circular nature of the constructed framework as well as the multi-directional arrows convey that radicalization and

> mobilization are neither linear processes nor are they necessarily permanent, insofar as a person can fall from a state of mobilization to one of radicalization or even a neutral position without exogenous interventions. (p.12)

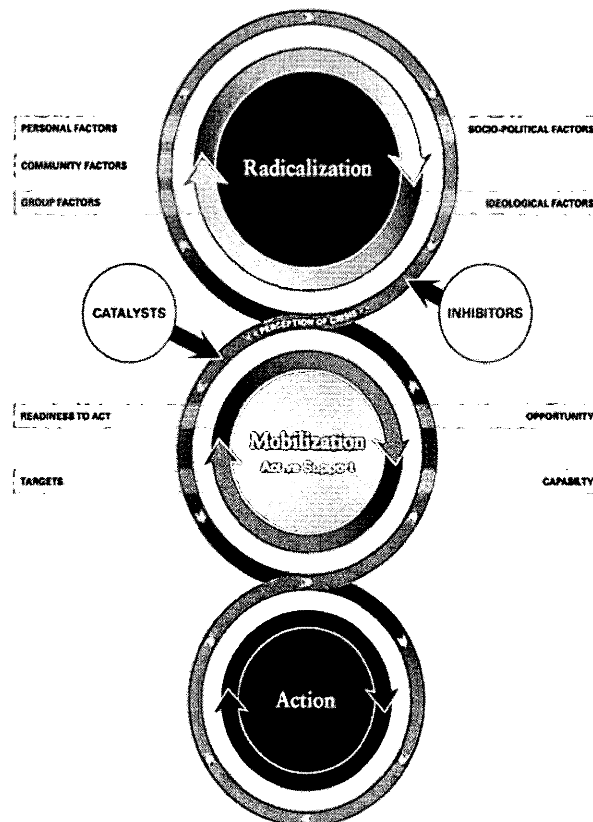

Figure 2. National Center for Counterterrorism (NCTC) radicalization framework. From "Cyber on the brain: The effects of cyberneurobiology & cyberpsychology on political extremism," by E. Orlina and A. Desjardins, 2012. Copyright 2012 by the Department of Defense.

Another area of note with regard to recruitment and mobilization are differences between inter- and intra-state radicalization and violence. The United Nations (2015) reports that as of 2015 over 30,000 foreign terrorist fighters have been recruited from over 100 UN member states to fight in Syria, Iraq, Afghanistan, Libya, and Yemen.

Christmann (2012) describes a "new terrorism" that is increasingly fluid and heterogeneous. This type of radicalization, which has recently been seen in London, Paris, Brussels, and San Bernardino, involves perpetrators who "were not then hardened veterans of some former conflict, but rather disenfranchised members of a community who would have been moulded in a broadly liberal-democratic and tolerant multi-cultural context" (p. 5). The now infamous Belgian suburb of Molenbeek is an example of this phenomenon of radicalization within insular communities in the West. Pratt (2015) describes Islamic radicalization in Europe in relation to Islamophobia, and contends that the two are a result of what he terms "reactive co-radicalization."

The heterogeneity of those who join modern extremist movements can also be seen in the increasing number of women who have joined groups like ISIL, and who have been directly involved in acts of terrorism (Huckerby, 2015a, 2015b). Huckerby states that, though there is a tendency to attribute the recruitment of women to subservience and coercion within male-dominant cultures, women are often drawn to extremist groups for the same reasons as men.

Primary Prevention of Violent Extremism

The increasing consensus in the international community is that security-based strategies that were the focus of counterterrorism efforts post-9/11 have been insufficient to contain the complex and ever-changing threat of violent extremism (The United Nations, 2015). Thus the United Nations has called for an increased focus—specifically in the form of both qualitative and quantitative research—into preventative measures. Preventative efforts aimed at social problems such as violent extremism can generally

take one of three forms—primary, secondary, or tertiary prevention (Bloom, 1996; Clinch, 2011; Liht & Savage, 2013). Primary prevention strategies are aimed at the widest relevant population, and involve those who may not yet show signs of the problem. The goal of primary prevention is to reduce the prevalence of a social problem by increasing resilience and social support, and by reducing stressors and vulnerabilities. Secondary prevention strategies focus on early detection and treatment once signs of the problem are evident. In the case of violent extremism, this might occur once someone has shown indications of radicalization or of moving toward engagement in violent acts. As an example of secondary prevention Liht and Savage (2013) discuss the UK's multi-agency referral program, named Channel (p. 44). Tertiary prevention affects an even smaller subset of the relevant population, namely those in whom the problem is already in an advanced state. In the case of violent extremism, these would be individuals who show clear signs of engaging in extremist violence—for example, individuals who have been incarcerated or detained on terrorism-related charges. Deradicalization programs—interventions that seek to help an already radicalized individual disengage from extremist violence—fall into the category of tertiary prevention.

Liht and Savage (2013) note that primary prevention strategies have distinct advantages when it comes to violent extremism. The challenge of secondary and tertiary prevention strategies—as evidenced by the multivariate models that inform deradicalization and disengagement efforts—is that there is no single path to violence. Savage's (2011) description of "flames arising from...complex, shape-shifting wholes" (p. 135) speaks to the difficulty of intervening and pulling an individual back from one or more of the myriad transition points between radicalization and violence. Conversely,

primary prevention has the advantage of being able to function in the absence of a complete understanding of the causes of a problem. Liht and Savage (2013) write,

> ...in the latter part of the 19th century, primary prevention successfully contained the spread of infectious diseases as people took measures that were seen to work, yet without complete knowledge of germ theory. With primary prevention, doing something strategic to interrupt a pernicious cycle (and then evaluating the outcomes of that intervention) is a step forward, without having to identify the exact pathway for a given individual. The best available account of a social problem improves and focuses prevention efforts when empirically evaluated for effectiveness. This feeds into its further conceptualization and evaluation. In this way, this intervention can make a contribution to the overall map of RIVE prevention. (pp. 44-45)

Primary prevention is also a central tenet of community psychology, as will be detailed in the section on psychologists' involvement in prevention efforts. Considering this overlap with community psychology, as well as the challenges detailed in the literature with regard to secondary and tertiary prevention strategies, the following sections will review existing community-oriented primary prevention interventions only. They will not assess deradicalization, disengagement, or other security-based initiatives that do not fall under the scope of primary prevention as defined above.

Existing Preventative Interventions

Systematic reviews of preventative interventions. Systematic reviews by both Pratchett et al. (2010) and Christmann (2012) of the evidence base for community-based

interventions to prevent violent extremism emphasize that there are limited empirical studies on the subject. Pratchet et al. (2010) note that this may be due in part to the difficulty of conducting community-wide studies or assessing changes in the attitudes of a whole community. Christmann (2012) attributes the lack of empirical studies to the preponderance of wholly theoretically driven studies—at the time of his review only 5% of studies on terrorism were empirically based—and a penchant for scholars to propose "impressionistic...far reaching generalisations on the basis of episodic evidence" (p. 8). Christmann also points out that the poor definition of terms has limited the usefulness of the existing evidence base. Christmann (2012) writes

> The review found that the evidence base for effective preventing violent extremism interventions is very limited...Furthermore, although a growing body of literature investigating the radicalisation process is emerging, the weight of that literature is focused upon terrorism rather than radicalisation. As such, the evidence is concerned with that smaller cohort of individuals who, once radicalised, go on to commit acts of violence in the pursuit of political or religious aims and objectives. This introduces a systematic bias in the literature, away from the radicalisation process that preceeds terrorism, including radicalisation that does not lead to violence. (p. 4)

Despite these limitations, however, both Pratchett et al. (2010) and Christmann (2012) were able to draw some conclusions with regard to preventative interventions. Pratchett et al. (2010) looked at both national and international databases "to find evidenced, evaluated interventions which had been intended to change attitudes towards violent extremism" (p. 6). Their analysis was not limited to violence in the name of

Islam. It also included interventions related to sectarian violence in Northern Ireland and Christian and Muslim religious violence in Indonesia. The study coded for three overall factors: the target population group (young people, women, community leaders), the focus of the intervention (capacity building/empowerment, theology, debate/discussion forums), and the mechanism of delivery (outreach, agency collaboration, community consultation). Pratchett et al. concluded that, based on the existing evidence, the most effective interventions were geared toward young people, women, and whole communities. Effective interventions focused on capacity building (fostering critical thinking skills), empowerment (encouraging social action), and debate and discussion surrounding theology and ideology. The authors give an example of an intervention that incorporated all of these characteristics, a drama workshop titled "The Muslimah make a difference." This workshop was implemented with groups of girls in local high schools in the Wycombe District of England. Participants were encouraged to explore their views of what might constitute extremist behavior in their community through drama. When asked to assess the workshops, participants stated that discussion and action through drama allowed them to have conversations about extremism without being labelled as "extremist" (p. 28). Finally, the most successful delivery mechanism appeared to be community outreach. Pratchett et al. note that work with community leaders was not enough on its own to lead to successful outcomes in terms of preventing support for violent extremism. As an example of a successful preventative intervention strategy, Pratchett et al. detail efforts in Slotervaart, The Netherlands. Policymakers in Slotervaart implemented interventions that focused on young people and aimed to build community-wide resilience to Islamic extremism and recruitment.

> Work in the Netherlands was therefore conducted with various agencies and public bodies (youth service, social workers, schools etc) [sic] alongside local mosques, Islamic research/training centres to provide support to parents, school teachers, youth workers, social workers, religious leaders, and self-appointed community leaders in providing broad-based resilience to young people in terms of their socialization. (Pratchett et al., 2010, p. 24)

Education and skills training for this program took place in the context of youth groups and mosque federations in collaboration with civil society and religious leaders (Marcouch, 2008; Ranstorp & Hyllengren, 2013). Specific aims of youth group education and training sessions were twofold: to increase awareness of the dangers of radicalization, and to help second-generation Morroccan and Turkish immigrants in areas of high unemployment channel feelings of frustration in positive ways such as social action, dialogue, and job skills training. Outreach for the Slotervaart program was focused on key community hubs, and engagement was highly effective when service providers used “a respectful, listening mode of interaction” (Pratchett et al., 2010, p. 25). Christmann (2012) also concluded that the most effective means of intervention was community outreach, especially those interventions that provided education in a non-prescriptive manner and that fostered independent thinking and leadership skills in young people. Like Pratchett et al. and others (Demant & De Graaf, 2010), Christmann points to the Netherlands as a model of successful preventative efforts.

The Center for Human Rights and Global Justice (2012) conducted a review of preventative strategies implemented by the U.S. and U.K. governments, and specifically focused on these programs’ engagement with women. The report emphasizes that women

must play a central role in any preventative strategy as they are integral to community resilience, challenging ideology, and giving voice to grievances and social issues that drive radicalization. Yet among the preventative strategies implemented by the British and U.S. governments in the past decade (The U.K.'s *Prevent* strategies, and the U.S.'s *Empowering Local Partners to Prevent Violent Extremism* strategy), the majority have not had an explicit focus on engagement with women, women's organizations, or women's issues. The report concludes that governments' failure to explicitly integrate gender into every step of prevention efforts—from planning to evaluation—is unsustainable and ill-advised.

It is noteworthy that the three major systematic reviews of preventative interventions—those of Pratchet et al., Christmann, and the Center for Human Rights and Global Justice—focus almost exclusively on government-implemented policies and programs. They do not, for example, consider interventions developed by educators (Clinch, 2011) or social psychologists (Liht & Savage, 2013) independent of government efforts. This is a gap that the author seeks to address in subsequent sections.

Education-centered interventions. Education plays a crucial role in the prevention of violent extremism (Clinch, 2011; FBI, 2016). Youth are susceptible to a confluence of developmental vulnerability to extremist ideologies; school settings that bring youth into social contact with one another and encourage the free flow of ideas; and the increased use of social media and online messaging. The Federal Bureau of Investigation (2016) gives the example of a 17-year-old Virginia student who was influenced by ISIL messaging online to create and disseminate extremist messages via social media to other peers at school. In this way, real and virtual social networks

contribute to the radicalization of young people. Though school settings present many risks, however, they also present opportunities for intervention and prevention. Educators have daily interactions with their students and are in a unique position to intervene and effect positive change (FBI, 2016, p. 3). They are also in a position to assess concerning behavior, and ultimately to impart messaging that may keep youth from progressing down the trajectory to violent extremism. Consequently, a number of preventative measures have been enacted internationally in education settings.

In its report on preventing violent extremism in schools, the Federal Bureau of Investigation (2016) identifies various drivers of violent extremism in the United States, and ways in which those drivers can be addressed in school settings. The report stresses that "law enforcement cannot arrest its way out of violent extremism" (p. 4), and characterizes prevention as a joint effort led by law enforcement, civic leaders, and communities. Recommendations of the report include establishing threat assessment teams; training educators on the role of interventions; ensuring that students have access to resources that can assist in overcoming developmental and socioeconomic obstacles (social services, mental health practitioners); strengthening family outreach; establishing student-led focus groups; eliminating stigmas, intolerance, and injustice in the community; and implementing extremism awareness training. The report provides various resources to aid educators, such as a link to a two-hour extremism awareness training video for grades 9-12 (FBI, 2016, p. 26). However, the report does not cite specific interventions that have been successful, let alone empirically evaluated, using the above strategies. Therefore, it is not entirely clear whether the recommendations were grounded in previous efforts, or whether they simply represent tentative impressions

based on existing counterterrorism models (see section on radicalization, recruitment, and mobilization theories).

Davies (2014) shows how "educative turbulence" can interrupt extremist attitudes. Using examples of intergroup encounters from Sri Lanka, Northern Ireland, and the UK, Davies posits that positive turbulence in educational settings is required to disrupt rigidity in thinking. This turbulence includes helping students to build habits of dialogue and dissent, and to learn to be resilient to offence. Davies also encourages educators to foster specific "self-organisation" skills, including the ability to critically analyze and deconstruct online messaging, and to use social media to establish a diverse set of social relations. Davies argues that these skills can help students become resilient to extremist ideology and rhetoric, and can also provoke them to take positive social action and become advocates for equity and peace. A limitation of this study is that the arguments and recommendations proposed by Davies, though they do draw on case studies, are impressionistic in nature. They are not grounded in any formal empirical methodology.

Clinch (2011) employed a community psychology framework to collect the views of a focus group of 22 13- and 14-year-olds in the UK about local factors that put their peers at risk for recruitment to extremist groups, and ideas for ways to reduce these risks through primary prevention in secondary schools. It was Clinch's goal to bring central principles of community psychology—including an emphasis on primary prevention, an exploration of risk and resilience factors, a focus on multiple systemic levels, and a participatory approach to research—to the study of violent extremism in schools. Doing so would "engage with young people as stakeholders in education policy to ensure that

the preventing violent extremism initiative in education is adapted to meet the needs of young people locally" (Clinch, 2011, p. 132). As a theoretical base for her exploration of primary prevention in schools Clinch referenced a previous intervention developed by England's Department for Children, Schools, and Families called *Learning Together to Be Safe* (Department for Children Schools and Families [DCSF], 2008), and a toolkit provided by the same organization for use in schools (DCSF, 2009). The program emphasized a tiered approach to prevention that is in line with the principles of community psychology (see figure 3).

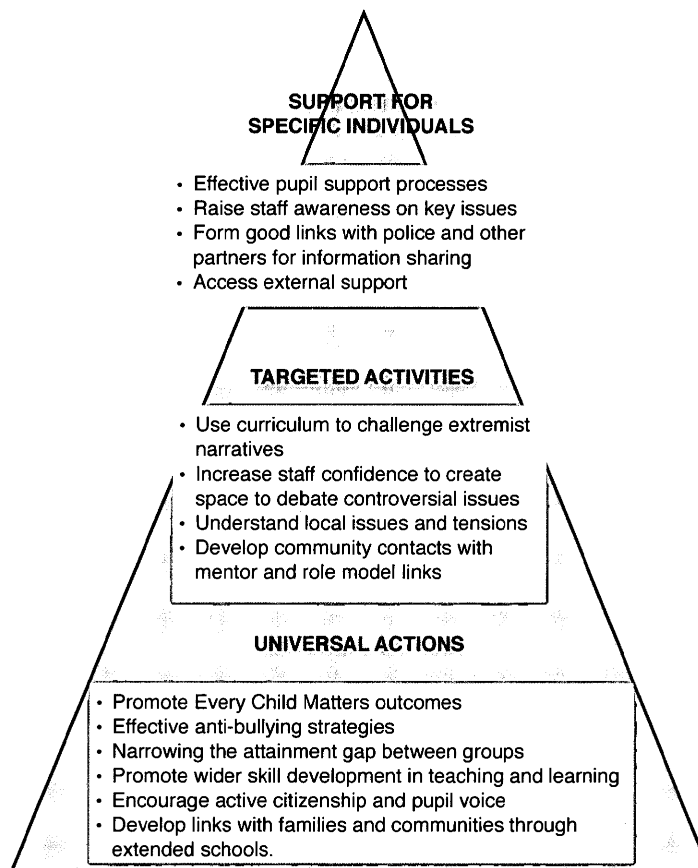

Figure 3. Tiered approach to preventing violent extremism in schools. Adapted from "The protection of children in England: Action plan," by Department for Children, School and Families, 2009. Copyright 2009 by Crown Copyright.

Clinch ran focus groups with a total 22 students from three different secondary schools. During the focus group, students were asked about risk factors for extremism in their communities, as well as their own ideas about how to effectively prevent extremism. Clinch used a thematic analysis approach to analyze focus group data. The analysis showed that students' views of the risk factors for violent extremism and means of prevention aligned with existing government policies in some areas but not in others. For example, students in the focus group emphasized the importance of moral education about violence, open debate in class, and discussion of similarities between those of different cultures—all of which align with existing guidelines of the UK government's "Prevent" program. However, students did not feel that discussion of politics and world events was of interest because they felt that these matters were not directly relevant to their lives. Clinch's thesis was the only in-depth study found by the author that explicitly brings the principles of community psychology to bear on the problem of violent extremism. By doing so Clinch was able to provide some valuable education policy recommendations, and to gain a more relevant understanding of the ways in which vulnerability to extremism manifests at different systemic levels.

Community policing interventions. Various scholars and policymakers have commented on the detrimental effects of policies to prevent violent extremism that target entire communities, religions, or social groups (House of Commons, 2010; Thomas, 2010). This point is particularly applicable to Muslim communities. The UK House of Commons (2010) report on preventing violent extremism states,

> The single focus on Muslims in Prevent has been unhelpful. We conclude that any programme which focuses solely on one section of a community is stigmatising, potentially alienating, and fails to address the fact that no section of a population exists in isolation from others. The need to address extremism of all kinds on a cross-community basis, dependent on assessed local risk, is paramount. (p. 5)

Similarly, Thomas (2010) states that the British government's "hearts and minds" policy response to the threat of Islamic extremist terrorism suffers from a "monocultural focus on Muslims [that] is in stark contradiction to the overriding policy goal of community cohesion, whilst its implementation has provoked accusations both of surveillance and of engineering 'value changes' within Muslim communities" (p. 1).

These concerns have prompted international organizations to differentiate between community-targeted and community-oriented approaches to preventing violent extremism (Executive Office of the President, 2011; Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe [OSCE], 2014; The United Nations, 2015). Community-targeted approaches form the basis of more traditional counterterrorism approaches and involve enforcement and intelligence-gathering activities (Bakker & Kessels, 2012; OSCE, 2014). Tactics have included the implementation of law enforcement stop-and-search powers and covert operations to detect and thwart terrorist attacks. Although these tactics continue to form a central part of strategies to counter violent extremism, they have a down side. These methods often involve little or no consultation with the targeted community and do not take into account every community's diverse needs. Consequently, such methods can further marginalize or stigmatize members of the community and drive them further down the path to violent extremism.

Community-oriented approaches, on the other hand, are marked by partnerships between communities and authorities, community involvement in the formulation and implementation of policies, and putting community safety at the forefront of discussions rather than state security.

The Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE, 2014) points out that community-targeted approaches can become community-oriented with proper support from and engagement with the community itself. It proposes community policing as one way to counter extremism in a way that upholds human rights and individual and community liberties. OSCE defines community policing as "a philosophy and organizational strategy that promotes a partnership-based, collaborative effort between the police and the community to more effectively and efficiently identify, prevent and solve problems of crime, the fear of crime, issues of physical safety and security, social disorder and neighbourhood decay in order to improve the quality of life for everyone" (OSCE, 2014, pp. 13-14).

Community policing has been a widely studied and adopted approach in recent years. It has been recommended as an essential component of prevention strategies by the United Nations (2015), the Executive Office of the President of the United States (2011), USAID (2011), and OSCE (2014). It is a "bottom up" approach that prioritizes human rights, and makes a clear distinction between radicalization and violent extremism (Murray, Mueller-Johnson, & Sherman, 2015; OSCE, 2014). For example, OSCE states that radicalization or the holding of extreme views is not in and of itself criminal, and that in fact, it has actually been a force for positive change at various times in human history. "For instance, people advocating the abolition of slavery or who championed universal

suffrage were at one time considered to be radical as they stood in opposition to the prevailing views in their societies" (OSCE, 2014, p. 19).

Forging partnerships between law enforcement and communities has distinct advantages such as building trust between communities and police; treating communities as stakeholders in preventing violent extremism and not simply as objects of law enforcement; increasing public vigilance; and timely detection of critical situations. However, community-policing is not without risks. OSCE identifies risks such as an over reliance on policing, stigmatizing particular portions of a community due to selective engagement, using community policing to spy on individuals, and giving the unintentional appearance of supporting certain groups within a community. OSCE advises policymakers and police to be aware of these risks and attempt to minimize them when implementing community policing programs.

Community policing programs have been enacted with some success in Denmark (Khader, 2014; OSCE, 2014). The Danish model prioritizes dialogue and collaboration between authorities and civil society in efforts to prevent recruitment into extremist groups such as ISIL. Khader (2014) gives the example of the Grimhøj mosque in Aarhus, Denmark, which saw around 25 young individuals leave to join violent extremist movements in Syria in 2013 alone. After implementing their model of community policing and initiating dialogue between the mosque's leaders and authorities, not a single person left Aarhus to fight in Syria in 2014.

Values complexity-centered interventions. A recent intervention developed by social psychologist Sara Savage and professor of divinity Jose Liht of Cambridge University (Liht & Savage, 2013; Savage et al., 2014) attempts to prevent violent

extremism by promoting complexity of values and thinking in young people who are vulnerable to extremist rhetoric. The intervention operationalizes and measures a construct called integrative complexity (Suedfeld & Tetlock, 2014). Integrative complexity (IC) measures an individual's ability to differentiate various dimensions of a particular topic, and to integrate them into a hierarchy (Conway et al., 2011). IC can assess the extent to which discourse limits value-tradeoffs—the ability to consider and prioritize competing personal values related to a specific subject (for example, religious traditionalism versus cultural integration)—by emphasizing one value to the exclusion of all others. It is thought that when competing values cannot co-mingle, extremist rhetoric results. Evidence suggests that in international conflicts, high complexity thinking precedes peaceful outcomes whereas low-complexity thinking precedes violence (Conway et al., 2011). Additionally, Conway et al. (2008) propose that IC can be divided into two sub-constructs—dialectical and elaborative complexity. Dialectical complexity occurs when a topic is seen from multiple, often opposing perspectives, whereas elaborative complexity involves a single perspective that is defended in a complex way. Conway et al. (2011) illustrate using the following example:

> Consider the following statement...''Peanut butter is great, not only because it is delicious, but also because it makes for a healthy meal.'' The viewpoint that peanut butter is great itself is never challenged or qualified, but rather is defended with two different dimensions (taste-related, health-related). Thus, this differentiation would be elaborative because it develops a singular viewpoint about peanut butter with two differentiated dimensions. Dialectical complexity, on the other hand, occurs when a given topic is described from multiple points of

view. Consider, for example, this statement: ''Peanut butter is delicious, but I don't like how it gets stuck on the roof of my mouth.'' In this case, two dialectically-opposing views of ''peanut butter'' are presented, one positive and one negative. (p. 156)

Conway et al. show these constructs to be directly applicable to extremist and fundamentalist rhetoric. In such thinking, dialectical complexity tends to be low (opposing views are not considered), but elaborative complexity tends to be high (the cherished view is defended in increasingly complex ways). Increasing dialectical complexity is the basis for Liht and Savage's (2013) *Being Muslim, Being British* (BMBB) intervention.

Liht and Savage note that in the UK, broad-based prevention initiatives—strategies have included promoting moderate Muslim voices and providing cautionary tales about terrorism—have often appeared to target the entire Muslim community. Further, they have largely lacked empirical support for their effectiveness. Liht and Savage aimed to avoid these issues by turning to the integrative complexity—also referred to as values complexity—framework. They state that "Rather than focusing on the content of ideology or beliefs particular to a community, the focus is on the structure of thinking—a cognitive construct that is precise and measureable, while being applicable to a range of extremisms or inter-group conflicts" (Liht & Savage, 2013, p. 45).

Liht and Savage draw on a wider context in presenting the framework for their intervention. They describe how exo- and macro-systemic trends such as globalization and modernization have increasingly brought values and identities into conflict. The response to a perceived threat to these values is to retreat to a "value monist" position—

one that defends one perspective to the exclusion of all else. In the UK, this holds true for both members of the host culture and immigrants. Perceived clashes of values can even result in situations where, as Liht and Savage (2013) put it, "one extremism [becomes] pitted symbiotically against another extremism, as in the right wing English Defence League mobilizing against radical Islamists" (p. 45). In these instances, value monist positions become attractive because they provide certainty and reduce the ambivalence surrounding such competing values as individualism and collectivism. The theoretical framework for BMBB brings together a number of theories of extremism from different theoretical stances and systemic levels—including cognitive (black-and-white thinking), existential (uncertainty and terror management), the enclave and social identity (retrenching to value monism in the face of a threat to group identity), and exo- and macro-level factors (globalization and modernization). As such, it provides a real-world example of how an ecological approach can be useful in the prevention of violent extremism.

The BMBB intervention itself is a multimedia course that presents young UK Muslims with various viewpoints embodied by influential Muslims. It encourages discussions about values and religious tradition in order to promote connection with a wider range of values and increase complexity of thinking at a developmentally vulnerable age. Rather than focus on a single cause or pathway to violent extremism, the facilitators help young people to explore values, identity, and their relationships to British and Muslim cultures. Liht and Savage consulted Imams and other community leaders in the implementation of a pilot study to evaluate BMBB. The researchers hypothesized that young Muslims participating in the BMBB program would exhibit higher IC levels as

well as a greater array of values at post-test than at pre-test.

The pilot study involved seven different groups with a total of 81 participants. The participants were young men and women (mean age 19) identifying as Muslim and living in the UK. The sample was primarily Sunni Muslim and was comprised of 60% males and 40% females. The program involved 16 contact hours and included films and group activities to help participants use an array of values to problem-solve. Researchers gathered pre- and post-test data that involved coding of two components—group verbal discussion during the first and last sessions, and written answers to six vignettes presenting various moral dilemmas. Coders rated IC levels and values, and interrater reliability was found to be high (above 80%). Researchers found that by the end of the program, IC had increased significantly. Significant increases were also found for all but a few of the 10 values rated.

Interestingly, though complex thinking and value pluralism increased significantly, the importance of religious tradition did not decrease. Rather, it increased. This suggests an important idea—that as resilience to extremism increases, so does religious traditionalism. This finding calls into question attempts to prevent extremism by simply encouraging a more secular viewpoint or a more moderate practice of Islam.

The authors acknowledged that, due to funding limitations, they were not able to have a comparison/control group, nor were they able to follow up with participants to assess longer term effectiveness. However, further empirical support has since been gathered by implementing the intervention in Kenya (Savage et al., 2014). Similar to BMBB, data from the *Being Kenyan, Being Muslim* intervention showed significant gains in IC. In this study, 24 Kenyan and Somali participants completed a 16-hour course

consisting of films and group activities. The course was designed to facilitate problem-solving on topics related to extremism using a range of personal values. Pre-test and post-test data showed significant increases in IC as evidenced by both written verbal data and oral presentations at the end of the course. The authors note that such changes in IC can predict a prosocial rather than a violent response to conflict. One new finding in this follow-up study was that a values complexity framework was not only effective as a means of primary prevention, but also provided an effective model for deradicalizing and reintegrating previous members of extremist groups.

The Role of Community Psychology in the Prevention of Violent Extremism

The above review of current interventions to prevent violent extremism shows that research into, and development of, interventions has been undertaken by criminologists (Christmann, 2012; Murray et al., 2015), educators (Clinch, 2011; L. Davies, 2014), political scientists (Bjørgo, 2011, 2013), political psychologists (Conway et al., 2008), social psychologists (Savage, 2011; Savage et al., 2014), sociologists (Thomas, 2010; Thomas & Sanderson, 2011), divinity/theology experts (Liht & Savage, 2013; Liht et al., 2011), government and policy experts (DCSF, 2008; House of Commons, 2010; Pratchett, Thorp, Wingfield, Lowndes, & Jabbar, 2010; The United Nations, 2015), and security organizations (FBI, 2016; OSCE, 2014). Conspicuously absent from this list are applied psychologists. Clinical psychologist James Jones (2006) writes, "most of the mainstream, scholarly literature [on terrorism] is written by social psychologists, not clinicians" (p. 167).

This is striking considering both the breadth of disciplines already involved in research and the potential contributions of applied psychologists to the development and implementation of psychosocial and community-based preventative interventions. Community psychology in particular—perhaps more than any other field of applied psychology—shares many of the core principles and research methodologies that have guided recent research into preventing violent extremism (Clinch, 2011). For example, Christmann's (2012) finding that successful programs benefitted from active involvement of the relevant community during the development and administration of interventions is in line with the community psychology principle of participatory action research (Clinch, 2011; Dickens & Watkins, 1999; Kloos et al., 2012; Nelson & Prilleltensky, 2010). Likewise, core community psychology values such as primary prevention and an ecological approach to treatment align well with much of the empirical research on preventative interventions (APA, 2014; Clinch, 2011; Liht & Savage, 2013; Nelson & Prilleltensky, 2010). The involvement of psychologists in this area of research and practice, therefore, bears exploration.

Present role of psychologists in countering violent extremism. Since the attacks of 9/11, psychologists have increased their involvement in countering violent extremism (Drancoli, 2011; Wagner & Long, 2004). Areas in which applied psychologists have been involved in recent years include counterterrorism—most notoriously in the interrogation of terror suspects, as detailed in the Hoffman Report (Hoffman, 2015)—risk assessment, profiling, peace-building, and hostage negotiation (Drancoli, 2011). Notably, all of these areas are either security-focused, or a response to violence that has already occurred. Risk assessment and profiling are designed to detect

imminent threats. Suspect interrogation, peace-building, and hostage negotiation typically occur once conflict is already present. This raises the question: Considering the importance that has been placed on primary prevention of violent extremism by so many other disciplines, why are applied psychologists not involved? More specifically, given the alignment of principles of community psychology with primary prevention, why are community psychologists not involved?

Tellingly, literature searches pairing the key words "community psychology" with "violent extremism," and "clinical psychology" with "violent extremism" yielded no results. A similar search of doctoral dissertations yielded only one result: Clinch's 2011 thesis, which has been referenced extensively in the current study. Simply put, there is next to nothing in the current literature that explicitly speaks to the involvement—or lack thereof—of applied and community psychology in the prevention of violent extremism.

Possible reasons for the absence of community psychology in this area can be extrapolated from the writings of Nelson and Prilleltensky (2010) and Orford (2008), who describe the history and current state of community psychology worldwide. Nelson and Prilleltensky state that, while the field of community psychology has deep roots in the United States and Canada, international community psychology is still in its incipient stages. Further, despite the fairly recent emergence of community psychology in Europe, Africa, and across Latin America, sustained international collaboration of community psychologists is rare. It is not surprising, therefore, that the application of community psychology principles to international issues such as violent extremism has not been widely undertaken.

Another possible explanation for the absence of community psychology in the prevention of violent extremism is reflected in Orford's (2008) description of the then current state of community psychology. Orford writes, "What is evident everywhere is the struggle that is required to maintain [community psychology] in the face of ubiquitous pressures to persist with or revert to a more conforming, individualistic type of psychology" (p. xv). Nelson and Prilleltensky (2010) express a similar sentiment, cautioning that community psychologists should be careful of the current "trend to 'internationalize' psychology," many of whose proponents engage in individualistic, paternalistic, and exploitative applications of Western psychology (p. 17). Based on these observations, it seems plausible that the field of psychology—even as it expands internationally—has not encouraged or actively facilitated engagement by community psychologists in a global, community-oriented effort such as primary prevention of violent extremism.

As for the involvement of the field of clinical psychology, narrow perceptions about the role of applied psychologists seems to be the most reasonable explanation for their lack of engagement in prevention efforts. Wagner and Long (2004) hypothesize that clinical psychologists typically see themselves as responders who deal with issues that are already present—as in most psychotherapy—rather than issues that can be prevented. Clinical psychologist and neuroscientist Louis Cozolino is more emphatic in his assessment, contending that psychologists are taught to maintain a therapeutic stance that keeps them socially and politically disengaged (Rajagopal, 2016). He states, "psychologists tend to watch from the sidelines...But in order for the field of psychotherapy to have any impact it has to be expressed politically and socially"

(Rajagopal, 2016). To be sure, recent global events make it clear that, increasingly, psychologists will be called upon to not simply be reactive, but to be proactive as well.

Rationale for greater involvement by community psychologists. The American Psychological Association's (2014) "Guidelines for Prevention in Psychology" clearly state that "[t]he contributions and leadership of psychologists are critical in implementing a prevention focus" (p. 287). Wagner and Long (2004) contend that psychologists "are well-qualified to explore the key questions concerning the 'prevention and mitigation' of terrorist behavior" (p. 209). Perhaps nowhere are these qualifications more apparent than in the field of community psychology. Clinch (2011) identifies a number of areas in which the principles of community psychology are directly applicable to the study and prevention of violent extremism—principles that have in fact already guided, albeit implicitly, much of the recent empirical research into preventative interventions. These principles include an ecological approach to understanding the person, participatory research, primary prevention, implementation of social interventions, identifying risk and resilience factors, and a global perspective.

Community psychology focuses on the relationship of individuals to their communities and to society at large (Kloos et al., 2012). A central principle, therefore, is to view the person in context, as in Bronfenbrenner's (1977) ecological approach. As previously described, the ecological metaphor views problems not simply as a matter of individual, intrapsychic processes—a common approach of many paradigms of applied psychology, although more recent relational and interpersonal approaches consider the individual's context—but as a function of interactions between the individual, the various systems that surround them, and interactions between those systems themselves. Nelson

and Prilleltensky (Nelson & Prilleltensky, 2010) describe the value of the ecological metaphor thus:

> The ecological perspective addresses the value of holism. Western science and ways of thinking about the world have emphasized linear, reductionistic and fragmented ways of understanding. In psychology, people are broken down into component parts (learning, perception, cognition) and are examined as isolated entities. Moreover, the researcher is a detached, objective scientist who is viewed as independent of the people he or she is studying, and the professional is an "expert" helper. The ecological perspective revives the emphasis on holistic thinking, feeling, and acting. (p. 82)

Although this characterization of Western researchers might itself be considered reductionistic, it draws attention to the importance of holism in psychology, a point that can be easily lost as knowledge becomes more specialized and siloed. As evidenced by the multiple theories on the causes of violent extremism, it is clear that extremism is multiply determined and can be better understood holistically, in a manner that allows for multiple levels of analysis.

One implication of the ecological metaphor is that research must be conducted in a collaborative, participatory manner, with practitioners working with rather than on people (Nelson & Prilleltensky, 2010. p. 83). Participatory research is another central principle of community psychology that has guided recent research into preventative interventions. This can be seen in the increased collaboration and consultation with community members in the development and implementation of these interventions

(Christmann, 2012; Executive Office of the President, 2011; Jose Liht & Savage, 2013; OSCE, 2014).

A third principle of community psychology that has guided recent research into violent extremism is primary prevention. This concept has been detailed in previous sections, and is becoming a central strategy in international efforts to counter the threat of extremism (The United Nations, 2015). Among the defining features of successful primary prevention interventions in community psychology are that interventions be universal (targeted at populations, not individuals); that interventions reduce the incidence or onset of a disorder; that interventions allow for outcome goals at different levels (microsystemic, mesosystemic, etc.); and that interventions promote the well-being of individuals, families, settings, and communities (Nelson & Prilleltensky, 2010). All of these features may be used to evaluate existing interventions and inform new interventions.

A fourth principle of community psychology is the implementation of social interventions. Nelson and Prilleltensky (2010) describe social interventions as "intentional processes designed to affect the well-being of the population through changes in values, policies, programs, distribution of resources, power differentials and cultural norms" (p. 176). Many have described changes in economic, sociocultural, and policy norms as being essential to the prevention of the conditions that give rise to violent extremism (Christmann, 2012; House of Commons, 2010; Krieger & Meierrieks, 2010). Toward this end, community psychologists can work as "insiders" or "outsiders"—inside the government or with outside organizations—to influence economic, social, and policy directions.

A fifth principle is the identification of risk and resilience factors at both the individual and community levels. Clinch (2011) warns that, although identifying risk factors for violent extremism is necessary, it is not sufficient to counter extremism in communities. Doing so also requires the development and support of resilience. Resilience is the flexibility that allows individuals and communities to bounce back from adversity. Clinch describes resilience as arising "from an interaction between protective factors within the individual and in the ecosystems around the individual" (p. 12). She states that fostering resiliency is especially important in communities that are vulnerable to extremist ideology and rhetoric. Interventions such as Liht and Savage's (2013) *Being Muslim, Being British* aim to do just this. By increasing complexity of thinking and encouraging leadership qualities, BMBB was able to show an increase in both resilience to extremist rhetoric, and an increased tendency to deal with life challenges and conflict through prosocial as opposed to violent means.

Finally, community psychology values a global perspective. Global problems require global solutions, and in this regard community psychology has the advantage of a rich history of international research and practice (Orford, 2008; Reich, Riemer, Prilleltensky, & Montero, 2007). An integral part of this history has been the challenge of negotiating intermingling values and worldviews; for example, the dialectic between individualistic and collectivistic values has been a source of controversy among community psychologists from various countries (Orford, 2008). As proposed in many theories of extremism—and in the interventions these theories inform—it is precisely this clash between opposing worldviews and values that can give rise to violent extremism, and that can push an individual from radicalization to violence. It stands to reason, then,

that the global perspective of community psychology—and the international experience of its practitioners—can be valuable in the development and implementation of future interventions to prevent violent extremism.

Summary and Exploratory Questions

This literature review has presented the current literature on causes of violent extremism using an ecological framework. The review then provided a brief explanation of primary prevention, followed by an assessment of research on existing interventions aimed at preventing violent extremism. Finally, the review presented a rationale based on current literature for greater involvement by applied psychologists—particularly from the field of community psychology—in the development, implementation, and evaluation of preventative interventions.

A number of conclusions can be drawn from this analysis of the literature. First, it can be concluded that theories of the causes of violent extremism span several levels of analysis—from the intrapsychic to the sociohistorical. A fuller understanding of violent extremism requires consideration of each of these levels. Bronfenbrenner's (1977) ecological systems theory provides a valuable framework with which to do this. Second, it can be concluded that research that takes up the United Nation's (2015) call for a global framework for the prevention of extremism is in its nascent stages. Lessons have been learned from a first wave of often heavy-handed and culturally unresponsive approaches, and these lessons have been integrated into newer approaches (Christmann, 2012; Liht & Savage, 2013; Savage, 2011; Thomas, 2016). Empirical validation of these newer approaches is ongoing. Finally, it can be hypothesized that, based on a high compatibility

of guiding principles and research methods, the field of community psychology may offer a valuable approach to primary prevention of violent extremism. One study in the field of education (Clinch, 2011) has already utilized this approach to gain the views of secondary-school students regarding violent extremism. But the future role of community psychology in this area of research and practice remains to be seen.

A number of exploratory questions emerge from this analysis and will be addressed in the current study. What lessons can be learned from existing interventions to prevent violent extremism? How can various disciplines integrate these lessons in order to inform future interventions? Can community psychology provide an effective framework from which various disciplines can approach the problem of violent extremism? How can community psychologists increase their involvement in this area of research and practice? The researcher will undertake a qualitative analysis of a range of expert interviews in order to contribute to an understanding of these issues, and to provide a preliminary framework to guide psychologists who wish to become involved in preventative efforts.

Chapter III: Methods

Overview of Method

This study sought to address a number of exploratory questions that emerged from an analysis of the literature on the prevention of violent extremism. These questions can be grouped into two categories: integration of the current knowledge base on preventative interventions—including drivers of violent extremism, the role of primary prevention, the development and implementation interventions, and possible future directions for research and practice—and the potential role of community psychology. The study addressed these questions through a qualitative analysis of interviews with a range of experts possessing theoretical and applied knowledge of primary prevention strategies, and a working knowledge of fields of applied psychology. Based on these criteria, interviews were done with experts in the following specific areas: social psychology (Savage, 2011; Savage et al., 2014), political psychology (Conway et al., 2008, 2011), education (Clinch, 2011; Tiflati, 2016), applied criminology (Christmann, 2012), international development (The United Nations, 2015; UNDP, 2016; USAID, 2011), global security/peacekeeping (FBI, 2016; OSCE, 2014), nonprofit program development (Cherney & Hartley, 2017; Weine, Henderson, Shanfield, Legha, & Post, 2013), and community psychology (Higson-Smith, 2002; Kloos et al., 2012; Reich et al., 2007).

A qualitative approach is generally suitable for areas in which limited research exists. Qualitative studies can provide a rich—though likely not generalizeable—understanding of a subject, and can provide a basis for future empirical studies. As

detailed in the literature review, primary prevention of violent extremism fits these criteria and therefore lent itself to qualitative inquiry.

This study employed the qualitative Thematic Analysis methodology delineated by Clarke and Braun (2006, 2013), as well as the Expert Interview method as concretized by Bogner, Littig, & Menz (2009) in their comprehensive overview, *Interviewing Experts*. As Christmann (2012) concluded after his systematic evaluation, research into primary prevention strategies for violent extremism is limited. What studies do exist vary in their levels of scientific rigor, and are spread across multiple fields of study (social psychology, political science, criminology, theology, etc.). As such, any inquiry into this area is necessarily exploratory and multidisciplinary. A qualitative methodology was appropriate for these reasons.

The thematic analysis method as set forth by Clarke and Braun (2006, 2013) was most suited to the needs of this study. Thematic analysis presented some key advantages over other qualitative approaches such as Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) and Grounded Theory. As noted by Clarke and Braun, thematic analysis is flexible and is not bound to any specific theoretical framework or epistemology. Thematic analysis can range from essentialist (reporting specific experiences or realities) to constructionist (exploring the social construction of realities). This range was particularly useful in gaining insight into the range of approaches—from individual psychology to social and systemic intervention—to preventing violent extremism. Second, though methodologies such as IPA require a relatively homogeneous sample in order to gain deep insight into the lived experience of a particular group of people, this study required an analysis of a range of views and experiences of experts from a variety of disciplines.

Though expert interviews have long been used in qualitative social research, the method has been developed and systematized to a greater degree in recent years (Bogner et al., 2009). There were many practical reasons for using expert interviews as a basis for this qualitative study. Bogner, et al. point out that expert interviews are more efficient in the exploratory phase of a project; that experts can function as a "crystallization point" for knowledge concerning a certain population or practice; and finally, that experts have access to insider knowledge and can be used as surrogates for a population that would otherwise be difficult to access. All of these considerations were relevant to the current study. In this exploratory phase of inquiry into primary prevention methods, experts from various fields served as crystallization points for valuable knowledge concerning violent extremists—a population that would have otherwise been very difficult to access.

Selection and Recruitment of Participants

Selection criteria. The principal selection criterion for this study was that participants be experts in an area related to the prevention of violent extremism. Bogner, Littig, & Menz (2009) define an "expert" as someone with

> technical, process and interpretative knowledge that refers to a specific field of action, by virtue of the fact that the expert acts in a relevant way (for example, in a particular organisational field or the expert's own professional area). In this respect, expert knowledge consists not only of systematised, reflexively accessible knowledge relating to a specialised subject or field, but also has to a considerable extent the character of practical or action knowledge. (p. 100)

In line with this definition, emphasis was placed on gaining the views of individuals who possessed both theoretical knowledge about violent extremism and practical knowledge of intervention efforts. During the recruitment phase of the study, the researcher found that those individuals who possessed knowledge of prevention efforts also tended to possess knowledge about the theories upon which those efforts were based. The converse, however, did not appear to be true. For example, a number of scholars were identified who had developed theories on the causes of violent extremism, but who had little awareness of prevention efforts and strategies. These individuals were not chosen for the study.

Suitable participants also had some working knowledge about fields of applied psychology, and ideally, about community psychology. In practice, remarkably few experts in areas related to violent extremism—including psychologists—were familiar with the field of community psychology. In the current study, 4 out of 8 participants were acquainted with community psychology. However, all experts who were ultimately chosen to participate were familiar with other applied areas of psychology such as clinical psychology, psychotherapy, and psychological assessment.

Prior to the recruitment phase of the study, a number of potential participants who might fit the inclusion criteria delineated above were identified in the literature. Most of these individuals had either developed and implemented preventative interventions, or had evaluated the evidence base for these interventions. These potential participants came from diverse fields including social psychology (Savage, 2011; Savage et al., 2014), theology (Liht & Savage, 2013; Liht et al., 2011), education (Clinch, 2011), applied criminology (Christmann, 2012), international development (DCSF, 2008; House of

Commons, 2010; The United Nations, 2015; USAID, 2011), global security (FBI, 2016; OSCE, 2014), nonprofit program development (Cherney & Hartley, 2017; Weine et al., 2013), and community psychology (Higson-Smith, 2002; Kloos et al., 2012; Reich et al., 2007). The researcher initially hoped to recruit a total of 8-10 individuals to maximally represent this range of fields. Ultimately, all of the above fields were represented with the exception of theology. The researcher was unable to recruit a suitable participant from this field.

Finally, in light of cautionary observations by Christmann (2012), Richards (2015), and Ginges, et al. (2011), particular attention was paid to the definition of terms in the selection of participants. Specifically, experts in areas not related to violent extremism as operationalized in this study (support for or committing of ideologically-motivated violence by non-state entities to further political or religious goals) were not included. For example, experts on cult psychology, "lone shooters," and government-sponsored ethnic cleansing and genocide were not considered.

Sampling strategy. Creswell (2011) states that, in qualitative research, "the intent is not to generalize to a population, but to develop an in-depth exploration of a central phenomenon" (p. 208). As such, a random sampling strategy was not appropriate for this study because the intent is not to generate a representative sample that would allow for generalization of results (Bauwgartner & Pahl-Wostl, 2013). Rather, a purposeful sample of 'information rich' experts provided an understanding of the central subject of this research—the prevention of violent extremism. The study utilized a combination of maximum variation sampling (Creswell, 2013; Patton, 2014) and snowball sampling in order to recruit 8 participants. Maximum variation sampling—also referred to as

maximum heterogeneity sampling—is "a purposeful sampling strategy in which the researcher samples cases or individuals that differ on some characteristic or trait" (Creswell, 2011, p. 204). Patton (2013) writes that a small but maximally diverse sample facilitates two kinds of findings—detailed, in-depth descriptions of each unique case, and patterns that cut across cases and are all the more significant for having emerged from heterogeneity. In this study, the characteristic that varies is the expert's field of study or practice. As previously stated, knowledge in the area of primary prevention of violent extremism is spread across multiple fields. Experts who might shed light on the research questions (current practices and future directions in the primary prevention of violent extremism, and the role of community psychology) came from the fields of social psychology, political psychology, applied criminology, education, international development, theology, global security/peacemaking, nonprofit program development, and community psychology. Per Patton's assertion, a sample of maximum diversity across these fields facilitated unique field-specific findings, and important patterns that cut across fields.

Snowball sampling involves the researcher asking participants to recommend other candidates for interview (Creswell, 2013). In this case, the researcher asked interviewees to recommend experts from other fields who might have a perspective on primary prevention strategies. A limitation of this sampling method was that, because empirical research in this area is sparse, few participants were likely to be able to name suitable candidates. As such, the researcher identified various initial interviewees so that different "snowballs" could be initiated simultaneously. Additionally, once the process

was underway, it was necessary to guide it such that a maximum representation of the disciplines involved in current research was achieved.

Recruitment strategy. The researcher compiled an initial list of potential participants based on a thorough review of the current literature on the subject. Interview subjects were recruited through the researcher's professional network as well as by contacting experts via email and telephone. A greater number of experts were identified than were ultimately recruited. As expected, not all potential participants responded or were able to participate. Notably, representation from the field of theology was not achieved as only one expert who fit the inclusion criteria was identified, and did not respond to a request for interview.

Protection of participants. All research participants are already publicly recognized as experts in their field. Nevertheless, a written Consent to Participate in Research (see Appendix B) was obtained prior to using participants' names and attributing interview content to them. The researcher anticipated that this study presented minimal risk to participants' psychological and physical wellbeing. However, it was not assumed that participants would be immune from emotional reactions or that subject matter was not personal simply by virtue of experts being presumably removed from the direct effects of interventions or violent extremist acts. To moderate the risk of emotional distress, the researcher set aside time to develop rapport, clearly explain the purpose of the study, and create a sense of safety prior to starting the interviews.

Qualitative Interview Protocol

Bogner et al. (2009) and Audenhove (2007) discuss a number of considerations unique to interviewing experts for qualitative analysis. First, it is important to keep in mind that experts are not neutral in their opinions, nor is it important for them to be neutral. Bogner et al. (2009) note that experts are not disinterested third parties.

> [T]he expert interview like other interviewing methods is used to gather information about a subject matter as seen from various perspectives, and although the expert's knowledge may be of a privileged nature it is nonetheless tied to a position like any other knowledge. (p. 38)

A second consideration is that the effects of interaction can be high in expert interviews, and that they are not "inter-subjectively repeatable" (Audenhove, 2007, p. 9). There is always the possibility with this method that participants will provide anecdotal information, and that the participation of the researcher in dialogue will itself shape the conversation. This effect of interaction was evident throughout the interviews for this study. Participants often provided personal views and anecdotal information about their experiences in prevention of violent extremism. These views shaped dialogue between researcher and expert that would not be repeatable.

A third consideration is the differentiation of the role of the interviewer. Bogner et al. (2009) list various possible roles for the interviewer, including as co-expert, expert outside of the field, lay person, authority, confederate, or possible critic. They also point to a role that exists somewhere between a layperson and a co-expert, namely, a "well-informed citizen and professional" (Bogner et al., 2009, p. 38). It is as a well-informed professional that the researcher functioned during the interviews for this study.

A fourth consideration is that expert interviews tend to be semi-structured—as was the case in the current study—and do not always cover all of the themes under investigation. Audenhove (2007) notes that the topic list for expert interviews may vary according to the individual's area of expertise, so long as certain major themes are covered. In this study, important major themes were the current state of interventions to prevent violent extremism—including drivers of violent extremism, the role of prevention, current practices, and possible future directions—and the role of applied or community psychology in their development and implementation. As expected, each subject emphasized some themes and not others according to their area of expertise.

Finally, Bogner et al. (2009) define three dimensions of expert knowledge—technical knowledge, process knowledge, and explanatory knowledge. Technical knowledge includes very specific knowledge in the field. In this case such knowledge might include theories of extremism, laws and policy relating to prevention efforts, and knowledge of community practices. Process knowledge—information on specific routines, processes, or interactions—might include knowledge related to the development, implementation, and evaluation of specific interventions. Explanatory knowledge consists of the participant's subjective ideas and interpretations. Examples of participants' explanatory knowledge in this study include ideas about the future direction of prevention efforts and thoughts on the role of community psychology.

The interview protocol (see Appendix C) reflected these considerations and allowed for some amount of leeway in the areas covered while still touching on the major themes relevant to this study.

Areas of Potential Bias

Areas of potential bias in this study included the selection of interview subjects, operationalization of terms, analysis of data by a single researcher, and finally, the researcher's own biases related to the issue of violent extremism.

Selecting interview subjects presents a challenge in any qualitative interview study. The low sample size represents a narrow range of views that may not be generalizeable to the views of a larger population of experts in the field. This study of interventions to prevent violent extremism was also unique in that it was multidisciplinary. The researcher aimed to reduce bias by selecting interview subjects that represented the varied fields involved in current research and practice. In doing so, the researcher hoped to gain a breadth and depth of views, and to draw conclusions that were not bound by the assumptions and presuppositions made by any single field of study. For example, a social psychologist might stress the primacy of addressing social identity in any efforts to prevent recruitment into extremist groups, while an expert in international development might feel that the main ingredient in any such intervention is the ability to address social grievances and contextual factors. Getting views from various disciplines not only reduced bias, but also provided a starting point for an integration of most effective practices.

Terms and definitions presented another area of potential bias in this study. As stated previously, definitions of terms related to violent extremism are not universally agreed upon. As noted by Ginges, et al. (2011), many of the terms themselves carry judgments that may prevent a deep and nuanced understanding of populations at risk of

recruitment by extremist groups. One way the researcher attempted to reduce this bias was to explicitly ask interview subjects for their views on the terms under discussion.

A third area of potential bias was the fact that the interviews and analysis of themes were carried out by a single researcher. There was a risk that the researcher's biases would be reflected in the analysis. To counter this risk, the researcher employed an external auditor familiar with the thematic analysis methodology. Using an external auditor in qualitative research is a way to decrease bias and increase validity (Barusch, Gringeri, & George, 2011; Miller, 1997; Smith, Flowers, & Larkin, 2009; Smith & Osborn, 2003). The auditor for this study reviewed interview transcripts as well as the researcher's thematic analysis in order to provide feedback on themes and methodology. Importantly, the auditing process entailed a dialogue between researcher and auditor rather than a unidirectional providing of feedback, and had the aim of generating more meaning from the analysis.

Finally, the researcher's own biases must be bracketed. The researcher has not been directly affected by violent extremism, or by interventions aimed at prevention of violent extremism. However, the researcher has experienced Islamophobia and racial profiling in the aftermath of 9/11 (though the researcher does not himself identify as Muslim). These experiences had the potential of coloring the researcher's view of preventative interventions aimed at Muslim communities—particularly those interventions that have been described as culturally insensitive or as profiling community members.

Data Analysis and Coding Procedures

The analysis phase of this study was undertaken in the following steps as outlined by Clarke and Braun (2006, 2013). It is important to note that these phases represent a recursive rather than a linear process, with the researcher moving back and forth between steps in a process that develops and deepens over time:

Step 1: Familiarization with the data. In this step, the researcher became familiar with the data by reading and re-reading interview transcripts and by listening to audio recordings. The researcher noted any initial observations. Immersion in the data required reading in an active manner in order to search for patterns. During this phase the researcher took initial notes and developed tentative ideas that would continue to be developed during the coding process.

Step 2: Coding. The researcher generated labels for salient features of the interviews that were relevant to the research question. The researcher collated these codes. Codes refer to "the most basic segment, or element, of raw data or information that can be assessed in a meaningful way regarding the phenomenon" (Boyatzis, 1998, p. 63). These elements can be semantic or latent in nature—that is, they can be patterns identified in the words themselves, or in underlying meanings (Clarke & Braun, 2006, 2013). Clarke and Braun (2006) note that no set of data is without some contradiction, and that these contradictions should not be ignored or smoothed out by the researcher. They also note that it is important to retain some surrounding content from each excerpt being coded in order to provide context. Coded data—groups of meaningful patterns—differ from themes, which are often broader and involve interpretative analysis by the researcher.

Step 3: Searching for themes. The researcher searched for themes—defined as "coherent and meaningful pattern[s] in the data relevant to the research question" (Clarke & Braun, 2013, p. 121). Clarke and Braun emphasize that this is an active process, and that themes are constructed rather than "discovered" by the researcher. Essentially, this phase involved analyzing codes and the relationship between them in order to see how they may combine into broader themes. The goal was to end up with a collection of themes and sub-themes, though some might later be combined, separated, or discarded altogether in the reviewing process.

Step 4: Reviewing themes. The researcher examined the relationship between themes. It was necessary to collapse some themes together, or split a theme into more than one theme. This phase consisted of two levels of review. First, the researcher reviewed at the level of coded excerpts to assess whether a given theme formed a coherent pattern. If not, the theme had to be refined or reworked. If so, the researcher moved to the second level—reviewing themes in relation to the data as a whole. The purpose of this review was twofold—to assess how the themes worked in relation to the entire data set, and to code additional items the researcher may have missed that pertained to each theme. By the end of the review phase, the researcher had a fairly clear idea of the final themes, and of the story they told.

Step 5: Defining and naming themes. The researcher wrote a detailed analysis of themes and constructed concise names for each. The researcher ensured that there was not significant overlap between themes. In writing the analysis, the researcher considered how the themes fit into the overall context of the proposed research questions. Themes

were named as concisely as possible, so that the reader would immediately have an idea of what they were about.

Step 6: Writing up. The researcher wrote an "analytic narrative," attempting to tell a compelling story about the data and placing it in the context of existing literature. The researcher chose compelling examples or excerpts that captured this story both within and across the themes. Ideally, a write-up should be more than just a description of the data. Rather, it should move data to progressively higher levels of abstraction and meaning that convey an argument that relates to the research questions. For this study, the researcher wrote up an analysis, discussion, and conclusions about the current state and possible future directions for interventions aimed at preventing violent extremism, as well as the role of community psychology in the development and implementation of these interventions. The researcher also offered a framework for how psychologists might increase their involvement in this area of research and practice.

The external audit. In addition to the above six steps, an external audit was performed prior to writing up the final analysis. The external audit is a strategy used by qualitative researchers to ensure rigor, increase validity, and decrease bias (Barusch et al., 2011; Creswell, 2013; Miller, 1997). It assesses both the process and the product of the researcher's analysis (Miller, 1997). The external auditor for this study reviewed transcripts and thematic analysis, and provided feedback on themes and methodology. As previously stated, the auditing process was not unidirectional, but rather a conversation in which both researcher and auditor reflected on their understanding and interpretation of the data, and identified areas of difference. This process helped to generate richer meaning from the interviews and higher levels of abstraction in the thematic analysis.

Chapter IV: Results

Participants

The background and relevant expertise of each research participant is described below. As previously stated, participants are already publicly recognized in their fields of study and practice, and professional background information—including research interests, publications, and employers—are available in the public domain. Additionally, providing professional background information is needed to establish participants' credentials as experts in their given field. As such, identifying information of participants has not been concealed or altered in any way. A written Consent to Participate in Research (see Appendix B) was obtained from each participant to this effect. An overview of the theoretical and applied expertise of participants in each interview domain can be found in Appendix D.

Sara Savage, Ph.D. (Social Psychology). Dr. Sara Savage is a social psychologist based in the Department of Psychology, University of Cambridge and directs the ICthinking research group. For the previous 15 years Sara worked as Senior Research Associate in the Psychology and Religion Research Group at Cambridge, during which she and her colleagues developed unique interventions aimed at preventing violent extremism. Sara continues to develop empirically based interventions to prevent extremism and inter-group violence through programmes that operationalise and measure the construct of (IC) Integrative Complexity (Suedfeld 2010), such as Being Muslim Being British, Being Kenyan Being Muslim, IC in Scotland (I SEE) and Conflict Transformation, published in a number of empirical articles and chapters. The IC model

is now being extended to a range of countries, extremisms and inter-group conflicts, supported by continual empirical assessment and training.

Lucian Gideon Conway III, Ph.D. (Political Psychology). Dr. Lucian Conway is a professor of political and social psychology at the University of Montana, and the director of its Political Cognition Lab. Dr. Conway's research involves the causes and consequences of simple and complex thinking. Using the well-validated construct of Integrative Complexity, Dr. Conway has studied the effects of extremism, of political conservatism/liberalism, and of attitude heritability on complex thinking. He has studied complexity in radical group rhetoric, and its consequences on personal health and attitude formation. These ideas have informed values complexity-based preventative interventions such as Being Muslim, Being British.

Alexander Zuev, Ph.D. (International Security/Peacekeeping). Dr. Alexander Zuev is the United Nations Assistant Secretary-General for Rule of Law and Security Institutions in the Department of Peacekeeping Operations. He was formerly the Special Advisor on Prevention of Violent Extremism with the United Nations Development Programme. In 2011, Dr. Zuev became the UN Resident Coordinator and UNDP Resident Representative for the Republic of Tajikistan. During his tenure as RC/RR in Tajikistan, he was closely involved in discussions on Preventing Violent Extremism (PVE) programming in the country and in the sub-region. He initiated the first regional workshop on PVE in the Europe and Central Asia region which was held in Tajikistan in 2016, and co-led the development of a globally innovative cross-border (Tajik-Kyrgyz) conflict prevention programme.

Kris Christmann (Applied Criminology). Kris Christmann is an applied criminologist and Research Fellow at the Applied Criminology Centre (ACC) at the University of Huddersfield, UK. His main research interests include the study of radicalization; counter-terrorism; and hate crime. Mr. Christmann has over 16 years of research experience, primarily for a range of Central Government clients as well as Local Government and third sector customers. Currently, Mr. Christmann and his colleagues are studying barriers to reporting and sharing information with authorities concerning violent extremist activity and involvement in foreign conflict in the United Kingdom. He also provides consultancy on a Home Office funded project evaluating a number of Prevent community projects.

Antony McAleer (Nonprofit Program Development). Antony McAleer is a co-founder and executive director of Life After Hate, a nonprofit organization that develops and implements programs to prevent and counter recruitment into the American violent far-right extremist movement. A former organizer for the White Aryan Resistance (WAR), Mr. McAleer served as a skinhead recruiter, proprietor of Canadian Liberty Net (a computer operated voice messaging center), and manager of the racist rock band, Odin's Law. Mr. McAleer's love for his children led him on a spiritual journey of personal transformation. Currently, Mr. McAleer helps to develop and oversee programs involving academic research on pathways into and out of extremism, community outreach, education, and consulting.

Sabrina Fiorentino (Education). Sabrina Fiorentino is an educator, community liaison, and founder of Hellen | Herald, a nonprofit organization dedicated to preventing recruitment into violent extremism. Ms. Fiorentino is a former educator for Google's

educational initiative in Dhaka, Bangladesh, where she worked with local agencies to bring Bengali students together through storytelling and digital media. Ms. Fiorentino founded Hellen | Herald in 2016 to prevent violent extremism by providing a more compelling proposition for its future recruits, one that is established and reinforced peer-to-peer, denormalizes radical behavior, and socially inoculates youth. The organization collaborates with local communities to pair creative expertise with at-risk youth leaders in order to co-create locally resonant solutions and launch campaigns that disrupt extremist recruitment.

Naaz Khan (International Development). Naaz Khan has over 10 years of experience in international educational development, including immigrant, refugee, and interfaith education; teaching; curriculum development; research; and training. She has experience with international refugee educational programming as well as domestic refugee resettlement, and has worked with several refugee service providers including the Lutheran Social Services of the National Capital Area and the International Rescue Committee. She is also currently an instructor at the University of Maryland, College Park, and facilitates dialogues on interfaith issues and on immigration. Ms. Khan has a M.A. in International Educational Development from Columbia University, Certification in English Language Teaching to Adults, and a degree in Refugee Studies from the American University in Cairo.

M. Brinton Lykes, Ph.D. (Community Psychology). Dr. Brinton Lykes is a Community Psychologist and Professor of Community-Cultural Psychology at the Lynch School of Education at Boston College. Her research interests include the effects of state-sponsored terror and organized violence; human rights policy and mental health

interventions; participatory action research; gender, culture, and theories of the self; and community-based strategies for change. Her many publications have appeared in the International Journal of Transitional Justice, Social Science & Medicine, American Journal of Community Psychology, American Psychologist, and the Journal of Social Issues, among others. She also serves on the Editorial Boards of Action Research and Peace and Conflict: Journal of Peace Psychology, and as a reviewer for many other journals and has co-edited three books and co-authored two others. In 2012 she received the Ignacio Martín-Baró Lifetime Peace Practitioner Award from the Society for the Study of Peace, Conflict and Violence, of the American Psychological Association and in 2013 she was awarded the American Psychological Association's International Humanitarian Award.

Interview Format

4 interviews were conducted via the Skype online video conferencing service (Dr. Savage, Dr. Conway, Mr. Christmann, Dr. Lykes); 3 interviews were conducted by telephone (Dr. Zuev, Mr. McAleer, Ms. Fiorentino); and 1 interview was conducted in person (Ms. Khan). As previously mentioned, conducting interviews via Skype and telephone presented advantages and disadvantages compared to conducting in-person interviews. Disadvantages included relative difficulty in developing and maintaining rapport due to limited nonverbal interaction and connectivity issues. The primary advantage of using Skype or telephone was ease of scheduling. By and large, participants had busy schedules, and their geographical locations varied widely. Videoconferencing and telephone provided a practical method of securing interviews with busy experts in

disparate locations such as London, Missoula, New York, Huddersfield, Los Angeles, and Boston. Regardless of communication medium, all interviews were digitally recorded and then transcribed using an online transcription service.

Data Analysis

After transcription, the interview data were analyzed using the six-step process outlined in Chapter III. Then, an external auditor reviewed transcripts and analysis in order to generate further meaning and increase the validity of results. Additional themes generated from discussions with the auditor were incorporated into the analysis.

The interview protocol contained five distinct domains aimed at integrating the current knowledge base on preventative interventions and assessing the role of community psychology in their development and implementation. These five domains are Drivers of Violent Extremism, the Role of Primary Prevention, Current Practices and Interventions, the Role of Community Psychology, and Future Directions. During data analysis, numerous themes and subthemes emerged within these five domains. A summary of domains, themes, and subthemes is contained in Table 1.

In the following sections, each domain and identified theme is detailed. Relevant quotes from participants are included to highlight commonalities and differences across the data set, and to ground the analysis in the voices of the experts.

Table 1

Domains, Themes, and Subthemes

Domain	*Theme & Subthemes*	*Participants*
1. Drivers of Violent Extremism	1A. Complexity of drivers	8
	1B. Definitions are problematic	6
2. Role of Primary Prevention	2A. Prevention is essential despite challenges • *Essential to countering violent extremism* • *Challenge: Poor definition of program goals* • *Challenge: Government funding priorities favor short-term and security-based strategies* • *Challenge: Lack of empirical support*	8
3. Current Practices and Interventions	3A. Defining a target population • *Danger of cultural profiling* • *Developmental window* • *Broad vs. Narrow targeting* • *Comprehensive assessment of risk factors*	8
	3B. Defining a mechanism of change • *Group affiliation and identity* • *Reducing cognitive constriction* • *Healing trauma* • *Capacity-building* • *Discussion of values and ideology* • *Addressing social grievances*	7
	3C. Community perceptions and trust	6
	3D. Community engagement	6
	3E. Delivery settings • *Schools* • *Prisons* • *Community settings* • *Online*	6
	3F. Delivery format • *Group format* • *Creativity and open discussion*	8
	3G. Insider Facilitation	6
4. Role of Community Psychology	4A. Psychologists as skilled facilitators	5
	4B. Psychologists as program developers	2
	4C. Psychologists as advocates	1
5. Future Directions	5A. Multidimensional approach	6
	5B. Greater empirical support • *Difficulty obtaining empirical support* • *Follow-up research in addition to pre-/post-test*	6
	5C. Community-specific programs	6

Domain 1: Drivers of violent extremism. All eight participants were asked about their thoughts on the drivers of violent extremism. Participants spoke of the complexity and interaction of factors leading to violent extremism as well as problems in defining and operationalizing extremism in the first place.

Theme 1A: Complexity of drivers. All eight participants spoke about the complexity of the drivers of violent extremism, and of the validity of various causal models. Most agreed that much further research is needed to attain an adequate understanding of these complex causal factors. Mr. Christmann, for example, said, "...we're very much in the infancy, and the scientific understanding of cause and effect is poor in terms of violent extremists and radicalization as a concept."

Other participants also discussed the difficulty in representing the complex causes of extremism in a theoretical model. Dr. Savage used McCauley's Two Pyramids model (McCauley & Moskalenko, 2017) as an example:

> In this model there are over two hundred and fifty potential transition points where a person could possibly move [to the] pyramid of extreme action. But at every possible juncture there are so many possible ways. It is so multifactorial...and that is very hard for governments to grasp.

These views on the complexity of drivers at a theoretical level was consistent with participants' applied experiences. Ms. Fiorentino, for example, spoke of the pressures at multiple levels faced by those at risk for engaging in violent extremism. Reflecting on her experiences working with youth in Bangladesh, Ms. Fiorentino said:

> ...these kids don't have support from the government, they don't have support from their schools, they don't have support from their families. It's one slip, and

> this alternative option [of violent extremism] is there like a ghost. It's everywhere and it's nowhere at the same time. It's your uncle. It's the guy that's selling tea on the corners, your teacher, your cousin. It's really this ever-present thing that, everything is failing for them, they can turn in this other direction and feel camaraderie and purpose, and kind of regain a strength that they've lost.

Similarly, Drs. Lykes and Zuev spoke of the social and structural factors that drive violent extremism. Dr. Zuev stated that, though religious indoctrination plays a role in causing violent extremism, "it is very often social injustice, lack of social and political inclusion, lack of employment and social engagement for young people, and many other factors" that ultimately push an individual down the road to engaging in violent extremism. Dr. Lykes described the "systemic and structural conditions that give rise to groups of primarily young people to take up arms," characterizing these conditions as "fundamentally experiences of having been marginalized, having been excluded."

Mr. McAleer pointed out that, just as the outcome of violent extremism has many causes, each cause can lead to a variety of potential outcomes, not just violent extremism.

> When we look at trauma, as an example, it's actually a lousy predictor despite being a causal factor. We know it's there in someone that goes [into violent extremism], but it's a lousy predictor because there's a whole spectrum of outcomes for a young person that has that in their history. Violent extremism is one of them. Addiction is another. Crime is another.

Overall, participants characterized the causes of violent extremism as complex, multidimensional, and non-predictive in and of themselves.

Theme 1B: Definitions are problematic. Six out of eight participants discussed the problematic nature of defining violent extremism. Dr. Zuev's perspective was representative of the views of several participants, including Dr. Lykes, Ms. Khan, and Ms. Fiorentino:

> ...people are struggling with the definition of what is extremism, and therefore prevention. International community and United Nations, in our meetings we also struggle. Because if you ask Iranian, Chinese, American, and say Palestinian and Israeli, 'Who are [violent extremists]?', you will get completely different answers...because some people will tell you that it's a national liberation movement, not a terrorist movement. And other people will tell you [the same movement] is criminal.

Mr. Christmann agreed that pejorative descriptors like violent extremism could be "thought about in several ways and rearranged quite drastically depending on who you are." However, he stressed the importance of operationalizing definitions despite the difficulty and complexity of the task. For example, Mr. Christmann drew a distinction between the terms "extremism" and "violent extremism," stating, "at least with 'violent extremism' we have some understanding of what we're talking about. It involves, in some sense, physical violence. Whereas 'extremism' is hopelessly vague." Without making the effort to operationalize terms, according to Mr. Christmann, prevention efforts are "pointless."

Domain 2: Role of primary prevention. All participants were asked about their views on the role of primary prevention in efforts to counter violent extremism. Most participants described primary prevention efforts as both essential and difficult.

Participants described various challenges to an increased focus on primary prevention by governments, researchers, and practitioners. These challenges include poorly defined goals, government funding priorities, and a lack of empirical support for primary prevention interventions.

Theme 2A: Prevention is essential despite challenges. All eight participants described primary prevention efforts as an essential component of any strategy aimed at countering violent extremism. Dr. Conway expressed his support for the "'ounce of prevention' mantra," while Dr. Zuev explained that, in a general sense, "the solution is always not in curative medicine, but in preventative medicine." However, all participants agreed that, although prevention is, in the words of Mr. Christmann, "one of those nice sounding words like 'mum' and 'apple pie,'" effective primary prevention of violent extremism is anything but simple. Participants described various challenges to primary prevention efforts.

The first challenge described by participants is that specific goals in primary prevention are hard to define, and that current programs reflect this poor definition of goals. Mr. Christmann recalled that, in his own research,

> broad-based community level programs were very fuzzy and rather ill-conceived. They were the kind of community-based educational programs that try to raise awareness [about the dangers of violent extremism]...without ever saying what that is. Again, this just leads on from the problem of...how you operationalize the object of concern.

Dr. Conway explained that it is more difficult to define and operationalize goals in preventative interventions as compared to security-based initiatives:

> I think the prevention point of view is good. Now, having said that, it's tricky and difficult and there are so many obstacles that exist to prevention that don't exist for defense. Defense is simpler in some ways...You're just trying to stop or often kill the people who are trying to stop and kill you.

A second challenge to primary prevention identified by participants was that current government funding priorities favor short-term and security-based strategies over prevention. Dr. Lykes observed that, in the United States, "we have too much of a short-term outcomes based approach to preventative intervention work and to the funding of it. I mean, this takes money over the long haul and people power over the long haul." She further reflected that "changing funding priorities is all about trying to figure out what a peace economy would look like. What would an economy look like that's built on really supporting the majority of the population's rights to a dignified life, human rights, health care and education?"

Ms. Khan and Dr. Savage also spoke of the short-term strategies favored by governments. Dr. Savage quipped, "Basically, it is like—can you change their brains in three hours? And can you change their brains permanently? This is the ideal from a government point of view." Ms. Khan recalled,

> with a lot of State Department-funded programs there's this deadline and, okay, we want a curriculum in two weeks from now or one week from now. What's the big deal? But most of the people asking for those products have never worked in education. You can't bust out a curriculum in two weeks, at least nothing that is meaningful.

Finally, some participants described the lack of empirical support needed to bolster prevention programs, as well as the difficulty in obtaining this empirical support. For example, Dr. Zuev described needing "more of an empirical base" if preventative interventions are to become a valued part of any strategy to counter violent extremism. Mr. Christmann pointed out that most existing interventions "weren't really evaluated in any robust way." Dr. Conway stressed the importance of longitudinal research to demonstrate the lasting effectiveness of primary prevention interventions. He gave the example of an intervention aimed at decreasing hostility between a group of Israelis and Palestinians:

> They brought the groups together [with an] Integrative Complexity approach. At post-test people reported that they loved the experience. They reported that their attitudes changed. Everybody said they liked it. Then they measured them six months later and found that they had just basically gone back to their exact pre-intervention attitudes. And I think that's what concerns me: Are you making lasting change?

Ms. Fiorentino, Mr. McAleer, and Ms. Khan all pointed out that an obstacle to obtaining empirical support for preventative interventions is the inherent difficulty in measuring prevention. Ms. Khan observed, "How do you prove that someone won't join a terrorist organization?" When asked how one could empirically measure the success of prevention programs, Ms. Fiorentino stated,

> Well, you can't really measure it by less kids blowing themselves up. I think what success looks like is the numbers that want to participate with us. The more kids that we see coming to us, that's success.

Overall, participants were in agreement that primary prevention is a challenging endeavor, but is nonetheless an essential component to any comprehensive strategy aimed at countering violent extremism.

Domain 3: Current practices and interventions. All eight participants were asked to describe their views and experiences related to current preventative interventions. Participants discussed both successful practices and obstacles faced in developing and implementing interventions. These practices and obstacles included defining a target population, defining a mechanism of change, addressing community perceptions, seeking community engagement, identifying the most effective settings and formats in which to deliver interventions, and identifying appropriate facilitators for these interventions.

Theme 3A: Defining a target population. All eight participants spoke of defining a target population as an essential element of current preventative interventions. Specific topics of discussion included the danger of targeting specific cultural groups, the ideal age range for preventative interventions, broad versus narrow targeting of interventions, and using a comprehensive assessment of vulnerability factors in order to define a target population.

Three participants spoke to the danger of unnecessarily targeting certain cultural groups. Specifically, participants stated that the majority of current interventions have targeted Muslim communities despite continuing dangers posed by other types of violent extremism. Mr. Christmann reflected on his experiences with the UK's Prevent program:

> If you look at the first interactions of Prevent, the counties where the programs were first run were those where 5% or more of the population were Muslim. It

> was explicitly targeting Muslim communities. And I sat in meetings with the Home Office and various other meetings with people from the Office of Security and Counter-Terrorism and that's very much their focus. There's an issue in regards to right-wing political extremism in this country as well, but the major area of focus is still Muslim terrorism in the UK.

Dr. Lykes was of the view that "prevention and intervention processes might be most effective when introduced at the level of the community and not necessarily identifying one group of people as terrorists and the other group of people as victim."

Seven participants described an ideal age range or developmental window within which to administer preventative interventions. There was remarkable agreement on this window from those with primarily theoretical as well as primarily applied expertise. Ms. Fiorentino described the ideal age range for intervention as "12 to 20—kids that are in their stage of self-identity and exploration." Ms. Khan's educational interventions were aimed at youth "between the ages of 13 and 23, who are considered at the highest risk." Dr. Lykes noted that "you can do things with 25-year-olds that are secondary and tertiary prevention, but you know primary prevention has to start younger." Dr. Savage asserted that "the lifespan teen years are really important because you have that group thing happening." In her experience implementing preventative interventions in Bosnia, Dr. Savage found the ideal age range to be "between 15 and 22. If it goes up to 25 that's fine." Mr. McAleer succinctly mused, "I think if we can just help young people deal with their shit..." Other participants also agreed that early intervention, especially during the teen years, was ideal for prevention work.

All eight participants discussed the pros and cons of broad versus narrow targeting of interventions. In this area there was some disagreement between participants. For example, Mr. Christmann argued for targeted, rather than overly broad, interventions:

> Now you can argue the merits of [broad versus targeted interventions], but I think if you're going to engage in some kind of intervention...then, in my mind, it's better to have an intervention which is targeted where you think the problem lies rather than some wide kind of inoculation sort of measure.

Conversely, Ms. Fiorentino specifically argued for a "social inoculation type of approach," and described current prevention programs as being

> ...very tight in scope. So, we can talk about Jigsaw [a Google initiative that provides alternative messages to internet queries related to violent extremism]. That's a very particular group of people targeted by this system. They're going to get online, they're going to search, and they're affected by Google. We can't be successful if we expect only those kids to change the whole system.

Dr. Conway reflected on the dilemma of broad versus narrow targeting thusly:

> Groups are often large and diverse, right? So where do you start? Maybe we're going to target the whole population. We're going to make everybody do this [workshop]. You have this sort of almost authoritarian kind of stance—we're not going to tolerate whatever it is, say, violence...I'm totally in favor of that point of view. But the problem is, are you really getting at the group of people you want?

Mr. McAleer spoke in terms of targeting primary prevention interventions specifically toward violent extremism versus a broader range of issues:

> What's important in a general prevention sense, my belief is that the earlier you go in the prevention phase, the less specific to violent extremism it needs to be. And I think if we want to go early, get really early in the prevention around that stuff, I think you have to have a much broader approach...you look at it to prevent the whole spectrum of antisocial stuff, not just violent extremism.

Finally, four participants recommended defining a target population based on a comprehensive assessment of vulnerability factors. Dr. Savage provided an incisive illustration of the need to look at a host of factors other than simply ideology, which has been the sole target of many preventative interventions, particularly with Muslim groups:

> If you can look at the main families of vulnerability factors, and we know what they are. If we do the psychology one it is trauma is in there; do the sociology one there is relative deprivation...With the Taliban youth, the deprivation was so extreme, joining the Taliban was just a way to get a meal. It was the difference between not having a meal and having a meal. It was not ideological at all. There are so many different kinds of extremism, different roots. And if you look at political corruption or vast experiences of injustice or just teenage lack of meaning, needing adventure, needing to feel that you are a hero, that you are doing something important in life. Or you do not get along with your father, you have alienation within the family or you are in that kind of bifurcation of, "We are in a Muslim community and we are living in the West"...Because that is a major cause of radicalization: "My friends drink and I am not allowed to. My friends have sex and I am not allowed to. How do I deal with girlfriends?" It is this inability for the worlds to live together. They look at retaliation to right wing

> extremism, national front or whatever. There are so many known vulnerability factors, and every one of those vulnerability factors when they bite, produce some different pathway, a different trajectory.

Others echoed Dr. Savage's sentiment, expressing that at-risk groups should be defined after consideration of multiple vulnerability factors such as age, economic and cultural marginalization, immigration and acculturation stress, experiences of racism and bullying, social isolation, trauma, mental illness, and previous instances of recruitment to extremist groups within a particular community. Mr. McAleer likened the compounding of these vulnerability factors to increasing hunger, and described how this hunger played into his own past as a white supremacist:

> The analogy I like to use is: Have you ever gone to the grocery store when you're really hungry? You know how your buying patterns change, right? You don't make the healthiest choices. I like to say that I went out into the world as a young man emotionally hungry, and made unhealthy choices.

Theme 3B: Defining a mechanism of change. Seven out of the eight participants spoke about the importance of defining a mechanism of change when developing preventative interventions. This view was emphasized by Mr. Christmann:

> I think you have to think very carefully about what you're trying to achieve...Probably the starting point is thinking about theory of change. In what ways and why is this intervention supposed to work? What is the underlying mechanism you're trying to address?

Notably, participants' ideas of what that mechanism of change should be varied widely. Three participants spoke of addressing group affiliation and identity as a primary

mechanism of preventing violent extremism. Ms. Fiorentino proposed that change is possible when youth can "expand on their personal identity" and "feel camaraderie." Dr. Savage stated,

> we have to [focus on] the socially shared group identity, group polarization, and the deep, deep in-group biases of their backgrounds...There has to be this psychological intervention bringing those into the room in the most playful way so that we can diffuse them. We are all social beings and we want to be part of the group and we will do anything. To stay in that group and to be a member of good standing. We will spout the rubbish because if we do not...we are out.

Two participants believed that reducing cognitive constriction should be the primary mechanism of change. Speaking of her values complexity-based interventions, Dr. Savage said, "Really, the solution when we say we are raising people's 'integrative complexity'—what we are really doing is producing a layer of metacognition from which you can view what is happening to your own thinking."

Two participants stated the importance of healing trauma. Mr. McAleer pointed to National Institute of Justice research "which says the number one correlated factor in the history of somebody joining a violent extremist group is childhood trauma." Ms. Khan reflected that one theory in past curricula she had administered was that children "act out violently because they are reliving their trauma." Both pointed to the importance of focusing on resiliency and strengths to heal trauma and reduce the likelihood of an individual engaging in violent extremism.

Three participants spoke of capacity-building in at-risk youth, including increasing leadership skills, agency, empowerment, compassion, and creativity. Ms. Fiorentino's approach with her organization, Hellen | Herald, is as follows:

> Our viewpoint is, using creativity, how can we help [at-risk youth] carve out their own path? And give them a sense of agency in their own life—give them the tools that they need to make their own choices...it's really creatively driven work-shopping, essentially taking the blueprint of the [Islamic State] marketing system and using it against them. We want to recruit local leaders and make them heroes in their own community...we want to really empower them with as many tools as possible.

Ms. Khan spoke about the importance of addressing "building confidence...and decision-making capacities" through creative activities involving "games, songs, and music." Dr. Lykes reflected on the importance of empowerment to shift power to local communities:

> We need to...foster possibilities of shifting power as much as we can so that the people that are in the context really experience a person who comes in from another context as being there to collaborate or to accompany or to engage with, and is committed to leaving something behind that is creating a set of skills and capacities that can be sustained beyond the psychologist's time with the community.

Three participants emphasized the value of providing a safe space to discuss values and ideology. Mr. McAleer reflected on his own experience running prevention workshops, stating, "We provide a safe place. Our thing is no judgment, just help. And

we abhor the ideology...But we don't abhor the human being." Ms. Khan recalled the power of organizing interfaith meetings where

> everyone had an opportunity to [express their values] and be seen in a safe space...And just to establish that relationship of trust because also, if you're Baha'i and you were persecuted by Muslims, it will take some time to trust a Muslim. If you were a Muslim persecuted by a Buddhist, that's also a relationship that's going to need some mending.

Dr. Savage described an intervention she implemented in Bosnia that provided a "safe, nonjudgmental space" where youth could "create [metaphorical] conflict, war, polarization, inter-group stuff, ideology, hate speech. We can actually create it in the room. Then we do the peace building afterwards."

Finally, two participants expressed that interventions at the level of the individual are meaningless without addressing social grievances and structural conditions such as unemployment and cultural marginalization. Dr. Zuev emphasized the importance of addressing "social injustice, lack of social and political inclusion, lack of employment and social engagement for young people," and further noted:

> ...there are social and there are individual psychological factors...Sometimes it has to do not with religion. It has to do with lack of employment. It has to do with social injustice or kind of corruption or violation of human rights or discrimination of minorities. We must look at those factors first.

Dr. Lykes pointed out the futility of "trying to make ideological changes in conditions where the odds of changing the material conditions of people's everyday lives are even more intractable than their ideological."

Theme 3C: Community perceptions. Six participants identified community perceptions as an important factor in being able to effectively implement preventative interventions. Ms. Fiorentino and Ms. Khan spoke about how interventions are presented to the communities in question. Ms. Khan noted, "we can't call this anti-terrorism, you know, and tell the kids that they are coming to some anti-terrorism program." And yet, she recognized that programs required an adequate explanation. Referring to a prevention program for Somali youth, Ms. Khan recalled, "The kids would ask, why the Somalis and not the other kids? And then we would say, well, we think that youth should have their own programs since they are dealing with different things than their parents." Ms. Fiorentino discussed a similar dilemma:

> There's a little bit of a distaste to say exactly what we're doing. We have to kind of make it abstract—"We want to hear your story, help you tell your story, help you learn how to share and grow." Really getting across that we're coming in from a creative agency, a cool youth agency [that is] for youth, by the youth. That's how we're representing ourselves. Something that's kind of like the secret club.

Others, including Dr. Lykes and Dr. Conway pointed out that interventions cannot be effective without addressing community perceptions of researchers as an "imposing presence."

Theme 3D: Community engagement. Six participants discussed the importance of engaging communities when developing and implementing preventative interventions.

Dr. Lykes gave an example from the perspective of community psychology:

> You can't work with locals when you are dropped into a community and you are there for a week. You know, they don't know you and you don't know them. So, I think there is a lot of homework that needs to be done before one collaborates in such a project. I also think that there's a lot of wisdom to be gained...from Native American groups who have developed for example their own guidelines for research ethic. Communities who have invited in researchers as opposed to researchers going to find a community that they can work with to engage in an intervention that they think should be done.

Dr. Conway also spoke about the approach of community psychology interventions, underscoring the effectiveness of "participatory research programs [that] work within communities to have feedback loops within communities." As an example of this, he referred to the *Being Muslim, Being British* intervention that was developed by Dr. Savage and her colleagues. Dr. Conway stated that this intervention was developed "in a community-based way, in consultation with the Muslim community."

Dr. Zuev expressed a similar view to those of Drs. Lykes and Conway:

> The most important is that it's not [solely] you or UN or any donor [that] designs a project for local population. You must engage—participate in an engagement of beneficiaries. This is the most important rule. If you don't consult with elderly, with religious leaders, with women who are community leaders, and with young people themselves, you will never succeed because it will be counterproductive.

Ms. Khan reflected on how western values can present an impediment to engaging effectively with communities. She said, "in a certain western structure humility

doesn't get you very far. But, ironically, or paradoxically, it's exactly what you need to make connections and to be able to work within other communities."

Theme 3E: Delivery settings. Six participants discussed the most effective settings in which to deliver interventions aimed at preventing violent extremism. Effective settings based on participants' past experiences and research included schools, prisons, community settings, and online.

Ms. Khan, Dr. Conway, and Dr. Savage discussed the effectiveness of interventions in School settings. Dr. Savage spoke of the "amazing change" she saw when implementing programs in Bosnian schools due to the "contextual support for the metacognition they developed [in the program]." She continued, "When you are working in schools you have the captive audience of students...[In other settings] you are only preaching to the converted. You are only getting the people into the room who want to come into the room. In a school, you are getting everybody."

Dr. Savage, Ms. Fiorentino, and Mr. Christmann all commented on programs implemented in prison settings. Mr. Christmann referred to one such program as "one of the most impressive [he had] seen at reaching hostile, disaffected young men."

Participants also discussed delivering programs in community settings, including religious institutions, youth centers, and creative spaces. Ms. Fiorentino's Hellen | Herald program engages youth in creative spaces to "empower kids...to tell their own stories" using such tools as YouTube and video editing. Ms. Khan related that, in less predictable settings such as a refugee camp, it is often necessary to improvise: "Sometimes they would bring [youth] into the transit center which is more like a building with

classrooms...Then other times, maybe, depending on the teacher, they would go outside, there was a yard."

Finally, participants discussed online prevention programs. Dr. Savage noted that an online setting is useful to supplement and increase the longevity of in-person programs. She observed that, in her experience, workshop participants "want to stay together as a group" and often "form their own Facebook community." Ms. Fiorentino noted that, though online programs can be effective, they "don't create a conversation." She described programs like Google's Jigsaw initiative as a "narrow lens for the solution." Overall, the sentiment described by Dr. Savage and Ms. Fiorentino is that online prevention programs are not an effective solution on their own and in the absence of in-person, community- or school-based initiatives.

Theme 3F: Delivery format. As far as delivery format for preventative interventions, the most common view among participants was that programs should take place in a group format. Additionally, participants advocated for program formats that involved creativity and open discussion as opposed to didactic methods. Mr. Christmann described a UK-based prevention program called Rise which employed a small group workshop format lasting between four and 12 weeks. This program began with group discussions on violent extremism, risk factors, and resiliency factors. Workshop participants' answers to these questions would be used to formulate the subsequent sessions. According to Mr. Christmann, "People weren't just simply spoken to like in terms of presented with some information. They were partaking very much in sessions." Within the Rise program, there were also:

> ...creative arts activities that involved music, art, [and] filmmaking as a way of directing young people. They may well be angry; they may well be politicized...so it was sort of a diversion into constructive activities if you like. So making a song, hip-hop or something, to articulate grievances in a constructive way. It can take different forms but it's all about building civic engagement.

Ms. Fiorentino's program also employs "creatively driven workshopping—essentially taking the blueprint of the [Islamic State] marketing program and using it against them." Creative workshop activities have included YouTube video editing and visual art. Similarly, Ms. Khan spoke to her experience developing curricula that involved "games, songs, music, and music videos" to build self-confidence and leadership skills in groups of Somali youth.

Mr. McAleer reflected on the effectiveness of group workshops with former white supremacists in which nonjudgmental discussion, emotion, and compassion were prioritized above facts. Mr. McAleer expressed his view thus:

> Don't get me wrong, there's a place for logic, facts, and information. But the problem isn't about logic, facts, and information. It's about...you're trying to fight an emotional problem with logic. You've got to fight it with an emotional solution.

Theme 3G: Facilitation. Six out of eight participants discussed the importance of utilizing program facilitators who are community insiders as opposed to solely outside researchers. Mr. McAleer pointed out that at-risk individuals often have difficulty trusting outsiders with difficult thoughts and feelings. He observed:

> At the front line, you're getting people at their rawest. And being able, the first time, to puke it out to someone who is going to understand what you're saying and not judge you for it—with [an insider] that's a guarantee. It's not a guarantee with a stranger.

Ms. Khan underscored the importance of this kind of trust in her work implementing a US State Department curriculum with Somali and Kenyan staff. She described local staff as a "crucial part" of the effectiveness of the program due to the "level of trust." She also spoke of shifting power to program participants by encouraging participants themselves to facilitate sessions. Ms. Khan illustrated this with a striking example from her work facilitating inter-faith dialogue with refugees. The story was of a Bhutanese refugee who attended a celebration of the Hindu religious holiday Diwali:

> She was an older woman who had never been asked a thing since she had gotten here, and felt like she had nothing to offer. She was too old to be employed. She didn't speak the language, any of that stuff. And she was like, I know the story [of Diwali]. We were like, well, bring it on. There was just this sense of pride and joy and ownership that she expressed. And this respect that she earned just by like, yes, I remember when we celebrated Diwali when I was a young girl and this is how we did it. Because the younger generation didn't have those memories, the younger generations grew up in the camps and didn't have those same, didn't have that same time and nurturing of those stories and that history...It flipped the power dynamics, right? Because all of a sudden, this refugee didn't become this charity case, she was a source of knowledge and wisdom and joy and celebration and all of these things.

When asked who should facilitate preventative workshops, Ms. Fiorentino was emphatic in her response. "Not us," she stated. "It can't be us. That's a very top-down approach and it never works that way. We do need to scrape for these kids, local stars, or potential local heroes...That's how we're going to be successful." Dr. Conway concurred with this sentiment, stating, "If you want to change Christian fundamentalist attitudes, I don't think that I'm going to be the right person as a psychologist at a secular institution to do that."

In his work evaluating prevention programs within prisons, Mr. Christmann reached a similar conclusion. While acknowledging the importance of skilled outside facilitators, he cautioned that, in his experience, many such program facilitators are "white, middle class young women. They have the theoretical knowledge, but I think there is always an issue about how they relate [to prison inmates]." Mr. Christmann elaborated:

> [Insider facilitation] very much helps because there is some immediate respect. The guys that came in [to the prisons] started off by explaining their background. They had done long stints inside, some pretty serious offenses, and immediately, that's a good way of building rapport. There is that mutual respect and from that starting point...With regards to the Manchester project I was just talking about, the Safer Spaces tool and the Rise program—those facilitators were very skilled, and they were from the same community as well.

Domain 4: Role of community psychology. All eight participants were asked for their views on the role of applied and community psychologists in the area of primary prevention of violent extremism. As previously mentioned some participants were not

familiar with the field of community psychology. However, all were familiar with fields of applied psychology such as clinical psychology and psychological assessment. Those who were not familiar with community psychology responded with their views on the role of applied psychologists in prevention. Participants spoke of potential roles for psychologists as skilled facilitators and developers of preventative programs. Additionally, one participant emphasized a role for community psychologists as advocates and activists, providing ethical oversight of prevention programs. Although this view was held by only one participant—community psychologist Dr. Brinton Lykes—the researcher determined it to be of significance considering the general lack of familiarity about community psychology among participants.

Theme 4A: Psychologists as skilled facilitators. Despite advocating for facilitation of programs by community insiders, five participants noted that psychologists could play an important role in skilled facilitation of preventative programs. Mr. Christmann acknowledged that applied psychologists have "a very particular skillset that is essential" to running group workshops. Mr. McAleer agreed that psychologists can play a "huge role" as facilitators, particularly by using "cognitive therapy skills" to reach participants. Dr. Savage admitted that, when first implementing preventative programs, she "didn't realize how much skill it would take to carry the program through the long term. And I think community psychologists are excellent, for instance, in Bosnia and Finland. The people we work most directly with there, you can say, are psychologists." Further, Dr. Savage said of her prevention workshops, "The best people to work for us are psychologists and community psychologists. They have that level of skill and they are used to working with groups."

Ms. Khan noted the lack of applied psychologists involved as facilitators in her international work for the US State Department:

> The organization had over 500 plus staff and not a single psychologist there. We're working with highly traumatized populations and there wasn't a single person with a psychology background in the entire organization despite every single staff member requesting that, just because that wasn't part of State Department funding.

Theme 4B: Psychologists as program developers. Two participants proposed a role for applied psychologists as developers of prevention programs. In Ms. Fiorentino's view, "The behavioral psychology aspect is extremely important [to program development]. We call it design research—going in and getting this psychographic information. What drives you? What are you afraid of? It's necessary to better understand the individuals we're talking to."

Dr. Savage spoke of her experience with having a psychologist with local knowledge as part of a large and varied team that consulted in the development of her Bosnian intervention. She underscored the value of having "many, many eyes" on a program as it is developed, and observed that psychologists can play an important role in "providing new and creative ideas for program sessions" and "training facilitators."

Theme 4C: Psychologists as advocates. Community psychologist Dr. Brinton Lykes outlined a role for community psychologists in prevention work that was different from other participants, but significant considering her field-specific knowledge and expertise. She proposed that community psychologists be advocates and activists for

human rights, and provide ethical oversight for prevention and counterterrorism efforts. Dr. Lykes began by reflecting on the historical role of community psychologists:

> I think that there was a moment in the history of community psychology when it was more activist in the orientation than it is now...I mean you look at what we did as psychologists in Guantanamo and how hard it was to put a brake on the American Psychological Association, how much incredible effort it took with an incredibly tiny group of extraordinary human beings who kept fighting it, fighting it, and fighting it until finally the association did something about it. I mean it is a humiliation and an embarrassment professionally. So, how we as psychologists can talk about terrorism in terms of Islamic youth, for example...I think we have to be much more clear about how we are contributing to these acts of violence, ways we have structured our own commitments and our priorities as a country.

Dr. Lykes went on to state that "the best way [for community psychologists] to be involved in prevention is to infuse it with a critical psychology point of view." She further expressed her hope for "community psychology to stand up and engage itself as a sub-discipline of psychology" instead of being "missing in action."

Domain 5: Future directions. All participants were asked for their thoughts on the future directions of programs aimed at prevention of violent extremism. Themes in this domain included the importance of a multidimensional approach in future prevention programs, the need for greater empirical support of primary prevention efforts, and the need for future programs to take a community-specific approach.

Theme 5A: Multidimensional approach. Five participants stressed that future programs should take a multidimensional approach to prevention instead of focusing solely on individual factors. According to Dr. Zuev:

> What is very important to be effective in your strategy is to put it into the national and local context instead of only the individual. It should be comprehensive...And it's not only local authorities but it is civil societies, families, municipalities. Peer networks, for example, can and should be used to prevent engagement of people, especially young people, into any kind of violent extremism.

Ms. Fiorentino similiarly expressed the "need for a multi-channel solution" to prevention. That is "present in as many places as possible, [including] community workshops and schools." Dr. Savage expressed that the "complex, multifactorial" drivers of extremism require a "multi-agency approach" to prevention.

Theme 5B: Greater empirical support. Six participants stressed the need for greater empirical support for prevention programs. Mr. Christmann reflected that, in his thorough review of prevention programs, he found that "most of them weren't really evaluated in any robust way." Similarly, Dr. Zuev stated, "we still need more of an empirical base [and] to make solid evaluations...about what works and doesn't work in a specific [preventing violent extremism] project."

Ms. Khan expressed her concern about the difficulty of obtaining greater empirical support for programs: "The State Department really likes pre-/post-test...But how do you actually prove that someone won't join a terrorist organization?"

Mr. McAleer understood the view that "genuine research" on prevention programs is difficult to obtain, but countered that "it's a lot less hard than trying to stamp

out ISIS." He went on to express optimism about the state of prevention research, stating, "Five, six years ago it's like oh, that's just woo-woo stuff. But there's more and more research now."

Dr. Conway noted that, while some programs have used simple pre- and post-test data to evaluate outcomes, few have measured participants' attitudes longitudinally, beyond the end of the program. He gave the example of a study that brought together Israelis and Palestinians. Post-tests at the end of the intervention showed that participants' attitudes had changed significantly. However, "they measured them six months later and found that they have just basically gone back to their exact pre-intervention attitudes...That's part of what concerns me: What's happening a year later? Are you making lasting change?"

Theme 5C: Community-specific programs. Participants also spoke to the dangers of attempting to develop standardized programs to be applied across communities, and emphasized that any prevention program needs to be driven by community-specific considerations. Ms. Fiorentino noted, "To really understand the local community, the culture in each geography, is extremely important." Dr. Zuev similarly stated, "We need certain consolidation and aggregation of data to understand what are the country specifics, what are the region specifics." Dr. Lykes also recognized that "there is a lot of homework that needs to be done before one collaborates in such a project."

Dr. Savage gave a specific example of how a program developed for one context might not be appropriate for another:

> The first thing I realized is all of the assumptions of [UK-based program] *Being Muslim, Being British*, which were appropriate for its context, will be a land mine

for Bosnia. Things like, you cannot use any music from Bosnia, any literature [due to censorship]. So how do you implement? You could not bring any Bosnian movies; you could not bring anything from Bosnia into the room...So it is a really different program. I went to the trauma recovery literature and the post-traumatic recovery literature to create something different.

Summary of Results

This chapter described the eight study participants, the format used for each interview, and general data analysis procedures. It then proceeded to describe the 16 themes and various subthemes that emerged from analysis of responses within the five domains of the interview protocol. Salient themes included a multidimensional approach to prevention, defining a mechanism of change, comprehensive assessment of vulnerability factors, a focus on youth, community-specific interventions, community engagement, and utilizing follow-up research. A complete list of themes and subthemes can be found in Table 1. An exploration of these themes in the context of the existing literature, and a presentation of these themes within a community psychology framework, follows in the Discussion chapter.

Chapter V: Discussion

Overview

The primary goals of this study were to integrate the current knowledge base on interventions aimed at primary prevention of violent extremism, explore the role of community psychology in the development and implementation of such interventions, and to provide a framework to guide future research and practice in this area. To these ends, eight experts from various fields related to the prevention of violent extremism were interviewed along five domains: drivers of violent extremism, the role of primary prevention, current practices and interventions, the role of community psychology, and possible future directions for research and practice. Analysis of interviews yielded 16 themes and 22 subthemes. A full outline of domains, themes, and subthemes can be found in Chapter IV, Table 1.

The current chapter will begin by discussing themes and subthemes from each interview domain in the context of the current literature on preventing violent extremism. Following this discussion, themes that emerged in this study will be presented in terms of current challenges to developing and implementing effective primary prevention programs, and corresponding best practices that can help address these obstacles. Finally, the discussion will move to a presentation of these best practices within a community psychology framework. This proposed framework—grounded in study results and informed by the central tenets of community psychology—can help guide future research and practice. Finally, strengths and limitations of the present study as well as suggestions for future research are discussed.

Discussion of Results

Domain 1: Drivers of violent extremism. Views voiced by study participants regarding the complexity of drivers of violent extremism and problems with definitions of extremism were very much in line with the current literature. Dr. Sara Savage, a participant in this study, articulated similar sentiments in a 2011 article, comparing violent extremism to "flames arising from more complex, shape-shifting wholes, rather than properties of deviant individuals" (p. 135). Indeed, a review of the literature identified several proposed causal factors including neurobiology, psychopathology, social identity, the search for significance, threat and dehumanization, cognitive constriction, economic marginalization, and large-scale structural and sociohistorical factors (see Chapter II for a full description of these factors). This diversity of views was reflected in the responses of study participants.

Echoing the views of several study participants including Dr. Lykes and Dr. Zuev, Ginges, et al. (2011) warn that the words and definitions surrounding violent extremism are inextricable from the perspective and judgment they carry. A fundamentalist to one person can be a freedom fighter to another. As such, words like *extremism*, *fundamentalism*, and *radicalization* often do more to cloud discussion than they do to engender solutions. For example, holding radical views is not in and of itself criminal, and a large portion of "radicals" and "fundamentalists" never commit violence in service of those radical beliefs (OSCE, 2014). Violence, however, is less subjective, and it therefore follows that so is the term *violent extremism*.

Overall, views of participants in the context of the current literature lend credence to the idea of taking a bioecological approach—one that accounts for individual and

multi-systemic factors—to understanding the complex drivers of violent extremism. However, it also seems clear that such an analysis can only be fruitful when terms related to violent extremism are clearly and contextually defined and operationalized.

Domain 2: Role of primary prevention. Study participants were largely in agreement that, despite challenges to developing and implementing programs, primary prevention should form an essential component of any larger strategy to counter violent extremism.

The need for primary prevention voiced by participants aligns with increasing consensus in the international community that purely security-focused strategies, such as those that were at the core of post-9/11 counterterrorism efforts, have been insufficient to contain the threat of violent extremism (The United Nations, 2015). This view led the United Nations to call for an increased focus on preventative measures. Affirming a unique place for primary prevention within the scope of larger efforts to counter violent extremism, Liht and Savage (2013) noted distinct advantages of primary prevention strategies over secondary and tertiary prevention. Namely, primary prevention can function in the absence of a definitive understanding of the causes of a problem. Due to the complex drivers of extremism, a definitive understanding seems unlikely. Rather, primary prevention must be enacted along with secondary prevention strategies such as deradicalization, and security-based tertiary prevention strategies, in order to effectively and comprehensively counter this shape-shifting threat.

That said, study participants noted that primary prevention is anything but simple. Challenges identified by participants included poor definition of program goals, government funding priorities that favor short-term and security-based strategies, and a

lack of empirical support to bolster prevention programs. While the first two challenges were not explicitly addressed in the literature on preventative interventions, the lack of empirical support was referred to in comprehensive reviews by Pratchett et al. (2010) and Christmann (2012).

Domain 3: Current practices and interventions. Systematic reviews of government-implemented preventative interventions by Pratchett et al. (2010), Christmann (2012), and the Center for Human Rights and Global Justice (2012) identified several factors and practices characteristic of successful preventative interventions. These reviews found that effective interventions were community-oriented and geared toward youth and women; that they were developed in consultation with communities and delivered in community settings; and that they focused on capacity-building, empowerment, and discussion of ideology. Clinch (2011) and the Federal Bureau of Investigation (2016) identified schools as an important delivery setting. Liht and Savage (2013) identified cognitive constriction as a primary mechanism of change and used group workshops to increase cognitive complexity, thereby reducing vulnerability to extremist rhetoric.

There was much overlap between the literature on current interventions and the responses of study participants. Overlap included areas such as delivery formats (group workshops, use of creativity and open discussion), delivery setting (schools, prisons, and community settings), defining a mechanism of change, engaging with communities to increase trust, and avoiding cultural profiling (Bjørgo, 2013; Clinch, 2011; Pratchett et al., 2010; Savage et al., 2014; Tiflati, 2016; UNDP, 2016). However, some of the themes expressed by participants went beyond what was expressed in the literature. These

themes are of particular value as they are drawn directly from participants' applied experience implementing current interventions.

First, participants' description of the tension between broadly and narrowly targeted interventions was compelling. Participants expressed that, on the one hand, narrow targeting can lead to cultural profiling and violation of civil rights, and on the other, overly broad interventions are ineffective. Views on either side of this dialectic can be found in the literature. Sarma (2017) describes the "low base-rate problem" associated with violent extremism. He asserts that, given that only a negligible percentage of a given population will engage in violent extremism, it is very difficult to reach "at-risk" individuals using broad measures. On the other hand, the UK House of Commons (2010) concluded that "any programme which focuses solely on one section of a community is stigmatizing, potentially alienating, and fails to address the fact that no section of a population exists in isolation from others" (p. 5). How can this tension be resolved in the service of developing an effective prevention strategy? A clue can be found in Clinch's (2011) study on the application of community psychology principles to the study of violent extremism. In this study, she proposes that a comprehensive assessment of risk and resilience factors at the biological, psychological, developmental, social, and structural levels can lead to better prevention outcomes. This ecological view was echoed by study participants who stated that a comprehensive assessment of vulnerability factors can lead to a sensible targeting of interventions, without the need for either narrow stereotyping or overly broad attempts at "social inoculation."

A second area in which participants' responses enriched ideas found in the current literature pertained to the ideal age for the target population of preventative interventions.

There is some discrepancy in the current literature regarding the vulnerability of youth to recruitment into violent extremism. Some authors argue that youth—and adolescents in particular—face a number of unique vulnerability factors including identity confusion, exposure to online extremist rhetoric, and the need for group affiliation (Maalouf, 2012; Spitaletta, 2014). Others counter this idea by pointing to the heterogeneity of those who join modern extremist groups, including adults, women, and individuals of varying socioeconomic status (Huckerby, 2015a, 2015b). By and large, study participants supported the former idea, and gave a very specific developmental window—between the ages of 12-25—within which to effectively implement preventative interventions. This age range was based on a range of vulnerability factors faced by youth, but also on the ideal settings and formats in which to deliver interventions. For example, Dr. Savage pointed to the advantages of delivering interventions in schools, where researchers are not solely "getting the people into the room who would come into the room," but rather a captive audience of students.

Another interesting view expressed by study participants that was not explicitly stated in the literature was that, though the internet is a significant platform for recruitment into extremist groups, it cannot be an effective prevention platform on its own. Participants alluded to the narrow scope of programs that have attempted to provide alternate messaging for search engine queries on topics related to violent extremism. Such programs, according to participants, do not spark the conversation or the interpersonal experience required to make lasting attitudinal change. Rather, participants expressed that the internet provides an effective adjunct to in-person interventions, and

provide a way for intervention participants to stay in contact and conversation long after the intervention is completed.

Finally, there was emphatic agreement among study participants that facilitators of preventative interventions should, at least in part, be community insiders as opposed to outside researchers. Interestingly, this view was nowhere to be found in the current literature on preventative interventions, which is perhaps a reflection of how nascent this area of research and practice is. Whereas, only a few years ago, those who developed preventative interventions were also the facilitators, current thinking has placed more emphasis on gaining trust and credibility by shifting power to in-group members.

Domain 4: Role of community psychology. Perhaps the most striking thing about participants' views on the potential role of community psychology in prevention efforts was how unfamiliar most participants were with community psychology. While some familiarity with fields of applied psychology was an inclusion criterion, only three participants were specifically acquainted with community psychology and how its principles and practitioners might inform prevention efforts. This speaks to both the general unawareness of community psychology in the current day, even among psychologists, and to the absence of involvement by applied psychologists in primary prevention of violent extremism. The researcher encountered this absence in the current literature as well as in interviews for this study.

Nevertheless, some participants delineated potential roles for applied and community psychologists in primary prevention efforts. Participants suggested that psychologists be involved as skilled facilitators of interventions, as developers of prevention programs, and in the role of ethical oversight.

Domain 5: Future directions. Participants' reflections and suggestions for future research in the area of primary prevention of violent extremism both aligned with and deepened views expressed in the current scholarly literature. Three themes that emerged from participant responses in this area were a multidimensional approach to prevention, the need for greater empirical support, and the need for community-specific programs.

Although the current literature abounds with descriptions of the complex causes of violent extremism (Borum, 1980; Mcgilloway, Ghosh, & Bhui, 2015; Savage, 2011; Weine et al., 2013), fewer authors argue for a multidimensional approach to prevention (G. Davies et al., 2016; OSCE, 2014). Study participants pointed out that a multidimensional approach to prevention—one that focuses on individual, peer group, community, and social grievances—is a logical response to extremism's multifactorial drivers.

There was agreement in both the current literature and between study participants that there is a need for greater empirical support to bolster future prevention programs and secure a greater level of government funding (Christmann, 2012; Pratchett et al., 2010; Savage et al., 2014). Study participants were more specific in their assessment of how to achieve empirical support than was the scholarly literature. Participants specified that solid empirical support for interventions would include well validated pre- and post-test measures that corresponded to the intervention's identified mechanism of change, and that efforts be made to implement follow-up and longitudinal measures to ensure that interventions have lasting change.

Many authors referenced the need to develop interventions specific to the identified community (Ellis & Ellis, 2017; OSCE, 2014; Poole, 2013), and study

participants, for the most part, agreed with this view. Some participants reflected that, in the future, interventions might be developed that are scalable and can be applied to other communities, geographies, and extremisms. However, the majority of participants cautioned against a "one-size-fits-all" approach, and stressed that each community will possess unique vulnerability factors, cultural considerations, and programmatic demands. It is important to note that, though the *structure* and *content* of each program can and should be tailored to the unique needs of each community, analysis of participant interviews did reveal a universal set of challenges and best practices that may inform an evidence-based, culturally responsive *approach* to devising such interventions. These challenges and best practices are discussed in the next section.

Challenges and Best Practices

When put into the context of the current literature, themes and subthemes that emerged from analysis of expert interviews may be viewed in terms of challenges to effective primary prevention of violent extremism, and corresponding best practices that may help guide future research and practice in this area. Best practices are not only based on the participants' own experiences researching and implementing preventative interventions, but are in many cases corroborated by the current theoretical literature and empirical evidence base—limited though it may be—on specific interventions. As noted above, challenges and suggested best practices do not represent a "one-size-fits-all" method of structuring interventions, but rather a universal set of considerations that participants found to be important irrespective of their fields of expertise and applied experience.

A series of challenges to implementing effective primary prevention strategies emerged from participant interviews. These challenges range from theoretical to political to ethical concerns, and can be summarized as follows:

1) Drivers of violent extremism are complex
2) Definitions of extremism are problematic
3) Goals of prevention programs are poorly defined
4) Government funding priorities favor short-term and security-based strategies
5) Lack of empirical support and difficulty obtaining empirical support to bolster preventative programs
6) Danger of cultural and religious profiling when targeting interventions too narrowly
7) Danger of ineffectiveness if interventions are overly broad (low base-rate problem)
8) Community perceptions of interventions and lack of trust

Similarly, several interview themes may be grouped into a set of best practices that are grounded in participants' prior experiences developing and implementing interventions, and reflect their suggestions for future research and practice. The 14 suggested best practices that emerged in this study are as follows:

1) Primary prevention should form an essential part of any larger strategy for countering violent extremism. A comprehensive strategy will include primary prevention (community-oriented), secondary prevention (deradicalization and disengagement), and tertiary prevention (security and counterterrorism) measures.

2) Terms such as "extremism," "radicalization," and "violent extremism" should be clearly and contextually operationalized in the development of prevention programs.
3) Programs should be informed by community- and context-specific research instead of a "one-size-fits-all" approach.
4) Programs should take a multidimensional approach to prevention, addressing peer groups, family systems, civic engagement, and social grievances instead of solely focusing on individuals.
5) Interventions should be targeted based on a comprehensive assessment of vulnerability and resilience factors. This avoids narrow profiling based on a single factor such as religion, as well as overly broad and ineffective measures.
6) Researchers should engage key community members—including youth, women, and religious and civic leaders—in developing and implementing interventions. Specific areas of community involvement include defining research questions, defining a mechanism of change, deciding on appropriate program formats and delivery settings, and facilitating interventions.
7) Programs should define a clear mechanism of change. Effective examples include addressing group affiliation and identity; reducing cognitive constriction; healing trauma; building capacities such as leadership, agency, compassion, and creativity; discussing values and ideology; and addressing social grievances.
8) The ideal age range for interventions is between 12-25.

9) Ideal delivery settings include schools, prisons, community settings, and online.

10) Ideal delivery format consists of group workshops that prioritize creativity and open discussion in a nonjudgmental space over didactic methods.

11) Program facilitators should be a combination of community insiders and outsiders with a defined skill set (psychologists, trauma specialists, creative talent, etc.).

12) Community psychologists and other applied psychologists should be involved as facilitators of interventions, program developers, and in the role of ethical oversight. This will ensure that programs are delivered skillfully, ethically, and in a culturally responsive manner.

13) Programs should implement well validated pre- and post-test measures that correspond with the identified mechanism of change

14) Programs should include follow-up and longitudinal research to ensure that interventions have lasting effects.

Interestingly, many best practices suggested by study participants map logically onto corresponding challenges. Said another way, participants themselves provided possible solutions to the very challenges they identified (see Table 2). As such, themes that emerged from this study may provide a useful tool for approaching future research.

Table 2

Challenges and Corresponding Best Practices

Challenge	*Best Practice*
Drivers of violent extremism are complex	Programs should take a multidimensional approach to prevention, addressing peer groups, family systems, civic engagement, and social grievances instead of solely focusing on individuals.
Definitions of extremism are problematic	Terms such as "extremism," "radicalization," and "violent extremism" should be clearly and contextually operationalized in the development of prevention programs.
Goals of prevention programs are poorly defined	Programs should define a clear mechanism of change. Effective examples include addressing group affiliation and identity; reducing cognitive constriction; healing trauma; building capacities such as leadership, agency, compassion, and creativity; discussing values and ideology; and addressing social grievances.
Government funding priorities favor short-term and security-based strategies	Primary prevention should form an essential part of any larger strategy for countering violent extremism. A comprehensive strategy will include primary prevention (community-oriented), secondary prevention (deradicalization and disengagement), and tertiary prevention (security and counterterrorism) measures.
Lack of empirical support and difficulty obtaining empirical support to bolster preventative programs	Programs should include follow-up and longitudinal research to ensure that interventions have lasting effects. Programs should implement well validated pre- and post-test measures that correspond with the identified mechanism of change (e.g. Integrative Complexity)
Danger of unnecessary and unethical cultural and religious profiling when targeting interventions too narrowly Danger of ineffectiveness if interventions are overly broad (low base-rate problem)	Programs should be informed by community- and context-specific research instead of a "one-size-fits-all" approach. Interventions should be targeted based on a comprehensive assessment of vulnerability and resilience factors. This avoids narrow profiling based on a single factor such as religion, as well as overly broad and ineffective interventions. Ideal age range for interventions is between 12-25.

	Ideal delivery settings include schools, prisons, community settings, and online. Ideal delivery format consists of group workshops that prioritize creativity and open discussion in a nonjudgmental space over didactic methods. Community psychologists and other applied psychologists should be involved as facilitators of interventions, program developers, and in the role of ethical oversight. This will ensure that programs are delivered skillfully, ethically, and in a culturally responsive manner.
Community perceptions of interventions and lack of trust	Researchers should engage key community members—including youth, women, and religious and civic leaders—in developing and implementing interventions. Specific areas of community involvement include defining research questions, defining a mechanism of change, deciding on appropriate program formats and delivery settings, and facilitating interventions. Facilitators should be a combination of community insiders and outsiders with a defined skill set (psychologists, trauma specialists, creative talent, etc.).

A Community Psychology Framework for Preventing Violent Extremism

Central principles of community psychology. It has been previously mentioned in this study that there appears to be a high degree of compatibility between the principles of community psychology and best practices with regard to primary prevention of violent extremism. This proposition emerged from a review of the current literature. Nelson and Prilleltensky (2010), for example, identified a number of principles central to community psychology, including a focus on primary prevention, an ecological approach, identifying vulnerability and resilience factors, implementing social and community-oriented interventions, participatory research, and an emphasis on empirical grounding. Clinch (2011) identified a number of areas in which these central principles are directly

applicable to the prevention of violent extremism. The following discussion will examine how the principles identified in the literature may be applied to themes that arose from expert interviews. More specifically, study themes will be viewed through the lens of community psychology principles with the hope of presenting a cohesive framework from which to approach prevention work.

Applied psychology versus community psychology. One potential obstacle to evaluating the compatibility of community psychology principles with study themes, as has previously been mentioned, is the relative unfamiliarity of many study participants with the field of community psychology. In many cases the interviewer relied on the broader term "applied psychology" as a proxy for community psychology. But there are important distinctions between applied psychology and community psychology that have a direct bearing on the framework to be presented.

Nelson and Prilleltensky (2010) present a comprehensive overview of these distinctions. They assert that traditional applied psychologists—including psychotherapists and clinical psychologists—deal primarily with the interpersonal or microsystemic level of analysis whereas community psychologists deal with multiple levels in an ecological framework. They further argue that the timing of applied psychology interventions is remedial in nature whereas community psychology interventions are preventative. They describe applied psychology interventions as focused on treatment and rehabilitation, and community psychology interventions as focused on community development and social action. They describe the "client" as inhabiting a role of compliance with applied psychology treatments as opposed to the role of an active, self-directed participant in community psychology interventions. They characterize

traditional applied psychology research as "based on positivistic assumptions" (Nelson & Prilleltensky, 2010, p. 6) and community psychology research as participatory in nature. They draw a distinction between the relatively few interdisciplinary ties of traditional applied psychologists—for example, between psychotherapists, psychiatrists, and social workers—and the great breadth of interdisciplinary collaboration required for community interventions. Finally, they argue that applied psychologists generally wear few professional "hats," whereas community psychologists must wear many, moving constantly between research, treatment, advocacy, and activism. All of these distinctions are important to bear in mind when examining the potential role of community psychologists in the prevention of violent extremism.

Best practices viewed through a community psychology lens. Once a clear understanding of the specific principles and roles of community psychology has been attained, the compatibility of these principles with study themes becomes evident. The 14 best practices delineated in previous sections not only appear to fit into this framework of principles, but seem to express the essence of these principles in and of themselves. This, perhaps, should come as no surprise, as the tenets of community psychology themselves emerged from the long experience of researchers and practitioners working with diverse communities (Orford, 2008). Indeed, it is interesting to see how study participants from diverse fields appear to have attained an implicit understanding of various principles of community psychology through their research and practice. Applying an explicit, "top-down" language—in this case, the language of community psychology—to describe their existing knowledge can be a useful way of synthesizing experiences, communicating

findings across disciplines, and maintaining a standardized rubric with which to assess the efficacy of programs.

Figure 4 illustrates how the 14 identified best practices express the six central principles of community psychology. The first principle, primary prevention, aligns with study themes that argued for prevention as an essential component of a multi-pronged strategy that would include primary, secondary, and tertiary prevention strategies. The second principle, an ecological approach to understanding the problem, aligns with the study theme of taking a multidimensional approach to prevention that addresses peer groups, family systems, and larger systems as opposed to solely the individual. The third principle, risk and resilience factors, aligns with participants' views that interventions should be targeted based on a comprehensive assessment of vulnerability factors, and that youth face the greatest vulnerabilities. The fourth principle, community-oriented and social interventions, aligns with themes arguing for community-specific interventions, delivery in community settings, and greater involvement by community psychologists. The fifth principle, participatory research, aligns with study themes that spoke of community engagement in developing and implementing interventions, prioritizing group discussion over didactic methods, and seeking insider facilitation of interventions. The sixth principle, empirical grounding, aligns with study themes that argued for greater clarity with regard to definitions, program goals, and mechanisms of change; well-validated pre- and post-test measures that correspond with the mechanism of change; and follow-up research to ensure lasting change.

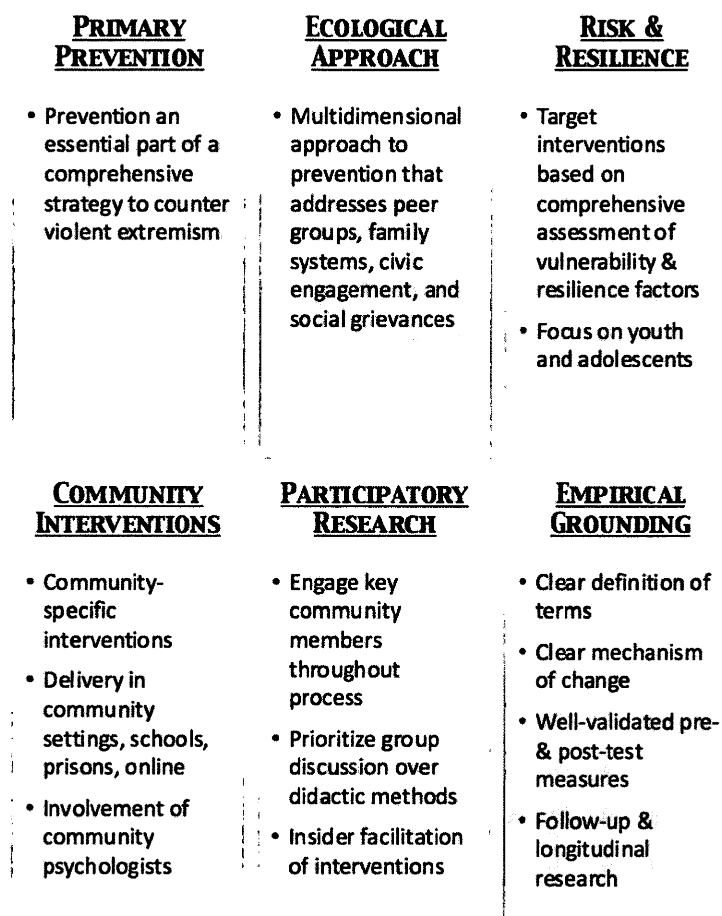

Figure 4. Study themes viewed through a community psychology lens

Notably, no single intervention reviewed in this study follows all of the principles listed above. For example, the *Being British, Being Muslim*, and *Being Kenyan, Being Muslim* interventions developed by Savage and her colleagues (Liht & Savage, 2013; Savage et al., 2014) follow many principles such as prioritizing group discussion, defining a clear mechanism of change, and using well-validated pre- and post-test measures. However, they neglect other principles such as using follow-up and longitudinal research and engaging key community members in formulating research questions. Similarly, Aly, Taylor, and Karnovsky's (2014) *Beyond Bali* educational

intervention focuses on building cognitive capacities in youth through a school-based initiative, and employs an assessment of risk and resilience factors. However, researchers did not employ follow-up research in their pilot study. Additionally, the program heavily favored didactic methods, and students' feedback was only taken into account at the end of the program.

What, then, would an intervention that adheres to all of the principles set out in the community psychology framework presented above look like? The following hypothetical scenario illustrates one possibility. It is hoped that this vignette and the organization of ideas presented in Figure 4 will illustrate the utility of community psychology as a unifying theory, and will provide a parsimonious yet comprehensive framework from which to approach future research and practice in this area.

The case of Sometown, USA. Sometown, USA, has been described by a prominent news outlet as a "hotbed" for violence and hate crimes. The rate of recruitment into extremist groups is six times higher in Sometown than it is for surrounding areas. Within the past year, fourteen individuals—primarily teenaged boys—have been questioned by local and federal authorities for connections to a locally active extremist organization, Group X, that has been responsible for a number of shootings targeting immigrants and ethnic minorities. Eight more individuals, also professed members of Group X, have been arrested in the past year for hate crimes against minority groups.

Due to escalating violence in the area, the state government calls in a multidisciplinary team of experts to assess the problem and formulate a prevention strategy. As a first step, researchers emphasize that any prevention strategy should be comprehensive, and should include primary, secondary, and tertiary measures. A local

nonprofit organization has already implemented a rehabilitation and reintegration program (secondary prevention) for youth who have been arrested or sentenced in connection with Group X's violent activities. Additionally, local and federal authorities have initiated several security measures to counter the violent actions of Group X (tertiary prevention). As a result, the team of researchers will focus on primary prevention.

Based on a comprehensive ecological assessment by the team—including a thorough review of existing data pertaining to unemployment, education, hate crimes, trauma and other factors—Sometown adolescents from 14 to 16 years of age are determined to be at particular risk for recruitment into Group X. The youth of Sometown have been economically and socially marginalized. Unemployment among parents is high, access to quality education is poor, and schools are in disrepair. However, when youth are transferred by parents to schools outside the community, they face frequent bullying and derogatory comments because of their socioeconomic status and the "trashy" reputation of Sometown. Rates of domestic violence, child abuse, and alcoholism in Sometown are high. Several students at the local high school have been referred to the school counselor for trauma-like symptoms, including intrusive memories of abuse, social withdrawal, hypervigilance, and behavioral outbursts. In a recent incident, teachers at Sometown High School notified authorities after a group of boys were found to have created a Facebook group that reposted violent content and rhetoric from Group X's website.

The multidisciplinary group of researchers—made up of a social psychologist, a community psychologist, a security expert, and a local nonprofit program developer—

proceed to meet with key community members, including a religious leader, school teachers, parents, and students. Researchers ask community members to describe the problems faced by the youth of Sometown. The religious leader argues that a lack of faith and values are at the core of Sometown's problems. Parents and school teachers point to lack of economic opportunity, lack of educational resources, and bullying experienced by their children outside of Sometown. One parent describes Sometown as an "island," and goes on to say, "when our kids get put down and turned away repeatedly by the outside world, they want to blame someone. They hear their fathers talking about outsiders taking their jobs. They feel forgotten. And before you know it, it becomes 'us versus them.'" Community members describe a variety of negative outcomes related to economic and social marginalization, including domestic abuse, drug use, alcoholism, over-reliance on public benefits, and finally, recruitment into extremist groups such as Group X.

As a next step, researchers and community members discuss factors that might protect youth against these negative outcomes, and decide on three primary resilience factors: discussion of values, reducing "us versus them" thinking, and advocating for educational and social reform. Researchers propose a school-based social intervention that addresses these three areas, and employ three well-researched mechanisms of change: increasing value complexity, healing trauma, and capacity-building. In close consultation with the community, they develop a semester-long school-based workshop that is initially offered to a pilot group of 9th and 10th grade students—particularly those with trauma and abuse histories—at Sometown High School. The workshop, titled *We Are Sometown*, employs group discussion of values and social grievances, individual trauma counseling, and creative activism projects such as filmmaking and student

journalism. Rather than solely focus on the students, the workshop also includes periodic "town hall" discussions where students present their concerns to teachers, parents, religious leaders, police, and local politicians. The school counselor at Sometown High—a community insider who was born and raised in Sometown—agrees to facilitate the workshop along with a community psychologist who is a member of the research team. A well-validated measure of value complexity is used to measure cognitive complexity prior to the workshop, on the last day of the workshop, and during each subsequent month for a six-month period. Additional questionnaires measuring trauma symptoms and self-efficacy are used to measure participants' symptoms, attitudes, and civic engagement at similar intervals.

Finally, workshop participants are encouraged to create a *We Are Sometown* Facebook group to keep in touch with one another, and to enable the creation of social action projects and dialogue long after the conclusion of the workshop.

Strengths and Limitations of the Present Study

The primary strength of this study is its consolidation of the knowledge-base on primary prevention of violent extremism, which has previously been spread across multiple fields of study. Prior systematic reviews of preventative interventions have been narrowly focused on government-implemented interventions, or on interventions implemented within a specific geographic area, field of study, or type of extremism. The current study brings together this dispersed knowledge-base through interviews with experts from multiple fields of study and geographical locations. Participants hailed from the fields of social psychology, political psychology, applied criminology, education,

international development, community psychology, nonprofit program development, and international peacekeeping; they have implemented preventative programs in Kenya, Somalia, Bosnia, Tajikistan, Finland, UK, Bangladesh, and the United States; and they have studied extremisms ranging from the Islamic State to the White Aaryan Resistance to left- and right-wing political extremisms. Synthesizing best practices from this diversity of views and experiences adds to the strength of the current study.

Another strength of this study is that it provides a parsimonious framework to guide and evaluate future interventions from both an effectiveness and ethical standpoint. An ethical approach to prevention is vital, and critiques of existing interventions have shown the dangers of approaches that single out specific cultures—most often Muslim communities—without due consideration of a variety of other factors involved in violent extremism (Poole, 2013; Thomas, 2010). These narrowly focused programs risk further alienating communities that have already been marginalized. Any future efforts in the area of primary prevention should be guided by principles that ensure both effective and ethical practices. Such principles are central to the community psychology framework presented in this study.

This study also has various limitations. First, due to the small sample size of eight participants, it is inadvisable to generalize the findings. Due to the dearth of empirical studies on primary prevention of violent extremism, the findings presented in this study are necessarily exploratory, and must be corroborated by further empirical research. Second, while the diversity of fields of expertise represented in this study may be considered a strength, it may also be considered a weakness insofar as the richness of views within a single field may not be accurately portrayed. Another limitation is that

Islamic extremism is overrepresented in both the literature review and the sample of experts. This bias reflects the narrow focus of current research on the topic, and the lack of studies on prevention of various other violent forms of religious, political, and social extremism.

Finally, an important limitation is that communities who may be the focus of preventative interventions have no direct voice in this study. From a community psychology perspective, the participation of community members in every stage of research is essential. Such participation was not feasible in the present case due to the global scope of the study, and its focus on synthesizing a diffuse, multidisciplinary knowledge base. By proposing the explicit application of community psychology principles to future research, it is hoped that an overall greater level of community involvement in the development of preventative interventions is achieved. Nevertheless, it is vital to keep in mind that this study represents only one side of the coin: the practices and experiences of those who have developed preventative interventions; it does not directly evaluate the experiences of target communities. Ultimately, it is these very communities who will determine the utility of any recommendations ventured herein. At its best, community research of the kind discussed in this study is not just about providing a seat at the table—it is about moving the table altogether. The application of community psychology principles will, it is hoped, encourage such an approach to the prevention of violent extremism.

Suggestions for Future Research

Because empirical studies in the area of primary prevention of violent extremism continue to be limited, future research is imperative to bolstering primary prevention efforts. In particular, there is a need to empirically validate the efficacy of the various mechanisms of change voiced by participants in this study, including addressing group affiliation and identity, reducing cognitive constriction, healing trauma, capacity-building, discussion of values and ideology, and addressing social grievances. Empirical evaluation of programs with a clearly identified mechanism of change will lead to a greater understanding of how primary prevention efforts can be helpful in the context of larger efforts to counter violent extremism.

Another suggestion for future studies is a greater focus on multidisciplinary research. As previously mentioned, research into the prevention of violent extremism is often siloed, with little sharing and integration of information between disciplines and across geographical areas. Future studies should be approached from an interdisciplinary perspective, and should contribute to a shared understanding of effective and ethical prevention strategies.

A third suggestion is to place greater emphasis on studying the experiences of communities who have been the targets of preventative interventions. Determining commonalities in the way vulnerable communities perceive researchers and interventions can lead to more effective engagement with these communities. Such research would also be in line with community psychology principles.

A fourth suggestion for future research relates to the narrow focus in much of the current research on Islamic extremism. As stated throughout this study, narrow profiling based on a single domain such as culture or religion is neither ethical nor efficacious. As

such, future research should explore the efficacy of the best practices delineated in this study in the development of interventions aimed at a broad range of extremisms, including right wing extremism, gang violence, and violent extremism perpetrated in the name of other religions. Violence in the name of some ideology is more common across cultures and religions than modern-day reporting and politics would perhaps lead us to believe. Developing community-specific primary prevention interventions in the context of the best practices and community psychology principles proposed in this study will, it is hoped, lead to a broad range of desirable outcomes both locally and globally.

Conclusion

This study sought to integrate the current knowledge-base on primary prevention of violent extremism, and to explore the potential role of community psychology in the development and implementation of preventative interventions. To these ends, a qualitative analysis of a multidisciplinary range of expert interviews was undertaken. Participants were interviewed across five domains: drivers of violent extremism, the role of primary prevention, current practices and interventions, the role of community psychology, and future directions. Several themes and subthemes emerged within these domains. These themes were grouped into challenges and best practices with respect to primary prevention efforts. Best practices were then viewed through a community psychology lens, and presented as an expression of the six major principles of community psychology: a focus on primary prevention, an ecological approach, emphasis on risk and resilience factors, community-oriented interventions, participatory research, and empirical grounding. A hypothetical case was presented that adhered to these community

psychology principles and best practices that emerged from the study. Finally, strengths and limitations of the present study were discussed along with suggestions for future research.

There is a realization in the global community that violent extremisms of all kinds present a continuing danger to global peace and security, and that secondary and tertiary prevention strategies alone have not been enough to contain this threat (Neumann, 2013; Orlina & Desjardins, 2012; The United Nations, 2015). As researchers and practitioners across disciplines respond to a global call for a greater focus on prevention, it becomes vital to approach such efforts in a concerted, systematic, ethical, and empirically grounded manner. It is hoped that the integration of perspectives and the community psychology framework presented in this study can serve as an initial step toward such an approach.

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Appendix A: Human Subjects Protocol

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Peter Dybwad, JD
—PRESIDENT—
Gilbert H. Newman, PhD
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Nevitt Sanford, PhD
—FOUNDER—

WRIGHT INSTITUTE COMMITTEE FOR THE PROTECTION OF HUMAN SUBJECTS: FULL REVIEW PROTOCOL APPROVAL

Sudhanva Rajagopal
200 Lakeside Drive, Apt. 604
Oakland, CA 94612

October 25, 2016

Re: Primary Prevention of Violent Extremism: A Qualitative Analysis of Current Practices, Future Directions, and the Role of Community Psychology

Dear Sudhanva,

The above project was reviewed and final approval has been granted by the Wright Institute Committee for the Protection of Human Subjects (CPHS). If your project involves the use of outside agencies, organizations or other schools, documentation of their approval of the project is required by the Wright Institute CPHS. You may only collect data from agencies from which such documentation has been received by our office. Our files currently indicate the following:

Written consent forms will be used.

The following reference number and expiration date have been assigned to this project: CPHS #: 11041604 Exp. date:

Please refer to this number and expiration date in all future correspondence concerning this project.

With respect to the Committee's approval of your use of human subjects, any significant changes or unforeseen events must be brought promptly to the Committee's attention. Also, if you are using consent forms, the signed consent forms must be kept on file at the Wright Institute for two years, in accordance with federal law. When you have completed your research you must turn copies of these forms in to my office, to be placed in your file.

If you have any questions regarding these matters, please contact me. Congratulations and good luck.

Cordially,

Virginia Morgan
Chair, Committee for the Protection of Human Subjects

Appendix B: Consent to Participate in Research

Consent to Participate in Research

I, ______________________, hereby authorize Sudhanva Rajagopal, MA to gather information from me for a study being conducted in association with the Wright Institute in Berkeley, California. The nature of the study and my participation in it has been explained to me and I understand the following:

1. This study seeks to evaluate current practices in primary prevention of violent extremism, and to assess the potential role of community psychology in the development and implementation of preventative interventions. These issues will be studied using a range of expert interviews.
2. My participation in this project is voluntary. I understand that I will not be paid for my participation. I may withdraw and discontinue participation at any time without penalty.
3. My participation will involve minimal risk to me beyond the possibility of some mild anxiety in considering and responding to the questions. I understand that most interviewees will find the discussion interesting and thought-provoking. If, however, I feel uncomfortable in any way during the interview session, I have the right to decline to answer any question or to end the interview.
4. Participation involves being interviewed by the researcher either in person or through a video or audio conferencing service such as Skype. The interview will last approximately 30-60 minutes. Notes may be written during the interview. Additionally, an audio recording of the interview and subsequent dialogue will be made. If I do not agree to be recorded, I will not be able to participate in the study. Further, I understand that the researcher will do everything possible to protect digital data (calls made on Skype or other digital or internet services), but that all digital content is subject to hacking.
5. I understand that the researcher will identify me by name in any materials related to this study. Because the study requires the participation of experts, it is essential to establish the credentials of these experts. This will involve the use of identifying information such as my name and a description of my professional background and publications.
6. If I have any questions or problems as a result of participating in the study, or if I wish to receive further information regarding the purpose and/or results of the study following participation, I may contact the Dissertation Chair, Beate Lohser, Ph.D., at blohser@wi.edu or +1 510-473-8802.
7. My participation is voluntary and has been gained without coercion. My refusal to participate would involve no penalty or loss of benefits and I may discontinue participation at any time without penalty or loss of benefits to which I am otherwise entitled.
8. I have read and understand the explanation provided to me. I have had all my questions answered to my satisfaction, and I voluntarily agree to participate in this study.
9. I have been given a copy of this consent form.

__________________________ My Signature _________ Date

__________________________ My Printed Name

Appendix C: Qualitative Interview Protocol

PRIMARY PREVENTION OF VIOLENT EXTREMISM
Interview Protocol Form

Interviewee (Title and Name):
Institution(s):
Interviewer: Sudhanva Rajagopal, M.A.

Survey Sections Used:

_____ A: Interviewee Background
_____ B: Drivers of Violent Extremism
_____ C: Role of Primary Prevention
_____ D: Current Practices and Interventions
_____ E: Role of Community Psychology
_____ F: Future Directions and Personal Reflections

Other Topics Discussed:

Documents Obtained:

Post Interview Comments or Leads:

Informed Consent:

To facilitate transcription, I would like to record our conversation today. Please review and sign the release form. Additionally, you will need to sign a form devised to meet our human subject requirements. Essentially, it states that: (1) Your name and professional biography may be used to establish your role as an expert, (2) your participation is voluntary and you may stop at any time if you feel uncomfortable, and (3) the researchers do not intend to inflict any harm. Thank you for your agreeing to participate.

I have planned this interview to last no longer than one hour. During this time, I have several questions that I would like to cover. If time begins to run short, it may be necessary to interrupt you in order to push ahead.

Introduction:

You have been selected to participate in this study because you have been identified as someone with experience and expertise related to the prevention of violent extremism. This research project aims to gain a range of views on the bases, development, implementation, and evaluation of preventative interventions. It also seeks to gain a deeper understanding of what role the field of community psychology might play in the prevention of violent extremism.

This study does not aim to evaluate response-oriented counterterrorism and security strategies. Rather, we are trying to learn more about broad-based primary prevention strategies—including current practices, lessons learned, and possible future directions.

A. Interviewee Background

- Can you say a little bit about your areas of interest and expertise?
    - Probe: How did you become interested in research on violent extremism?

B. Drivers of Violent Extremism

- How do you define violent extremism?
- What is your view on the causes and major drivers of violent extremism?

C. Role of Primary Prevention

- What is your view on the role of primary prevention with regard to violent extremism?
    - Probe: Are there fundamental differences between primary, secondary, and tertiary prevention approaches?
- How much importance should be placed on primary prevention initiatives in the context of global efforts to combat violent extremism?
    - Probe: How can researchers and practitioners help to increase the emphasis placed on primary prevention?

D. Current Practices and Interventions

- What are the characteristics of effective interventions to prevent violent extremism?
- How do you identify groups who would benefit most from such interventions?
    - Probe: Are demographic factors such as age and gender important in identifying groups who would benefit most?
- What are some strategies to engage communities when developing these interventions?
    - Probe: What part does addressing grievances and focusing on social issues and human rights play in prevention?
- When do you believe it is most critical to offer interventions?

- Can interventions be developed that target extremism across cultures and religions?
    - Probe: What are some of the common factors of extremisms across cultures that can be targeted by preventative interventions?
- What are your thoughts on primary prevention as an alternative to deradicalization and deprogramming approaches?
- Recruitment and radicalization are increasingly taking place online. How can preventative interventions address this mode of recruitment?
- In your experience, has there been much interdisciplinary collaboration in developing preventative strategies and interventions?
    - Probe: How might greater collaboration be achieved?
- How do you evaluate the success of preventative interventions?

E. Role of Community Psychology

- What is your understanding of community psychology?
- Do you think that applied fields of psychology—such as clinical and community psychology—have a role to play in primary prevention efforts?
- The literature suggests that community psychology in particular shares many of the core principles that have guided recent research, including a focus on context, prevention, and participatory research. Are these factors important in your own research?
    - Could a community psychology framework be valuable in approaching research and practice in this area?
- How can applied psychologists become more involved in preventative efforts?

F. Future Direction of Prevention Efforts & Personal Reflections

- How do you think interventions can address the changing means and methods of extremist groups?
- What can governments do to better promote broad-based primary prevention as opposed to security-based and deradicalization efforts?
    - Probe: What are the obstacles to expanding the research, development, and implementation of primary prevention strategies?
- What are your personal reflections on the future direction of efforts to prevent violent extremism?
- Anything you would like to add in closing?

<u>Post Interview Comments and/or Observations:</u>

Appendix D: Participants' Domains of Expertise

	NAME	TITLE	ORGANIZATIOIN	FIELD	*DOMAIN OF EXPERTISE*			
					DRIVERS OF EXTREMISM	PRIMARY PREVENTION	CURRENT INTERVENTIONS	COMMUNITY PSYCHOLOGY
1	Sara Savage, Ph.D.	Professor; Research Director, IC Thinking (Cambridge), Ltd.	Cambridge University	Social Psychology	Theoretical	Theoretical / Applied	Theoretical / Applied	Theoretical
2	Lucian Conway III, Ph.D.	Associate Professor; Director of Political Cognition Laboratory	University of Montana	Political Psychology	Theoretical	Theoretical	Theoretical / Applied	*N/A*
3	Alexander Zuev, Ph.D.	Special Adviser on Prevention of Violent Extremism	United Nations / UNDP	International Security/Peacekeeping	Theoretical	Theoretical / Applied	Applied	*N/A*
4	Kris Christmann	Research Fellow, Applied Criminology Centre	University of Huddersfield	Applied Criminology	Theoretical	Theoretical	Theoretical / Applied	*N/A*
5	Tony McAleer	Executive Director, Co-Founder; Former organizer for White Aryan Resistance	Life After Hate	Nonprofit Program Development	Theoretical / Applied	Theoretical / Applied	Applied	Theoretical
6	Sabrina Fiorentino	Co-Founder; Former Educator, Google Bus Bangladesh	Hellen and Herald	Education	Theoretical / Applied	Theoretical / Applied	Applied	*N/A*
7	Naaz Khan	Instructor, International Educational Development and Refugee Studies	University of Maryland	International Development	Theoretical	Applied	Theoretical / Applied	Theoretical
8	M. Brinton Lykes, Ph.D.	Professor; Co-Director, Center for Human Rights and International Justice	Boston College	Community Psychology	Theoretical	Theoretical / Applied	Theoretical	Theoretical / Applied