# Transparent Communication in Counter-Terrorism Policy: Does Transparency Increase Public Support and Trust in Terrorism Prevention Programmes?

Gordon Clubb, Graeme Davies & Yoshiharu Kobayashi

Published online: 21 Mar 2024.

Submit your article to this journal ↗

View related articles ↗

View Crossmark data ↗

# Transparent Communication in Counter-Terrorism Policy: Does Transparency Increase Public Support and Trust in Terrorism Prevention Programmes?

Gordon Clubb[a], Graeme Davies[b], and Yoshiharu Kobayashi[a]

[a]School of Politics and International Studies, University of Leeds, Leeds, UK; [b]Department of Politics and International Relations, University of York, York, UK

**ABSTRACT**

Within research and policy on preventing and countering terrorism, transparency is viewed as a necessity to generate public support and trust for counter-terrorism policies. Yet there is no systematic evidence to support these assumptions while research in other policy areas has challenged these assumptions, showing some forms of transparency might decrease support and trust. This paper presents results from two experimental surveys conducted in the United Kingdom to examine the effect of increased transparency on support and trust for terrorism prevention policy. Our findings challenge the widely held assumptions with regard counter-terrorism policy: increased policy information about a prevention policy (based on real Prevent websites) decreases support for Prevent, it makes people less likely to report suspected radicalisation to Prevent, and it has no effect on trust. Conversely, transparency which communicates the rationale behind policy decisions (in this case, the controversial Prevent referral process) increases policy acceptance, decreases the intent to protest, and increases trust in the prevention programme. The findings have global implications for counter-terrorism policy which is primarily based on positive, linear assumption on the relationship between transparency, trust and support—the most common form of transparency these policies use is at best ineffective and at worse counter-productive.

## Introduction

Government counter-terrorism and the burgeoning number of counter violent extremism programmes all face a similar challenge insofar as they require varying degrees of public support to be effective, yet can often face a community backlash.[1] Research on counter-terrorism regularly and consistently cites increased transparency as a means to increase trust and support in counter-terrorism policies or to reduce public backlash.[2] Transparency is assumed to be essential across a wide range of counter-terrorism policies that operate globally and criticism of terrorism prevention programmes have centred on the lack of transparency.[3] A lack of transparency in terrorism prevention policies has been linked to undermining community trust among key stakeholders, posing challenges to the delivery of the prevention policy.[4] Furthermore, greater policy transparency has been identified as a way to help build community engagement in prevention programmes,[5] such as facilitating a greater willingness to report 'intimates" suspected of extremism to the authorities.[6] Similarly, it has been argued that programmes aiming to reintegrate terrorists have been detrimentally affected by a lack of transparency,[7] with increased transparency identified as a means to build trust and confidence to help facilitate reintegration.[8] Transparency is also seen as essential to allow for the evaluation of

programmes and to make practitioners accountable,[9] mitigating the misperceptions surrounding the programmes.[10] *However, since none of these studies focus primarily on the issue of transparency, there is no conceptualisation of what transparency is and no evidence to support these claims in relation to policy support and trust.*

Thus, the assumed relationship between transparency, trust and support permeates a wide range of counter-terrorism policies in various contexts: the following study focuses on one of the most internationally well-known and influential terrorism prevention programmes which best captures the application of the assumed benefits of increased transparency—the UK's Prevent programme. From its inception, Prevent has received significant criticism it has had a monocultural focus on Muslims, it has received accusations of surveillance, of stifling free speech within classrooms, and of having a chilling effect on human rights.[11] The UK's Prevent programme has made attempts over the years to become more transparent in light of a perceived lack of community trust and support. In the following study, we look at the effects of transparency on trust in the Prevent programme and multiple measures of support, such as attitudes on whether government spending on Prevent should increase or decrease, likelihood to protest decisions made by Prevent and a willingness to report "intimates" to Prevent if they suspected them of being radicalised. These measures capture the different assumed benefits greater transparency may have; at the very least to reduce opposition to the programme.

Recognising the criticisms of a lack of transparency and its negative effects, there has been a renewed effort to make Prevent more transparent wherever possible,[12] by making data on referrals available for public scrutiny,[13] though this initially highlighted the significant over-representation of young Muslims within Prevent referrals.[14] While Prevent regularly releases statistics of referrals and cases within the programme, recommendations have been made to increase data transparency.[15] Recently, websites have been launched with the aim of increasing public awareness of Prevent, in part to overcome a reluctance to support the policy by making referrals of suspected cases of radicalisation. The Act Early website was launched to support Prevent by detailing the signs of radicalisation, outlining the process of referrals and case-support, providing real stories, and making referral-making accessible.[16] LTAI website provided further information about the part of Prevent which handles referrals (Channel) and includes a Q&A which seeks to counter criticisms made against Prevent.[17] Many local authorities or local police websites also provide information about Prevent, its work, and how it operates—for example, one website provides significant detail on how Channel panels operate.[18] Thus, significant amounts of information are released to the public with regard to Prevent to challenge opposition to Prevent and to encourage community engagement with the policy. Emphasis on increased transparency by communicating policy information extends internationally, with examples to be found in relation to a number of CT/CVE programmes.[19]

While increased transparency is motivated by legal and normative reasons as well as instrumental ones,[20] transparency is often presented as an instrument to generate trust and support, which can subsequently improve how programmes operate. Prevent's communications are designed to facilitate "intimate reporting" to Prevent by overcoming community opposition and to address wider public and media criticism which can also present challenges to Prevent's work. There are normative reasons behind Prevent's focus on transparency but these are largely intertwined with instrumental motivations to build public and community support and trust. However, as yet there has been no detailed examination of what transparency entails in this policy domain and no empirical research to test these widely held assumptions that have to varying degrees been reflected in policy delivery. Nevertheless, a body of literature (outlined below) has examined the effects of transparency for support and trust in policy areas such as regulatory agencies, traffic security, ("ordinary") prisoner release programmes and Covid vaccines. This literature strongly challenges the assumed positive effects of transparency, in some cases showing some forms of transparency can have a negative effect on trust and support for policies and related institutions. Given how embedded assumptions are with regard counter-terrorism policy, the article makes an important contribution by examining empirically whether different types of transparency increase trust and support in terrorism prevention policy. Existing references to transparency in a counter-terrorism (CT) or counter violent extremism (CVE) context are vague;

we build upon research on transparency to detail different types of transparency—policy information transparency and decision-making transparency. The article builds on findings in the wider transparency literature to formulate hypotheses on the effects of transparency on trust and support, but in the context of CT and CVE policy.

## What is policy transparency?

A specific challenge with regard to research that references a positive link between increased transparency and CT/CVE policy is the lack of examination or explanation what transparency entails. Several studies have examined the effects of communications strategies and community engagement interventions on support and trust among specific communities—for instance, research has shown that communications have positive effects on support and trust when showing a programme is effective,[21] when including a credible messenger,[22] and when a programme is procedurally just.[23] These studies are especially relevant in understanding strategic communications in the context of counter-terrorism policy but they do not attempt to operationalise policy transparency. As a result, in the following study we draw upon an extensive literature on policy transparency which has operationalised certain dimensions of transparency to explore its impact on trust and support. Transparency refers to the extent to which external actors such as citizens are able to regularly access information that allows them to understand what an organisation is doing.[24] It is often assumed that better and regular access to information allows citizens to participate in decision-making more effectively and hold organisations accountable.[25] Therefore, transparency is seen as an intrinsic value of good governance or a regime value fundamental to successful democracy,[26] although it is often promoted as an instrument to improve other goals such as enhancing legitimacy, restoring trust and increasing policy support.[27]

The following study focuses on two types of policy transparency, policy information transparency and decision-making transparency.[28] Policy information transparency refers to the disclosure of information regarding a policy by detailing what the policy is, who the policy will affect and how much it costs and to whom.[29] By informing citizens how a policy will impact them, policy transparency enables them to better evaluate policy benefits, which subsequently can foster policy support. However, citizens often lack a basic understanding of the impact of policies, which may mean they are more negative in evaluating them.[30]

Decision-making transparency provides citizens details about decisions that affect them within a policy, explains why certain decisions were made in the policy area allows them to check whether these decisions are in line with acceptable norms.[31] The critical aspect of this type of transparency does not relate to the decision itself but *what* (the decision), *how* (the decision procedure) and *why* (the decision rationale) a policy decision was taken. The *decision* refers to publicly communicating a decision made by an institution or as part of a policy. *Rationale* concerns the information on the substance of the decision, such as the facts and reasons on which it was based. *Procedure* refers to things that happened during the decision-making process, such as deliberations, negotiations and procedures (such as publishing the minutes of a committee meeting or by outlining the steps, regulations and procedures applied when making a decision).[32]

## Effects of transparency on trust and support

As noted above, transparency is often promoted due to its perceived efficacy as an instrument to enhance legitimacy, restore trust and increase policy support.[33] These goals are also potentially interrelated: positive assessment of government communication can increase trust, and higher level of public trust means higher level of public acceptance of policy.[34] Trust is understood as generalised trust,[35] trust in an institution,[36] or trust in an institution in relation to the specific policy area.[37] Support in transparency research consists of several components which are important to distinguish but for simplicity are classified broadly as forms of support. These include: a) support for the policy, measured either through a stated commitment for tax spending in the relevant policy area or

attitudinal support for the policy[38]; a willingness to comply with or accept policies decisions made by an institutions in relation to a policy area[39]; perceptions of policy legitimacy[40]; or a stated likelihood to protest an institutions' policy decision.[41] Details on how trust and support are measured and the rationale for choosing these as measures in the following study are discussed below.

Transparent communication from the government is essential during times of public danger to strengthen public resilience, ensure trust in institutions, and facilitate the adoption of behaviours necessary to reduce risk.[42] Transparency has been linked with increasing policy support, compliance, trust and inducing behavioural change in relation to a policy. However the majority of research evidence shows the positive effects of transparency is far more uncertain than typically assumed; types of transparency have different effects, effects depend on the policy domain,[43] and mediated by cultural factors.[44] For instance, studies have shown that transparency has a more negative effect in 'controversial' policy areas that involve taboo trade-offs between secular and sacred values, such as traffic security policy or releasing prisoners on probation.[45] In formulating our hypotheses, we make the determination that CT/CVE policies would be more in line with findings in such controversial policy areas. The UK's Prevent programme, has been widely viewed as controversial, whether as a matter of life-or-death or as a threat to civil liberties.[46] Next, we outline the effects of two types of transparency —policy information transparency and decision transparency—on trust and support.

### Policy information transparency, support and trust

Policy information transparency has been shown to have mixed effects on policy support and is shaped by how information is presented to increase understanding and the type of policy area,[47] with the type of policy area moderating these effects.[48] Porumbescu et al found increasing detailed policy information reduced policy understanding,[49] which was found to be negatively associated with policy support—measured as an intent to increase taxation in the policy-area. Porumbescu et al show that increased fluency of policy information can increase policy support however this is mediated by the controversy of the policy area, which involves trade-offs between sacred and secular values, such as prisoner re-entry programmes: while transparent policy information increased understanding, it had no moderating effect in the controversial policy area—in other words it neither increased nor decreased policy support.[50] However a limitation with these studies is they measure support by asking respondents if they would comply with paying a new tax to support the police, which may be confounded by attitudes toward taxation and will likely conflate opposition with neutral views on the policy. Several studies show that transparency, particularly in policy areas involving matters of life-or-death, can have a negative effect on acceptance, legitimacy and to an extent trust,[51] subsequently the measures by Porumbescu et al would not adequately capture the opposition to a policy area making a taboo trade-off which used to explain the mediating effects of the policy area.[52]

CT/CVE policies involve matters of life-or-death and involve trade-offs between the material resources to fund them and the prospect of (not) preventing a terrorist attack. It is plausible that increased information would also reduce understanding: while the public might be familiar broadly with counter-terrorism, CVE policies are considerably different and likely less well-known among the public (for instance, the media will typically cover the former more than the latter)[53]—increased information, regardless of fluency, will likely challenge assumed knowledge and increase complexity. Considering these mechanisms and existing evidence in other policy areas, we hypothesise policy information transparency will increase opposition to a policy (and will not increase support for the policy). We expect our findings will challenge the assumption in counter-terrorism research and policy that policy information transparency (the most common type of transparency used in policy) increases support.

**H1**: Policy information transparency will decrease support for a terrorism prevention policy.

Next, research has explored whether policy information transparency has a positive effect on trust, whether measured in a general sense or in relation to the institution responsible for the policy under consideration. Debates in the transparency literature have revolved around whether increased knowledge

of government processes can increase understanding and trust in government or whether greater transparency increases uncertainty and confusion.[54] Circumstances where policy information transparency has been shown to have a positive effect on trust, for instance where organisations have a pre-existing reputation for transparency,[55] are unlikely to apply given the aforementioned reputation for a lack of transparency in matters of counter-terrorism policy. Further studies have shown that policy information transparency has no effect on trust in cultural contexts with established transparent practices in government (as they are less sensitive to new information) and policy information transparency can have a negative effect on trust in other cultural contexts which do not value government transparency and have a higher acceptance of distance from political decision-making.[56] De Fine Licht show that in controversial policy areas, increased decision transparency has a negative effect on perceived legitimacy of the policy but has no effect on trust in the management of the policy area.[57] However, it is unclear whether this would be the case of a policy such as Prevent or counter-terrorism policy or whether policy information has the same effect. Grimmelikhuijsen et al argue that the relationship between trust and transparency is also moderated by the extent the relevant organisation is politicised and the theoretical mechanisms which make decision transparency effective in generating trust are not applicable to policy information transparency.[58] One study on transparent information about Covid vaccines show that positive or "neutral" information decreases trust[59] and latent policy information transparency—where the public has the potential to access government information such as a database—is slightly negatively related to trust.[60] Thus we anticipate the negative effects of transparency on support to similarly lead to a negative effect on trust in Prevent. We do not anticipate it to increase trust as assumed in research and policy in counter-terrorism and expect our findings to challenge this perspective.

**H2**: Policy information transparency will decrease trust in terrorism prevention policy.

### Decision transparency, support and trust

In contrast to policy information transparency, decision transparency has been shown to *increase* policy support (measured as decision acceptance). In this body of work there is more support for the assumptions held in counter-terrorism research and policy, even though this form of transparency is less prominent in counter-terrorism policy, which tends to frame transparency in terms of policy information. De Fine Licht et al show that "fishbowl transparency"—providing full openness to the decision-making process such as releasing meeting minutes—does not increase decision acceptance however the provision of a rationale for a decision (after it has been made) does increase decision acceptance.[61] In another study De Fine Licht study the effect of decision transparency on policy support with taboo trade-offs that involve matters of life or death.[62] Participants exposed to only the policy decision (used in this study as the control) reported lower decision acceptance than the decision-making rationale condition but not the decision procedure condition, while the decision-making rationale condition reported significantly higher willingness to accept the decision in comparison to both conditions.[63] De Fine Licht theorise that procedural transparency makes the trade-off in the controversial policy area more salient whereas transparency rationale avoids invoking negative feelings and make it easier to accept a decision.[64] As a consequence, decision-rational transparency is hypothesised to have a positive effect on decision acceptance. Furthermore. De Fine Licht also show that decision rationale transparency decreased the willingness to protest a policy decision in non-controversial policy areas but had no effect in controversial policy areas, while decision procedure increased the willingness to protest in comparison to decision and rational conditions.[65] As we compare decision transparency with a no decision transparency control (in line with Grimmelikhuijsen et al),[66] we expect the effects of decision rationale transparency to have stronger effects and lead to a decreased willingness to protest because it overcomes the negative feelings produced through the taboo trade-off. Finally we explore whether the hypothesized positive effects

of decision rational transparency translates to support for increased spending on Prevent and an increased willingness to report to Prevent.

**H3**: Decision-rationale transparency increases the acceptance of decisions.

**H4**: Decision-rationale transparency reduces the willingness to protest decisions in terrorism prevention policy.

Decision transparency has been shown to have positive effects on trust, although again this tends to be moderated by policy area and the different dimension of decision transparency. Grimmelikhuijsen et al theorise that decision transparency can increase trust through two psychological mechanisms: a) exposing citizens to decisions reduces psychological distance, prompting them to assess trust on concrete details rather than abstract or negative stereotypes; b) where citizens oppose a conclusion and inhibit a strong motivation to scrutinise information and underlying arguments, providing a clear rationale may help to justify a difficult decision and overcome initial scepticism.[67] Porumbescu and Grimmelikhuijsen show that communicating the procedural elements of policy decision-making can increase trust in local government.[68] Grimmelikhuijsen et al compares the effects of different types of decision transparency: no exposure to a policy decision; exposure to a policy decision; exposure to a policy decision and a rationale; and exposure to a policy decision and a description of the procedure.[69] They find that decision transparency increases trust when compared to no exposure to a policy decision however there is no statistically significant difference between types of transparency i.e. decision-rationale has no difference when compared to the group exposed only to the policy decision. However these effects don't apply to all policy domains, for example financial regulators, which may be due to their overly technical and abstract nature. Furthermore, decision rationale transparency effects can be more pronounced in certain sectors, such as education, which might indicate that some sectors are more likely to trigger motivated scepticisms than others—hence, rationale transparency is speculated to likely increase trust in more controversial policy decisions.[70]

De Fine Licht tests the effects of decision-making transparency on trust within a controversial policy area such as traffic security policy decision-making—finding no statistically significant relationship between forms of decision-making transparency and trust.[71] Importantly, this study compares rationale and procedural transparency with a "no transparency" group, however this group is exposed to the policy decision which Grimmelikhuijsen et al conceptualise as another form of decision transparency.[72] In other words, Grimmelikhuijsen et al's research shows that all forms of decision transparency can have a positive effect on trust (though mediated by policy areas) and the combination of communicating a decision and the rationale increases trust in policy areas which trigger motivated scepticism (by introducing the taboo trade-off).[73] As decision-transparency accentuates the controversial nature of the policy, we hypothesise the combination of communicating the decision and the rationale increases trust while other configurations of decision transparency do not.

**H5**: Decision-rational transparency will increase trust in the UK's work in terrorism prevention.

## Methods

We design and implement two survey experiments, one for policy transparency (Experiment 1) and the other for decision-making transparency (Experiment 2), to test our hypotheses. The surveys were administered over the internet by YouGov, whose 300,000 panel members formed the sampling frame. Most of these are actively recruited by targeted campaigns via non-political websites, rather than volunteering for the panel. Similarly, respondents are not able to choose which surveys to take part in: they are either sampled for a given data collection or not. Although these are non-probability samples, YouGov has a strong record in generating results representative of the British electorate—as measured

by their accuracy in predicting elections. The surveys were conducted during February 2022. Following the removal of participants who failed either of two attention checks, our sample was 1,261 respondents for Experiment 1 and 2,426 for Experiment 2 and ensured that each treatment and control group consisted of approximately 600 respondents to identify small effects (thus even for null findings, we can have reasonable confidence in these results).

To test the effects of transparency on support and trust in CT/CVE policy, the experiments focus on the UK government's Prevent programme because it is often at the centre of claims that transparency can increase community support, which the programme has sought to do and subsequently provides a realistic account of transparent communications. Officially, Prevent is an early intervention programme led by the UK Home Office, working with police, government agencies, and statutory stakeholders to identify, assess and address possible vulnerabilities or risks of radicalisation (to terrorism).[74] We use a case study of Prevent because it provides a realistic case of how policy information is communicated to the public and it is of practical significance given how claims on the importance of transparency centre on the Prevent programme. While there are unique aspects to Prevent which distinguishes it from the broader family of CVE programmes,[75] however several programmes internationally have been influenced by Prevent and much of its work (beyond the management of the referral system) is typical of a terrorism prevention programme. Focusing on Prevent can provide some insight into how increased transparency among other CT/CVE policies may affect support and trust.[76]

Following existing studies, we employ vignette-based experiments where respondents are randomly exposed to different amounts of transparent information. In Experiment 1 looking at policy information transparency, all respondents in the control and treatment groups first read a brief description of Prevent. The treatment group is provided with additional texts describing in greater detail what Prevent is and how it works, drawn from several official Prevent websites and documents. The control group is not given this additional information. While other studies provide no information about a policy in control groups, we included a brief statement about Prevent for all experiment groups including the control group. This was necessary as reports show that a percentage of the public believe "Prevent" to be non-controversial policy such as an anti-bullying strategy.[77] To avoid confounding effects, it was preferable to ensure all respondents had a basic level of information of what Prevent is in order to isolate the effect of higher levels of policy information transparency.

We chose to convey a decision regarding the Prevent referral process (the process by which individuals suspected of being radicalised are reported to Prevent and then provided support if necessary): most public references to decisions made in the context of Prevent relate to media reportings on the referral process, hence why it was chosen rather than more general, high-level policy decisions. To signal the text is a form of government transparency, the vignette and narrative is constructed as a press release from Prevent, detailing the perspective of the Prevent case-worker. While there is less public information on decision-making within Prevent, we based the vignettes on several policy and training documents[78] as well as consulting individuals experienced working in and with the Prevent referral process. Experiment 2 consists of four groups of information—the control received no information about the policy decision (but is provided with a description of Prevent) and the three conditions reflect different types of decision transparency as conceptualised by Grimmelikhuijsen et al: decision transparency communicates the case of someone being reported to Prevent and the referral case being dropped (based on several real cases); decision rationale adds to this information by communicating why the decision was made; and decision procedure adds information about the formal process informing the decision.[79] The type of extremism is made explicit to avoid respondents making assumptions with regard the ideology concerned, as studies have shown respondent attitudes to counter-terrorism policies vary depending on the ideology of the policy target.[80] We focus on a dropped referral case (as opposed to a "successful" case) to reflect the type of highly publicised scenarios that make Prevent controversial and since the public are more likely to learn about Prevent through such scenarios, practically we would expect greater transparency to be more significant. Below we detail the content of the vignettes (See Tables 1 and 2)—the structure of the vignettes is common to existing transparency studies and conveys the key features of both types of transparency.

**Table 1.** Policy information transparency vignettes

| Control Group | You will now be shown information from a government website about Prevent. Please read the information carefully—an attention check will follow<br>WHAT IS PREVENT?<br>Prevent is a government programme which aims to stop people becoming terrorists or supporting terrorism |
|---|---|
| Policy Information Transparency Group | You will now be shown information from a government website about Prevent. Please read the information carefully—an attention check will follow<br>WHAT IS PREVENT?<br>Prevent is a government programme which aims to stop people becoming terrorists or supporting terrorism<br>WHO DELIVERS PREVENT?<br>The Home Office works with local authorities, a wide range of government departments, the police, and community organisations.<br>WHAT DOES PREVENT DO?<br>Prevent is about safeguarding and providing support to individuals vulnerable to radicalisation. Prevent provides training and support for a wide range of sectors (education, criminal justice, faith, charities, health).<br>HOW DOES PREVENT IDENTIFY THOSE AT RISK?<br>Referrals to Prevent can come from concerned friends and families, social services, health, police, education and local communities.<br>WHAT KIND OF SUPPORT IS PROVIDED?<br>Mentoring, diversionary activities such as sport, health or mental health support, signposting services such as education, employment or housing. |

**Table 2.** Decision-making transparency vignettes

| Control and all Treatment Groups | **What is Prevent?**<br>Prevent is a government programme which safeguards those vulnerable to radicalisation and aims to stop people becoming terrorists. |
|---|---|
| Decision Only, Decision + Rationale, Decision + Procedure Treatment Groups | **The following text is a Prevent Press Release. Please read carefully—an attention check will follow**.<br>HOME OFFICE<br>For Immediate Release<br>A local teenager has been referred to the government's Prevent programme, which aims to prevent terrorism.<br>He was overheard making comments which sounded of an Islamist extremist nature. He had also begun to withdraw from friends and family, showing unusual changes in behaviour.<br>The referral was passed on to a Prevent officer to decide if the referral should be investigated further. |
| Decision Only Treatment Group | Decision<br>Following further investigation, it was concluded that the individual's case did not need taken further and was dropped. |
| Decision + Rationale Treatment Group | Decision<br>Following further investigation, it was concluded that the individual's case did not need taken further and was dropped.<br>While the individual showed some typical signs of being vulnerable to radicalisation, further investigation showed there was little risk of radicalisation toward terrorism. The individual had no history of criminal or extremist activity. His unusual behaviour was due to pressures he was feeling at home. The comment he made may have been extreme it was taken out of context and there is no history of him holding extreme views. |
| Decision + Procedure Treatment Group | Decision<br>Following further investigation, it was concluded that the individual's case did not need taken further and was dropped.<br>The Prevent officer conducted a meticulous investigation according to the Police Gateway Assessment. The officer checked the concern with the Safeguarding Lead and completed the vulnerability assessment framework. The officer then spoke to the individual of concern and their parents. Having carried out the appropriate checks, the initial referral was not taken further and no safeguarding issues were identified. |

Upon reviewing the vignettes, respondents were asked a series of questions about support and trust. Both experiments measured trust through a single-item measure of trust in the specific policy area (the "work for preventing terrorism in the UK") as opposed to a measure of general trust,[81] which more directly addresses our research question. We measure support in both experiments through a preference to increase or decrease government spending ('Should government spending on Prevent increase, decrease, or stay the same?).[82] For the experiment on policy information transparency we also include an additional measure of support ("To what extent do you support the UK's Prevent programme?"). With regard the experiment on decision-transparency, we take into account several limitations in other studies to measure decision acceptance in relation to an acceptance of decision-making in general as opposed to one singular decision ("To what extent do you agree with decisions made by Prevent?").[83] Again, we utilise a measure deployed by de Fine Licht's which aims to capture the inverse of decision acceptance ("How likely do you think it is that you will protest against the decision, for example, by writing a letter to an editor or by contacting a politician?").[84] Finally, across both experiments we include an exploratory measure on "intimate referral support" which relates to support for terrorism prevention policy but has not been deployed in relation to transparency ("How likely are you to refer a friend or family member to the Prevent programme if you thought they were being radicalised?"). An objective of prevention programmes is to encourage and facilitate early intervention in cases of suspected radicalisation.[85] Intimates such as friends and family members are often the most likely to be in a position to spot the signs of radicalisation and as a consequence there is much effort to consider what influences the likelihood of intimates to make a referral to programmes such as Prevent.[86] One assumption is increased transparency can help facilitate referrals from intimates,[87] and much of the information on the Prevent websites we base vignettes aim to encourage referrals by providing information.

## Results

Our results show that increased policy information transparency reduces support and trust in Prevent. It also shows that decision-making transparency increases decision acceptance and reduces the will-ingness to protest policy decisions. Below we present the results from a series of linear regression models that estimate the effects of the experimental treatments on a series of dependent variables that represent different dimensions of public attitudes towards Prevent. The four models examine different aspects of support for Prevent, including support for expenditure, general support for the programme, trust in the programme and behavioural support demonstrated in a willingness to report intimates. The results will be presented both as regression table and as a series of marginal effects graphs.

Looking across models on Table 3 it is important to note that while the model fit indicated by the F-scores are good (with the exception of model 1) the r-squared statistics are low. The low r-squared statistic suggest that the substantive effect of the experimental treatments is fairly small and is potentially open to omitted variable biases. As such the models indicate a modest yet still important change overall. In order to test the robustness of our results we included a series of demographic (age,

Table 3. Experiment I—Effect of transparency in comparison to control group

|  | Model I Support | Model II Spending | Model III Trust | Model IV Referral |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Policy Information | −.037 | −.154 | −.266 | −.322 |
|  | (.086) | (.057)*** | (.09)*** | (.119)*** |
| Constant | 5.503 | 3.5 | 4.284 | 5.203 |
|  | (.06)*** | (.04)*** | (.063)*** | (.084)*** |
| N | 1003 | 1003 | 1003 | 1003 |
| F | 0.19 | 7.39*** | 8.73*** | 7.33*** |
| $R^2$ | 0.001 | 0.01 | 0.01 | 0.01 |

*<0.10 **<0.05 ***<0.01.

sex, education) and political (voter ID) controls in the model. The inclusion of these variables did not meaningfully change the effect of the treatments.

Looking at Model I which looks at general support, we find no evidence for policy information decreasing support for Prevent. Moving on to Model II which examines support for increasing expenditure for the Prevent programme, we find that increased policy information leads to a preference for a reduction in spending for the Prevent programme (B = −.154 ($p < .01$)). This supports **H1** suggesting that more detailed information about a policy has a negative effect on policy support, as measured by a preference to decrease government spending, although there is little evidence to suggest it influences general attitudes towards the programme. Model III looks at trust and provides us with evidence in support of **H2** that increased policy information transparency reduces trust in the programme (B = −.266 ($p < .01$)). Interestingly, model IV suggests that policy transparency has a negative impact on willingness to report an intimate contact (B = −.322 ($p < .01$)).

Together these findings challenge wide-held assumptions in terrorism studies that transparency can increase policy support, trust or overcome opposition.[88] The findings are consistent with studies which theorise that taboo trade-offs moderate the effects of transparency on policy support.[89] By distinguishing between types of support, our findings suggest that increased transparency reduces the willingness to engage in deeper forms of support (e.g. deployment of resources, changes in behaviour) which is normatively challenging but the effects are less strong with regard attitudinal support (See Figure 1). While De Fine Licht found no effects of decision transparency on trust in the specific policy area and Grimmelikhuijsen et al found no effect of policy information on generalised trust,[90] our findings show that policy information transparency decreases trust in the specific policy area. Increased policy information typically leads to further confusion and/or decreases perceived policy understanding,[91] the overly positive or neutral nature of the messaging can be perceived with scepticism due to prior mistrust,[92] particularly in a policy area which has less of a reputation for transparency.[93]

Table 4 looks at the effect of increased transparency in policy decisions upon five dependent variables that represent different elements of support for the Prevent Programme. Three forms of
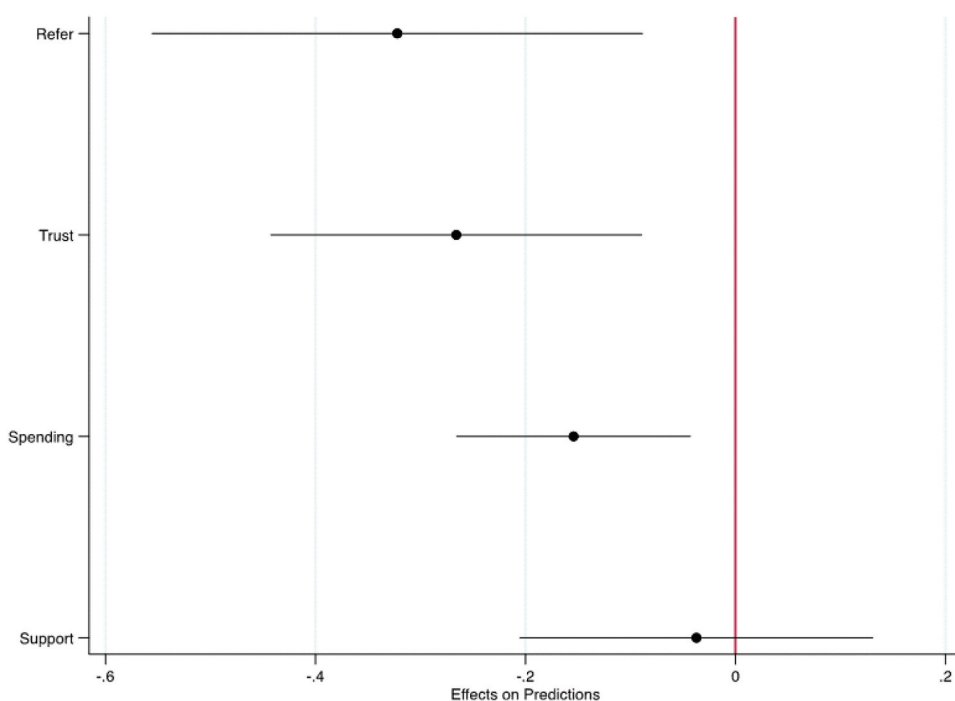


Figure 1. Experiment 1—Effect of policy information on different attitudes towards prevent.

**Table 4.** Experiment 2—Effect of transparency in comparison to control group

| Variables | Model I Decision Acceptance | Model II Willingness to Protest | Model III Support Spending Change | Model IV Willingness to Report | Model V Trust |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Decision | −.274 | −.279 | 0.064 | .212 | .128 |
| | (.044)*** | (.094)*** | (.050) | (.103)** | (.08) |
| Decision + Rationale | .116 | −.543 | 0.059 | .078 | .195 |
| | (.044)*** | (.095)*** | (.051)) | (.104) | (.081)** |
| Decision + Procedure | −.046 | −.390 | 0.059 | .081 | .024 |
| | (.044) | (.094)*** | (0.051) | (.104) | (.081) |
| Constant | 3.169 | 2.879 | 3.383 | 4.74 | 3.960 |
| | (.031)*** | (.067)*** | (.036)*** | (.056)*** | (.056)*** |
| N | 2341 | 2341 | 2341 | 2341 | 2341 |
| F | 28.21*** | 11.59*** | 0.73 | 1.47 | 2.53* |
| $R^2$ | 0.03 | 0.01 | 0.001 | 0.001 | 0.01 |

*<0.10 **<0.05 ***<0.01.

decision transparency—decision, rationale and procedure—are tested in comparison to a control group which received no information on the decision. Looking across models on Table 4 it is important to note that the overall model fit indicated by the F-scores is not consistently good, while models 1 and 2 have significant F-scores, and 5 has a borderline significant score, models 3 and 4 have a poor overall fit reflecting the lack of effect of the experimental treatments. The r-square statistics are generally quite small across the models again reflecting the relatively small, but there are important substantive effects for each of the experimental treatments. Again, in order to test the robustness of our results we included a series of demographic (age, sex, education) and political (voter ID) controls in the model. The inclusion of these variables did not meaningfully change the effect of the treatments.

Model 1 shows the effects of decision transparency on acceptance of policy decisions made by Prevent: exposure to only the example policy decision reduces acceptance (B = −.274 ($p < .01$)), the inclusion of the rationale behind the policy decision increases acceptance (B = .116 ($p < .01$)), whereas the inclusion of the procedure used to make the decision has a borderline negative impact on decision acceptance although this is not statistically significant (B = −.046 ($p < .10$)) Model 1 supports **H3** that decision rationale increases decision acceptance and this is the only condition which shows an increase in decision acceptance. Importantly, we find a statistically significant difference between types of decision transparency (See Figure 2), supporting the salience of including a rationale in reducing motivated scepticism over other forms of decision transparency.[94] Finally, our findings show that decision transparency has an effect on acceptance for Prevent's policy decisions more widely and not just with regard one specific policy decision, as identified by De Fine Licht and Grimmelikhuijsen et al.[95] Our experiment sought to convey a realistic decision the public are likely to be exposed to in the media which accounts for the significant decrease in acceptance when exposed only to the decision—in cases of negative reporting of Prevent decisions, increased transparency which includes a rationale not only removes the negative effects but also increases acceptance of decisions made by Prevent.

Model II looks at the stated willingness to protest decisions made by Prevent, finding that decision (B = −.279 ($p < .01$)), rationale (B = −.543 ($p < .01$)), and procedure (B = −.390 ($p < .01$)) transparency all decrease a willingness to protest decisions. This finding supports **H4** insofar as decision rationale decreases a willingness to protest decisions, however the overall findings require further consideration. As Figure 2 shows, there is no difference between the three decision transparency conditions, meaning all forms of decision transparency make people less willing to protest policy decisions. Models III and IV were exploratory variables on policy support however we find no statistically significant results across any of the conditions except in Model IV with only decision transparency increasing the willingness to report intimates (B = .212 ($p < .05$)). One possible explanation for Model IV's findings in line with research on drivers of intimate reporting[96] is decision transparency accentuates the potential risk to the community even where the case is
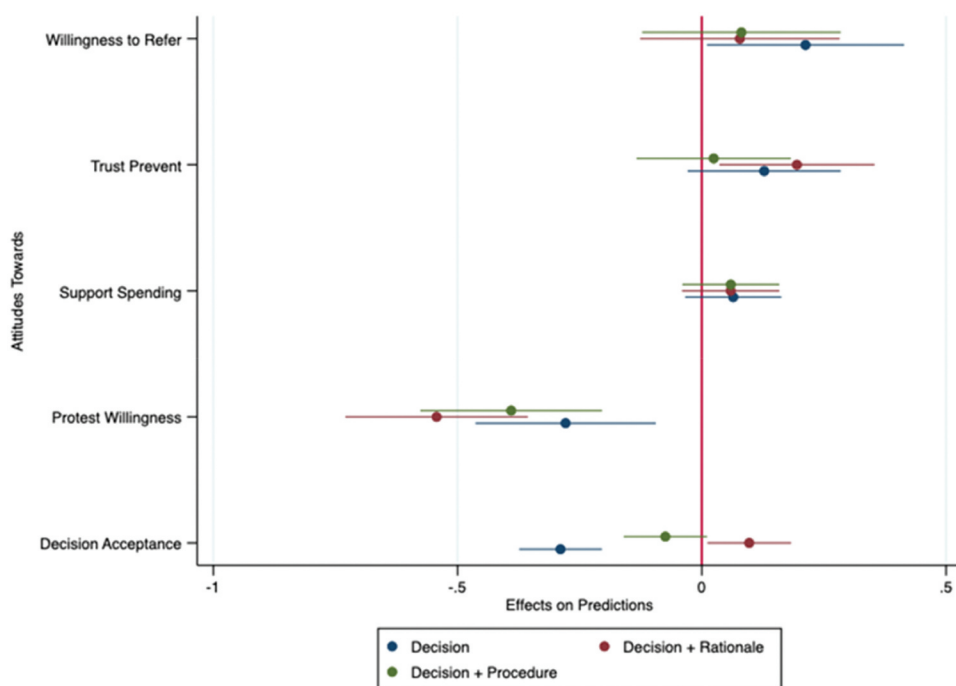
**Figure 2.** Experiment 2—Effect of decision transparency on different attitudes towards prevent.

dropped, whereas procedure and rationale transparency reduce/clarify this risk. Model V focuses on trust in the work to prevent terrorism, providing support for **H5** by finding that decision rationale condition increases trust (B = −.195 ($p < .05$)). As expected, no other condition was statistically significant and supports the argument that trust is slightly increased by providing decision transparency *and* the rationale in policy domains that involve taboo trade-offs.[97] While this finding provides some support for the assumption in terrorism research that increased transparency can improve trust,[98] the increase is relatively small and prior trust in terrorism prevention work (or the damage caused by Prevent referrals) may not be as negative as these studies assume. Though, of course, much of the discourse on Prevent focuses on the loss of trust among a specific audience, typically British Muslims, whereas our study focuses on the general population.

In all, our findings provide support for claims that transparency rationale can reduce a willingness to oppose a policy, increase decision acceptance, and increase trust. Grimmelikhuijsen et al theorise that decision rationale has this effect because it overcomes motivated scepticism toward a policy.[99] However, this does not tend to hold for all measures and in most cases there is no difference between transparency conditions. We find effects consistent with prior research tends to manifest in measures which capture attitudes toward a policy but not in measures which capture behavioural intent toward a policy—even the reduced willingness to protest is unclear as all treatment conditions are indistinguishable. Prior studies emphasize the role of the policy area as mediating the effects of decision transparency, and while we cannot test its effect, the relative inconsistency with our findings and prior studies indicates other mediating factors within the specific policy area we test. Firstly, terrorism prevention programmes not only invoke taboo trade-offs but invoke trade-offs between sacred values which have not been explored—in other words, while rationale transparency may overcome scepticism among audiences typically predisposed to opposing counter-terrorism policy, communicating the policy decision might shift attitudes driven by different sacred values. Thus, in contrast to prior studies which focus on trade-offs between secular and sacred values, increased decision transparency counter-terrorism policy may prompt a trade-off *between* sacred values such as human rights versus national security; as a consequence, transparency on the decision would

decrease acceptance among those concerned about both values as there is less transparency on why the prevent investigation was dropped, people who prioritise national security would be less willing to protest the policy when they are told it targets 'the other'[100] and would be more likely to support making a referral when the security risk is accentuated (by obfuscating the decision).

## Conclusion

The research addressed a core assumption in terrorism studies which has informed counter-terrorism policy—increased transparency can improve support and trust in policy—and the findings challenge this assumption, showing transparency is a double-edged sword for support and trust in terrorism prevention policy. While the effects of transparency on support and trust may be small, our findings show that instead of having a positive effect that commonly used forms of transparency—policy information transparency—have either a negative or no effect of varying measures of attitudinal and behavioral support, as well as trust. Our research findings give evidence for policy-makers to be far more cautious in developing communication strategies, particularly aimed at a general audience, and that transparency should be considered alongside a wider range of communications strategies in order to have the intended instrumental effect.[101] As detailed above, several prevention programmes have made efforts to transparently communicate the aims of programmes, partly in the assumption it can build support and trust among the wider public and key stakeholders. The following study tested the effects of prevention policy information on support and trust, finding this form of transparency decreased support and trust in most measures. Practically these are significant findings insofar as the vignettes used in the experiment were based on existing public communications by Prevent and the study has shown this information is counter-productive among a representative sample of the UK population. As an example, one of the key challenges prevention programmes face is encouraging those who are best-placed to spot the early signs of radicalisation to report this to authorities or service providers—the Prevent website for instance provides information to the public with the aim of encouraging referrals and our findings indicate that communicating policy information reduces intent to report. However, we show that some forms of transparency can increase support and trust for prevention policy by providing a rationale for decisions, even in a scenario which could present the policy in the negative light.

Several studies have theorised the mechanisms by which policy information transparency can reduce trust and support and while the following study does not seek to test these theories, the results are consistent. It has been argued the effect of transparency depends on the policy domain, which has been explained through how policy decisions involving taboo trade-offs can result in transparency having a negative effect on trust and support: greater transparency confronts people with taboo trade-offs between secular and sacred values, which generates a negative response to the policy or ameliorates the increases in support found in other policy domains. Other explanations focus on the effects of messaging, specifically how policy information transparency can negatively affect policy understanding which subsequently reduces trust, and pre-existing negative attitudes to a policy area can be accentuated through increased transparency which takes a particularly positive or neutral slant. Contributing to research on transparency, we show that increased policy information can decrease trust in the work of a specific policy area and that decreases in support tends to be in measures which relate to behavioural support but not attitudinal support. Given a major aim of counter-terrorism messaging is to increase public involvement, our findings suggest increased policy information transparency makes people less willing to engage in higher levels of behavioural support (such as committing to spending increases) but has no effect on attitudinal support.

Our research also makes a contribution to studies on decision transparency in firming up evidence of the generally more positive effect of decision rationale on support and trust. Decision rationale increases the acceptance of decisions made by the relevant institution, it decreases a willingness to protest and increases trust within the policy area. While the findings are broadly consistent with the findings of other studies with regard decision transparency, we find inconsistencies in other forms of decision transparency which to an extent weaken the theoretical mechanisms by which transparency

effects are explained. While the following study cannot speak definitively to these points, one possible explanation which would be theoretically consistent is the nature of the policy domain invokes *sacred vs sacred* trade-offs that mediates decision transparency quite differently and inconsistently than in policy decisions that invoke trade-offs between sacred and secular values. Prevent is not only a matter of life-or-death, it is a policy area which potentially undermines other sacred values such as civil liberties and anti-discrimination, consequently transparency effects may be shaped by attitudes toward these competing sacred values.

One possible limitation of the study is we could only make reference to one suspected ideology. Research shows that public support for counter-terrorism varies depending on the identity of the intervention target, with some audiences less supportive of a policy when it involves Muslims[102]—we decided to be clear to avoid participants making assumptions of the identity and chose a suspected Islamist case to realistically communicate the tensions arising from the referral process. Furthermore, in reflection this may be seen as a limitation of the second experiment insofar as the control group did not expose the identity of the individual, however including the information would have undermined the experiment and the validity of the control. Another possible limitation is, by conveying a realistic government attempt at transparency, we could be criticised for not critically challenging the government narrative—however the second experiment presents a far more negative slant on Prevent, the information provided was based on a developed literature on policy transparency, and at the end of the experiment we provided participants with further information on Prevent which included critical literature of Prevent. While we challenge the instrumental assumptions regarding transparency, transparency is valuable for reasons beyond its effects on public opinion—normatively, governments should be more transparent and an evidence-based understanding of the instrumental utility of transparency can support the normative dimension. There are different manifestations of transparency and how terrorism studies understand transparency may differ from how we researched policy transparency—we focused on forms of transparency which are common in practice and have a developed theoretical and empirical basis, though future research could test other forms of transparency. An additional contribution of our study is to better conceptualise what transparency may look like in relation to terrorism prevention as we found no definition in any of the studies we reviewed. Another possible criticism is many of these assumptions in terrorism studies are made with regard a specific community (e.g. transparency will increase trust among British Muslims) and our study looks at a general population—future research could explore this further but in this study we opted to build more closely on existing research on transparency which does not account for differences within a population. Finally, our findings are specific to Prevent but have broader implications for similar CVE programmes globally, especially regarding policy information transparency, though clearly any generalisability should be taken with caution, particularly between contexts which have higher and lower traditions of policy transparency.

## Disclosure statement

## Funding

## Notes on contributors

*Gordon Clubb* is an Associate Professor in Terrorism. His research focuses on public support for counter-terrorism and PCVE policies, de-radicalization, and the role of former extremists in PCVE.

*Graeme Davies* is a Professor at the University of York. His research examines the relationship between domestic politics and state behaviour in the international system.

*Yoshiharu Kobayashi* is an Associate Professor of Global Political Economy and Development at University of Leeds. His research centers on both global and domestic politics around issues such as pandemics, refugee crises, poverty, and terrorism.

## Notes

1. Bart Schuurman, "Defeated by Popular Demand: Public Support and Counterterrorism in Three Western Democracies, 1963–1998," *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism* 36, no. 2 (2013): 152–75; Isabelle Duyvesteyn and Bart Schuurman, "Public Support and (Counter) Terrorism," in *Routledge Handbook of Terrorism and Counterterrorism*, edited by Andrew Silke (Routledge, 2018), 416–24; Andrew Glazzard and Alastair Reed, "Beyond Prevention: The Role of Strategic Communications Across the Four Pillars of Counterterrorism Strategy," *The RUSI Journal* 165, no. 1 (2020): 74–88; Graeme Blair, Rebecca Littman, Elizabeth R. Nugent, Rebecca Wolfe, Mohammed Bukar, Benjamin Crisman, Anthony Etim, Chad Hazlett, and Jiyoung Kim, "Trusted Authorities can Change Minds and Shift Norms During Conflict," *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences* 118, no. 42 (2021): e2105570118; Sadi Shanaah, "What Motivates Muslims to Engage in Counterextremism? The Role of Identity, Efficacy, Emotions, and Morality," *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism* 44, no. 9 (2021): 755–75.

2. Talene Bilazarian, "Countering Violent Extremism: Lessons on Early Intervention from the United Kingdom's Channel Program," October 2016, 11, https://extremism.gwu.edu/files/downloads/Channel/UK.pdf; Adrian Cherney, "Police Community Engagement and Outreach in a Counterterrorism Context," *Journal of Policing, Intelligence and Counter Terrorism* 13, no. 1 (2018): 60–79; Alexander Guittard, *Beyond CVE: Evolving US Countering Violent Extremism Policy to Prevent the Growing Threat of Domestic Terrorism* (Harvard Kennedy School, Belfer Center, 2019); Vikram Dodd, "Counter-Terror Chief Says Policing Alone Cannot Beat Extremism," *The Guardian*, 2019, https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2019/aug/06/counter-terrorism-chief-calls-for-greater-social-inclusion; Stevan Weine, David P. Eisenman, Janni Kinsler, Deborah C. Glik, and Chloe Polutnik, "Addressing Violent Extremism as Public Health Policy and Practice," *Behavioral Sciences of Terrorism and Political Aggression* 9, no. 3 (2017): 208–21; Behnam T. Said and Hazim Fouad, *Countering Islamist Radicalisation in Germany: A Guide to Germany's Growing Prevention Infrastructure* (JSTOR, 2018); United States. Department of Homeland Security, *Department of Homeland Security Strategic Framework for Countering Terrorism and Targeted Violence* (Homeland Security, 2019).

3. Bilazarian, "Countering Violent Extremism"; David C. Lundie, "Building a Terrorist House on Sand: A Critical Incident Analysis of Interprofessionality and the Prevent Duty in Schools in England," *Journal of Beliefs & Values* 40, no. 3 (2019): 321–37; Shamim Miah, *Muslims, Schooling and Security: Trojan Horse, Prevent and Racial Politics*. (London: Palgrave, 2017).

4. Rachel Briggs, "Community Engagement for Counterterrorism: Lessons from the United Kingdom," *International Affairs* 86, no. 4 (2010): 971–81; Imran Awan, "'I Am a Muslim Not An Extremist': How the Prevent Strategy has Constructed a 'Suspect' Community," *Politics & Policy* 40, no. 6 (2012): 1158–85; Madeline-Sophie Abbas, "Producing 'Internal Suspect Bodies': Divisive Effects of UK Counter-Terrorism Measures on Muslim Communities in Leeds and Bradford," *The British Journal of Sociology* 70, no. 1 (2019): 261–82.

5. Bilazarian, "Countering Violent Extremism"; Shanaah, "What Motivates Muslims to Engage in Counterextremism?"

6. Michele Grossman, "When the 'Right Thing to Do'feels so Wrong: Australian Muslim Perspectives on 'Intimates' Reporting to Authorities about Violent Extremism," in *Islamophobia and Radicalization*, edited by J. Esposito and D. Iner (Cham: Palgrave Macmillan, 2019), https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-95237-6_11; Thomas Wuchte and Mehdi Knani, "Countering Violent Extremism and Radicalization that Lead to Terrorism: The OSCE's Unique Regional Blueprint," *Journal Exit-Deutschland. Zeitschrift für Deradikalisierung und demokratische Kultur* 2 (2013): 76–85.

7. Reto Rufer, "Disarmament, Demobilisation and Reintegration (DDR): Conceptual Approaches, Specific Settings, Practical Experiences" (Geneva Centre for the Democratic Control of Armed Forces, 2005); Yosuke Nagai, "Reintegration of Al-Shabaab's Defectors in Somalia: An Examination of Conditions for Successful Reintegration," *Peace and Conflict Studies* 27, no. 3 (2021): 5; Vanda Felbab-Brown, "'In Nigeria, We Don't Want Them Back': Amnesty, Defectors' Programs, Leniency Measures, Informal Reconciliation, and Punitive Responses to Boko Haram" *'In Nigeria, we Don't Want Them Back': Amnesty, Defectors' Programmes, Leniency Measures, Informal Reconciliation, and Punitive Responses to Boko Haram* (Tokyo, Japan: United Nations University, 2018).

8. Blair et al., "Trusted Authorities can Change Minds and Shift Norms"; Tarela Juliet Ike, Danny Singh, Sean Murphy, Dung Ezekiel Jidong, Fran Porritt, and Evangelyn Ebi Ayobi, "Community Perspectives of Former Terrorist Combatants, Militants and Reintegration Programmes in Nigeria: A Systematic Review," *Behavioral Sciences of Terrorism and Political Aggression* 14, no. 2 (2022): 142–68; Chaula Rininta Anindya, "The

Deradicalisation Programme for Indonesian Deportees: A Vacuum in Coordination," *Journal for Deradicalization* Spring, no. 18 (2019): 217–43.

9. John Horgan and Kurt Braddock, "Rehabilitating the Terrorists?: Challenges in Assessing the Effectiveness of De-Radicalization Programs," *Terrorism and Political Violence* 22, no. 2 (2010): 267–91; Daniel Koehler, "How and Why We Should Take Deradicalization Seriously," *Nature Human Behaviour* 1, no. 6 (2017): 95.

10. Victor Asiedu, "Planning and Implementation of a Community-Based Approach to Reintegration Programmes of Ex-Combatants," *Development in Practice* 22, no. 1 (2012): 98–103; Caitlin Mastroe, "Evaluating CVE: Understanding the Recent Changes to the United Kingdom's Implementation of Prevent," *Perspectives on Terrorism* 10, no. 2 (2016): 50–60; David Lowe, "Prevent/Resilience Strategies: Are they Inclusive or Divisive?" *The New Jurist*, 2016, https://researchonline.ljmu.ac.uk/id/eprint/3855/1/Prevent_Resilience%20Strategies_%20Are%20they%20Inclusive%20or%20Devisive_%20_%20The%20NewJuri.pdf (accessed April1, 2023).

11. Paul Thomas, "Failed and Friendless: The UK's 'Preventing Violent Extremism' Programme," *The British Journal of Politics and International Relations* 12, no. 3 (2010): 442–58; Rob Faure-Walker, "Teachers as Informants: Countering Extremism and Promoting Violence," *Journal of Beliefs & Values* 40, no. 3 (2019): 368–80; Tarek Younis, "The Psychologisation of Counter-Extremism: Unpacking Prevent," *Race & Class* 62, no. 3 (2021): 37–60; Amnesty International, "'This is the Thought Police'" (London, Amnesty International UK, November 2023) (accessed January 30, 2024).

12. Briggs, "Community Engagement for Counterterrorism."

13. Julian Hargreaves, "Prevent Counter-Terrorism Strategy Remains Unfair on British Muslims, Despite Home Office Efforts," *The Conversation*, December 18, 2018.

14. Paul Thomas, "Britain's Prevent Strategy: Always Changing, Always the Same?" in *The Prevent Duty in Education: Impact, Enactment and Implications*, edited by Busher Joel and Lee Jerome (Springer Nature, 2020).

15. Mubaraz Ahmed and Sam Alvis, "Past, Prevent and Future: Improving Prevent for a New Generation" (Tony Blair Institute for Global Change, 2020); William Shawcross, "Independent Review of Prevent" (House of Commons, 2023).

16. ACT Website, "Act Early," https://actearly.uk/ (accessed October 10, 2022).

17. The LTAI website has been since removed and has been merged with the ACT website. An example of the material on the LTAI website which informed the experiment vignettes can be found at Prevent Channel Overview, "Let's Talk About It," *Safeguarding Warwickshire*, https://www.safeguardingwarwickshire.co.uk/images/downloads/WSAB-Spotlight-Feature-Docs/LTAI_Prevent_Channel_overview.pdf (accessed June 28, 2023).

18. See HM Government, "Channel Duty Guidance: Protecting People Vulnerable to Being Drawn into Terrorism," 2020, https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/964567/6.6271_HO_HMG_Channel_Duty_Guidance_v14_Web.pdf (accessed October 10, 2022).

19. International Association of Chiefs of Police, "Using Community Policing to Counter Violent Extremism: Five Key Principles for Law Enforcement" (Washington, DC: Office of Community Oriented Policing Services, 2014); Asena Baykal, Sarah Bressan, Julia Friedrich, Giulia Pasquali, Philipp Rotman, Marie Wanger, "Evaluating P/CVE: Institutional Structures in International Comparison" (Global Public Policy Institute, 2021); OECD Website, "Voluntary Transparency Reporting Framework" https://www.oecd.org/digital/vtrf/ (accessed October 10, 2022).

20. Suzanne Piotrowski, Stephan Grimmelikhuijsen, and Felix Deat, "Numbers Over Narratives? How Government Message Strategies Affect Citizens' Attitudes," *Public Performance & Management Review* 42, no. 5 (2019): 1005–28.

21. Mary Beth Altier, "Criminal or Terrorist? Fear, Bias, and Public Support for Prisoner Reentry Programs," *Terrorism and Political Violence* 35, no. 1 (2023): 83–103.

22. Blair et al., "Trusted Authorities can Change Minds and Shift Norms."

23. Mohammed M. Ali, Kristina Murphy, and Adrian Cherney, "Counter-Terrorism Measures and Perceptions of Police Legitimacy: The Importance Muslims Place on Procedural Justice, Representative Bureaucracy, and Bounded-Authority Concerns," *Journal of Criminology* 55, no. 1 (2022): 3–22; Kristina Murphy, Natasha S. Madon, and Adrian Cherney, "Promoting Muslims' Cooperation with Police in Counter-Terrorism: The Interaction between Procedural Justice, Police Legitimacy and Law Legitimacy," *Policing: An International Journal* 40, no. 3 (2017): 544–59.

24. Stephan G. Grimmelikhuijsen and Albert J. Meijer, "Effects of Transparency on the Perceived Trustworthiness of a Government Organization: Evidence from an Online Experiment," *Journal of Public Administration Research and Theory* 24, no. 1 (2014): 137–57; Gregory A. Porumbescu, "Using Transparency to Enhance Responsiveness and Trust in Local Government: Can it Work?" *State and Local Government Review* 47, no. 3 (2015): 205–13; Gregory Porumbescu, Nicola Bellé, Maria Cucciniello, and Greta Nasi, "Translating Policy Transparency into Policy Understanding and Policy Support: Evidence from a Survey Experiment," *Public Administration* 95, no. 4 (2017): 990–1008.

25. Yeunjae Lee and Jo-Yun Queenie Li, "The Role of Communication Transparency and Organizational Trust in Publics' Perceptions, Attitudes and Social Distancing Behaviour: A Case Study of the COVID-19 Outbreak," *Journal of Contingencies and Crisis Management* 29, no. 4 (2021): 368–84.
26. Jenille Fairbanks, Kenneth D. Plowman, and Brad L. Rawlins, "Transparency in Government Communication," *Journal of Public Affairs: An International Journal* 7, no. 1 (2007): 23–37.
27. Piotrowski et al., "Numbers Over Narratives?" 1007.
28. The most common way policy transparency has been operationalized is through three types of policy transparency—policy information transparency, decision-making transparency, and policy outcome transparency. We decided to not focus on policy outcome transparency because the theoretical base is more developed in relation to other forms of transparency and CT/CVE. Porumbescu et al., "Translating Policy Transparency into Policy Understanding and Policy Support"; Stephan Grimmelikhuijsen, Gregory Porumbescu, Boram Hong, and Tobin Im, "The Effect of Transparency on Trust in Government: A Cross-National Comparative Experiment," *Public Administration Review* 73, no. 4 (2013): 575–86. Programmes typically face greater challenges in communicating policy outcomes due to privacy, security and difficulties in measuring outcomes, Koehler, "How and Why We Should Take Deradicalization Seriously."
29. Porumbescu et al., "Translating Policy Transparency into Policy Understanding and Policy Support," 992; Gregory A. Porumbescu, "Does Transparency Improve Citizens' Perceptions of Government Performance? Evidence from Seoul, South Korea," *Administration & Society* 49, no. 3 (2017): 443–68; Grimmelikhuijsen et al., "The Effect of Transparency on Trust in Government."
30. See Porumbescu et al., "Translating Policy Transparency into Policy Understanding and Policy Support," 992.
31. Grimmelikhuijsen et al., "The Effect of Transparency on Trust in Government"; Porumbescu et al., "Translating Policy Transparency into Policy Understanding and Policy Support."
32. Jenny de Fine Licht, "Policy Area as a Potential Moderator of Transparency Effects: An Experiment," *Public Administration Review* 74, no. 3 (2014): 361–71; Stephan Grimmelikhuijsen, Feie Herkes, Ian Leistikow, Jos Verkroost, Femke de Vries, and Wilte G. Zijlstra, "Can Decision Transparency Increase Citizen Trust in Regulatory Agencies? Evidence from a Representative Survey Experiment," *Regulation & Governance* 15, no. 1 (2021): 17–31.
33. See note 27 above.
34. Dong-Young Kim and Junseop Shim, "Government Communication and Public Acceptance of Policies in South Korea," *International Review of Public Administration* 25, no. 1 (2020): 44–63.
35. Grimmelikhuijsen et al., "The Effect of Transparency on Trust in Government."
36. Grimmelikhuijsen et al., "Can Decision Transparency Increase Citizen Trust in Regulatory Agencies?"; Grimmelikhuijsen and Meijer, "Effects of Transparency on the Perceived Trustworthiness of a Government Organization."
37. de Fine Licht, "Policy Area as a Potential Moderator of Transparency Effects."
38. de Fine Licht, "Policy Area as a Potential Moderator of Transparency Effects"; Rui Mu, Yan Li, and Tie Cui, "Policy Narrative, Policy Understanding and Policy Support Intention: A Survey Experiment on Energy Conservation," *Policy Studies* 43, no. 6 (2022): 1361–81; Porumbescu et al., "Translating Policy Transparency into Policy Understanding and Policy Support."
39. Kim and Shim, "Government Communication and Public Acceptance of Policies in South Korea"; Gregory A. Porumbescu, Meghan I. H. Lindeman, Erica Ceka, and Maria Cucciniello, "Can Transparency Foster More Understanding and Compliant Citizens?" *Public Administration Review* 77, no. 6 (November 1, 2017): 840–50, https://doi.org/10.1111/puar.12790.
40. Jenny De Fine Licht, Daniel Naurin, Peter Esaiasson, and Mikael Gilljam, "When Does Transparency Generate Legitimacy? Experimenting on a Context-Bound Relationship," *Governance* 27, no. 1 (2014): 111–34.
41. de Fine Licht, "Policy Area as a Potential Moderator of Transparency Effects"; Grimmelikhuijsen et al., "Can Decision Transparency Increase Citizen Trust in Regulatory Agencies?"
42. Lee and Li, "The Role of Communication Transparency and Organizational Trust in Publics' Perceptions, Attitudes and Social Distancing Behaviour."
43. De Fine Licht et al., "When Does Transparency Generate Legitimacy?"; Grimmelikhuijsen et al., "Can Decision Transparency Increase Citizen Trust in Regulatory Agencies?"; Maria Cucciniello, Gregory A. Porumbescu, and Stephan Grimmelikhuijsen, "25 Years of Transparency Research: Evidence and Future Directions," *Public Administration Review* 77, no. 1 (January 1, 2017): 32–44, https://doi.org/10.1111/puar.12685, https://dspace.library.uu.nl/bitstream/1874/348413/1/Cucciniello_et_al_2017_Public_Administration_Review.pdf.
44. See note 35 above.
45. de Fine Licht, "Policy Area as a Potential Moderator of Transparency Effects"; Porumbescu et al., "Can Transparency Foster More Understanding and Compliant Citizens?"
46. Thomas, "Failed and Friendless"; Gordon Clubb, Daniel Koehler, Jonatan Schewe, and Ryan O'Connor, *Selling De-Radicalisation: Managing the Media Framing of Countering Violent Extremism* (Routledge, 2021).
47. Piotrowski et al., "Numbers Over Narratives?"; Mu et al., "Policy Narrative, Policy Understanding and Policy Support Intention."

48. Porumbescu, "Does Transparency Improve Citizens' Perceptions of Government Performance?"; Porumbescu et al., "Translating Policy Transparency into Policy Understanding and Policy Support"; Porumbescu et al., "Can Transparency Foster More Understanding and Compliant Citizens?"
49. Porumbescu et al., "Translating Policy Transparency into Policy Understanding and Policy Support."
50. Porumbescu et al., "Can Transparency Foster More Understanding and Compliant Citizens?"
51. Stephan G. Grimmelikhuijsen, Suzanne J. Piotrowski, and Gregg G. Van Ryzin, "Latent Transparency and Trust in Government: Unexpected Findings from Two Survey Experiments," *Government Information Quarterly* 37, no. 4 (2020): 101497; de Fine Licht, "Policy Area as a Potential Moderator of Transparency Effects."
52. de Fine Licht, "Policy Area as a Potential Moderator of Transparency Effects"; Porumbescu et al., "Can Transparency Foster More Understanding and Compliant Citizens?"; Porumbescu, "Does Transparency Improve Citizens' Perceptions of Government Performance?"; Porumbescu et al., "Translating Policy Transparency into Policy Understanding and Policy Support."
53. Clubb et al., *Selling De-Radicalisation*.
54. See Grimmelikhuijsen et al., "The Effect of Transparency on Trust in Government," 575.
55. Giselle A. Auger, "Trust Me, Trust Me Not: An Experimental Analysis of the Effect of Transparency on Organizations," *Journal of Public Relations Research* 26, no. 4 (2014): 325–43.
56. See note 35 above.
57. See note 37 above.
58. Grimmelikhuijsen et al., "Can Decision Transparency Increase Citizen Trust in Regulatory Agencies?"
59. Michael Bang Petersen, Alexander Bor, Frederik Jørgensen, and Marie Fly Lindholt, "Transparent Communication about Negative Features of COVID-19 Vaccines Decreases Acceptance but Increases Trust," *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences* 118, no. 29 (2021): e2024597118.
60. Grimmelikhuijsen et al., "Latent Transparency and Trust in Government."
61. De Fine Licht et al., "When Does Transparency Generate Legitimacy?"
62. See note 37 above.
63. de Fine Licht, "Policy Area as a Potential Moderator of Transparency Effects," 366.
64. Ibid.
65. Ibid.
66. Grimmelikhuijsen et al., "Can Decision Transparency Increase Citizen Trust in Regulatory Agencies?"
67. Ibid., 18.
68. Gregory A. Porumbescu and Stephan Grimmelikhuijsen, "Linking Decision-Making Procedures to Decision Acceptance and Citizen Voice: Evidence from Two Studies," *The American Review of Public Administration* 48, no. 8 (2018): 902–14.
69. Grimmelikhuijsen et al., "Can Decision Transparency Increase Citizen Trust in Regulatory Agencies?"
70. Ibid., 28.
71. See note 37 above.
72. See note 58 above.
73. Ibid.
74. ACT Website, "Act Early."
75. For instance, Prevent is much more state-oriented than other programmes, especially the Prevent Duty, which operates at a national level and is institutionalized—arguably it is a result of the sheer scale of the referral system that creates much of the controversy with Prevent.
76. Of course there are contextual factors to consider, not least the tendency of transparency effects to vary between democratic and non-democratic states. See Grimmelikhuijsen et al., "The Effect of Transparency on Trust in Government."
77. There are three reports on public attitudes to Prevent which shows the public have little understanding of Prevent. Ahmed and Alvis, "Past, Prevent and Future"; Jon Clements, Manon Roberts, and Dan Forman, "Listening to British Muslims: Policing, Extremism and Prevent," *CREST Advisory*, 2020, https://www.crestadvisory.com/post/executive-summary-listening-to-british-muslims-on-policing-extremism-and-prevent; HM Government, "Prevent: Public Knowledge and Interactions," 2019, https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/930110/Annex_B_-_Prevent_Survey_findings_report__1_.pdf.
78. HM Government, "Channel Duty Guidance." Each local council has their own information on Channel Referral Guidance which details the decision process, for example See Staffordshire Safeguarding Children Board, "Safeguarding People Who are Vulnerable to Being Drawn into Extremism and/or Terrorism in Staffordshire (Prevent/Channel Referral Guidance)," 2019, https://www.staffsscb.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/09/Prevent-Chanel-Guidance.pdf.
79. See note 58 above.
80. Mary Beth Altier, "Criminal or Terrorist?: Fear, Bias, and Public Support for Prisoner Reentry Programs," *Terrorism and Political Violence* 35, no. 1 (2023): 83–103.

81. Our approach draws upon the measure used by De Fine Licht to measure the effects of transparency on trust in traffic security and public culture and leisure promotion. de Fine Licht, "Policy Area as a Potential Moderator of Transparency Effects" See also Grimmelikhuijsen et al., "Can Decision Transparency Increase Citizen Trust in Regulatory Agencies?"

82. The measure is a variation of other studies however it was adjusted to reflect a more realistic scenario for UK participants (e.g. it is very unlikely a specific tax for one counter-terrorism policy would be introduced, therefore using this measure would likely result in more negative responses). See Porumbescu et al., "Can Transparency Foster More Understanding and Compliant Citizens?"

83. While a more specific focus on one policy decision would be preferable, we expected this would affect the results of the control group who were not exposed to a particular decision, therefore the measure used was appropriate across all groups. See de Fine Licht, "Policy Area as a Potential Moderator of Transparency Effects"; Grimmelikhuijsen et al., "Can Decision Transparency Increase Citizen Trust in Regulatory Agencies?"

84. See note 37 above.

85. Shandon Harris-Hogan, Kate Barrelle, and Andrew Zammit, "What is Countering Violent Extremism? Exploring CVE Policy and Practice in Australia," *Behavioral Sciences of Terrorism and Political Aggression* 8, no. 1 (2016): 6–24.

86. Grossman, "When the 'Right Thing to Do'feels So Wrong."

87. Paul Thomas, Michele Grossman, Shamim Miah, and Kris Christmann, "Community Reporting Thresholds: Sharing Information with Authorities Concerning Violent Extremist Activity and Involvement in Foreign Conflict: A UK Replication Study," (2017).

88. Bilazarian, "Countering Violent Extremism"; Cherney, "Police Community Engagement and Outreach in a Counterterrorism Context"; Guittard, *Beyond CVE*; Weine et al., "Addressing Violent Extremism as Public Health Policy and Practice"; Said and Fouad, *Countering Islamist Radicalisation in Germany*; Security, *Department of Homeland Security Strategic Framework*.

89. de Fine Licht, "Policy Area as a Potential Moderator of Transparency Effects"; Porumbescu et al., "Can Transparency Foster More Understanding and Compliant Citizens?"

90. de Fine Licht, "Policy Area as a Potential Moderator of Transparency Effects"; Grimmelikhuijsen et al., "Can Decision Transparency Increase Citizen Trust in Regulatory Agencies?"

91. See note 49 above.

92. Petersen et al., "Transparent Communication about Negative Features of COVID-19."

93. Auger, "Trust Me, Trust Me Not."

94. See note 58 above.

95. de Fine Licht, "Policy Area as a Potential Moderator of Transparency Effects"; Grimmelikhuijsen et al., "Can Decision Transparency Increase Citizen Trust in Regulatory Agencies?"

96. Sara K. Thompson, Michele Grossman, and Paul Thomas, "Needs, Rights and Systems: Increasing Canadian Intimate Bystander Reporting on Radicalizing to Violence," *Terrorism and Political Violence* (2023): 1–22; imates' reporting to authorities about violent extremism," *Islamophobia and Radicalization: Breeding Intolerance and Violence* (2019).

97. See note 37 above.

98. Awan, "'I Am a Muslim Not an Extremist'"; Abbas, "Producing 'Internal Suspect Bodies'."

99. See note 58 above.

100. Altier, "Criminal or Terrorist?"

101. See Altier, "Criminal or Terrorist?"; Blair et al., "Trusted Authorities can Change Minds and Shift Norms"; Ali et al., "Counter-Terrorism Measures and Perceptions of Police Legitimacy"; Murphy et al., "Promoting Muslims' Cooperation with Police in Counter-Terrorism."

102. See note 100 above.