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# Increasing Cognitive Complexity and Collaboration Across Communities: Being Muslim Being Scottish

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# Increasing Cognitive Complexity and Collaboration Across Communities: Being Muslim Being Scottish

## Author Biography

Dr Eolene Boyd-MacMillan is Senior Research Associate and Co-Director of the IC Thinking Group, Department of Psychology, University of Cambridge. For the past decade, Eolene has been involved in reducing and preventing destructive conflict through the development and empirical evaluation of cognitive complexity interventions. Using the concept and cross-culturally validated measurement frame of integrative complexity (IC) with predictive values (Suedfeld and Tetlock, 2014), she aims to advance understanding of the mechanisms involved in and effects of increasing cognitive complexity management capacities through participatory action research and end-user partnerships in diverse communities.

## Abstract

Being Muslim Being Scottish (BMBS) joins a *family* of IC interventions, Being Muslim Being British (BMBB) and Being Kenyan Being Muslim (BKBM). Like BMBB and BKBM, the newest family member, BMBS, is designed to increase cognitive complexity management by enabling participants to identify and access a wider range of their own values (value pluralism). Increased cognitive management capacities enable movement from rapid, inflexible, closed, *black and white* thinking that sees no validity in other viewpoints toward more deliberate, flexible, open thinking that can tolerate *shades of grey*, and see validity in other viewpoints without sacrificing one's core values. Piloted in a large city in Scotland with a new model of participant involvement, participants represented both safeguarding practitioner and Muslim communities. Evaluated using the cross-culturally validated integrative complexity empirical measurement frame, statistical analyses showed significant gains in complex thinking about participants' self-identified in and outgroups. These results predict more peaceful outcomes to intra- and inter-group conflict as participants recognize and access a wider range of responses choices in the face of difference and disagreement. Qualitative analyses found increased awareness of risks to radicalization, confidence to discuss controversial and sensitive topics, and communication among diverse communities for effective safeguarding. While these pilot results indicate that BMBS is effective at reducing violent extremism through increased integrative complexity management capacities and structured cross community-learning, further research is suggested.

## Acknowledgements

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## Introduction

The British Broadcasting Company (BBC) reported in August 2016, that “open sources” estimated 850 militants had travelled to Syria or Iraq from the whole of the United Kingdom (UK).<sup>1</sup> This may be a reasonable estimate in light of the January 2015 estimate of 500 to 600 reported by the International Centre for the Study of Radicalization, King’s College London.<sup>2</sup> Within the UK, Scotland is not immune. There have been reports of people travelling, including a young man from Scotland who appeared on a Daesh recruitment video (later confirmed to have died in Syria, August 2015).<sup>3</sup> The 2011 Scottish Government census indicated that within a population of 5,295,000, those who identified as Muslim were 77,000 (1.4 percent of the population).<sup>4</sup> Daily overall relations among Muslims and non-Muslims in Scotland are harmonious alongside reported experiences of prejudice and discrimination toward Muslims, e.g., when going through airport security.<sup>5</sup> Reported in previous issues of the *Journal of Strategic Security*, two Integrative Complexity Thinking interventions, Being Muslim Being British (BMBB) and Being Kenyan Being Muslim (BKBM) gained positive recognition from diverse governmental bodies.<sup>6</sup> The interventions took a nuanced approach to values and use of an empirically based predictive measure (integrative complexity, aka IC), to reduce and prevent recruitment to violent

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<sup>1</sup> “Who are Britain’s Jihadists?” *BBC News*, August 12, 2016, available at: <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-32026985>.

<sup>2</sup> Peter R. Neuman, “Foreign Fighter Total in Syria Exceeds 20,000; Surpasses Afghanistan Conflict in the 1980s,” *International Centre for the Study of Radicalisation*, January 26, 2015, available at: <http://icsr.info/2015/01/foreign-fighter-total-syriairaq-now-exceeds-20000-surpasses-afghanistan-conflict-1980s/>.

<sup>3</sup> See note 1.

<sup>4</sup> For comparison, those identifying as “No religion” numbered 1,941,000 (36.7 percent of population), while those with a religious affiliation numbered 2,986,000 (56.3%), including Church of Scotland 1,718,000 (32.4 percent), Catholic 841,000 (15.9 percent), Jewish 6,000 (0.1 percent), and those who did not respond 368,000 (7 percent). For further statistics, see “Summary: Religious groups demographics,” 2011 census data, Scottish Government, available at: <http://www.gov.scot/Topics/People/Equality/Equalities/DataGrid/Religion/RelPopMig>.

<sup>5</sup> Stefano Bonino, “Visible Muslimness in Scotland: Between discrimination and integration,” *Patterns of Prejudice* 49:4 (2015): 367-391, available at: <http://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/0031322X.2015.1066978?journalCode=rpop20>; Stefano Bonino, “Scottish Muslims Through A Decade of Change: Wounded by the Stigma, Healed by Islam, Rescued by Scotland,” *Scottish Affairs* 24 (1, 2015): 78-105. Doi.10.3366/scot.2015.0054 .

<sup>6</sup> Jose Liht and Sara Savage, “Preventing violent extremism through value complexity: Being Muslim Being British,” *Journal of Strategic Security* 6:4 (Winter 2013): 44-66, available at: <http://scholarcommons.usf.edu/jss/vol6/iss4/3>; Sara Savage, Anjum Kahn, and Jose Liht, “Preventing Violent Extremism in Kenya through Value Complexity: Assessment of Being Kenyan Being Muslim,” *Journal of Strategic Security* 7:3 (Fall 2014): 1-26, available at: <http://scholarcommons.usf.edu/jss/vol7/iss3/2>.

extremism.<sup>7</sup> Discussed more fully below, integrative complexity measures the extent to which a person recognizes the complexity of a situation. The measures range from not seeing any complexity—one dimension, one value, one viewpoint, no ambiguity, qualifications or exceptions (low integrative complexity)—toward recognizing and giving some validity to different dimensions, values, and viewpoints in a situation, along with links or interactions among them (high integrative complexity).<sup>8</sup>

International appreciation for BMBB and BKBM and the success of another IC (integrative complexity) Thinking intervention designed to tackle Protestant-Catholic sectarianism in Scotland (I SEE! Scotland) generated interest in piloting a third family member, Being Muslim Being Scottish (BMBS).<sup>9</sup> The pilot was run in a large city in Scotland to reveal if the approach of IC (integrative complexity) interventions was as effective at PVE/ CVE in a Scottish context as its relations (BMBB, BKBM) had been in other contexts.

Being Muslim Being Scottish is based on the same structure as BMBB and BKBM, adapted to:

- Reflect Scottish culture (e.g., role play scenarios, illustrations, metaphors, national and local references);
- Ensure increased awareness of risks to radicalization, confidence to discuss controversial and sensitive topics, and communication among diverse communities for effective safeguarding.

Both prevention (educators, social workers, police prevent officers) and Muslim (leaders, parents, and young people) community members in Scotland were looking for ways to collaborate on reducing and preventing violent extremism. All were keen to continue to build strong relationships across communities for collaborative preventative work based on trust and open communication. These attitudes and desires coincided with a new delivery model for participant involvement in BMBS. Evolving from a model that involved mainly participants who might be targeted by or already linked with violent extremist groups, this model required safeguarding practitioners (educators, social workers, police prevent

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<sup>7</sup> To our knowledge, the IC Thinking Method uses the only empirically based predictive measure in the field of PVE/CVE. This has been communicated to IC academics by experts at the UK Home Office, United States (U.S.) Pentagon (Strategic Multi-Assessment, SMA, Program), U.S. Department of State (Counter Terrorism Bureau), Radicalization Awareness Network (RAN), and the Hedayah Organization (global PVE think tank) and training center (Abu Dhabi).

<sup>8</sup> Peter Suedfeld, Philip E. Tetlock, and Siegfried Streufert, “Conceptual/Integrative Complexity,” in Charles P. Smith (ed.), *Motivation and Personality: Handbook of Thematic Content Analysis* (New York, NY: Cambridge University Press, 1992), available at: <http://www2.psych.ubc.ca/~psuedfeld/Chapter.pdf>.

<sup>9</sup> See Boyd-MacMillan et al., *Journal of Strategic Security* 9:4 (2016).

officers) to go through the intervention, alongside those who might be targeted. The aim of this requirement was to enable cross-community learning and mutual support based on shared integrative complexity vocabulary along with experiences of cooperative and collaborative partnership that could be drawn upon after the course.<sup>10</sup> This aim cohered with UK Prevent emphases on increasing community resilience (understood as enabling access to resources for successful adaptation in the face of adversity).<sup>11</sup>

To achieve these aims, four months before course delivery (November 2014), the BMBS facilitator met informally with members of the Muslim and practitioner communities in the city where the pilot would take place. During these meetings, leaders from the Muslim and practitioner communities were reassured that the aim of the BMBS pilot was not to blame or target but to resource and support. The anonymous assessment process was explained and discussed, highlighting the evaluation focus on course effectiveness, not the participants, to inform future interventions for ongoing quality assurance. Course delivery would be at a neutral location satisfactory to all communities.

After these conversations, representatives of both practitioner and Muslim communities committed to participate in the BMBS pilot. Participants included young people and others whose evaluations and reports of the intervention would be trusted by their wider communities. The selection process may have resulted in participants favorably predisposed to the intervention, although the facilitator's discussions with both practitioner and Muslim communities revealed the presence of a healthy skepticism going into the intervention.

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<sup>10</sup> Highlighting the importance of reinforcing shared identities and reducing us and them experiences between authorities and Muslims, illustrated by research in Scotland, see Leda M. Blackwood, Nick Hopkins, and Stephen Reicher, "Divided by a common language?: Conceptualizing Identity, Discrimination, and Alienation," in Kai J. Jones and Thomas A. Morton (eds.), *Restoring Civil Societies: The Psychology of Intervention and Engagement After Crisis* (London, England: Wiley-Blackwell, 2012), 222-236, available at: [https://research-repository.st-andrews.ac.uk/bitstream/handle/10023/4703/Blackwood\\_Divided\\_by\\_common\\_language\\_pre\\_print.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y](https://research-repository.st-andrews.ac.uk/bitstream/handle/10023/4703/Blackwood_Divided_by_common_language_pre_print.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y).

<sup>11</sup> For a discussion of these emphases, see Peter Rogers, "Contesting and Preventing Terrorism: On the Development of UK Strategic Policy on Radicalisation and Community Resilience," *Journal of Policing, Intelligence and Counter Terrorism* 3:2 (October 2008): 38-61, available at: <http://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/18335300.2008.9686913?tab=permissions>; Michael Ungar, "Social Ecologies and Their Contribution to Resilience," *The Social Ecology of Resilience: A Handbook of Theory and Practice* (London: Springer, 2012): 13-32, available at: [http://link.springer.com/chapter/10.1007%2F978-1-4614-0586-3\\_2](http://link.springer.com/chapter/10.1007%2F978-1-4614-0586-3_2); Ami C. Carpenter, *Community Resilience to Sectarian Violence in Baghdad* (New York, NY: Springer, 2014), available at: <http://www.springer.com/us/book/9781461488118>.

The requested intensive schedule was two days of six to seven hours each, over one weekend. While not ideal pedagogically—e.g., BKBM was run over four days—we accommodated this scheduling request as a one-off for this pilot. While an intensive schedule might reduce effectiveness, refusal might have prevented the pilot from happening. An effective pilot with an intensive schedule would indicate a robust model and suggest the possibility of even greater effectiveness over four or more days. Participants did commit to a six-hour debrief, scheduled one week after the intervention. The debrief would present the underlying theory, explore drivers and pathways to violent extremism as addressed by BMBS structure and design, and consider ways forward.

## Underlying Theory and Intervention Design

The underlying theory of the BMBS structure was detailed in the articles reporting on BMBS and BKBM.<sup>12</sup> A summary is offered here. Although many social factors and personal experiences have been identified as playing a role, no one can predict the exact circumstances in which any one individual will become committed to violent extremism.<sup>13</sup> However, we do know that extremist ideologies, defined as polarized positions on any ideological dimension, e.g., political, religious, ethical, moral, philosophical, or ecological, feature simplified, polarized black and white thinking (measured as low integrative complexity).<sup>14</sup> Introduced briefly above, integrative complexity refers to our thinking style in the face of difference or disagreement. More specifically, integrative complexity is the cognitive lens through which we see our social world during conflict: a narrow cognitive lens that sees the world in black and white, non-ambiguous terms and does not validate other perspectives or a widening

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<sup>12</sup> See note 6.

<sup>13</sup> Clark McCauley and Sophia Moskalenko, “Individual and Group Mechanisms of Radicalization” in Laurie Fenstermacher, Larry Kuznar, Tom Rieger, and Anne Speckhard (eds.), *Protecting the Homeland from International and Domestic Threats: Current Multi-Disciplinary Perspectives on Root Causes, the Role of Ideology, and Programs for Counter-Radicalization and Disengagement*, (Washington, DC: Strategic Multi-Layer Assessment (SMA) Office White Paper in support of counter-terrorism and counter-WMD Periodic Publication, 2010), available at:

<http://www.brynmawr.edu/psychology/documents/McCauleyMoskalenko.pdf>;  
Lynn Davies, “Security, Extremism and Education: Safeguarding or Surveillance?,” *British Journal of Educational Studies* 64:1 (2016): 1-19, available at:  
<http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/00071005.2015.1107022>; Davies, *Journal of Strategic Security* 9:4 (2016).

<sup>14</sup> Peter Suedfeld, Ryan W. Cross, and Carson Logan, “Can Thematic Content Analysis Separate the Pyramid of Ideas from the Pyramid of Action? A Comparison Among Different Degrees of Commitment to Violence,” in Hriar Cabayan, Valerie Sitterle, and Matt Yandura (eds.), *Looking Back, Looking Forward: Perspectives on Terrorism and Responses to It* (Washington, DC: Strategic Multi-Layer Assessment Occasional White Paper, 2013): 61-68, available at:  
<http://www.phibetaiota.net/wp-content/uploads/2013/08/Suedfeld-et-al.-2013-Can-Thematic-Content-Analysis-Separate-the-Pyramid.pdf>.

lens that sees shades of grey, tolerates ambiguity, and sees some validity in other viewpoints despite disagreement. Moving from a narrow toward a wider cognitive lens involves two steps, differentiation (e.g., tolerating ambiguity, recognizing change over time, or incomplete knowledge, seeing different dimensions or viewpoints as legitimate) and integration (e.g., identifying links among different dimensions or viewpoints, such as mutual influence or an overarching framework).<sup>15</sup> Differentiation and integration each can be broken down into elaboration (complex elaboration of one view) and dialectical (complex interactions among different views).<sup>16</sup> Thinking characterized by low integrative complexity involves neither differentiation nor integration.

In violent extremist narratives, a narrow cognitive lens is often supported by focus on one moral value as the most important, to the exclusion of any other.<sup>17</sup> Opposing groups can see and portray one another as championing opposite values, e.g., individualism *or* communalism, not both. A duty to honor and protect the most important or sacred value can be used to justify not only antagonism toward the opposed group(s) but acts of aggression and violence. This group duty can override personal hierarchies of values that include the values seen to be championed by others, emphasizing the group narrative of threat between them and us. When not feeling threatened, we access a range of human values, but when part of a group that feels threatened, we tend to focus on one value as the most important, to the exclusion of our other values.<sup>18</sup> Extremist

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<sup>15</sup> See note 8.

<sup>16</sup> Luke G. Conway, III, Felix Thoemmes, Amy M. Allison, Kirsten H. Towgood, Michael J. Wagner, Kathleen Davey, Amanda Salcido, Amanda N. Stovall, Daniel P. Dodds, Kate Bongard, and Kathrene R. Conway, "Two Ways to Be Complex and Why They Matter: Implications for Attitude Strength and Lying," *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 95 (5, 2008): 1029-1044. doi:10.1037/a0013336.

<sup>17</sup> Philip E. Tetlock, "A Value Pluralism Model of Ideological Reasoning," *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 50:4 (1986): 819-827, available at:

[https://www.researchgate.net/publication/232547958\\_A\\_Value\\_Pluralism\\_Model\\_of\\_Ideological\\_Reasoning](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/232547958_A_Value_Pluralism_Model_of_Ideological_Reasoning); Bruce Hunsberger, Michael Pratt, and Mark S. Pancer, "Religious Fundamentalism and Integrative Complexity of Thought: A Relationship for Existential Content Only?" *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion* 33:4 (1994), available at:

[https://www.researchgate.net/publication/272595636\\_Religious\\_Fundamentalism\\_and\\_Integrative\\_Complexity\\_of\\_Thought\\_A\\_Relationship\\_for\\_Existential\\_Content\\_Only](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/272595636_Religious_Fundamentalism_and_Integrative_Complexity_of_Thought_A_Relationship_for_Existential_Content_Only); John T. Jost et al., "Political Conservatism as Motivated Social Cognition," *Psychological Bulletin* 129:3 (2003), 339-375, available at:

<http://faculty.virginia.edu/haidtlab/jost.glaser.political-conservatism-as-motivated-social-cog.pdf>; Vassilis Saroglou, "Beyond Dogmatism: The Need for Closure as Related to Religion," *Mental Health, Religion & Culture* 5:2 (2002), 183 - 194, available at:

<http://www.uclouvain.be/cps/ucl/doc/psyreli/documents/2002.MHRC.NFCS.pdf>; Charles B. Strozier, David M. Terman, and James W. Jones, *The Fundamentalist Mindset* (Oxford, England: Oxford University Press, 2010), available at: [http://link.springer.com/referenceworkentry/10.1007/978-1-4614-5583-7\\_564?no-access=true](http://link.springer.com/referenceworkentry/10.1007/978-1-4614-5583-7_564?no-access=true).

<sup>18</sup> See Shalom H. Schwartz and Klaus Boehnke, "Evaluating the Structure of Human

groups can exploit this movement away from value pluralism to galvanize members into violence toward anyone outside the group.<sup>19</sup> Four decades of research have revealed that a drop in thinking complexity, supported by focus on one value as the most important (value monism), predicts violent conflict.<sup>20</sup>

The cross-culturally validated measurement frame evaluates the absence or increasing presence of integrative complexity.<sup>21</sup> Integrative complexity measures capture complex reactions to and engagement with difference and disagreement, including the interplay of cognition, emotion, and social processes, e.g., recognizing change over time or mutual influence among conflicted parties.<sup>22</sup> Increases in integrative complexity *management* capacities include increased cognitive and emotion regulation.<sup>23</sup> Participants' real life circumstances and environments most likely will not have changed very much, if at all, between beginning and finishing the intervention, but increased self-management capacities empower them with more (often previously unrecognized) response choices.

Integrative complexity interventions are designed to enable participants to access a wider range of their own values, especially those in tension with one another. The challenge of trying to honor two important values in tension with one another—communalism *and* individualism—energizes and motivates the effort of more complex thinking.<sup>24</sup> Repeatedly experiencing the inter-woven process of honoring two values in tension, and shifting from low toward more complex thinking while role-playing true-to-life group conflicts, increases integrative complexity management

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Values with Confirmatory Factor Analysis,” *Journal of Research in Personality* 38:3 (2004): 230-255, available at:

[https://www.researchgate.net/publication/222293101\\_Evaluating\\_the\\_structure\\_of\\_human\\_values\\_with\\_confirmatory\\_factor\\_analysis](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/222293101_Evaluating_the_structure_of_human_values_with_confirmatory_factor_analysis); see also Isaiah Berlin, *The Crooked Timber of Humanity* (London, England: John Murray, 1990), available at: <http://press.princeton.edu/titles/9983.html>.

<sup>19</sup> Michael A. Hogg, “Uncertainty and Extremism: Identification with High Entitativity Groups Under Conditions of Uncertainty,” in Vincent Yzerbyt, Charles M. Judd, and Olivier Corneille (eds.), *The Psychology of Group Perception: Perceived Variability, Entitativity, and Essentialism* (New York, NY: Psychology Press, 2004), available at: <http://people.psych.ucsb.edu/sherman/david/Hogg.Sherman.etal.jesp.pdf>.

<sup>20</sup> Peter Suedfeld and Philip E. Tetlock, “Integrative Complexity at Forty: Steps Toward Resolving the Scoring Dilemma,” *Political Psychology* 35 (2014): 597-601, available at: <http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/pops.12206/abstract>.

<sup>21</sup> Gloria Baker-Brown, Elizabeth J. Ballard, Susan Black, Brian de Vries, Peter Suedfeld, Philip E. Tetlock, *Coding Manual for Conceptual/Integrative Complexity* (University of British Columbia and University of California, Berkeley, 1992), available at: <http://www2.psych.ubc.ca/~psuedfeld/MANUAL.pdf>.

<sup>22</sup> Ibid and see discussion and references in Boyd-MacMillan et al., *Journal of Strategic Security* 9:4 (2016).

<sup>23</sup> Boyd-MacMillan et al., *Journal of Strategic Security* 9:4 (2016).

<sup>24</sup> See note 17, Tetlock, 1986.

capacities among participants. This experience reduces the appeal of extremist narratives accompanied by calls to violence because we are attracted to stimuli with complexity levels similar to our own.<sup>25</sup>

In light of the relationships among extremisms, values, and integrative complexity, the point of entry for BMBS is simplified, polarized black and white thinking (low integrative complexity) based on a single value (value monism). Participants access a wider range of their own values while exploring topics with violent extremist import (e.g., community and close relationships, equality, money and justice, purity and pleasure, science and religion, peace or *fitna*). Each session takes participants through three *experiential* steps of transformation:

1. engaging with different dimensions and viewpoints on a topic in a conflict situation (differentiation);
2. identifying and accessing a wider range of one's own values represented by the different views (value pluralism);
3. practicing strategies for linking different dimensions and viewpoints, e.g., integrating what is deemed as best from a range of viewpoints into a pro-social way forward, referred to as cherry-picking (integration).<sup>26</sup>

Run as a skills course (typically, eight two-hour sessions), the intervention uses an experiential pedagogy drawn from Theatre of the Oppressed and transformational learning. Participants experience group action-learning with multi-media DVDs, and prompted critical reflection directed toward body sensations, thoughts, emotions, and group dynamics.<sup>27</sup> Group exercises support participant engagement with a range of values and viewpoints on controversial issues concerning many, including Muslims, living today in Scotland (e.g., who should decide whom someone should marry, or what should guide a young person deciding whether to go to University). Such conflicts express deeper tensions that can be exploited by violent extremist narratives, such as authoritarian versus democratic decision-making, communalism versus individualism, change the world by changing social structures versus changing the individual. Participants are supported to think critically for themselves on the complexities of these situations, experiencing the embedded value tensions. After they

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<sup>25</sup> See note 19.

<sup>26</sup> See note 6.

<sup>27</sup> Augusto Boal, *Theatre of the Oppressed* (Sidmouth, England: Pluto Press, 2008); Augusto Boal, *Legislative theatre: Using Performance to Make Politics* (London: Routledge, 1998); John Mezirow and Associates, *Learning as Transformation: Critical Perspectives on a Theory in Progress* (San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass, 2000).

experience role-plays representing the complexity of real world debates, they are less likely to be taken in by more simplistic presentations.<sup>28</sup>

Experiential, structured exploration in role-play of values and viewpoints builds skills in empathy and perspective taking. These skills, which support and inter-twine with integrative complexity management capacities, equip participants to engage constructively with potential opponents (e.g., those of other faiths, no faith, Westerners, or Muslims) without sacrificing their own core values. For situations where other parties do not want to engage constructively, participants practice strategies in role-play to diffuse the tension and move on, leaving the door open for later engagement, if desirable and possible. At times, low integrative complexity reactions are appropriate; if in physical danger, find safety.<sup>29</sup>

Throughout, participants learn to recognize low integrative complexity in themselves and others:

- noticing how viewing their social world through a simplified us versus them lens (low integrative complexity) feels in their bodies (embodied cognition),
- identifying the emotions that accompany their own and others' reported experiences of this narrowed, tunnel vision way of thinking (low integrative complexity), and
- recognizing their own and others' behaviors when seemingly locked in a polarized ideology (low integrative complexity).<sup>30</sup>

Some might enjoy the experience of narrowed, tunnel vision thinking as ordered, clear-cut, and authoritative, while others might find it uncomfortable or alienating. In keeping with fight, flight, and freeze reactions, even in role, some want to protect or defend their group, others want to be aggressive toward the other groups, and others close down. Specific experiences are not judged but noticed and identified. This enables on-going recognition of when one is moving into a closed thinking style that is unable to respect or work with other viewpoints.

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<sup>28</sup> See note 19.

<sup>29</sup> See Andrews Fearon and Boyd-MacMillan, and Boyd-MacMillan et al., *Journal of Strategic Security* 9:4 (2016).

<sup>30</sup> Peter Suedfeld, Dana Leighton, and Lucian Conway, "Integrative Complexity and Cognitive Management in International Confrontations: Research and Potential Applications," in Mari Fitzduff and Chris Stout (eds.), *The Psychology of Resolving Global Conflicts: From War to Peace* (Westport, CT: Praeger Security International, 2006).

Participants reflect on the difficulty of respecting different viewpoints when viewing the social world through a narrowed cognitive lens (low integrative complexity), even in role. They experience the speed with which in and outgroup biases can be elicited, leading to polarized thinking (e.g., we're right—you're wrong, we're good—you're bad, replicating the findings of minimal group studies).<sup>31</sup> Participants are surprised that this happens in role-play, even when assigned randomly to a group with a viewpoint personally disagreed with, on a range of topics with extremist import. Experiential recognition of how any of us can personally maintain and perpetuate entrenched conflicts (with the potential of moving toward violence) motivates participants to engage deeply with the process of moving out of polarizations. Participants learn what they need to do while in a group setting to manage their integrative complexity and resist returning to low integrative complexity (such as slow deep breathing, taking time out, using taught active listening skills), identifying the strategies that work most powerfully for them. These strategies equip participants to work with people with whom they disagree, for example, by finding shared values or value trade-offs or re-framing the disagreement with new language.

Responding to trained facilitator queries and prompts, participants revise the role-play scenarios until they feel true to life.<sup>32</sup> To date, across this family of interventions, the scenarios have been experienced as realistic. Subsequent discussions focus on how a participant represented a particular character (e.g., family member, community leader) or diverse possible endings. Repeatedly experiencing and reflecting on the movement out of simplified, polarized thinking (low integrative complexity) toward respecting different viewpoints and working pro-socially despite disagreement shifts how a person engages with those they oppose. Some impression management is possible, but only an unsustainable, incremental increase in integrative complexity, that is discernible by context. The *how* or structure of thinking (rather than the *what* or content) is held at a less than conscious level of awareness, rendering shifts toward higher integrative complexity not easily faked by giving a right or socially accepted answer. Using the cross-culturally validated measurement frame, this not easily faked shift is empirically measurable.

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<sup>31</sup> Muzafer Sherif, *Group Conflict and Co-Operation: Their Social Psychology* (London, England: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1967); Henri Tajfel, *Human Groups and Social Categories: Studies in Social Psychology* (Cambridge, England: Cambridge University Press, 1981); Henri Tajfel, "Social Psychology of Intergroup Studies," *Annual Review of Psychology* 33 (1982): 1-39, available at: <http://www.annualreviews.org/doi/abs/10.1146/annurev.ps.33.020182.000245?journalCode=psych>.

<sup>32</sup> See note 27.

## *Assessment*

The effectiveness of the BMBS pilot was assessed with two hypotheses, A and B:

- A. Based on the results from BMBB and BKBM, we hypothesized that after going through BMBS pre-post course comparisons of integrative complexity measures regarding participants' views toward self-identified own and opposed communities would:
- show significant increases, and
  - correlate with a second set of post-course integrative complexity measures and a qualitative analysis of self-reported learning.

Such results would be in keeping with the BMBB and BKBM results (BMBB showed significant integrative complexity gains in oral data, BKBM showed significant IC gains in written verbal data).<sup>33</sup>

- B. Based on the course topics and design, as well as participant presentations and debrief discussions after BMBB and BKBM, we hypothesized that qualitative analysis of transcribed BMBS participant presentations (anonymized as transcribed), and of the six-hour debrief discussion one week later, would both indicate fulfilment of three outcomes linked to the Prevent Strategic Objectives:

1. Increased awareness of the risk of radicalization among Muslim community members and an increased confidence to talk about issues affecting young people who may not have previously had the tools to discuss these controversial themes. (Link to Prevent Strategic Objective: 1. Ideology and Ideologues—Provide a response to the ideological challenge of terrorism and the extreme narrative that may facilitate radicalization.)
2. Increased awareness particularly amongst practitioners of factors that inform effective referral and engagement with Channel or similar processes in Scotland with regard to engagement, capability, and intent of referral and intent to commit acts of violent extremism, terrorism or travelling to conflict zones for illegitimate or illegal reasons.

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<sup>33</sup> For more information about BMBB and BKBM results, see note 6.

3. Increased communication and development of more positive interactions between practitioners and Muslim Community members on drivers and pathways to violent extremism within local contexts to reduce and prevent violence among young people.

(Both B2 and B3, directly above, link to Prevent Strategic Objective: 2. Individuals–Prevent individuals from becoming terrorists or supporting terrorism.)

### *Recruitment and Sample*

The local Muslim communities worked with the Being Muslim Being Scottish (BMBBS) facilitator to engage eleven representatives to participate in the BMBS pilot. The Scottish Preventing Violent Extremism Unit (SPVEU) within the Directorate for Local Government and Communities at Scottish Government, worked with the BMBS facilitator, and through the local Police Scotland Prevent Delivery Unit, to engage ten practitioner participants.

BMBS was delivered in March 2015, over two days during one weekend; twenty-five participants attended on Saturday of which twenty-one participants (eighty-four percent) also participated on Sunday. The venue was a centrally located hotel in the city center deemed neutral by all participants. With informed oral consent (responding to concerns about confidentiality and individual targeting) and anonymous identifier codes (used in all IC Thinking research), written pre-post intervention data was collected from the twenty-one participants who attended both days. All twenty-one anonymously provided basic demographic data via a five-item questionnaire. The following weekend, fifteen (seventy-one percent) of the twenty-one participants gathered for a six-hour debrief to discuss the drivers and pathways to violent extremisms as addressed in the theoretical approach and design of BMBS. Table 1 summarizes participant demographics for the twenty-one participants who completed both days of BMBS delivery, fifteen of whom participated in the debrief.

**Table 1. Participant Demographics**

| Age  | Gender          | Group  | University Education                            | Religious Education                                     | Country of Birth   |
|--|-----------------|--|---|---|--|
| Range = 19–59 (40 year span)<br>Mean age = 42.05<br>7 aged 39/below;<br>14 aged 40/above | M = 13<br>F = 8 | Muslim = 11 (educationalists, other professionals, housewives, students)<br>Practitioner = 10 (educationalists, social workers, police prevent officers) | One or more years = 19<br>None = 1<br>Blank = 1 | Islam = 3<br>Christian = 2<br>16 specified “o” or blank | Outside of UK (Egypt, Libya, Algeria, Pakistan) = 6<br>Scotland/UK/Great Britain/EU = 15 |

Source: Author

### *Method of assessment*

A simple assessment design was used with BMBS, to minimize the time and participant burden during an intensive two-day delivery (that included administration of pre-posttests):

#### *1. Paragraph Completion Tests (PCTs)*

Before and after the BMBS intervention, participants were asked first to write responses to items A and B:

(A) The community (group) that I identify strongly with is \_\_\_\_\_

*(Examples: Scottish... British... Muslim... Scottish Muslim... British Muslim... Somali... Sufi... Islamic... African... my tribe ... African Muslim ... Secular ... Salafi ... Asian ... Arab... Western influenced... White ...Christian...Other (use any combination or come up with your own)*

(B) The community (group) that is most unlike/opposed to my group is \_\_\_\_\_

Next, the facilitator led the participants in a Think Aloud group warm-up exercise using two topics unrelated to extremist differences (e.g., most preferred animal, least preferred food) to encourage people to express their thinking freely and fully while writing out their responses. The Think Aloud technique is standard practice when researchers are more

interested in process of thinking, the *how* of thinking, rather than content of thinking.<sup>34</sup>

After Think Aloud practice, participants were asked to write as much as they could, without self-censorship or concern for grammar, syntax, or spelling, in the blank space provided (half or more of one side of an A4) in response to the following prompts:

- When I think about MY community (group) ...
- When I think about the OTHER group ...

Paragraph Completion Tests (PCTs) have established validity as the “gold standard” in eliciting responses that can be coded for IC.<sup>35</sup> Appearing just below 1.A and 1.B above (community / group I identify with; community / group most unlike/opposed to my group), questions one and two invited participants to write about the group or combination of groups just identified.

## *2. Participant presentations*

During the last session (end of second day, first weekend), all participants presented orally on their learning from BMBS. Presentations were audio recorded (with participant permission), transcribed verbatim, and anonymized during transcription. To correlate with presentation analyses, the BMBS facilitator submitted an observational report to IC Thinking on anonymized participant engagement. An IC Thinking Director also took notes during the debrief.

## *3. Social Identity & Power (SIP) Questionnaire*

After the PCT, participants responded to a five-item questionnaire focusing on perceived power relations among participants in and outgroups. Next to each of five statements, participants ticked boxes to indicate the strength of their agreement or disagreement. For example, “groups that are more powerful often treat my group unfairly,” or “members of my group are easily accepted into influential or powerful groups.” Possible responses ranged from five (Strongly agree) to one (Strongly disagree).

## Analytic Strategy

### *1. Paragraph Completion Tests (PCTs)*

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<sup>34</sup> K. Anders Ericsson and Herbert A. Simon, *Protocol analysis: Verbal Reports as Data* (Revised Edition) (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1993).

<sup>35</sup> Suedfeld and Tetlock, “Integrative Complexity at Forty,” 597.

Anonymous PCT responses were collected pre-post intervention from twenty-one participants and scored using the cross-culturally validated frame of IC coding.<sup>36</sup> Two trained, experienced integrative complexity coders independently (without discussion) scored the eighty-four written paragraphs (four paragraphs x twenty-one participants) regarding participants' self-identified in-group and self-selected outgroups. One coder was blind to conditions and participants. The second coder was blind to conditions and semi-blind to participants (having met fifteen participants during the debrief). Each coder reported going through the data independently at least three times to assign and re-check their scores. After assigning and re-checking scores independently, the two coders compared, discussed, and agreed on scores. Agreed scores were given to a third colleague blind to conditions and participants, who analyzed agreed scores for significant pre-post change as aggregated matched pairs using SPSS software to produce *group* pre-post scores.

## 2. Presentations

All twenty-one presentations were qualitatively assessed by two trained, experienced integrative complexity coders for evidence of differentiation (integrative complexity scores two or three) and integration (integrative complexity scores four or five). This qualitative analysis was correlated with quantitative integrative complexity scores by two trained, experienced integrative complexity coders. The coders randomly selected chunks from sixteen (seventy-six percent) of the twenty-one presentations. Both coders independently reviewed the data at least three times before assigning scores to the chunks, and then compared, discussed, and agreed on final scores.

All twenty-one anonymous and transcribed presentations were read for evidence of increased awareness among participants about the risk of radicalization and factors that inform effective referral to Channel or similar processes; increased confidence to talk about controversial issues that may be used to facilitate radicalization; and increased communication between members of represented communities regarding the drivers and pathways to extremism. The facilitator internal observational report and Director's notes from the six-hour debrief (one week after the intervention) were also read for indications of the same increased awareness.

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<sup>36</sup> Baker-Brown, "Coding Manual."

### 3. Social Identity and Power (SIP)

All twenty-one responses to the five-item SIP questionnaire were collected pre-post intervention and analyzed for change indicating increased risk to vulnerability to extremist narratives using SPSS software.

## Results

### 1. Paragraph Completion Tests (PCTs)

In response to PCT questions A and B, participants identified in and outgroups. Tables 2 and 3 present all of the written data indicating group identifiers. Although gender identities are salient among European and Middle Eastern cultures no participant used gender (or age) as an in-group or outgroup identifier.<sup>37</sup> A range of factors contribute to in and outgroup associations; our analysis focused on structure of thinking toward these groups, not the associations per se. Nineteen out of twenty-one participants (ninety percent) had dual or more identities for their in-groups, thirteen out of twenty-one (sixty-two percent) for their outgroups. Ten (forty-eight percent) used identifiers not among the given examples for their in-groups and fourteen (sixty-seven percent) for their out-groups. These statistics indicate participants felt a degree of freedom while naming in groups and outgroups.

**Table 2. In-Group Identifiers**

| Dominant in group identifiers were religious and national  | Other in group identifiers referred to location, skin colour, politics, or species   |
|--|--|
| Muslim (10)<br>Christian (4)<br>“dour”/Irish/Protestant/Catholic (1)<br>Scottish/Scots/Scotland (9)<br>British (5)<br>Arab (2)<br>German (1)<br>Pakistan (1) | City-“ians” (city where pilot was run) or urban (3)<br>wider community (1)<br>white (2)<br>socialist (2)<br>secular (1)<br>human (1) |
| <i>Nineteen participants named more than one in-group identifier.</i>  |  |

Source: Author

<sup>37</sup> The “women are wonderful effect” was found among both men and women in sixteen geographically and culturally diverse countries in Latin America, Europe, Middle East, and Australasia. Peter Glick et al, “Bad but Bold: Ambivalent Attitudes Toward Men Predict Gender Inequality in 16 Nations,” *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 86 (5, 2004): 713–728.

**Table 3. Outgroup Identifiers**

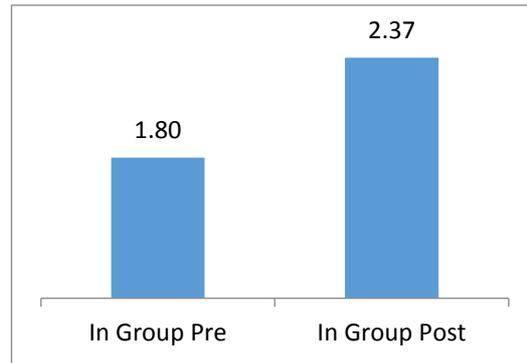
|   |  |
|---|--|
| Dominant outgroup identifiers were political and religious  | Other outgroup identifiers referred to skin colour, cultural influences, criminal behaviour, and unknown groups                                    |
| BNF/far or extreme right wing/National Front Group (8)<br>Tory (1), Westminster elitist (1)<br>Arab leaders, royals “or anyone who oppresses others to serve their own needs” (1)<br>Community council group (1)<br>“None- Don’t believe in “us and them,” cannot say certain group opposed to my group. Of course, any individual or group, which clashes ideologically with that to which I identify, could be placed in this space. Anyone/group which does not support British Muslim interests.” (1)<br>Salafi (1)<br>Secular/atheist (1)<br>Not opposed to Islamic faith but do not understand it and would like to (1) | White (1)<br>Western influenced (1)<br>Criminals, power-hungry people, child abusers (2)<br>“Perhaps” a tribal undiscovered group (1)<br>Blank (1) |
| <i>Thirteen participants named one outgroup identifier; seven named more than one.</i>  |  |

Source: Author

Aggregated matched pair comparisons of written responses to PCT questions one and two (“When I think about MY community (group)...” or “...the OTHER group...”) collected before and after the intervention showed significant increases in integrative complexity (IC) regarding:

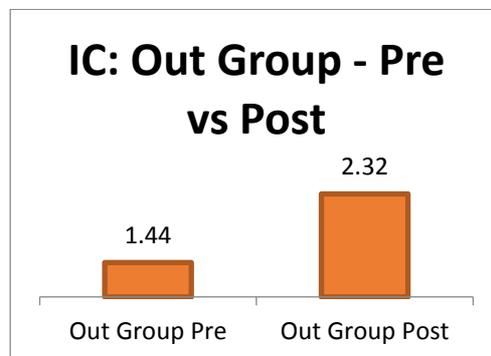
- in group: an increase from group mean IC score 1.8 to 2.37
- outgroup: an increase from group mean IC score 1.44 to 2.32
- combined in and outgroups: an increase from group mean IC score 1.67 to 2.31

(Questions one and two appeared on the PCT directly below the identified in groups and outgroups; participants responded with reference to the groups they had just identified.) These results are presented in Bar Charts 1, 2, and 3.



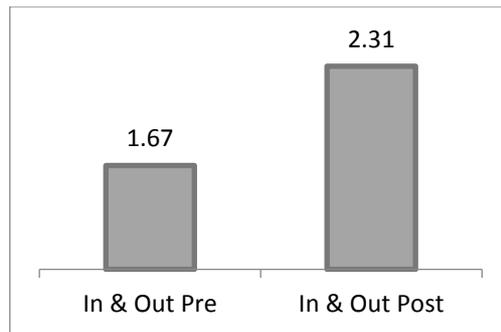
Source: Simon Pellew

*Bar chart 1.* Group mean scores showing movement *from* simplified, polarized thinking about participants' self-identified in groups (integrative complexity score 1.80) *toward* more complex thinking (integrative complexity score 2.37). This shift indicates increased recognition of and respect for difference amongst those within their in groups. This increase predicts more peaceful outcomes to conflict or disagreements with members of their own (or in) groups, e.g., respect for different views despite disagreement. These results are statistically significant (due to the intervention, not random effects; matched pair  $t$  test  $p < 0.007$  and Wilcoxon  $p < 0.013$ ).



Source: Simon Pellew

*Bar chart 2.* Group mean scores showing movement *from* simplified, polarized thinking about participants' self-selected outgroups (integrative complexity score 1.44) *toward* more complex thinking (IC, integrative complexity score 2.32). This shift predicts more peaceful outcomes to conflicts with those they perceive as unlike or opposed to their own group, e.g., respect for different views despite disagreement. These results are statistically significant (due to the intervention, not random effects; matched pair  $t$  test  $p < 0.000$  and Wilcoxon  $p < 0.000$ ).



Source: Simon Pellew

*Bar chart 3.* Group mean scores showing movement *from* simplified, polarized thinking about combined in and outgroups (integrative complexity score 1.67) *toward* more complex thinking (integrative complexity score 2.31). Overall, participants' thinking about their named in and outgroups show increased cognitive complexity. These results are statistically significant (due to the intervention, not random effects; matched pair *t* test  $p < 0.000$  and Wilcoxon  $p < 0.001$ ).

These PCT results show that BMBS is effective in a Scottish context at significantly increasing participants' integrative complexity management capacities, predicting more peaceful outcomes to conflicts with those within their own groups and with those they perceive as unlike or opposed to their groups. Increased integrative complexity management capacities translate into a wider array of response choices when facing difference and disagreement.

## 2. Participant Presentations

All twenty-one participant presentations showed evidence of integrative complexity learning represented as differentiation (integrative complexity scores two and three, e.g., tolerating ambiguity, seeing some validity in other values and viewpoints). Four presentations also evidenced integrative complexity learning represented as integration (integrative complexity scores four and five; e.g., finding links among different viewpoints such as underlying shared values or mutual influence). Randomly selected chunks from sixteen (seventy-six percent) of twenty-one transcribed presentations were assigned integrative complexity scores two through four, correlating with the qualitative analysis. Presentation results from both qualitative and quantitative analyses correlate with the PCT results (overall group mean increase to integrative complexity score 2.31) and support the finding that BMBS is effective at significantly increasing participants' capacities to respect difference and work with those with whom they disagree.

All twenty-one presentations indicated increased:

- communication between communities (Muslim and Practitioner),
- awareness of the risk and factors involved in radicalization and supporting people vulnerable to radicalization, and
- confidence to speak about controversial topics.

These results cohere with increases in integrative complexity; participants not only have more information, they have increased capacities to access and use the information, even in situations involving difference and disagreement. Participant quotations supporting these outcomes appear in the Discussion.

Post-course presentation statements were supported one week later (during the six-hour debrief) by expressions of strong appreciation for the course. Participants suggested that the course be used with young people, with groups that include Muslims and those of other faiths or none, and rolled out widely in their communities, including state schools. The facilitator internal observational report and director debrief notes cohered with the presentation statements.<sup>38</sup>

### 3. *Social Identity & Power (SIP) Responses*

Comparison of pre-post intervention responses to the five SIP questions did not reveal any significant changes or risk, group-wide (the group mean score pre-intervention was 3.19,  $SD = .630$  and post intervention was 3.11,  $SD = .537$ ; a score of five = possible risk). Qualitative scrutiny of individual responses showed an overall slight decrease in risk for the group. A slight increase from 3.8 to four for one participant was compared with that participant's PCT scores (identified using anonymous participant code), which showed an increase from two (toward in-group) and one (toward outgroup) to three regarding *both* in and outgroups. Additionally, this participant's presentation showed differentiation (IC scores two and three). Thus, the overall indicators for this participant were positive with evidence of increased capacities to respect difference, seeing validity in other views despite disagreement, and acceptance that reasonable people can disagree, predicting peaceful more outcomes to conflicts.

In summary, the empirical results from the Paragraph Completion Tests (PCTs) and presentations evidenced that BMBS significantly increased participants' integrative complexity toward their in and outgroups, predicting more peaceful outcomes to intra- and inter-group conflicts. Qualitative analysis of all presentations, and coding of randomly selected

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<sup>38</sup> Presentation transcriptions, facilitator report, and Director notes are confidential. Any access queries should be directed to the Scottish Government.

chunks from sixteen (seventy-six percent) of twenty-one presentations, correlated with the PCT empirical results. The Social Identity and Power (SIP) results did not reveal significant change. The presentations, facilitator's internal observational report, and director's debrief notes (taken during the six-hour gathering one week after the intervention) all evidenced increased communication between Muslim and Practitioner communities, increased confidence to discuss controversial topics, and increased awareness of the risks of radicalization and how to support people vulnerable to extremism.

## Discussion

The Paragraph Completion Test (PCT) results indicate that this participant group began with slightly higher IC scores overall (1.6) than other courses (e.g., 1.1, 1.2, 1.3), reflective of the group composition and participant aims: Muslim community leaders and young people willing to go through BMBS to experience its potential as a community resource, *and* practitioners responsible for enabling diverse communities to work together. Although slightly higher, overall pre-BMBS integrative complexity scores were within the integrative complexity score one category. Post BMBS scores showed a statistically significant upward shift to above integrative complexity score two, evidencing increased capacities that predict more peaceful outcomes to conflict; increased integrative complexity management capacities provide recognition of and access to a wider array of response choices when facing difference and disagreement. The increase in integrative complexity scores was greatest in scope with regard to the out-group (from pre BMBS 1.44 to post BMBS 2.32). This increase indicates that participants emerged from BMBS thinking about those they perceive as unlike or opposed to their group with greater complexity, not from one evaluative stance (e.g., all bad), but with qualifications, exceptions, ambiguity, recognition of some validity in their views and acceptance that reasonable people can disagree. Movement into integrative complexity score two represents a crucial step away *from* thinking about the Other in a way that is vulnerable to being exploited by violent extremist groups, *toward* thinking that is capable of working pro-socially with difference and disagreement while holding on to one's core values.

These BMBS pilot results replicate results from Being Muslim Being British (BMBB) and Being Kenyan Being Muslim (BKBM), and were achieved despite less than ideal conditions, indicating the robustness of the intervention structure. Value pluralism and value tensions were not directly evaluated (as in BMBB and BKBM) due to time constraints, but the integrative complexity gains indicate that a wider range of important values in tension was accessed by participants to support thinking that is

more complex. The behavioral measure of conflict styles also was not used (due to time constraints). Integrative complexity interventions now are being assessed with other behavioral measures (resilience, using CD-RISC).<sup>39</sup>

A six hour debrief one week after the intervention with seventy-one percent of the participants indicated that the integrative complexity increases were robust, both through the discussion content and in that a large percentage showed up. However, making time for a full day of discussions one week on could still represent an after-glow effect from being part of the intervention itself. Although the intervention experience clearly was meaningful for the participants, formal follow-up measures were not funded. Other IC (integrative complexity) Thinking interventions (I SEE! Scotland, Conflict Transformation) have had six-month and nearly two-year follow-up interviews, both of which confirmed the durability and robustness of the changes through self and observer reports.<sup>40</sup> In all cases, interviewees were not briefed or told the questions before the interview.

We hypothesize that the integrative complexity gains would have been even greater had the delivery schedule been comparable to BKBM and BMBB (sixteen hours over four or more days). The experiential nature of the intervention, followed by reflection and discussion guided by the trained facilitator, are key for effectiveness. Paced, repetitive movement through experience, reflection, and discussion, builds new practices of self, other, and social awareness that support self-regulation and management, including cognitive and emotional regulation.<sup>41</sup> Time between sessions enables participants to use their new levels of awareness in other contexts. Experiences within and outside the intervention context can be reflected upon and integrated. During this BMBS pilot, participants may have grown fatigued over the two days; reflections and discussions may have been curtailed while going through the group learning exercises and role-plays. Only one evening offered space to practice their new awareness outside the intervention context. The need for more time was mentioned in more than one participant's (transcribed and anonymized) presentation, and during the debrief a week later.

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<sup>39</sup> Jonathan R. T. Davidson and Katherine M. Connor, "Connor-Davidson Resilience Scale (CD-RISC) Manual," available at <http://www.connordavidson-resiliencescale.com/user-guide.php>; see Boyd-MacMillan et al., and Andrews Fearon. *Journal of Strategic Security* 9:4 (2016).

<sup>40</sup> Regarding interviews of participants from the *I SEE! Scotland* intervention, see Boyd-MacMillan et al., *Journal of Strategic Security* 9:4 (2016); interviews of participants from *Conflict Transformation* were conducted for a master's thesis.

<sup>41</sup> See discussion in Boyd-MacMillan et al., *Journal of Strategic Security* 9:4 (2016).

Despite the intensive schedule, the empirical results validate the effectiveness of BMBS in a Scottish context. Participants' thinking about in and outgroups shifted away from simplified, polarized, black and white thinking toward greater complexity, with recognition of and respect for difference. In other words, members of both Muslim and practitioner communities recognized greater diversity among their own and among those they perceived as unlike or opposed to their groups. Muslims or practitioners from different schools of thought may agree on issues while interpreting them differently; this was experienced and drawn out when participants stood on value spectrums (signs with value labels—communalism, individualism—laid on the floor on opposite sides of the room). Two might agree on the mix of values, but for different reasons; others might have similar a view but understand the values that undergird that view very differently. Seeing more diversity within one's own and other groups indicates increased social identity complexity, and correlates

**Participant Quotes**

*"I found for myself the common between the British values and the Islamic values and there is no contradiction between them ... and we need to work on this in the future."*

*"When I say there is not grey colors doesn't mean there is no areas where God Almighty Allah (STA) has given us a chance to explore, he left territories, big territories for us to, you know, there is very little black and very little white and the grey area is vast and big."*

*"What I've further learnt that although I didn't agree with some of the viewpoints I heard today, tolerance is the important thing, and recognition, and the rights of individuals to hold their own views is the most important thing, and it's important that we recognize that and we fight for that."*

*"I think we also figured out where we have a lot in common and it doesn't matter whether you are Muslim or Christian, there are parallels in most beliefs. I also think that we need to break down to we are all humans and see the human first. If it's a decent person does it really matter what religion that person is or what culture that person is coming from?"*

*"I think it's a very great experience to listen to each other, to hear from each other."*

*"I think as a group it's made us think, it's made us reflect, it's made us question some of our views and it's also given us a good toolbox for engaging with different points of view and speaking with different types of people on different issues."*

*"Partnership working is not jargon, it's actually critically important...because a key point here is this is not just about Muslims. Every community faces this issue. So, we are working with individuals who are not part of the Muslim community but are part of other communities."*

*"A lot of values are very interlinked and...identity—I think that's the main link that I just keep seeing everywhere in every issue that we discussed—is this issue that young British Muslims face huge identity crisis and personally I identify myself and being both British and Muslim."*

with inter-group harmony and increased integrative complexity.<sup>42</sup> The significance of increasing integrative complexity by one point over two intensive days is highlighted when considered alongside the finding that integrative complexity can increase by one point over an entire life-span.<sup>43</sup> Moreover, integrative complexity is domain (topic) specific and the content of BMBS ensures that integrative complexity is increased on topics relevant to radicalization and violent extremisms.<sup>44</sup>

End of course presentations by participants correlate with the PCT results, containing evidence of differentiation and integration, respect for difference enabling collaboration despite disagreement (integrative complexity score two or above). Requiring all participants to present on learning from BMBS reinforces and extends the learning process. Participants reflect and integrate their BMBS experience into their personal narrative, thus creating and inhabiting their own counter-narratives.<sup>45</sup> Public presentations strengthen the newly enhanced integrative complexity capacities, operating as declarations of intent to which one can be held accountable. Any desire to over-state learning or personal change may have been mitigated by the other participants' knowledge of one another's challenges and questions during the intervention. Expressions of appreciation and suggestions for going forward continued the processes of building trust, relationships, community resilience, and other forms of social capital.

Representative quotations from presentations (see two sidebars) illustrate these points, demonstrating integrative complexity capacities that will reduce and prevent extremism through more complex thinking about themselves and those with whom they disagree. The quotations also reveal engagement with and consideration of the risk and factors involved in radicalization and how to support people vulnerable to radicalization, as well as increased confidence to speak about controversial topics. These statements were accompanied by strong appreciation for the course and calls for women to be included and involved in safeguarding efforts. Recommendations included the course being used with young people, with groups that included Muslims and those of other faiths or none, and rolled

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<sup>42</sup> Marilynn B. Brewer and K. P. Pierce, "Social identity complexity and outgroup tolerance," *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin* 31 (2005): 428-437, available at: <http://psp.sagepub.com/content/31/3/428.abstract>.

<sup>43</sup> Suedfeld, Leighton, Conway, "Integrative Complexity and Cognitive Management."

<sup>44</sup> Suedfeld, Cross, Logan, "Can Thematic Content Analysis;" Boyd-MacMillan et al., *Journal of Strategic Security* 9:4 (2016).

<sup>45</sup> Davies, "Security, Extremism," 14: "the educational task is to build habits of engagement, seeing oneself not just as a member of society, nor even just as a participant but as an actor in shaping what goes on;" and see Davies, *Journal of Strategic Security* 9:4 (2016).

out widely in their communities, including in state schools.<sup>46</sup> These themes re-appeared during the debrief one week later, when fifteen participants (seventy-one percent) gathered for six hours. They explored the drivers and pathways to extremism addressed by BMBS underlying theory and design, reflected on learning, and considered ways forward.

### *Being Muslim Being Scottish Created Trust and Allowed for Honest Exchange*

The Scottish Government, working through the Police Scotland officers involved, committed to transparency and partnership with Muslim community members and this created an environment conducive to full engagement with Being Muslim Being Scottish (BMBS), by both the Muslim and practitioner participants. The openness and goodwill shown all around set the scene for a positive course experience. The group's stance was possibly reflected in the pre-intervention integrative complexity scores being slightly higher than usual. This was despite historic frustrations, as revealed in a presentation:

“I have asked for 2 to 3 years to... get contact with young people and my conversations are still with middle aged men about how I can get that contact with young people, which then raises the question for me, ‘How on earth are young people able to ask any questions to anyone except from middle aged men?,’ who have a very traditional and a respected view with regard to Islam and what the Islamic position is. These are young people who have been born in the west, or have come to the west, they see a different culture, and they want to hear a different perspective. They want the opportunity to ask questions. I don't get a sense that they are getting that opportunity to ask those questions out with a relatively tight field. Don't take that as a criticism, it's an observation and one that I would like to take forward with you certainly in [this city] but others perhaps nationally as well.”

In the statement above, a practitioner asks about the opportunities for young people to ask questions while with Muslim community leaders and members (e.g., in the Mosque). The facilitator reported that the Mosque leaders who were present immediately invited and arranged for the practitioner to meet with young people in their communities. This

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<sup>46</sup> Lynn Davies, “Interpreting Extremism by Creating Educative Turbulence,” *Curriculum Inquiry* 44 (4, 2015): 450-468, 457, doi.org/10.1111/curi.12061. Students show increased inclusivity across religious and ethnic lines, and challenge racism, if they experience such behaviors in or outside school, Katherine Covell and R. Brian Howe, “Rights, Respect and Responsibility: Report on the RRR,” Initiative to Hampshire Education Authority (2005).

example illustrates what the facilitator described as a “willingness to listen to others,” accompanied by a stance of “congruence” and even “candor without personal offence from contentious views” expressed during the sessions.<sup>47</sup> The BMBS design features course guidelines that the facilitator sets out at the beginning of and throughout the intervention: respect, non-judgement, listening, and confidentiality (allowing for safeguarding duties).

None of the participants described safeguarding practitioners or Muslims as an opposed outgroup, although one named Muslims as an out-group that the participant wanted to understand better. However, some identifiers (e.g., white, secular/atheist, Western influenced, not supportive of Muslim interests, want to understand Muslims better) could have or did include other participants. Trust was not a given at the outset of the course.

Trust is a multi-dimensional construct. Recent research identified seven superordinate dimensions, three relating specifically to perception of the outgroup (competence, integrity, predictability) and three to perception of in group and outgroup relations (compassion, compatibility, collaboration) with one further dimension undergirding the others (security).<sup>48</sup> The six dimensions have subthemes while security refers to the perception that the outgroup is not a threat to the physical and psychological safety or identity of the in group.<sup>49</sup> We would argue that security refers not only to the absent of threat, but positive peace that promotes community psychosocial health.<sup>50</sup> We hypothesize that increased integrative complexity management capacities support trust building on several dimensions and elicits experiential evidence of the sub-themes while exploring difficult topics. Secondary transfer effect or attitude generalization suggests that any trust-building among BMBS participants from diverse groups will be extended to include others outside

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<sup>47</sup> Facilitator’s report, see note 39.

<sup>48</sup> Mariska Kappmeier, “Trusting the Enemy: Towards a Comprehensive Understanding of Trust and Intergroup Conflict,” *Peace and Conflict: Journal of Peace Psychology* 22:2 (2016): 134-144, available at: <http://psycnet.apa.org/index.cfm?fa=buy.optionToBuy&id=2016-08781-001>.

<sup>49</sup> Dimensions and sub-dimensions: competence has ability, capability to follow through, and knowledge accuracy; integrity has honesty, good intention, promise fulfilment, and moral code; predictability has consistency; compassion has fairness and benevolence; compatibility has commonality and emotional accessibility; and collaboration has access and openness with information, Kappmeier, “Trusting the Enemy,” 143.

<sup>50</sup> Davies, “Security, Extremism,” 2; Davies, *Journal of Strategic Security* 9:4 (2016).

of the BMBS participant group.<sup>51</sup> Future research can measure for increases in trust on the seven dimensions and their sub-themes.<sup>52</sup>

Participants commented on meeting face-to-face, sometimes for the first time, people with whom they had corresponded by email for a long time. Because of BMBS, practitioners were keen to continue to learn about the Muslim faith and the different schools of thought within Islam. Muslim community members noted in their presentations and anonymous PCT (Paragraph Completion Test) responses a fresh recognition of the diversity of views among their own community members. As a person recognizes and tolerates more diversity within and less overlap among their own groups (increased social identity complexity) inter-group harmony increases; as noted, increased social identity complexity correlates with increased integrative complexity.<sup>53</sup> Participants also were keen to learn more about *Prevent Practices* (e.g., what constitutes a hate crime, reporting processes) and the views that inform those practices. Muslim participants disclosed during the debrief some hesitation to report aggressive behavior (e.g., name-calling, other verbal abuse, spitting), for fear of being seen as causing problems. Practitioners responded immediately with clear guidance and encouragement to report, both to receive help with the distressing experience and to contribute to the accuracy of crime statistics. To facilitate such honest exchanges, during session four on Equality, BMBS participants learn active listening skills; these skills can equalize relationships, foster empathy, and enable perspective-taking, all supportive of increased capacities to respect and work well with difference (increased integrative complexity). The facilitator reported that learning and practicing active listening skills was particularly valued by this group.

## Being Muslim Being Scottish Enabled Exploration of Identity and Values

Discussions during the Being Muslim Being Scottish (BMBS) sessions revealed a *post referendum effect* (the Scottish Independence Referendum, September 18, 2014, six months before the BMBS pilot),

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<sup>51</sup> Miles Hewstone, Simon Lolliot, Hermann Swart, Elissa Myers, Alberto Voci, Ananthi Al Ramiah, and Ed Cairns, "Intergroup Contact and Intergroup Conflict," *Peace and Conflict: Journal of Peace Psychology* 20:1, (2014): 36-53, available at: [http://www.hermannswart.com/wp-content/uploads/2014/09/2014\\_Hewstone-Lolliot-Swart-et-al\\_PCJPP.pdf](http://www.hermannswart.com/wp-content/uploads/2014/09/2014_Hewstone-Lolliot-Swart-et-al_PCJPP.pdf); as over-attribution error, see Vincent Y. Yzerbyt, Anouk Rogier, and Susan T. Fiske, "Group Entitativity and Social Attribution: On Translating Situational Constraints into Stereotypes," *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin* 24:10 (1998): 1089-1103, available at: <http://psp.sagepub.com/content/24/10/1089.short>.

<sup>52</sup> Planned research in Northern Ireland will include implicit attitude measures. See Boyd-MacMillan, Campbell, and Furey, *Journal of Strategic Security* 9:4 (2016).

<sup>53</sup> See note 43.

referring to the increased public interest in questions about identity and citizenship. As public discourse considered what it means to be Scottish and British, the way was opened for reflecting on other dual identities. On the Paragraph Completion Test (PCT), nineteen of the twenty-one participants self-identified in groups with dual or more identities, (sixty-two percent perceived their out-groups with dual or more identities). Affirming dual identities helps to reduce and prevent extremisms:

“For example, if one identifies strongly as a Scottish Muslim but finds the authorities treating oneself or other Scottish Muslims as an alien other, this will impact on the way that one conceptualises the relationship between Muslims and authority. This does not mean that one experiences a crisis of identity, which makes one vulnerable to others’ influence. Rather, it means that one must re-evaluate one’s hitherto taken-for-granted assumptions about the relationships between the categories of Muslim and Scottish and the dual identifications that many hold (Hopkins, 2011). In turn this may impact upon one’s self-definition and who one orients to when considering how to act.”<sup>54</sup>

In other words, the exploration of identity and values by practitioner and Muslim BMBS participants strengthened recognition of shared identities and enhanced the likelihood of future collaboration on reducing and preventing extremisms. “In a real sense it is up to authorities whether the kinds of experiences they create for members of marginalized groups are ones that accord with a message of “them and us”.”<sup>55</sup> Practitioner engagement with BMBS demonstrated the seriousness with which they took this responsibility.

As mentioned, BMBS group exercises invite participants to place themselves on value spectrums representing values in tension such as communalism *versus* individualism (via signs placed on the floor at either end of an imagined line). The facilitator invites participants positioned differently along the spectrum to explain why they placed themselves where they have (e.g., closer to one value at either end or somewhere in the middle). In placing themselves on the spectrum, explaining their positions, and hearing others explain their positions, participants not only experience the value tension as they access their own deepest values to determine where to stand, but practice engaging respectfully with others’

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<sup>54</sup> Blackwood, Hopkins, Reich, “Divided by a Common,” 12 (in pre-print version, see link in note 10). See also Nick P. Hopkins, “Dual Identities and Their Recognition: Minority Group Members’ Perspectives,” *Political Psychology* 32:2 (2011): 251-270, available at: <http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/j.1467-9221.2010.00804.x/abstract>.

<sup>55</sup> Ibid.

values, viewpoints, and interpretations, in a context of non-judgement and growing trust (created and maintained by the course guidelines, mentioned above). The facilitator observed that the discussions around values and identity seemed to be experienced as “cathartic” among participants.<sup>56</sup> Discussion of values and identity tap into tensions reflective of the diversity among and between Muslims, practitioners, and other groups. We hypothesize that discussing values and identity in a safe context enabled some resolution of emotions generated by these tensions and involved the processes of distancing through role-taking and empathy.<sup>57</sup>

*Being Muslim Being Scottish enabled discussions about the role of women and the Mosque in society, their roles in the lives of young people, and the possibility of secular-religious compatibility.*

Although none of the participants used gender or age identifiers when naming in and outgroups, several participants focused on the experiences of women and young people during their presentations. This was echoed during the debrief. Participants expressed concern about providing safe spaces where young people can explore issues about identity and the role of women in society as being not only in the home. An agreed conviction emerged amongst participants that Muslim women need to be included more in safeguarding young people.<sup>58</sup> Some expressed the need to re-evaluate the role of the Mosque in contemporary society, suggesting that the Mosque host activities in which Muslims and non-Muslims mixed without any agenda other than to spend time together.<sup>59</sup> There were assertions that young people need positive role models and ongoing role modelling showing how Islamic and Scottish identities are compatible. The Being Muslim Being Scottish (BMBS) session on Science and Religion

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<sup>56</sup> Regarding the Facilitator’s Report, see note 39.

<sup>57</sup> Thomas J. Scheff, “Catharsis and Other Heresies: A Theory of Emotion,” *Evolutionary Behavioural Sciences* 1:3 (2007): 98-113, available at: [https://www.researchgate.net/publication/228359758\\_Catharsis\\_and\\_other\\_heresies\\_A\\_theory\\_of\\_emotion](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/228359758_Catharsis_and_other_heresies_A_theory_of_emotion); and Claus Lamm and Jasminka Majdandzic, “The Role of Shared Neural Activations, Mirror Neurons, and Morality in Empathy—A Critical Comment,” *Neuroscience Research* 90 (2015): 15-24, available at: <http://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0168010214002314>.

<sup>58</sup> For an exploration of experiences of Muslim women in Scotland, see Masoumeh Velayati, “Muslim women and work in Scotland,” in Shirley A. Jackson (ed.), *Routledge International Handbook of Race, Class, and Gender* (New York, NY: Routledge/Taylor & Francis, 2015): 84-101. For an exploration of gender and extremism, see RAN Centre of Excellence, “RAN Issue Paper: The Role of Gender in Violent Extremism,” (December, 2015), available at: [http://ec.europa.eu/dgs/home-affairs/what-we-do/networks/radicalisation\\_awareness\\_network/ran-papers/docs/issue\\_paper\\_gender\\_dec2015\\_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/dgs/home-affairs/what-we-do/networks/radicalisation_awareness_network/ran-papers/docs/issue_paper_gender_dec2015_en.pdf)

<sup>59</sup> Davies, “Interpreting Extremism,” 457; Paul Thomas, “Between Two Stools? The Government’s “Preventing Violent Extremism Agenda”,” *The Political Quarterly* 80 (2, 2009): 282–291.

uses this specific tension to explore the overarching tension between purely secular and purely religious viewpoints, with examples of how some have found an underlying compatibility between science and religion. These examples of compatibility show how those with religious faith can honor their core values while living in a culture with a dominant secular discourse. In this way, the BMBS course method engenders hope and self-efficacy.

### Being Muslim Being Scottish and Concerns about Internet and Media

Participants expressed concern over the role of the internet and media in presenting and perpetuating false information that can lead young people toward extremist ideologies. Being Muslim Being Scottish (BMBS) increases critical thinking skills (evidenced by increases in integrative complexity scores) to see through manipulative images and statements, on-line or in person. For example, during the seventh session on Purity and Pleasure, participants learn about framing—by the media and ourselves—and five common tricks (rhetorical strategies used to frame

#### Participant Quotes

*“I’ve been to events where women have literally been told to enter through the back door and not speak because, apparently, “the voice of a woman should not be heard by a man and this is the view within Islam,” and it’s a view I respect but I don’t agree with and I don’t think it represents mainstream Islam and I don’t think it’s appropriate for this society. But unfortunately, sometimes people propagate these views and sometimes these people are given a very big space in the community to do what they want to do... it’s because there is a vacuum there and we need to try to fill it, because if you don’t fill it... young people will be confused. Not everyone has the courage to stand up to this kind of thing...to say, “Oh, maybe I’m going to ignore that because I don’t think it’s right.” Not everyone has the courage or has the education from home to be able to make those nuanced...judgement calls, “I think I’ll leave this bit and...I will take that bit and that sounds balanced and that doesn’t.”*

*“When you are sitting there, doing nothing, that is the time when all these extreme thoughts come into your head, and we need to try to get away from that. And the only way to do that is by learning the real truth, not just in Islam, but in what it is in the whole community...What is Britain exactly? And I genuinely think we need to do more for the youth just to make sure, even if it’s just a talk, even if it’s just football...Not just for the Muslim youth, but for all.”*

*“It’s something that can be taken forward and actually presented to the children... something we found when we were teaching them...They would give their opinion but they were unable to give what other groups think. Being presented with four different scenarios, for example, for each topic [as in BMBS]...you might not have thought of it... you were forced to face it and then discuss it.”*

*“It’s a dangerous time because of a number of things like media bias and all those sorts of things...I think it’s really important as we go forward that the silent majority continually speaks up, but in doing that there has got to be engagement with all the various partners. I’ve seen the benefits of working with partners in my own line of work and I’ve been very grateful to members of the Muslim community in helping de-radicalize one youngster and that’s the sort of positive story that never gets out there.”*

*“I’ve gained valuable insight into Islamic culture and beliefs from some very open and honest people ... I now know to read beyond the sensationalist headlines and to think objectively whenever Islam is reported in a negative sense.”*

images as well as statements) indicative of low integrative complexity. These tricks are often used to lower the integrative complexity of others: black and white contrast followed by a list of three, us and them, thin end of the wedge, caricature, and foot in the door.<sup>60</sup> DVD clips present inflammatory real life examples of these tricks. Rather than focusing on the content, participants engage in an informal contest to identify the tricks being used. In this way, participants practice recognizing the structure of thinking in inflammatory statements rather than debating or arguing about the content. This game is followed by discussion of where and by whom they have seen the tricks used to frame other people, including recognition of when they have used them themselves.<sup>61</sup> This discourse analysis, coupled with session-by-session exploration of contrasting viewpoints on a range of topics, sensitizes participants to the ways in which images and language can be framed to mislead and manipulate.<sup>62</sup> Increased understanding of framing through manipulative tricks and similar strategies lays the foundation for specialist instruction regarding media (of all types) manipulation.<sup>63</sup> Inflammatory and extremist statements are explored in a structured but indirect way, creating a safe context for honest discussion about the content within the parameters of the intervention guidelines mentioned above.

## Being Muslim Being Scottish Going Forward

A week after the intervention concluded, during the six-hour debrief, participants expressed unanimous consensus about the value of Being Muslim Being Scottish (BMBS) and a strong desire to take it forward on a wide scale, including delivery in schools. The BMBS design avoids defensive reactance by building connections and eliciting positive affect among participants, approaches shown to be related to pro-social behaviors, ranging from supporting environmental causes to general helpfulness.<sup>64</sup> Participants explore sensitive issues in a safe environment

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<sup>60</sup> Bonino, "Visible Muslimness," 389-391; Liht and Savage, 10.

<sup>61</sup> Eran Halperin, "Emotional Barriers to Peace: Emotions and Public Opinion of Jewish Israelis About the Peace Process in the Middle East," *Peace and Conflict* 17 (2011): 22-45, available at: <http://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/10781919.2010.487862>; Lynn Davies, "Security, Extremism and Education: Safeguarding or Surveillance?," *British Journal of Educational Studies* 64:1 (2016): 1-19, see 13-14, available at: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/00071005.2015.1107022>.

<sup>62</sup> Charlie Winter, "The Virtual 'Caliphate': Understanding Islamic State's Propaganda Strategy," (London: Quilliam Foundation, 2015).

<sup>63</sup> An example of specialist instruction can be found at: Digital Disruption, <http://www.digitaldisruption.co.uk>.

<sup>64</sup> Netta Weinstein, Michael Rogerson, Joshua Moreton, Andrew Balmford, and Richard Bradbury, "Conserving Nature Out of Fear or Knowledge? Using Threatening Versus Connecting Messages to Generate Support for Environmental Causes," *Journal of Nature Conservation* 26 (2015): 49-55, available at: <http://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S1617138115000527>.

that builds social capital and community resilience, while also enhancing individual capacities. Participants suggested that BMBS be delivered by paired co-facilitators with Muslim and practitioner community members, thus modelling in course delivery the needed collaboration and cooperation. Co-Facilitation is now required practice for all IC Thinking interventions. Finally, participants expressed a strong desire that BMBS be run not only with Muslims but also with participants from a wide range of communities to increase integrative complexity capacities across cultural and social divides.<sup>65</sup>

## Conclusion

This reporting on a Being Muslim Being Scottish (BMBS) pilot completes a trilogy of reports from the BMBB family, first delivered in 2007. As part of the first generation of IC (integrative complexity) Thinking interventions, these results indicate the continued robustness of this intervention family. Delivered in 2015, with a new model of participant involvement requiring practitioner and Muslim community member representatives, BMBS was found to be effective in a Scottish context at significantly increasing integrative complexity thinking toward in and outgroups *from* simplified, polarized black and white thinking *toward* more complex thinking that respects difference and enables pro-social collaboration despite disagreement. Increased integrative complexity toward in and outgroups predicts more peaceful outcomes to intra- and inter-group conflict as participants recognize and access a greater range of response choices when facing difference and disagreement. Participant presentations and debrief discussions revealed increased awareness of risks to radicalization, confidence to discuss controversial and sensitive topics, and communication among diverse communities for effective safeguarding. These increases cohere with the course topics and design. The combined assessment results evidence that BMBS was effective at reducing and preventing violent extremism; participants not only have more information but evidenced capacities to access and use the information when facing difference, disagreement, and opposition.

The new model of participant involvement prompted initial, informal meetings among participant communities and engendered some trust in and transparency about the intervention and the assessment process. With representatives from both practitioner and Muslim communities, the IC learning across communities will support on-going collaboration, increasing community resilience—its approaches and structures for organizing and using resources in the face of adversity—and other forms of

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<sup>65</sup> Davies, “Interpreting Extremism,” 457.

social capital.<sup>66</sup> Our understanding is that because of BMBS, the represented communities planned to collaborate informally to meet the needs of young people with an Imam participant planning to introduce young people to insights and processes experienced during BMBS.

Further research is needed with a four-day minimum delivery schedule. Other behavioral measures are needed alongside integrative complexity measures (resilience, trust measures). Funding for follow-up measures will benefit all: end-user, practitioner, research, and policy communities. Meanwhile, the results from this BMBS pilot were in keeping with and extended the intervention family, in both practice and theory.

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<sup>66</sup> Betty Pfefferbaum, Rose L. Pfefferbaum, and Richard L. Van Horn, "Community Resilience Interventions: Participatory, Assessment-Based, Action-Oriented Processes," *American Behavioural Sciences* 59:2 (2015): 238-253, available at: <http://abs.sagepub.com/content/59/2/238.short>.