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Religion, Conflict and Globalization

**Given the context in which British counter-terrorism
policy was developed, is it effective at targeting the
growing threat of Right-Wing Extremism?**

Madeleine de Ferrer

Student Number: s4263103

Thesis Supervisor: dr. J. Tarusarira
Second Assessor: dr. G. Andrejc
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Abstract

Since the new millennium the landscape of counter-terrorism policy has changed dramatically in the United Kingdom. From being virtually non-existent in the 90s, to now being a legally bound duty to certain professions. This thesis will trace the journey from 9/11 to the 6th January 2021 insurrection in Washington DC. It will consider the ever changing backdrop of terrorism in the West and the ways in which policy has worked to keep up with the dynamic threat. Analysis will be broken into three large historical sections (2001-2010, 2010-2015, 2015-2021) to allow thorough investigation into the effect of specific terror attacks, political changes and global events. Policy will then be situated in response to these contextual factors and their language and construction holistically examined.

Using social contract theory and critical race theory to approach the research question it will work to consider the effectiveness of counter-terrorism policy in terms of its ability to be uniformly applied against the growing threat of the far-right. The role of religion within mainstream, Western society will be considered throughout, with particular concentration on its long-standing association with 'terrorism' and 'violence', awareness will particularly brought to the relationship between the Prevent policy and British Muslims.

Finally, suggestions will be made as to how the United Kingdom should proceed in the future with its counter-terrorism policy.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

The United Kingdom ranks as the 30th most impacted country by terror, the second most affected country in Europe, according to the Global Terrorism Index 2020.¹ Since 9/11 the UK has had approximately 100 recorded terror-related deaths, the attacks are primarily attributed to either jihadi-inspired extremism or Northern Irish terrorism.² The current threat level is severe, meaning that an attack is highly likely. Terrorism has been ever apparent in the public consciousness since 2001 and the connection between wars in Iraq, Afghanistan and refugees has been developed by politicians and the media.³

In Britain, one of the largest changes to arise from this terror attack was in the form of the counter-terrorism strategy (CONTEST), published in 2003 under Tony Blair's Labour government. While there had been previous anti-terror legislation, this was its 'first comprehensive ... strategy' acting as an immediate response to 9/11.⁴ It aimed to 'reduce the risk' in the UK and allow people to 'go about their lives freely and with confidence'.⁵ CONTEST has four different work-streams: Prevent, Pursue, Protect and Prepare. The effectiveness of Prevent will be the focus of this thesis. Prevent aims to 'stop people becoming terrorists or supporting terrorism'.⁶ Its objectives are to respond to the 'ideological challenge' of terrorism; 'prevent people from being drawn into terrorism'; and 'work with sectors and institutions where there are risks of radicalisation' that need to be addressed.⁷

¹ Institute for Economics & Peace, 'Global Terrorism Index 2020: Measuring The Impact Of Terrorism' (2020), 8.

² 'GTD | Global Terrorism Database' (*Start.umd.edu*, 2020) <<http://www.start.umd.edu/gtd/>> accessed 8 December 2020.

³ Ian Drury, 'Radicalised Asylum Seekers Have Murdered Or Injured More Than 1,000 In Terror Attacks In Europe Since 2014' *Daily Mail* (2018).

⁴ House of Commons Home Affairs Committee, 'Project CONTEST: The Government's Counter-Terrorism Strategy' (2008), 4.

⁵ HM Government, 'CONTEST: The United Kingdom's Strategy For Countering Terrorism' (2018), 7.

⁶ HM Government, 'Prevent Strategy' (2011), para 3.8.

⁷ HM Government, 'Prevent Strategy' (2011), para 3.21.

While Prevent has been in the consciousness of public sectors since as early as 2006, there was a notable shift in dynamic in 2015, with the arrival of the Counter-Terrorism and Security Act. S.26(1) of the legislation creates a legal responsibility on specified bodies (including schools) to 'have due regard to the need to prevent people from being drawn into terrorism'.⁸ While this duty does not bind the teachers personally and does not create mandatory reporting requirements, it does place a new legislatively bound responsibility onto schools to protect students and identify any concerning changes.

The Prevent duty applies to many public bodies in the United Kingdom. Within them, the Prevent duty is implemented by risk assessments, working in partnership, staff training and IT policies.⁹ Risk assessments create an expectation that staff have considered the risk of specifically their students being drawn into terrorism and supporting extremist ideas. This risk is contextual to the environmental factors surrounding the institution and will vary significantly from area to area. The working in partnership criteria builds on pre-existing relationships between the institution and local safeguarding boards, run by the local authorities. Further to this, there will be an additional expectation that the institutions will be engaging with wider figures, extending the remit for looking for concerning behaviour.

The trajectory that Prevent has continued post-2003 has been, generally speaking, to target Muslim communities. In 2007 (post 7/7 attacks in London), Prevent funding was directed to seventy local authorities with a demographic of 5% or more of a Muslim population, which was later reduced to just 2%.¹⁰ Much of this funding went to ostensibly positive community-focused measures within the British Asian demographic. While this approach has since shifted somewhat, with more recent governments deploying more centralised approaches to counter-terrorism, the message of these measures have always been distinguishing Muslims from the rest of the population and labelling them as a threat. Very little consideration of the holistic factors behind the movement to extremism was considered by the governments and Prevent represented

⁸ Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015, s.26(1).

⁹Department for Education, 'The Prevent Duty: Departmental Advice For Schools And Childcare Providers' (2015).

¹⁰ Charlotte Heath-Kelly, 'The Geography Of Pre-Criminal Space: Epidemiological Imaginations Of Radicalisation Risk In The UK Prevent Strategy, 2007–2017' (2017) 10 Critical Studies on Terrorism, 304.

a demand to shift responsibility onto figures in religious communities and away from parliamentary choices related to foreign affairs. This is especially notable considering three decade long violent Troubles that affected British cities, resulting in hundreds of deaths in the United Kingdom. While perpetrators were convicted under terrorism charges and subsequently recognised as terrorists, the deployment of a sophisticated counter-terrorism strategy only came to fruition as a response to a terrorist attack occurring in a completely different country.

In more recent years there has been a well-documented 'surge' of far-right terrorism (for the purposes of this thesis, this term includes nationalism, white supremacy, neo-Nazism and neo-fascism).¹¹ In North America, Western Europe and Oceania, there has been an increase of far-right attacks by 250% in the past five years. Far-right attacks are distinct from other forms of terrorism as the majority of them (60% between 1970-2019) are caused by 'unaffiliated individuals'.¹² In reality, this means that there is less of a recognisable and tangible community surrounding the perpetrators of these attacks. Additionally, since the conception of the CONTEST strategy the accessibility of the internet has significantly increased which has had a direct effect on certain terrorist attacks and their ability to find a virtual 'community' of like-minded individuals to whom they may not have had previous access to. The problem, therefore, is that the foundation of CONTEST and the remit of Prevent is insufficiently large enough and appropriately deployed and understood to access these individuals and stop the growth of this terrorism. One of the difficulties with Prevent and the wider CONTEST policy is that they are built on assumptions and clear boundaries and definitions that exist within the general understanding of terrorism. However, there has been an insufficient number of attacks to produce data that creates any strong discernible correlations. Additionally, it treats terrorism as a fixed concept with recognisable characteristics, however, this ignores societal evolution, the effect of global events, the rise of technology and many other factors that contribute to an endlessly shifting landscape of crime.

¹¹ Institute for Economics & Peace, 'Global Terrorism Index 2020: Measuring The Impact Of Terrorism' (2020), 3.

¹² Institute for Economics & Peace, 'Global Terrorism Index 2020: Measuring The Impact Of Terrorism' (2020), 64.

The purpose of this thesis is to demonstrate the limitations of the current Prevent policy within both its construction and the context in which it was produced and show that it is inappropriate in the current climate to accurately prevent the growing threat of right-wing extremism. It will be argued that the policy specifically works to target religious extremism and emphasis is placed on the 'problem' of Islam, encouraging widespread fear of the religion, demonstrable in mainstream media discourse. By situating the policy on an irrational, 'foreign' religion not only was a 'suspect community' created but it fed into far-right narratives, leading to an increase in Islamophobia in Britain.

Furthermore, building on the academic research, it will be shown that Prevent perpetuates misrepresentations about already disenfranchised groups resulting in scaremongering and further alienation from mainstream society. Language around right-wing terrorism will be considered and the nation's desire to perceive terror and whiteness as being incompatible will be presented. Finally, the concept of 'British values' will be thoroughly examined concerning its ineffectiveness at preventing the terrorism of the far-right.

The primary theories that will be used are critical race theory and social contract theory, this will allow conclusions to be drawn as to the relationship between legislation and the perceived population of the United Kingdom.

Methodology

Research Question : how effective is the Prevent strategy at targeting non-Islamic extremism?

The primary approach for this thesis is critical discourse analysis on my primary sources of four different versions of the CONTEST (2006, 2009, 2011, 2018) strategy and two versions of Prevent (2006, 2011). These sources are the primary material for the thesis and are necessary to understand the governmental perception and presentation of the threat of terrorism in the United Kingdom. The primary sources will be situated within global and political events to further understand the cause of changes and develop a better understanding of parliamentary intention. The analysis will be separated into three sections: 2001-2010, 2011-2015, 2015-present. This has been separated for several reasons, firstly for brevity and conciseness and to keep points

organised and clear. Secondly, this follows the changes in political leadership in the United Kingdom (Labour, Conservative/Liberal Democrats and Conservative), often the new CONTEST was in response to the previous version under the prior political leadership, therefore it follows that the different versions roughly fit evenly between the three sections. Particular attention will be focused on the language being used and interpretations supported by evidence will be presented. Much of the language used in all of the sources are theorised to be coded, conclusions will be drawn from repeated use of certain words and phrases and suggestions will be made as to particular interpretations.

The other source that will be analysed is political speeches by politicians related to their subject matter. Attention will be brought to the timing of the speech (and the relevant context will be established), choice of vocabulary and structure.

Symbols used by right-wing extremist (RWE) groups will be explored too, and their self-identification and representation, with a primary focus on their use of Nationalist imagery, this will allow insight into how they are being treated by mainstream politics.

Terrorist acts occurring in Western countries will also be situated within the context of the Prevent strategy and the parliamentary discourse surrounding those events will be examined in great detail. For example, tropes such as the 'lone wolf' will be explored and conclusions will be drawn as to how this presentation affects the public's perception of risk.

Theoretically, critical race theory, social contract theory and labelling theory will be used to analyse these sources to assist with an understanding as to how society has understood these events and the consequences of their presentation will be examined. It is believed that through this approach to the research question, a full and extensive understanding of the various issues surrounding the topic will be presented and from this, strong conclusions can be developed.

Ethics

Considering the subject matter of this thesis, ethical considerations are of the utmost importance. Every effort will be taken to discuss all individuals involved with care and

respect and significant research has gone into using the correct terminology and descriptors for all relevant parties and events.

There are some necessary factors to consider with the ethics of critical discourse analysis. As discussed by Hugh Tyrwhitt-Drake, inherent to 'critical' there is a necessary element of judgement which can result in researchers 'undermining its claim to disciplinary status by taking a cavalier approach to the data' and even resulting in the manipulation of data to fit conclusions.¹³ Especially with such a sensitive area taking a 'cavalier' approach has a real and significant risk to hurt potentially vulnerable individuals and support harmful attitudes. In order to reduce the risk of this occurring, care will be taken to contextualise all information and events preceding the texts. This approach carries an inherently reduced risk to individuals, however, events (in particular terror events) will be thoroughly fact-checked before the discussion to allow the most transparent presentation possible.

There is additional risk concerning my own biases in this research, it is of the utmost importance that my views do not encroach or shape my research or responses as this could risk jeopardising my analysis and conclusions.

Academic justification

On 6th January 2021, the United States Capitol Building in Washington DC was stormed by a right-wing group in support of the exiting president, Donald Trump. Some of the rioters carried cable ties and blueprints of the building, suggesting that this event was pre-planned. The justification of the attack was that the Democrats were attempting to 'steal' the election, despite repeated evidence that the November 2020 presidential election was conducted fairly and according to the standard legislation of the United States.¹⁴ Five individuals died as a result of the riot, many were injured (including 15 police officers) and there was extensive property damage to the symbolically iconic. For *some* reason, this group of individuals felt justified to storm a building that has an inherent role in democracy in the Western world, somehow the rioters who proclaimed themselves to be 'patriots' led an 'insurrection' against the very country they feel

¹³ Phil Graham, 'Ethics In Critical Discourse Analysis' (2018) 15 Critical Discourse Studies.

¹⁴ The Guardian, 'Most Republicans Still Believe 2020 Election Was Stolen From Trump – Poll' (2021).

beholden to.¹⁵ The last time the Capitol had had anything of this nature occur was over two-hundred years earlier, in the War of 1812.

In the two decades post 9/11, there has been clear rhetoric surrounding the inherent dangers and harm of Islam through the media, politicians, discourse around Brexit which has filtered to or from policy. The effect of this period on Muslims in Britain has been immense and resulted in an increase in hate-crimes and racism under the label of a potential terrorist. However, according to statistics produced by the government and the Global Terror Index, there is evidence that in the past five years there has been a shift in extremist activity to the Right – as exemplified in the Capitol riots. The long-standing conceptualisation of terror threat was visibly changing, however, there has been no adjoining change in policy or legislation to reflect this.

The academic justification is twofold, firstly the threat of Islam is no longer the only substantial terror threat facing the West and there is ostensibly a need to have a new, robust counter-terrorism policy that is distinct from the complicated history of Prevent. Secondly, the way in which terrorism is conceptualised in the West needs to be shifted away from the post-Enlightenment perspective of terrorism that holds religion as inherent and towards a wider and more holistic strategy. Policy needs to be examined carefully, language assessed and broader theories need to be developed to understand ‘why’ the far-right have been able to establish themselves as a terror threat, despite theoretically robust preventive systems in place.

¹⁵ Sabrina Tavernise, 'These Are The Rioters Who Stormed The Nation's Capitol' *NY Times* (2021).

Chapter 2: Literature Review

Prevent has been in public consciousness since 2006 and has had an enormous effect on both the political and social landscape in the United Kingdom, as a result, there has been a large body of accompanying scholarship. The vast majority of thinkers are critical of the strategy, with some touting it as being 'controversial' citing unclear language and aims, and the negative effect that this policy has had on 'targeted communities', in particular the Muslim experience. The policy has also been discussed at length in terms of the novel landscape that it operates in, distinguishing itself from any other piece of policy.

One of the most significant bodies of work produced to understand the impact that counter-terrorism legislation has had on Muslim communities, was the research report by Choudhury and Fenwick, produced for the Equality and Human Rights Commission.¹⁶ They use four case studies in specific areas in the United Kingdom using both focus groups and semi-structured interviews. The lives of Muslims and non-Muslims in Britain are presented as being 'parallel', with Muslims being treated as if within a 'suspect community', entirely due to their religion.¹⁷ Choudhury argues that the policies themselves are operating in such a way that they are producing a 'climate of fear' towards them.¹⁸ There is comment on the distortion of perceived threat in the United Kingdom as being presented as coming from terror, as opposed to the large societal threats originating from other social and criminal issues (drugs, unemployment, racism etc.). Particular emphasis on the effect of specific legislation, such as stop and search measures, were made to establish the lived experiences of Muslims in the United Kingdom. The report concluded that the 'suspect community' has created feelings of 'alienation', isolation, 'anxiety and vulnerability' amongst British Muslims and Asians. These fostered feelings, as a result of counter-terrorism policy, have been shown to fuel the recruitment narrative of Islamic extremist groups.

¹⁶ Tufyal Choudhury and Helen Fenwick, 'The Impact Of Counter-Terrorism Measures On Muslim Communities' (2011).

¹⁷ Tufyal Choudhury and Helen Fenwick, 'The Impact Of Counter-Terrorism Measures On Muslim Communities' (2011), 85.

¹⁸ Tufyal Choudhury and Helen Fenwick, 'The Impact Of Counter-Terrorism Measures On Muslim Communities' (2011), 44.

The concept of 'suspect communities' has been well documented and theorised by many other academics. Imran Awan, in his 2012 article, conducts early analysis into the 2011 policy suggesting that this iteration will continue to alienate British Muslims and reproduce the 'suspect' community, furthering the alienation of Muslims.¹⁹ He suggests that this is shaped by factors from racial profiling to the 'excessively wide powers' and deliberate misrepresentation of some Islamic fractions as being 'extremists'. Awan concludes that more research is necessary into the causes of extremism beyond looking to a single explanation within Islam, as this is resulting in the mass alienation and marginalisation of a community.

This was also considered in Francesco Ragazzi's work, who questioned whether or not it went far enough. His 2017 article situates itself around the conflation of social policy and security and the effect the controversial Prevent has had on the Muslim communities.²⁰ He analyses Cameron's 'muscular liberalism' speech and his vilification of the concept of multiculturalism. This then leads into his discussion about the distorted relationship between the state and British Muslims, in particular the weaponization of British citizenship and Islam, with Britishness being a 'reward' for Muslims as opposed to an inherent 'right'.²¹

Boukalas, in his 2019 article, states that there is a distinct lack of clarity in terms of the aims and approaches of the Prevent strategy suggesting that it exists within a 'clash of values' paradox.²² Boukalas situates the context of Prevent as denoting the Muslim community 'as an actionable site of counterterrorism'.²³ He considers the veiled attacks on Muslims in the UK and the effect that the 2015 legislative change has had on them. Particularly interesting was the notion of Britain further colonising its own

¹⁹ Imran Awan, "I Am A Muslim Not An Extremist": How The Prevent Strategy Has Constructed A "Suspect" Community' (2012) 40 Politics & Policy.

²⁰ Francesco Ragazzi, 'Suspect Community Or Suspect Category? The Impact Of Counter-Terrorism As 'Policed Multiculturalism'' (2016) 42 Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies.

²¹ Tufyal Choudhury and Helen Fenwick, 'The Impact Of Counter-Terrorism Measures On Muslim Communities' (2011), 7.

²² Christos Boukalas, 'The Prevent Paradox: Destroying Liberalism In Order To Protect It' (2019) 72 Crime, Law and Social Change, 468.

²³ Christos Boukalas, 'The Prevent Paradox: Destroying Liberalism In Order To Protect It' (2019) 72 Crime, Law and Social Change.

communities through its 'social policy' utilising 'the logic of security'.²⁴ This is enacted through the country's use of the liberal 'British values' in terms of defining other elements related to terrorism. This, Boukalas asserts, is ultimately responsible for the Government's destruction of liberalism 'in order to protect it'.²⁵

Fahid Qurashi uses ethnographic research to show how the 'War on Terror' discourse has securitised the social structures within Muslim communities. He particularly focuses on the embedding of these narratives through 'community engagement' approaches.²⁶ He comments on the culture of 'suspicion and fear' that exists in the communities and the constant pressure that is felt at having your 'Britishness' assessed. He suggests that Prevent is state-implemented Islamophobia that has sought to categorise the Muslim community into 'good' and 'bad' in relation to the government's own political positions, built on judgments on dress, activism and ideas.²⁷ He considers Prevent an attempt to contain 'Muslim political agency' and frame their approaches as a victory for public security and safety.

Heath-Kelly is a major academic in this field, specifically writing about the Prevent strategy and its evolution.²⁸ She sheds light on the confused development of approaches within the varying political contexts over the past two decades, providing a fascinating overview and analysis in the landscape of counter-terrorism policy and its political development, referring to this specifically as 'pre-crime'. Pre-crime is an interesting concept as it is built entirely on suspicion as opposed to action or guilt and is key in the creation of 'suspect communities'. She outlines the changes between political leadership, commenting on New Labour's Islamic community focused approach and the shifts to the coalition's centralised 'big data' influenced approach. She uses the prior

²⁴ Christos Boukalas, 'The Prevent Paradox: Destroying Liberalism In Order To Protect It' (2019) 72 *Crime, Law and Social Change*.

²⁵ Christos Boukalas, 'The Prevent Paradox: Destroying Liberalism In Order To Protect It' (2019) 72 *Crime, Law and Social Change*.

²⁶ Fahid Qurashi, 'The Prevent Strategy And The UK 'War On Terror': Embedding Infrastructures Of Surveillance In Muslim Communities' (2018) 4 *Palgrave Communications*.

²⁷ Fahid Qurashi, 'The Prevent Strategy And The UK 'War On Terror': Embedding Infrastructures Of Surveillance In Muslim Communities' (2018) 4 *Palgrave Communications*, 3.

²⁸ Charlotte Heath-Kelly, 'The Geography Of Pre-Criminal Space: Epidemiological Imaginations Of Radicalisation Risk In The UK Prevent Strategy, 2007-2017' (2017) 10 *Critical Studies on Terrorism*.

discourses of health care and preventive medicine as being the root for the pre-crime interventions in the mid-twentieth century that have subsequently laid the groundwork for the counterterrorism strategy. She criticises this chosen method of policy by establishing the field of terrorism as markedly different to the field of healthcare and crime due to a lack of high level research and substantial data. This allowed shortcuts to be taken by the governments and generalised hypotheses about where best to target. These shortcuts were then exemplified in the distribution of funding, training and education in line with merely the demographics of Muslim population across the country.

This policy's decision to centralise British values was a theme in other literature, alongside a general consensus that the language used in the policy is insufficiently clear and will result in discrimination against Muslims. Crawford's article used critical race theory to unpick the reality of 'Fundamental British Values' and considered whether or not they were truly compatible with a Muslim identity.²⁹ Crawford delineated the difference between the literal definition of the values, being 'rule of law', 'individual liberty', 'mutual respect' and 'tolerance' which are all superficially positive values to have in a liberal and democratic society, and the effect that they are having in terms of their 'cultural supremacy'.³⁰ There has not been discussion, however, in how promotion of British values could undermine the aims of counterterrorism policy from the perspective of reducing Nationalist ideology; which is a factor that will be explored in this thesis.

Specifically situating the research within the education setting, Crawford analyses the utility of the promotion of the values as well as the use of teachers as being 'custodians of natural values' and 'duty-bound 'instruments of surveillance''.³¹ There were many fascinating aspects to this article, particularly of note was the association of Britishness being whiteness and how the promotion of these values are 'imperialist presumption of superiority' and result in the exclusion of non-white individuals.

²⁹ Claire E. Crawford, 'Promoting 'Fundamental British Values' In Schools: A Critical Race Perspective' (2017) 37 Curriculum Perspectives.

³⁰ Claire E. Crawford, 'Promoting 'Fundamental British Values' In Schools: A Critical Race Perspective' (2017) 37 Curriculum Perspectives, 199.

³¹ Claire E. Crawford, 'Promoting 'Fundamental British Values' In Schools: A Critical Race Perspective' (2017) 37 Curriculum Perspectives, 200.

Language was further considered in Richards's article that looked specifically at the issues alongside the use of the terms 'radicalization' and 'vulnerability' in the policy.³² There is a clear gradient and subsequent disjuncture that accompanies the term radicalisation. Radicalisation is a focus throughout all counter-terrorism policy which, in more recent years, has been expanded to include non-violent radicalism. Richards considers this newfound emphasis to be a substantial problem. This is largely due to a double standard when considering the notion of the 'radical'.³³ Historically and contemporarily, 'radical' in certain contexts is a positive word that has been used to describe political parties manifestos, various waves of feminism or a drastic approach to the climate crisis. It has also not been used about terrorism activity until the mid-2000s and predominately to describe Islamic related extremism. Richards not only suggests that there is difficulty in terms of the contextual use of the word but there is also a lack of consistent evidence that there is a connection between radicalisation and terrorism. The main problem as a result of using imprecise language is that the scope of individuals affected by the policy becomes significantly widened for little to no material gain and at the detriment of individual's rights. Additionally, the purported reasoning behind looking at radicalisation – that being that it looks to more of the root causes and can pre-empt terrorism, he believes can still be achieved through solely looking at terrorism.

Another issue considered in this article was the direction of focus in the policy, an issue which also arose in Joel David Taylor's article that looked at suspect categories and alienation.³⁴ Richards suggested that the wide scope of the policy, achieved through its language, was a result of the state's 'denial about the impact of foreign policy on domestic terrorism'.³⁵ Taylor considers this in more detail thorough looking at the shifting nature of the policy and the effect of a redirection of focus from being

³² Anthony Richards, 'The Problem With 'Radicalization': The Remit Of 'Prevent' And The Need To Refocus On Terrorism In The UK' (2011) 87 *International Affairs*.

³³ Anthony Richards, 'The Problem With 'Radicalization': The Remit Of 'Prevent' And The Need To Refocus On Terrorism In The UK' (2011) 87 *International Affairs*, 144.

³⁴ Joel David Taylor, "'Suspect Categories,' Alienation And Counterterrorism: Critically Assessing PREVENT In The UK' (2018) 32 *Terrorism and Political Violence*.

³⁵ Anthony Richards, 'The Problem With 'Radicalization': The Remit Of 'Prevent' And The Need To Refocus On Terrorism In The UK' (2011) 87 *International Affairs*, 147.

community-focused to community-targeted, reflecting two different perspectives of radicalisation (Anglo-Saxon and European). This approach was demonstrated in the allocation of funding and the recognition of 'key sites' for Prevent, the funding went to 'seventy English local authorities of a Muslim population of or more than five percent'.³⁶ Suggesting the motivations behind the Prevent strategy and the desire to separate certain communities and label them as being potential threats. Within this separation of Muslim communities, there creates a new space of distrust and alienation from the rest of society.

Githens-Mazer, in an article for Al Jazeera, writes scathingly in response to David Cameron's speech accompanying the 2011 revision to the CONTEST and Prevent duty.³⁷ He suggests that the government has rejected the evidence and factually rooted approaches in favour of an approach 'based on emotion' and choosing to 'link terrorism with identity' – identity in this context, meaning Islam.³⁸ The connection of Islam and terrorism either covertly in political speeches, or overtly on the front of tabloids, has been within the public consciousness for decades

In a meeting between David Anderson QC and the Muslim Council of Britain, they discussed some of the concerns that they had on Prevent.³⁹ Anderson specifically discusses that there has been a 'discriminatory application of the law in schools', in particular in the BNP and EDL heartlands where they are seen to only be monitoring Muslim pupils.⁴⁰ The document also touches on the coding of language that surrounds different types of terrorism, Ryan McGee, an EDL member, was sentenced for two years for building a nail bomb – but was described as being an 'immature teenager'.⁴¹ Anderson argues that there is

³⁶ Joel David Taylor, 'Suspect Categories,' *Alienation And Counterterrorism: Critically Assessing PREVENT In The UK* (2018) 32 *Terrorism and Political Violence*, 855.

³⁷ Jonathan Githens-Mazer, 'Club Britain: Access Denied' *Al Jazeera* (2011) <<https://www.aljazeera.com/opinions/2011/2/10/club-britain-access-denied-4/>> accessed 5 December 2020.

³⁸ Jonathan Githens-Mazer, 'Club Britain: Access Denied' *Al Jazeera* (2011) <<https://www.aljazeera.com/opinions/2011/2/10/club-britain-access-denied-4/>> accessed 5 December 2020.

³⁹ The Muslim Council of Britain, 'Meeting Between David Anderson QC And The MCB: Concerns On Prevent' (2015).

⁴⁰ The Muslim Council of Britain, 'Meeting Between David Anderson QC And The MCB: Concerns On Prevent' (2015).

⁴¹ Vikram Dodd, 'Soldier Jailed For Making Nailbomb Avoids Terror Charge' *The Guardian* (2014).

a 'monstrously wide' definition of terrorism and draws on the definition as being part of the issue in implementing the duty.

The literature heavily concentrates on the impact that the prevent strategy has had on the British Muslims through the construction of suspect categories, alienation and vilification. There is a gap, however, as none of the academics have discussed that in doing this the construction of the terrorism as a religious and Islamic issue, it has allowed the far-right to thrive.

Chapter 3: Theoretical Framework

Conceptualisation of Religion

It is necessary to assess the conceptualisation of religion and secularism in the post-enlightenment West in order to grapple with the implications of counter-terrorism policy. This is due to the normative association with terrorism and religious violence in scholarship and wider political and media discourse. The existence of religious violence, for example, is something that continues to cause rife debate in academia. Due to the implicit religiosity of Islamic extremism and the weaving of Islam into policy, this must be unpacked. The three primary schools of thought considering religious violence are constructivism, interpretivism and materialism which all provide varying epistemological perspectives to varying degrees of usefulness.

Cavanaugh considers some of the arguments that support the idea that religion leads to violence in his book, 'The Myth of Religious Violence' largely using a constructivist lens to analyse these in depth.⁴² His overarching criticism of the arguments is that we do not have a sufficiently precise definition of religion, which then creates a fallibility in the assertion that religion is inherently more violent than secularism. He suggests that the reductive argument is akin to the 'clash-of-civilizations' worldview, which is a reference to Huntington's 1993 article that stated that the world can be split into around six different civilisations. It is in these civilisations, marked by differences in 'language, history, religion, customs, culture, institutions' as opposed to geographical, economic or political, that future conflict will arise from.⁴³ Huntington's theory, alongside most other secularisation theories, have been largely rejected and disproven.⁴⁴ This theory suggests that these civilisations are inherently incompatible with each other with conflict occurring along the 'fault lines' between them.⁴⁵ Huntington even goes onto state that he believes the relationship between Islam and the West as being in an increasingly 'virulent' conflict.⁴⁶ Cavanaugh says that this view

⁴² William T Cavanaugh, *The Myth Of Religious Violence* (Oxford University Press 2009).

⁴³ Samuel P. Huntington, 'The Clash Of Civilizations?' (1993) 72 *Foreign Affairs*, 24.

⁴⁴ Samuel P. Huntington, 'The Clash Of Civilizations?' (1993) 72 *Foreign Affairs*, 22.

⁴⁵ Samuel P. Huntington, 'The Clash Of Civilizations?' (1993) 72 *Foreign Affairs*, 31.

⁴⁶ Samuel P. Huntington, 'The Clash Of Civilizations?' (1993) 72 *Foreign Affairs*, 32.

presents religious violence as being ‘fanatical and uncontrolled’ and ‘impossible to reason on our own terms’.⁴⁷ Whereas secular violence by contrast is supposedly ‘controlled, reasonable’ and ‘necessary’.⁴⁸ This is a clear connection throughout the depiction of wars and terrorism in the 21st century and Huntington’s reductive analysis of global politics that plays into tropes of incompatibility between specific groups that borders on conspiracy theory, which will be discussed in more detail in later chapters.

Hick and Kimball assert that all religion revolves around the idea of the ‘ultimate’ and it is this ‘absolutist’ quality of religion that causes violence. Hick uses ‘family-resemblance’ in lieu of providing a comprehensive definition of religion, resulting in the exclusion of Marxism or nationalism.⁴⁹ Cavanaugh found this definition to be somewhat arbitrary, especially when the logical conclusion of this argument is that religious violence is inherently worse and more worthy of attention than the allegedly rational secular violence.⁵⁰ Kimball suggests a ‘we all know it when we see it’ approach to defining religion, suggesting that we can support ideas by using ‘data’ to conduct an empirical analysis.⁵¹ Cavanaugh suggests that his implicit definition is ‘unjustifiably clear’, meaning that large examples of violence are ignored and not thoroughly scrutinised.⁵² Kimball produces five ‘warning signs’ for when a religion is going to turn evil (‘absolute truth claims, blind obedience, the establishment of an “ideal” time, the belief that the end justifies any means, and a declaration of holy war’), Cavanaugh analyses them by considering nationalism – in particular Bush’s speech in the wake of 9/11, concluding that it fits squarely within Kimball’s conceptualisation of religious violence.⁵³

The secular/religion dichotomy is often not fully interrogated by thinkers, the majority of whom are Western writing in a post-enlightenment context. The enlightenment had enormous ramifications both practically and theoretically, in terms of the relationship between religion and society. The enlightenment saw the separation

⁴⁷ William T Cavanaugh, *The Myth Of Religious Violence* (Oxford University Press 2009) 17, 53.

⁴⁸ William T Cavanaugh, *The Myth Of Religious Violence* (Oxford University Press 2009), 211.

⁴⁹ William T Cavanaugh, *The Myth Of Religious Violence* (Oxford University Press 2009), 20.

⁵⁰ William T Cavanaugh, *The Myth Of Religious Violence* (Oxford University Press 2009), 23.

⁵¹ William T Cavanaugh, *The Myth Of Religious Violence* (Oxford University Press 2009), 58.

⁵² William T Cavanaugh, *The Myth Of Religious Violence* (Oxford University Press 2009), 22.

⁵³ William T Cavanaugh, *The Myth Of Religious Violence* (Oxford University Press 2009), 21.

of church and state, causing the mass privatisation of religion resulting in the religious authority of Europe being undermined in favour of political revolution. As a result of this process, religion was beginning to be seen as something severable to the individual and from society itself – creating secular countries. This alienates religion and religious symbols, shrouding it in mystery and allows it to fall victim to mistruths. The Enlightenment was not a universal experience, however, and much of the world does not have the same distinct separation of church and state as is found in Europe and the Western world, rather they are interwoven. Religion affects legislation, politics, education and more – making it impossible to isolate and problematise religion. There is an assumption by some in the West that the Muslim world is archaic, backwards and developmentally static due to the centralisation of religion in State, but this claim is fallacious as modernity has occurred through ‘reforms, reactions, innovations’.⁵⁴ Herein lies an issue when isolating religion as being the primary cause of the violence, its severability from the public sphere is not a universal experience.

Kimball states that ‘more wars have been waged, more people killed, and more evil perpetuated in the name of religion than by any other institutional force in human history’, but this statement rejects nuance as to the reality of religion and its place in history.⁵⁵ It draws comparison with Juergensmeyer’s theory of ‘cosmic war’ relates to the intensity, irrationality and absolutist nature of religious activists’ commitment to their religion. It refers to the ‘never-ending’ idea of religious conflict, punctuated by religious symbolism and their ethical justification within religious moral codes.⁵⁶ Juergensmeyer differentiates between ‘cosmic war’ and ‘holy war’ on the grounds that ‘cosmic war’ refers to a far broader concept, beyond religious, on the plane of good and evil.⁵⁷ He draws comparison between Marxism and Islam in order to establish why religious violence has greater intensity, while Marxism does provide structured ideology to ‘challenge [...] power, authority, and order’ religion does the same, but on an

⁵⁴ Christopher de Bellaigue, 'Stop Calling For A Muslim Enlightenment' *The Guardian* (2015).

⁵⁵ Charles Kimball, *When Religion Becomes Evil* (HarperCollins e-Books 2014), 168.

⁵⁶ Mark Juergensmeyer, *Terror In The Mind Of God* (University of California Press 2000), 145.

⁵⁷ Nathan Schneider, Interview with Mark Juergensmeyer, 'Cosmic War On A Global Scale: An Interview With Mark Juergensmeyer' (2010).

'eternal' timeline – elevating the struggle infinitely.⁵⁸ The idea of religious war is that the short-term effects of conflict, whether they be victorious or not, is somewhat irrelevant because the war will continue 'eternally'.⁵⁹ The difficulty with this perception is that it is unhelpful for global political relations and furthers the alienation of religious people from mainstream society. Additionally, it removes the nuance of conflicts, for example Juergensmeyer presents the Northern Irish conflict as 'in the broadest sense ... a religious crusade', opting to centralise the religious component to a largely politically grounded conflict.⁶⁰ Religion, therefore, cannot be problematised as being divisive when it is so entirely interconnected with secular issues. Juergensmeyer's views also present religion as being a single, permanent, immovable entity, something apparent within Dawkins's work too, which refuses to recognise the gradient of religion and the shifting relationship individuals may have with their one religion throughout their lifetime.

A nuanced, constructivist approach that seeks to interrogate the reductive association of religion and violence will be taken as it allows holistic examination of the threat of the far-right beyond the constraints of seeing it as *just* political ideology. Terrorism, irrespective of the ideology behind it, causes harm and has resulted in the deaths of thousands. By labelling some terrorism as being inherently worse than others, it seeks to limit the scope of policy and directs the narrative in an unhelpful direction. Someone dying in an attack on the grounds of nationalism is no worse or better than someone dying due to Islamic extremism. Language surrounding the attacks are weaponised to further the narrative surrounding religious and non-religious violence, therefore the conversation surrounding right-wing extremist attacks and military interventions in the Middle East will need to be assessed.

Social Contract Theory

Social contract theory is a relevant theory for analysing the separationist and exclusionary language used in the strategy. It forms part of the school of classical

⁵⁸ Nathan Schneider, Interview with Mark Juergensmeyer, 'Cosmic War On A Global Scale: An Interview With Mark Juergensmeyer' (2010).

⁵⁹ Nathan Schneider, Interview with Mark Juergensmeyer, 'Cosmic War On A Global Scale: An Interview With Mark Juergensmeyer' (2010).

⁶⁰Mark Juergensmeyer, *Terror In The Mind Of God* (University of California Press 2000), 41.

criminology which is built on the assumption that all humans are individual, rational actors born equally – opposing positivist and determinist criminal theories. Social contract theory was originated by Thomas Hobbes in his 1651 text, *Leviathan*. He suggested that people, at their root, are selfish beings, ‘in the voluntary acts of every man, the object is some good to himself’.⁶¹ He positions this concept of man in the so-called, ‘natural state’ which refers to a period, pre-government that was characterised as being ‘solitary, poor, nasty and brutish’ and man lived in ‘continual fear and danger of violent death’.⁶² Hobbes theorised that a social contract was enforced by an absolute sovereign was necessary to achieve societal evolution and prevent living in that state of constant brutality. He essentially holds an absolute sovereign as being a ‘mortal god’ who instils order in return for protection against the ‘invasion of foreigners’.⁶³ In Hobbes’s text, there is a clear sense of fear of ‘other’ and a recognised necessity of order within society to protect against enemies and internal violence. The primary vein of criticism of Hobbes’s social contract is the disconnect between man being a rational being while simultaneously willing to give up their right to freedom, property and right to life by ‘placing himself under the command of an unbeatable power that can inflict violence on him at will’.⁶⁴

The theory was then evolved by thinkers John Locke and Jean Jacques Rosseau, both rejecting Hobbes’s conception of the natural state as being one of deprivation and violence. Locke suggested that it was rather one of ‘peace, goodwill, mutual assistance and preservation’ and Rosseau felt that it would have been a simpler time, but ultimately fairer.⁶⁵ While Hobbes stated that there was a need to have an absolute sovereign, Locke favoured a democratically elected government to enable a ‘state of liberty, not of licence’, enforcing the rights of the people and utilising the state as a means to protect individual’s freedoms.⁶⁶ Rosseau’s conception of the reality of the social contract differed slightly too, whereas Locke and Hobbes understood it as being a historical fact Rosseau saw it as being more hypothetical. A believer in free will, he

⁶¹ Thomas Hobbes, Michael Oakeshott and Richard S Peters, *Leviathan* (Touchstone 1997), 81.

⁶² Thomas Hobbes, Michael Oakeshott and Richard S Peters, *Leviathan* (Touchstone 1997), 78

⁶³ Thomas Hobbes, Michael Oakeshott and Richard S Peters, *Leviathan* (Touchstone 1997), 106, 105.

⁶⁴ Jean Hampton, *Hobbes And The Social Contract Tradition* (Cambridge University Press 1987), 191.

⁶⁵ John Locke, *Second Treatise of Civil Government* (1690, reprinted in 2011 by Watchmaker Publishing)

⁶⁶ John Locke, *Second Treatise of Civil Government* (1690, reprinted in 2011 by Watchmaker Publishing)

exemplified his view of the relationship between man and the social contract as 'man [being] born free, but everywhere he is in chains'.⁶⁷ Essentially the social contract removes an element of freedom in return for protection from the natural state and societal evolution. However, as with the contractual nature, there is an element of give and take and the need to strike an appropriate balance.

The social contract has had a notable influence on the creation of liberal democracies in Western Europe and the United States. The relevance of social contract when assessing potentially imposing strategies onto the public is related to the relationship of state legitimacy and social coercion.⁶⁸ Haubrich considers this relationship in a post 9/11 landscape and describes the fragility of this balance. He suggests that if the state legitimacy is eroded when a section of society no longer accepts their force, then state aggression is a proportionate response to readjust the tensions. However, this could essentially backfire, produce further and more widespread violence and undermine the state's legitimacy. There are significant difficulties in using social contract theory to develop nations in the 21st-century context, namely globalisation and the subsequent fuzziness of both countries' borders and their identity. Sznajder suggests that in the erosion of the authoritarian states Hobbes envisioned in the 1600s and the move towards liberal democracies with entrenched human rights, terrorism is beginning to challenge the revised state identity and is even moving societies back to the natural pre-social contract state.⁶⁹ He compares the evolution of liberal ideals and international war pre and post-9/11 starting with the Westphalian Order which codified the view that politics and diplomacy should be the primary approach to hold stability and peace between nations.⁷⁰ This idea was then fed into subsequent international achievements such as the League of Nations, the UN Charter and the concept of human rights'. There was a clear movement away from the use of violence as a means to impose rule and regulation and towards discussion and more cerebral approaches. With each step towards the protection of individual rights and into codified agreements between states came a potential detriment to the

⁶⁷ Jean Jacques Rousseau, *Du Contact Social ou Principes du Droit Politique* (1913) 1 Ch 1

⁶⁸ Dirk Haubrich, 'The Social Contract And The Three Types Of Terrorism: Democratic Society In The United Kingdom After 9/11 And 7/7', *The Consequences of Counterterrorism* (2010).

⁶⁹ Natan Sznajder, 'Terrorism And The Social Contract' (2006) 15 Irish Journal of Sociology.

⁷⁰ Natan Sznajder, 'Terrorism And The Social Contract' (2006) 15 Irish Journal of Sociology, 10.

sovereignty of states, no longer was all legislation tied in the single sovereign or even the democratically elected government and thus the 'mortal god' image of leadership became fallible. Outwardly looking and trying to protect individuals regardless of their citizenship is said to have 'weakened the sovereignty of the state', as has the replacement of the previous absolutist aggression and resolve to protect your state with international law and restrictions of warfare.⁷¹

Szanaider places 9/11 as being the turning point and marked the era by the blurring of 'peace/war and civilians/combatants'.⁷² It likens this time as a more authentic inaction of the social contract, with a reversion back to absolute sovereignty, accomplishing goals through violence and torture and the suspension or out and out rejection of human rights to achieve the higher aim of reclaiming the sovereign's rule. He considers the holocaust as a transgression against the Enlightenment, placing this 'barbarism' as an inevitable outcome of modernity.

Critical Race Theory

Critical race theory (CRT) was a school of thought born out of the idea that race is a socially constructed category and not a biologically natural concept, that is used to oppress people of colour. Distinct from other civil rights theories, CRT considers the foundations of liberal societies in particular looking at 'equality theory, legal reasoning, Enlightenment rationalism, and neutral principles of constitutional law'.⁷³ Officially created in 1989, the theory has roots in the 60s and 70s and was originated out of critical legal studies, by thinkers like Richard Delgado, Derrick Bell and Kimberlé Crenshaw. There are 'basic tenets' of CRT: (1) racism is a normal and everyday experience in Western countries and reflects the experience most people of colour have, (2) white supremacy serves 'important purposes' for white people, both practically and psychologically (3) racism is a 'social construction' and not a biological reality. CRT recognises that there is a fluidity with how white people racialize groups at different times 'in response to shifting needs in the labor market'.⁷⁴ Delgado uses the example of

⁷¹ Natan Szanaider, 'Terrorism And The Social Contract' (2006) 15 Irish Journal of Sociology, 10.

⁷² Natan Szanaider, 'Terrorism And The Social Contract' (2006) 15 Irish Journal of Sociology, 10.

⁷³ Richard Delgado, Jean Stefancic and Angela Harris, *Critical Race Theory* (2001), 3

⁷⁴ Richard Delgado, Jean Stefancic and Angela Harris, *Critical Race Theory* (2001), 9.

the Middle Eastern people being viewed as 'exotic' and 'fetishized' previously and now being seen as 'fanatical, religiously crazed terrorists bent on destroying America and killing innocent citizens'.⁷⁵ Furthermore, it is suggested that even the categorisation of 'terrorist' by Western countries should be situated within the construction of a white supremacist state.

How race is thought about has intrinsic connections to legislation, with race being understood as objective, scientific fact – masking the social construction and historical context which has dictated understanding for centuries, legislators were able to present 'whiteness' and its privilege as an 'objective fact'. This allows a hierarchy of race, 'disguised as the product of natural law and biology'.⁷⁶ This understanding of race and the faux connection between science and privilege made space for biological positivist schools of thought, which attempted to draw conclusions from individuals' characteristics and draw conclusions as to their genetic disposition to commit crime. Lombroso, for example, created 'criminal atavism' and drew certain biological characteristics, such as sensitivity to touch, thinness of body hair, sloping foreheads as being indicative of a propensity to commit crime – all of which are now widely discredited.⁷⁷ Interestingly, Katy Sian compared the Prevent policy to positivism – suggesting that in trying to find the 'extremist types' there is a similarity with Lombroso seeking 'criminal types'.⁷⁸ From this, it is clear that considering race as a biological fact makes problematic assumptions about the individual.

Gillborn suggests that white supremacy should not be considered as a peripheral problem for people in the far-right groups existing in the outliers of society, but rather even within the 'mainstream political parties, and the functioning of agencies like the education system itself' there is active implication 'in maintaining and extending the grip that white people have on the major sources of power in 'Western' capitalist societies'.⁷⁹ There is an intrinsic connection between the white supremacy continuing to

⁷⁵ Richard Delgado, Jean Stefancic and Angela Harris, *Critical Race Theory* (2001), 9.

⁷⁶ Cheryl I. Harris, 'Whiteness As Property' (1993) 106 *Harvard Law Review*, 1738.

⁷⁷ Cesare Lombroso, Mary Gibson and Nicole Hahn Rafter, *Criminal Man* (Duke University Press 2007), 91.

⁷⁸ Katy Sian, 'Born Radicals? Prevent, Positivism, And 'Race-Thinking'' (2017) 3 *Palgrave Communications*, 3.

⁷⁹ David Gillborn, 'Education Policy As An Act Of White Supremacy: Whiteness, Critical Race Theory And Education Reform' (2005) 20 *Journal of Education Policy*, 11.

pervade the West through policy, legislation, education, industrial prison complex and many more and the colonialization and subsequent exploitation that essentially built the West.

The theory is imperfect, however, as it struggles to allow nuance into the homogenised group of white people – class, privilege and socio-economic background to have a considerable effect on individuals.⁸⁰ This is necessary to consider in this context due to the traditional make-up of membership from far-right groups, while the majority are white they are also often from poorer backgrounds, have lower education and are amongst some of the most underprivileged in the country. There is a substantial gulf between those in power and these individuals, many of whom feel 'left behind'.⁸¹ There is difficulty in a thorough analysis of this issue, as there is a distinct lack of research as to *who* exactly are members of right-wing extremism (RWE) – generally policy is built on reductive stereotypes and ignore the indication that the demographics of these groups could be shifting.

Darder and Torres said that “race” should occupy the central position in any ‘legal, educational, or social policy analysis’ and it is felt that using CRT to explore this research question, especially considering how intrinsically connected to race it is, allows the best analysis of the situation.⁸² It allows context and background to be considered alongside close-text analysis. It is, for this reason, critical race theory will be the driving force for analysis in this thesis, in particular, it will be used to consider how race informs and distorts the social contract. Considering that the social contract needs to be in perfect equilibrium between the population and the state, to prevent returning to the natural state, conclusions will be drawn as to who the deemed population is of the United Kingdom in specific reference to the Prevent strategy.

⁸⁰ Mike Cole, 'Critical Race Theory Comes To The UK' (2009) 9 *Ethnicities*, 247.

⁸¹ Mike Cole, 'Critical Race Theory Comes To The UK' (2009) 9 *Ethnicities*.

⁸² Mike Cole, 'Critical Race Theory Comes To The UK' (2009) 9 *Ethnicities*, 246; Antonia Darder and Rodolfo Torres, 'What'S So Critical About Critical Race Theory?: A Conceptual Interrogation.', *After Race: Racism After Multiculturalism* (NYU Press 2004), 98.

Chapter 4: Discourse Analysis

The critical discourse analysis will be broken into three distinct periods of time, characterised by shifts in political leadership and counter-terrorism policy changes. The evolution of the Prevent strategy will be situated in its context, which will allow additional material for analysis and provide scope for nuanced commentary. This method allows for the most accurate and in-depth analysis. The three periods of time are: A:2001-2010, B:2011-2015 and C:2015-2021.

A: 2001-2010

2001-2010 represents a period of high tension, encompassing 9/11, 7/7, other major terrorist incidents and a global financial crisis. The previous enemy of Soviet Russia moves to the wayside and Islam becomes the West's new target. This period saw considerable counter-terrorism legislation and policy changes, in response to this new Islamic extremist threat. Focus will first be on the political and broader societal commentary surrounding the global events, then CONTEST will be analysed and situated within this context.

9/11 and 7/7

On September 11th 2001 in a series of coordinated terrorist attacks nearly 3000 civilians died in the United States of America. The attack 'triggered profound' permanent changes globally.⁸³ The total deaths is the 'highest number of deaths' ever recorded by the Global Terrorism Index and is ten times as many deaths in comparison to any other attack in the United States. The nineteen perpetrators were affiliates of Al-Qaeda, all from the Middle East with the majority from Saudi Arabia, they were all male and aged between 20 and 33.

The direct aftermath of the attacks and the reaction of George Bush and Tony Blair, in particular, potentially holds the key as to why 9/11 has had such a transformative effect on domestic and global relations and policy. The political

⁸³ Institute for Economics & Peace, 'Global Terrorism Index 2020: Measuring The Impact Of Terrorism' (2020), 5.

commentary laid the groundwork for Islamophobia to flourish in the West, which in turn created further shifts towards right-wing extremism and allowed conspiracy theories such as *the Great Replacement* and *Eurabia* to enter and thrive in far-right spaces.⁸⁴ The language used was clearly divisive, creating a notion of incompatibility between the West and Islam.

Bush's response largely formulated around his declaration of the so-called 'War on Terror'. This declaration rewrites the attack as being an 'act of war', which qualifies the US's response in the form of military invasions in Afghanistan (2001) and Iraq (2003).⁸⁵ 'War' suspends ordinary peacetime law, it allows for the erosion of individual liberties for the broader purpose of public protection and domestic safety. It invokes what Lee-Koo describes as the 'protection myth', which plays into 'moral, political and ethical' justification of war.⁸⁶ It takes advantage of the fragility of the public's emotional state and uses this distortion of peacetime norms to enact disproportionate and unreasonable responses, as was the case in the fallacious September Dossier which was part of the justification for Britain's invasion of Iraq.⁸⁷

War creates the assumption that there are two sides that are somewhat equally matched, 'acts of war raise[] the possibility that the enemy would be seen as soldiers or warriors'.⁸⁸ Therefore, it results in a distortion of Al-Qaeda's significance and their role as a mouthpiece for Islam as a whole, that has led to negative consequences for Muslims globally. In the aftermath of the attacks Bush makes direct reference to Saddam Hussain former leader of Iraq, (despite the majority of the attackers hailing from Saudi Arabia), which he later retracts some five years later, however it connected Al-Qaeda with Iraq and generally the Middle Eastern region.⁸⁹ This lack of clarity and precision in the way

⁸⁴ Institute for Economics & Peace, 'Global Terrorism Index 2020: Measuring The Impact Of Terrorism' (2020), 72.

⁸⁵ Richard Jackson, *Writing The War On Terrorism: Language, Politics And Counter-Terrorism* (Manchester University Press 2005), 60.

⁸⁶ Alex J Bellamy and others, *Security And The War On Terror* (Routledge 2008), 44.

⁸⁷ Privy Council, 'Review Of Intelligence On Weapons Of Mass Destruction' (2004).

⁸⁸ Richard Jackson, *Writing The War On Terrorism: Language, Politics And Counter-Terrorism* (Manchester University Press 2005), 60.

⁸⁹Maéva Clément, Thomas Lindemann and Eric Sangar, 'The "Hero-Protector Narrative": Manufacturing Emotional Consent For The Use Of Force' (2016) 38 *Political Psychology*; Suzanne Goldenberg, 'Bush: Saddam Was Not Responsible For 9/11' *The Guardian* (2006).

that the 'enemy' was discussed during this period of high emotion has had a direct detrimental effect on both global relations with Muslim countries, as well as with Muslim individuals living in the West as general anti-Islamic sentiment begins to diffuse into mainstream discourse.

The establishing of the sides creates a moralistic binary – good and evil, 'barbaric' and 'civilised', with the terrorists being a 'ubiquitous, evil and omnipotent enemy' and America as 'strong', 'determined', 'innocent' and 'peaceful'.⁹⁰ Bush said 'either you are with us or you are with the terrorists', which works to remove all grey area that would have allowed space for critical discourse by the public, scholars and politicians globally. It creates an absolute truth, West is good and anything anti-West is bad or evil. This binary sensationalises the issue and works to label anything 'Muslim' as being the cause of terrorism. Through centralising the religiosity of the terrorists and their home countries, it works to divulge responsibility onto Islam and positions it as being a villainous, irrational, 'inhumane' religion that has been incapable of adapting to the modernity of the West.

The British response, led by Tony Blair, was initially guided by Resolution 1373 as directed by the UN Security Council that required states to 'suppress the financing of terrorism' and 'improve international cooperation' of their counter-terrorism measures.⁹¹ However, the UK and the US have a so-called 'special relationship', that became exemplified in the campaign of the 'coalition of the willing' in which certain countries joined together to seek action against 'international terrorism'.⁹² This element laid the groundwork for the invasion of Iraq. Katselli and Shah characterises the British response to 9/11 as being less about one specific attack, but rather in pursuit of stopping the far broader concept of 'international' terrorism that seeks to hurt the 'democratic world' mirroring Bush's sentiment.⁹³ This ties into Huntington's

⁹⁰ Mohammed S Elshimi, *De-Radicalisation In The UK Prevent Strategy* (Routledge Taylor & Francis Group 2018); Richard Jackson, *Writing The War On Terrorism: Language, Politics And Counter-Terrorism* (Manchester University Press 2005), 176, 60.

⁹¹ United Nations Security Council, 'Resolution 1373' (2001).

⁹² Elena Katselli and Sangeeta Shah, 'September 11 And The UK Response' (2003) 52 *International and Comparative Law Quarterly*, 245.

⁹³ Elena Katselli and Sangeeta Shah, 'September 11 And The UK Response' (2003) 52 *International and Comparative Law Quarterly*, 248.

conceptualisation of the clash of civilisations and the incompatibility he presents between the different cultures.⁹⁴ Blair declares that terrorism needs to be 'driven from our world' which creates imagery akin to Juergensmeyer's cosmic war, that the conflict continues elsewhere in some other realm.⁹⁵ The use of 'democratic' is also interesting, as it situates the US as being the ultimate representation of democracy. In doing this, there becomes implicit association of the Muslim world as being inherently undemocratic. Undemocratic systems are characterised by unfairness, limited societal progression, inequality and dictatorship. The language creates a hierarchical position for the West, suggesting that they are superior to the 'regressive' regimes of the East.

Blair also makes explicit reference to acting in 'our' interest. While it could be perceived that this is in response to the 67 British citizens who died in the attacks, to Blair's own admission those deaths were irrelevant to his response, 'even if no British citizen had died it would be right to act...'.⁹⁶ The use of 'our' is an assumption of similarity between the US and the UK. Britain has long declared the US its 'closest ally', this could be for a number of reasons with the US embassy suggesting it is merely a reflection of 'common language, ideals and democratic practices'.⁹⁷ However, when it is reduced to its historical essence, it is a statement on the similarity between cultures which inherently incorporates both religion and race. On one hand it is a strong statement of unity across the globe but on the other it creates divisions within the domestic sphere as to who is the within the government's perceived population.

The Labour government's approach was to support military action overseas and reduce the domestic terrorism threat. This was to be done via support for international agreements and extradition requests and public policy. The military response was framed through speeches and legislation as being 'self-defence', Blair declaring that there is British 'direct interest in acting in our own self-defence'.⁹⁸ This mirrors Article

⁹⁴ Samuel P. Huntington, 'The Clash Of Civilizations?' (1993) 72 *Foreign Affairs*.

⁹⁵ Mark Juergensmeyer, *Terror In The Mind Of God* (University of California Press 2000).

⁹⁶ Elena Katselli and Sangeeta Shah, 'September 11 And The UK Response' (2003) 52 *The International and Comparative Law Quarterly*, 249.

⁹⁷ 'History Of The U.S.-UK Special Relationship And U.S. Policy' (*U.S. Embassy & Consulates in the United Kingdom*, 2021) <<https://uk.usembassy.gov/our-relationship/policy-history/>> accessed 15 June 2021.

⁹⁸ Elena Katselli and Sangeeta Shah, 'September 11 And The UK Response' (2003) 52 *The International and Comparative Law Quarterly*, 249.

51 of the UN Charter that permits action in 'self-defence if an armed attack occurs against a Member of the United Nations'.⁹⁹ The concept of 'self-defence' once again draws into the binary of unlawful aggressor and lawful victims, diametrically opposed from one another. Self-defence is a common law and legislative legal principle in English law, permitted on the grounds of 'reasonableness'.¹⁰⁰ By positing the forthcoming invasion of Afghanistan as self-defence in line with an assumption of reasonableness, it seeks to blur some of the heavy-handedness of the attacks in order to cloud the perception of unfair harm that was caused. We see this in how the attacks were presented, both by politicians and the mainstream media. Cole and Maisuria consider how the interception of 'common sense discourse' and racialisation in the justification of actions that resulted in the deaths of civilians was used to control the narrative.¹⁰¹ For example, phrases such as 'friendly fire', 'soft targets', 'collateral damage' are used to mitigate the full effect of the actions of the British army, masking the reality of war in order to allow for better consumption by the British public.¹⁰² When this language is then used alongside anti-Islam and pro West propaganda, it represents a clear attempt at manipulation of language to fit the chosen narrative.

Five years later, the 7/7 attacks occurred which had significant effects in British counter-terrorism policy, in particular resulting in it being brought into the public sphere. Four British citizens conducted a series of coordinated attacks across central London which caused the deaths of 52 civilians. Three out of four of the perpetrators were born in the UK with the fourth moving to the UK at the age of five. This was a major distinction between 9/11 and 7/7, in the former all of the attackers were from the Middle Eastern region and travelled to the US to commit the attack but in the latter all attackers grew up, were educated and at least partially groomed in the UK. Blair declared in the wake of the attack simply that 'we know that these people act in the

⁹⁹ United Nations Charter, art 51.

¹⁰⁰ Criminal Law Act 1967, s3.

¹⁰¹ Mike Cole and Alpesh Maisuria, 'Shut The F*** Up', 'You Have No Rights Here': Critical Race Theory And Racialisation In Post-7/7 Racist Britain', 101.

¹⁰² Mike Cole and Alpesh Maisuria, 'Shut The F*** Up', 'You Have No Rights Here': Critical Race Theory And Racialisation In Post-7/7 Racist Britain', 101.

name of Islam', which was then widely reported by the British media.¹⁰³ When compared with the news sources across the world, a significantly more nuanced picture is developed. For example, in Iran, a Muslim majority country, they suggested far more complicated reasons behind the attack than simply 'Islam'. Instead they state that while 'contrasting values' are a 'strong reason', most analysts suggest that it was more in response to the 'militaristic and unilateral approach' of the Western intervention in Iraq that has resulted in the 'transformation of Iraq into a battleground'.¹⁰⁴ In Blair's decision to associate the violence with mere religion, as opposed to the complicated and ongoing violence occurring in the Middle East, supported by the British government, he is evading responsibility. Additionally, by offering no comprehensive analysis and awareness into the breadth of potential reasons for the attack, it works to continue to vilify Islam as portray the religion as being irrational. Post 7/7 there was renewed pressure for the government to develop a comprehensive counterterrorism strategy to target homegrown terrorism, which was delivered in the form of the Prevent strategy.

CONTEST and Prevent (2006)

Prior to CONTEST counter-terrorism policy was predominately in the form of the Prevention of Terrorism Acts (which have now been replaced by consolidated Acts) and were produced in response to Northern Irish related terrorism that occurred in the United Kingdom between 1969 and 1997. These Acts allowed organisations to be marked as illegal, prevented movement for individuals within the UK, created new offences for financial assistance related to terrorism and allowed arrests to be made without warrant if there was reasonable suspicion. The Irish Republican Army (IRA) was responsible for around 1,705 civilian deaths, with the vast majority occurring in

¹⁰³ "LONDON BOMBS Blair says bombers in capital acted 'in name of Islam'". *AFX - Asia*. July 7, 2005 Thursday. <https://advance-lexis-com.proxy-ub.rug.nl/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:4GK5-Y590-TWKJ-V23W-00000-00&context=1516831>.

¹⁰⁴ (July 9, 2005, Saturday). Iranian radio says London bombings possible result of support for US Iraq policy. *BBC Monitoring Middle East - Political Supplied by BBC Worldwide Monitoring*. <https://advance-lexis-com.proxy-ub.rug.nl/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:4GKM-SPY0-00KJ-D2NV-00000-00&context=1516831>.

Northern Ireland.¹⁰⁵ However, some fatalities did occur in Britain too, often in the form of amateur bombings in public spaces (pubs, train stations, shopping centres etc.). There is a substantial difference in the policy and legislation that accompanied the 'new' Islamic extremism, which allows conclusions to be drawn as to the perception, risk of harm and threat attached to Islam as opposed to the IRA.

CONTEST was conceptualised in 2003 (post 9/11) and first published publicly in 2006 (post 7/7).¹⁰⁶ It was the first strategy of its kind in the Europe or America, representing a new comprehensive and holistic approach from the government, aiming to mitigate the threat of terrorism using multiple routes.¹⁰⁷ The aim of the 2006 CONTEST was to 'reduce the risk from international terrorism', and provided four workstreams to achieve this: Prevent, Pursue, Protect and Prepare.¹⁰⁸ Prevent was the most novel of the four, demarking a new pre-crime approach to counter 'the radicalisation of individuals'.¹⁰⁹ While the legislation accompanying the Northern Irish threat was focused on containing the threat and punishing those involved, Prevent represented the government's attempt to reach those who were potentially vulnerable to 'radicalisation'.¹¹⁰

The demonstrable differences between the approaches to Northern Irish related extremism and Islamic extremism could be a reflection of many different components. The first major difference is that the scale of 9/11 and 7/7 was of a significantly greater magnitude than any single Northern Irish attack. From this, we can see that Islamic extremism could be reasonably be established as having a more widespread risk that could create more substantial harm. The second major difference is the ideology behind the terrorism and the opportunities to resolve to conflict. Northern Irish related violence, despite there being a definite religious element, was predominately politically fuelled and required a resolution for a specific issue. Therefore, after the resolution was

¹⁰⁵ 'CAIN: Sutton Index Of Deaths' (*Cain.ulster.ac.uk*, 2021)

<https://cain.ulster.ac.uk/sutton/tables/Organisation_Responsible.html> accessed 1 July 2021.

¹⁰⁶ Home Department, 'Countering International Terrorism: The United Kingdom's Strategy' (2006).

¹⁰⁷ Charlotte Heath-Kelly, 'The Geography Of Pre-Criminal Space: Epidemiological Imaginations Of Radicalisation Risk In The UK Prevent Strategy, 2007–2017' (2017) 10 *Critical Studies on Terrorism*, 299.

¹⁰⁸ Home Department, 'Countering International Terrorism: The United Kingdom's Strategy' (2006), 1.

¹⁰⁹ Home Department, 'Countering International Terrorism: The United Kingdom's Strategy' (2006), 9.

¹¹⁰ Terrorism (Northern Ireland) Act 2006

reached the violence substantially subsided. In this instance, a widespread community driven scheme to prevent radicalisation would have been inappropriate. CONTEST works to carefully differentiate Northern Irish related extremism with Islamic extremism, referring to its 'distinctive characteristics'.¹¹¹ Those characteristics are outlined as being the 'international' threat, the numerous 'groups' that this threat comes from, the Muslim governments that potentially support the terrorists, the magnitude of their attacks and the 'extremist beliefs'.¹¹² This language allows for Islam to be conceptualised as a risky religion foreign to the United Kingdom. The governments of Muslim countries are presented as being 'weak' and incapable of controlling the threat within their own state. Underlying all is the threat of Islam that 'encourages or obliges its adherents to carry out acts of violence against those that they identify as their enemies'.¹¹³

The labelling of Islamic violence as being 'international' is a trope that is prevalent in all future versions of Prevent and discussion surrounding this violence.¹¹⁴ Neither international or domestic terrorism have fixed definitions in policy or law, making the concept open for interpretation. This use of 'international' is argued as being an attempt to demarcate responsibility for terrorist attacks onto the 'foreign' with the boundaries being deliberately unclear and the labelling itself is somewhat unnecessary. In the case of the 7/7 attackers, all four individuals were British nationals, educated and brought up in the United Kingdom. By positioning them as being 'international' seeks to reduce their Britishness and exchange it for Islam, 'entrenching the image of that Muslim as different and a foreign outsider' once again supporting an incompatibility between the two.¹¹⁵

This took the shape of the policy's emphasis on the 'local community', allowing the government to divulge responsibility, in particular, to community leaders of faith. In this iteration of the policy, Prevent was delivered by the Department for Communities and Local Government through the Prevent Pathfinder fund. The fund was distributed

¹¹¹ Home Department, 'Countering International Terrorism: The United Kingdom's Strategy' (2006), 6.

¹¹² Home Department, 'Countering International Terrorism: The United Kingdom's Strategy' (2006), 1.

¹¹³ Home Department, 'Countering International Terrorism: The United Kingdom's Strategy' (2006), 7.

¹¹⁴ Home Department, 'Countering International Terrorism: The United Kingdom's Strategy' (2006), 1.

¹¹⁵ Mohammed S Elshimi, *De-Radicalisation In The UK Prevent Strategy* (Routledge Taylor & Francis Group 2018), 36.

to any local council borough with 'sizeable Muslim communities' or areas with Muslim population of 5% or higher.¹¹⁶ The focus of this funding was initially at the 'general population of our Muslim communities', then to 'those who are most at risk' and then at 'those justifying and/or glorifying violent extremist ideologies and terrorism'.¹¹⁷ By distributing the funding in this way and stating that 'it is not for Government to intervene in theological debates', it relinquishes Governmental accountability and places all responsibility onto Muslim communities as *their* problem.¹¹⁸ It creates a 'reductive and offensive association' with the religion of Islam and violent extremism, that is then exemplified and highlighted to the public and wider society. It labels this minority religion in the United Kingdom as a threat, generating that 'suspect community' purely on the basis of religion. The measures of success of the Prevent programme was 'demonstrable changes in attitudes among Muslims'.¹¹⁹ That statement suggests that there are wide-spread existing attitudes among Muslims in the United Kingdom that are in support of terrorism.

There could have been alternative approaches or characteristics for the government to hone in on, terrorists could have been profiled on their similar ages, gender, socio-economic backgrounds. Research could have been taken to better understand the cause of terrorism beyond the broader strokes of 'religion'. Academics have established that causal factors lies more in 'humiliation' or 'frustration', than a religion followed peacefully by millions for generations.¹²⁰ Instead, the British government approached the situation with a clear target on the Muslim community, dictating the national understanding of this religion.

This decentralised approach saw funding being shifted solely based on the demographic of Muslims in local areas. This focuses responsibility for terrorism onto

¹¹⁶ Department for Communities and Local Government, 'Preventing Violent Extremism Pathfinder Fund' (2007), para 16.

¹¹⁷ Department for Communities and Local Government, 'Preventing Violent Extremism Pathfinder Fund' (2007).

¹¹⁸ Department for Communities and Local Government, 'Preventing Violent Extremism - Winning Hearts And Minds' (2007), 10.

¹¹⁹ Fahid Qurashi, 'The Prevent Strategy And The UK 'War On Terror': Embedding Infrastructures Of Surveillance In Muslim Communities' (2018) 4 Palgrave Communications, 4.

¹²⁰ Daniela Pisoiu and Sandra Hain, *Theories Of Terrorism* (Routledge Taylor & Francis Group 2018), 50.

Muslim communities and then becomes further intensified onto community leaders and local mosques, in doing this there creates an intrinsic connection between Islam and terrorism that is now being outlined and distributed into the public. The grassroots approach that followed, mobilising Imams into different areas of society, implies that extremism is inherent to the religion. There could have been the opportunity to profile terrorists in other ways, looking into their ages, gender, socio-economic backgrounds and attempt to better understand the attraction for these individuals to move to extremism. The causal factor is not religion, it lies more in symptoms of 'humiliation' or 'frustration'.¹²¹ Rather, the government moved away from the a more targeted approach and preferred to generally declare that an entire religion was a risk to public safety.

In marking community leaders as essential to reduce the risk of terrorism, the good/bad Muslim dichotomy becomes engaged. This is a recurring trope in discourse surrounding Islam and has been seen frequently in the past two decades, from the refugee crisis to the direct aftermath of terrorist attacks. Muslims are expected to be seen along an either/or binary, expected to ignore nuance and fuzziness to their identities. This has been widely discussed in literature, Mamdani labelling 'good' Muslims as those who are 'modern, secular, Westernised' who 'share the norms of liberal society'.¹²² Ragazzi further suggests that these 'good' Muslims form an additional function in society, that correlates to their expected role in this policy – to become 'trusted' Muslims.¹²³ By asking the 'trusted' Muslims to perform surveillance in their own community, they are asking them to position their Britishness above their religious community creating a hierarchy of identity.

This version of CONTEST and Prevent is rudimentary, it is short, vague concepts are used without particular focus or direction and it is clearly a product of 'rushed' policy.

Hate Crimes and Racial Profiling

¹²¹ Daniela Pisoiu and Sandra Hain, *Theories Of Terrorism* (Routledge Taylor & Francis Group 2018), 50.

¹²² Francesco Ragazzi, 'Suspect Community Or Suspect Category? The Impact Of Counter-Terrorism As 'Policed Multiculturalism'' (2016) 42 *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*, 732.

¹²³ Francesco Ragazzi, 'Suspect Community Or Suspect Category? The Impact Of Counter-Terrorism As 'Policed Multiculturalism'' (2016) 42 *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*, 732.

Amongst the production of new policy and legislation there was something else notable occurring in the background during the end of the decade, laying the groundwork for the emergence of the far-right. Post 9/11 there was a surge of racial profiling and anti-Islamic hate crimes. Part of this began in the police and institutional profiling occurring in the West, for example the slaying of Brazilian Jean Charles de Menezes on the London Underground, whose death resulted in no police officer being charged with any wrongdoing or face any disciplinary actions. The individual was shot as a result of misidentification due to failures in the police surveillance procedures. Menezes was shot eight times, with seven in head, despite not carrying explosives or having any connection with terrorist activity. Menezes was killed essentially because he resembled a Muslim-looking man and boarded the Underground.

In 2006 Mohammed Abdul Kahar was shot in his East London home at 4am during a police raid of the property on the grounds of intelligence relating to terrorist activity. Kahar remarked that the deliberate shot was solely the result of 'eye contact' between himself and the police officer.¹²⁴ This shows that despite the absence of threat, the police officer felt compelled and validated to shoot the man in his own home. His action was supported on the grounds of 'appropriate precautions to protect themselves [and] the public.'¹²⁵ It is suggested that Kahar's racial and religious profile was associated with the risk level that he posed to the public, without any tangible evidence of a threat to the officer's life or people in close proximity. In the construction of Kahar's identity, the police officer perceived threat as a result of society's labelling of Muslim men as terrorists. The extension of police powers in the aftermath of the terrorist attacks has resulted in the justification of police concentration on British Asian men. By shooting Kahar without reasonable suspicion, it demonstrates that Muslim men are seen as existing in a space where ordinary police procedures and legislation are suspended on the grounds of perceived threat. Kahar is therefore forced to be an outsider to ordinary law and order, meaning that he has to accept an alternative reality in Britain.

¹²⁴ Hugh Muir, 'He Looked At Me And Shot. As Soon As He Had Eye Contact, He Shot Me' *The Guardian* (2006).

¹²⁵ Hugh Muir, 'He Looked At Me And Shot. As Soon As He Had Eye Contact, He Shot Me' *The Guardian* (2006).

This state mandated treatment and exclusion of Muslims from the mainstream population led the way for an influx of hate crimes against the community in the subsequent years and the formulation and popularity of structured far-right groups. Governmental data in religiously motivated hate crime is historically lacking in detail, with later versions being far more thoroughly researched. However, in opinion polls and academic research there is consistent evidence that there has been a significant increase in anti-Muslim hate crime in the years preceding 9/11 and 7/7.¹²⁶ These events range from 'low-level criminal damage' to 'gang attacks', 'death threats' and even terror plots.¹²⁷

Financial Crisis

Centre-left Tony Blair stood down as PM in 2007 in large part as a result of the lack of public support for the 2003 invasion of Iraq. The invasion has been suggested by many commentators to have been illegal, as it was justified on the unsupported belief that Iraq has weapons of mass destruction. The Chilcot Inquiry found that the legal basis of the British invasion of Iraq was 'far from satisfactory' and that there was no immediate threat to the country.¹²⁸ The cost of the Iraq war from 2003-present is over £8 billion, with the cost of the Afghanistan war sitting at around £21.3 billion.¹²⁹ Furthermore, the Iraq war killed 179 members of the British Armed Forces and hundreds of thousands of Iraqi civilians.

Gordon Brown replaced Tony Blair in 2007 and remained leader until 2010. Within this period, a new version of CONTEST and Prevent were developed (2009) and the financial crisis occurred. The financial crisis is a less obvious factor that could implicate count-terrorism strategy, however, it has enormous implications on the social landscape of the United Kingdom. With the crash, as a result of mass defaulting sub-prime mortgages that were caused by excessive risk-taking by the banks, there was

¹²⁶ Jonathan Githens-Mazer and Robert Lambert, 'Islamophobia And Anti-Muslim Hate Crime: A London Case Study' (European Muslim Research Centre 2010), 40.

¹²⁷ Jonathan Githens-Mazer and Robert Lambert, 'Islamophobia And Anti-Muslim Hate Crime: A London Case Study' (European Muslim Research Centre 2010), 45.

¹²⁸ House of Commons, 'The Report Of The Iraq Inquiry' (2016), 62.

¹²⁹ Ministry of Defence, 'Freedom Of Information Request Into The Cost To The UK Of The Iraq And Afghanistan Wars' (2021).

widespread devastation and recession faced by many countries. In situations like this, the most affected are often the working class especially when harsh austerity measures were brought in that caused mass unemployment, an increase in suicides and drops in the birth rates. These measures resulted in a 'defensive character' of the United Kingdom and calls to 'pull up the drawbridge', creating a country with a far more introspective character.¹³⁰ This tension generated hostility to minority groups, further exacerbated by daily news of the conflicts in Iraq and Afghanistan and the connection of Islam with terrorism and threat. According to 'demand-side' explanations of the success of far-right groups, times of economic uncertainty create great appeal to individuals of a lower socioeconomic background who lack higher education.¹³¹ This explanation suggests that with the fraught state of society as a result of the financial crash, white working-class people were pushed towards far-right extremism in an attempt to seek 'demands for dignity and fraternity'.¹³²

However, it must be noted that there was an increase in extremism on both the left and the right within Europe as a result of the economic recessions, triggering these actors to 'demonstrate their views both on the recession's causes and the solution required'.¹³³ With some younger, educated individuals seeking solace in anarchism participating in violent left-wing attacks across the continent.¹³⁴ Right-wing extremism began to increase in its professionalism, organising marches, having active social media, professional websites and producing sophisticated propaganda. Nevertheless, much of the issues caused by this group were considered to be more 'public order concerns' as opposed to potentially endangering the 'political, constitutional, economic or social structure of any of the Member States'.¹³⁵ At this stage, there became a clear presence of

¹³⁰ Satnam Virdee and Brendan McGeever, 'Racism, Crisis, Brexit' (2017) 41 *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, 1808, 1811.

¹³¹ Elizabeth A Morrow and John Meadowcroft, 'The Rise And Fall Of The English Defence League: Self-Governance, Marginal Members And The Far Right' (2018) 67 *Political Studies*, 540.

¹³² Elizabeth A Morrow and John Meadowcroft, 'The Rise And Fall Of The English Defence League: Self-Governance, Marginal Members And The Far Right' (2018) 67 *Political Studies*, 540.

¹³³ Europol, 'EU Terrorism Situation And Trend Report' (European Police Office 2011), 7.

¹³⁴ Europol, 'EU Terrorism Situation And Trend Report' (European Police Office 2011), 7.

¹³⁵ Europol, 'EU Terrorism Situation And Trend Report' (European Police Office 2011), 29.

the right-wing in politics, however, the severity of the threat to the wider, mainstream public was believed to be very small.

CONTEST 2009

In March 2009 a revised and substantially more comprehensive version of CONTEST was published in response to the failures of the previous policy and the increase in resources for counter-terrorism. One particular focus was the Prevent strand, that had been deemed to be the 'least developed' aspect of the previous strategy and one that had 'received far less' resources than the other workstreams.¹³⁶

While a far more substantial document than its predecessor, its perception of threat is the same and it solely references 'international terrorism' or Islamic extremism. It refers to 'the current wave of international terrorism' as being 'specifically connected to disputes and conflicts which involve Muslims and the Islamic world'.¹³⁷ This demonstrates reductive analysis of the situation by policy makers, it presents Islam as a single, problematic non-denominational religion that is spreading terrorism. In this version there is a greater attempt to contextualise and they provide more historical detail and validate the presentation of threat. Within the historical background, the religious component is highlighted repeatedly, for example, when discussing the terrorist attempt to overthrow the Egyptian government to declare the 'genuine Islamic state' it frames the groups as having 'an explicitly religious agenda and claimed to justify violence on religious grounds'.¹³⁸ This applies a Western perception of religion in its private, severable construction to a non-Western context. By highlighting the religious element of this violence it works to problematise and other Islam, as opposed to looking at the situation from a more holistic view.

This is a theme throughout this iteration of CONTEST, terrorist attacks are framed less as being anti-West and perhaps related to foreign policy or historical imperialism and

¹³⁶Home Department, 'The United Kingdom's Strategy For Countering International Terrorism' (2009), 82.

¹³⁷ f Home Department, 'The United Kingdom's Strategy For Countering International Terrorism' (2009), 41.

¹³⁸ Home Department, 'The United Kingdom's Strategy For Countering International Terrorism' (2009), 10.

instead 'a religious duty incumbent upon all Muslims'.¹³⁹ The government have a thin line to guide their policy down, they have to try and navigate a robust, hard lined approach while simultaneously working to not harm their population and perpetuate falsehoods about races and religions. These are the competing tensions in all of the counter-terrorism policy in the past twenty years. However, in this version there are severely limited attempts to mitigate any harm to British Muslims. From here we can consider the social contract and the perceived population by New Labour. The social contract only works if kept in equilibrium, meaning that if it treads too far the world would return to its 'natural state'. This policy, as well as the extension of stop and search powers, airplane restrictions and widespread racial profiling, demonstrates that British Muslims and Muslim-looking people are not calculated into the social contract and are therefore not perceived as being part of the British population.

This policy also gave a new role to community leaders, in particular Muslim religious leaders, to advance the integration and community cohesion of Muslims and prevent future terrorist attacks e.g. they seek to 'build the capacity and skills of Imams through [...] training'.¹⁴⁰ This sees the invoking of the good/bad Muslim dichotomy, in which these leaders are asked to choose their 'British' identity over their 'Muslim' identity. It also places responsibility onto these religious leaders, once against perpetuating the idea that terrorism is solely the result of religion. In the case of the 7/7 attackers, it is questioned how much research into the causal factors was involved, beyond establishing religion as the sole root cause of the violence.

This version of CONTEST also establishes counter-terrorism efforts as being a financial priority in the UK, despite being in the wake of the financial crisis. This escalates the severity of the perception of threat, given the widespread reduction of government funding, and sets a tone for the future prioritisation of counter-terrorism in the UK.

B: 2011-2015

¹³⁹ Home Department, 'The United Kingdom's Strategy For Countering International Terrorism' (2009), 11.

¹⁴⁰ Home Department, 'The United Kingdom's Strategy For Countering International Terrorism' (2009), 136

From 2011 to 2015, David Cameron was Prime Minister of the coalition Conservative and Liberal Democrat government. He was the first Conservative Prime Minister since 1997 and the shift in leadership is believed to have been in large part a response to the financial crisis and a welcoming of austerity measures to bring future financial stability to the United Kingdom. This period saw the most sophisticated and current version of Prevent being deployed in the United Kingdom, which attempted to balance the preventing the current terrorist threat with the interests and protection of the British Muslim population. There is also the first acknowledgement of threat beyond Islamic extremism which seeks to futureproof the policy.

Prevent (2011)

While the first two versions of Prevent had some differences, the changes made in 2011 were the most drastic and is the current operative version. The biggest change was the shift away from the community-focused approach and towards a centralised National scheme. In this iteration, responsibility was relocated to staff in schools, universities, hospitals etc. and was distributed across the country, relatively indiscriminately. This version of the policy is also the first reference and inclusion of right-wing extremism (RWE) into British counter-terrorism policy. There is a definite sense that this policy was written with the purpose to 'endure' the test of time and recognised that the threat of terrorism is not stagnant and fixed, rather it is fluid and malleable dependent on contextual factors and the political climate.¹⁴¹ However it is argued that it is still entirely skewed towards Islamic extremism, it uses out-dated terms and struggles to be robustly applied to non-Islamic terrorism.

This version of Prevent is a stand-alone document, as opposed to being an excerpt within CONTEST and is in itself significant, standing at over one-hundred pages. It provides context, a framework, an overview of the 'new' strategy, three objectives and discussion on the means of delivery into the wider public. The strategy denounces the previous New Labour approach, labelling it as 'disproportionate'.¹⁴² It says that the previous Prevent 'stigmatised communities' and implied that terrorism was 'specific' to

¹⁴¹ Home Department, 'Prevent Strategy' (2011), 3.

¹⁴² Home Department, 'Prevent Strategy' (2011), 27.

'Muslim communities'.¹⁴³ The main means of mitigating this disproportionate effect on Muslims was to widen the scope of terrorist threat, which would allow all extremist groups to be engaged in this policy. It also refers to a 'reorientation' of their approach in distributing resources, moving away from the previously 'crude calculation' of Muslim population and favouring a risk-based assessment on activity as opposed to population size.¹⁴⁴

The presentation of threat is notable, it categorises the threat into 'international', 'Northern Ireland', 'extreme right-wing' and other forms of terrorism.¹⁴⁵ It is suggested that this is presented in order of perceived threat-level to the United Kingdom.

International terrorism is a curious label for first group as it only refers to Islamic extremism. Perhaps this was an attempt to lessen the effect on Islamic communities, in light of the policy's view on the previous versions, however it continues the trope throughout all governmental literature in terms of distancing and reallocating the threat onto the foreign, other. Critical Race Theory suggests that this language is an example of white supremacy drawing the agenda of the policy. It exists solely to benefit white people to the detriment of everyone else in the United Kingdom, who should be reidentified as something separate from the mainstream. There is a juxtaposition in the policy between referring to this terrorism as being 'international' and then asking for the policy to be distributed within communities in domestic Britain. Also noteworthy is the heavy usage of reference to Al Qa'ida, during the period it was published Al Qa'ida being recognised as the biggest threat to the United Kingdom is accepted. However, that is no longer the case, with groups such as the Islamic State taking notoriety for Islamic Extremist attacks in the UK. While this is not a significant issue, it does demonstrate a naivety as to the policy's ability to 'endure' and questions why the policy has not been updated in the past decade given the changing landscape of Islamic extremism.

Northern Ireland-related terrorism is briefly explained and supported by clear factual information, the increase in threat level addressed and it becomes acknowledged that it is beyond the scope of much of Prevent and is dealt with through specific statute and safeguards. It is striking that it has been placed as the second threat,

¹⁴³ Home Department, 'Prevent Strategy' (2011), 40.

¹⁴⁴ Home Department, 'Prevent Strategy' (2011), 40.

¹⁴⁵ Home Department, 'Prevent Strategy' (2011), 13.

while not explicitly in threat order, Islamic extremism is objectively the largest threat and 'other forms of terrorism' is suggested to be the smallest threat. Therefore it is implied that Northern Irish related terrorism is a larger threat to the United Kingdom than RWE, this is despite Prevent not being within the scope of Northern Irish related terrorism. It is suggested that this demonstrates a deliberate mitigation of risk of harm from RWE.

Extreme right-wing terrorism is immediately addressed in comparison with Al Qa'ida terrorism, described as being 'much less widespread, systematic or organised', this draws a stark contrast to the preceding discussion of Northern Ireland, of which there had been no mention of other terror groups at all.¹⁴⁶ By comparing the two in this way, it suggests an almost either/or relationship, either we have Islamic terrorism (which is far more likely, significant and serious) or we have RWE (which is much less likely, with no clear terrorist organisations). The second paragraph of this section further draws comparisons concerning the far more extensive 'training, guidance and support' that Al Qa'ida supporters have, as well as not having planned any 'operations on the scale of those planned by their Al Qa'ida counterparts'.¹⁴⁷ The use of the word 'counterpart' is illuminating, as it establishes that the two are seen as opposites – but that only one of the sides is *actually* a threat and *actually* worth having concern about. The purpose of this section on RWE was less to do with addressing the growing threat in this section of society and far more to exacerbate the presented threat of Islamic extremism. In its positioning of RWE and Islamic extremism as being opposing, by labelling Islamic extremism as international it presumes RWE is reactionary and domestic. However, Lambert and Githens-Mazer suggest that actually 'the evidence is already sufficiently clear to conclude that extremist nationalists in the UK take inspiration from propaganda that is every bit as global in nature as that which promotes Al-Qaida'.¹⁴⁸ This shows that there is a chasm between the presentation of RWE in the strategy, much of which is drawn from stereotypes and hasty conclusions reached as a result of a limitation of evidence as opposed to proper care and attention. This is in

¹⁴⁶ Home Department, 'Prevent Strategy' (2011), 15.

¹⁴⁷ Home Department, 'Prevent Strategy' (2011), 15.

¹⁴⁸ Craig J. J. McCann, *Prevent Strategy And Right-Wing Extremism: A Case Study Of The English Defence League* (Routledge 2020), 21

large part through the use of the internet and in particular, the dark web to push forward propaganda, in much of the same way as some Islamic extremist groups.

The final terrorist threat is loosely presented under 'other forms of terrorism' and vaguely points to perhaps being 'secular' or 'political and religious'.¹⁴⁹ It does provide some examples, namely groups related to the Israel-Palestine conflict, Sikh groups and groups related to Sri Lanka. This section had no comparison to any of the aforementioned groups.

The three objectives of this iteration of Prevent are: to challenge the ideology, protect vulnerable people and support sectors where there are risks of radicalisation.¹⁵⁰ It also hopes to work alongside pre-existing Government programmes to facilitate integration, demonstrating the wide-reaching remit of these objectives. The third objective, to support sectors, has had the greatest impact on society, it calls to sectors like 'education, faith, health criminal justice and charities' to work closely with the government to highlight and address radicalisation.¹⁵¹ The strategy then works through each sector and provides specific guidelines and data to support its call for assistance, the policy treads lightly seeking for 'proportionate' measures that are evidence led. The strategy, at this point, discusses the risks in neutral terms with very little mention and detail of the specific threat.

There is also the first mention of the internet in the policy, demonstrating some limited foresight into the development of extremist groups and the ways that they are likely to evolve. However, it is generally unresearched and hypothetical, for example it states that 'we do not yet have a filtering product ... and we are unable to determine the extent to which effective filtering is in place in schools'.¹⁵² This is another example of how out of date the strategy is, a decade later extremists' use of the internet has increased exponentially and with the popularity of the dark web and the use of undetectable cryptocurrency, it has transformed into an unregulated, lawless space.

¹⁴⁹ Home Department, 'Prevent Strategy' (2011), 15.

¹⁵⁰ Home Department, 'Prevent Strategy' (2011), 7.

¹⁵¹ Home Department, 'Prevent Strategy' (2011), 40.

¹⁵² Home Department, 'Prevent Strategy' (2011), 79.

One interesting component of the Prevent strategy is found within their index. It states that the policy uses the definition of 'terrorism' provided for in the Terrorism Act 2000 and then summarises it. However, there is a notable distinction between the definition in the Terrorism Act and in the glossary of the Prevent strategy. The Terrorism Act 2000 was changed in 2008 under the Counter-Terrorism Act 2008 (s.75(1)) and so the definition now reads:

'an action that endangers or causes serious violence to a person/people; causes serious damage to property; or seriously interferes or disrupts an electronic system. The use or threat must be designed to influence the government or to intimidate the public and is made for the purpose of advancing a political, religious, *racial* or ideological cause'¹⁵³

The change being the inclusion of 'racial'. However, in the Prevent strategy, published three years later, it reads instead: '... made for the purpose of advancing a political, religious or ideological cause'.¹⁵⁴ The discrepancy could be considered somewhat minor, however, it is argued that in the 2011 policy's decision to omit 'racial' it is tightening the scope of the policy to the benefit of the far-right. While this could be merely an error, it suggests that the government does not perceive racial terrorism (of which involves overwhelmingly far-right groups) as being on the same level as ideological, religious or political terrorism. The subtle change could be representative of a far more significant perspective in British governance, and if it is simply erroneous then it suggests a lack of care to the victims of racial terrorism.

The Growing Far-Right

The far-right are a difficult group to fully categorise, they have no uniformity amongst their ideologies, targets or goals, therefore it resembles a somewhat murkier concept. The far-right has existed in discourse, for centuries, oscillating between the peripheries and the mainstream, in line with the political climate. Within the broad right-wing extremism area, there are various splinter groups, not unlike Islamic extremism, however there is greater scope for discrepancy between ideologies. The splinter groups

¹⁵³ The Counter-Terrorism Act 2008, s.75(1).

¹⁵⁴ Home Department, 'Prevent Strategy' (2011), 108.

include neo-Nazism, neo-fascism, white nationalism and separatism, ethnonationalism, ecofascism and patriot groups. Generally speaking, fascism underpins most of these groups described as being 'a fuzzy totalitarianism, a collage of different philosophical and political ideas, a beehive of contradictions'.¹⁵⁵ The discrepancy between the groups and their aims create substantial difficulties in terms of determining whether or how the government labels them and whether they are subject to counter-terrorism policy.

The end of the 2000s marked the peak of the popularity of structured, official far-right groups such as the British National Party (BNP), English Defence League (EDL) and the National Front. Their rise was the result of large-scale terrorist attacks perpetrated by 'foreign', 'international' terrorists, a financial crisis and period of harsh austerity and a need to find a source of scapegoats for the harm felt. The demand-side component to the popularity of right-wing extremism has already been discussed in response to the financial crash, but Morrow and Meadowcroft suggest that the 'supply-side' is also necessary to consider the rise and success of the far-right.¹⁵⁶ While demand-side does provide some degree of explanation to far-right interest, namely that people from low-socioeconomic backgrounds move to these fringe groups during times of instability, Morrow suggests that solely using this explanation remove agency from individuals and does not provide an adequate explanation from people from other socioeconomic backgrounds. Supply-side explanations suggest that these political groups are 'providing opportunities for political participation'.¹⁵⁷ They reference Fryer and Levitt who use the example of the success of the KKK in the 1920s, when there was a demand for a group to allow individuals to show their 'hatred' and 'religious intolerance' but also a willingness to provide a 'fraternal membership' to any individual seeking one.¹⁵⁸ There is no single explanation of why people shift to more polarising

¹⁵⁵ Jeff Sparrow, *Fascists Among Us: Online Hate And The Christchurch Massacre* (Scribe Publications 2019), 12.

¹⁵⁶ Elizabeth A Morrow and John Meadowcroft, 'The Rise And Fall Of The English Defence League: Self-Governance, Marginal Members And The Far Right' (2018) 67 *Political Studies*, 540.

¹⁵⁷ Elizabeth A Morrow and John Meadowcroft, 'The Rise And Fall Of The English Defence League: Self-Governance, Marginal Members And The Far Right' (2018) 67 *Political Studies*, 540.

¹⁵⁸ Elizabeth A Morrow and John Meadowcroft, 'The Rise And Fall Of The English Defence League: Self-Governance, Marginal Members And The Far Right' (2018) 67 *Political Studies*, 541.

political groups, however, it is clear that the circumstances at the latter half of the decade were pushing people to the peripheries.

The EDL, between 2009 and 2013, was led by Stephen Yaxley-Lennon (known as Tommy Robinson), who continues to be a key figure for the far-right in the United Kingdom. The vast majority of his discourse surrounds the idea of a threatening 'radical Islam'.¹⁵⁹ We see the idea of the 'radical' being used in this context directly in CONTEST and through the political discourse. He puts forward a clear theme of 'our' Britain and wanting it 'back' from the Islamic extremists. In interviews conducted during this period by Githens-Mazer and Lambert for a paper on Islamophobia and Anti-Muslim Hate Crime in London, there are clear examples under that same hatred of Islam, widening discussion from Islamic extremists to all Muslims.¹⁶⁰ For example, one interviewee retells going to a football match where he sees two women dressed in burqas and nearby people start chanting "We hate Muslims, and we Muslims, we are the Muslim haters".¹⁶¹ Much of this is rooted in the connection between Muslims and terrorism. It is argued that this divisive and separationist language is born out of a moderate governmental policy and political discussion. It is almost as if license and conviction have been given to extreme individuals to follow through with their perception of the governmental intention. While it is admitted that on one hand there is a repeated emphasis that it is only a very small number of Muslims who are a threat to public security, on the other hand, funding being given indiscriminately to areas with a high Muslim demographic depicts an entirely different image.¹⁶²

Between these three major far-right groups in the United Kingdom, we can draw significant similarities in their representation. All three have a strong nationalist identity, from their names to their logos. As well as BNP having 'British' in their name, they also have a union-jack shaped heart as their logo and on demonstrations are

¹⁵⁹ Elizabeth A Morrow and John Meadowcroft, 'The Rise And Fall Of The English Defence League: Self-Governance, Marginal Members And The Far Right' (2018) 67 *Political Studies*, 547.

¹⁶⁰ Jonathan Githens-Mazer and Robert Lambert, 'Islamophobia And Anti-Muslim Hate Crime: A London Case Study' (European Muslim Research Centre 2010).

¹⁶¹ Jonathan Githens-Mazer and Robert Lambert, 'Islamophobia And Anti-Muslim Hate Crime: A London Case Study' (European Muslim Research Centre 2010), 20.

¹⁶² Department for Communities and Local Government, 'Preventing Violent Extremism Pathfinder Fund' (2007), para 16.

followed by many members carrying the British flag.¹⁶³ The EDL similarly having 'English' in their name and have opted for both a St George's cross and a shield with an Anglo Saxon cross emblem in the centre accompanied by the slogan 'no surrender'.¹⁶⁴ The National Front too sports a Union Jack in their logo but this time in the shape of 'NF'. 'Britishness' or 'Englishness' is central to these group's identities, this theme of nationalism underlies most of these group's values.¹⁶⁵ It is suggested that the ways these groups brand themselves in the context of their divisive anti-Muslim, anti-immigration messaging is related to their construction and presentation of national identity. Within the confines of these groups, they have created their own understanding of Britishness and have supported these claims by packaging themselves under the national flag, perhaps in an attempt to create validity under their messages. They are attempting to use national symbols to repack the country as a white supremacist state and then use their power to continually put pressure on institutions that attempt to generate religious and racial equality in the country. Some of these parties enjoyed time in more mainstream politics, with the BNP once holding over fifty seats in local government and two in European Parliament in 2010 and the National Front having marginal success in the late 60s and 70s.¹⁶⁶ The fact that these groups were even allowed to have political standing at all shows that they are not recognised as a serious and viable terror or extremist threat. This aligns with much of the statute and policy provisions that work to cope with RWE, 'racism, hate crime and extremism are articulated in several different policy documents belonging to separate disciplines'.¹⁶⁷ Generally speaking, these groups are seen in a similar vein to football hooliganism and are dealt with exclusively as a public order issue very separate from extremism. Hate crime carries far shorter sentences, are dealt with less seriously and will attract a far lower level of monitoring.

¹⁶³ 'British National Party' (*Bnp.org.uk*, 2021) <<https://bnp.org.uk/>> accessed 15 June 2021.

¹⁶⁴ Jon Garland and James Treadwell, 'No Surrender To The Taliban': Football Hooliganism, Islamophobia And The Rise Of The English Defence League' (2010) 10 *The British Society of Criminology*.

¹⁶⁵ Martin Walker, *The National Front* (Fontana/Collins 1978), 34.

¹⁶⁶ Martin Walker, *The National Front* (Fontana/Collins 1978), 90-91.

¹⁶⁷ Craig J. J. McCann, *Prevent Strategy And Right-Wing Extremism: A Case Study Of The English Defence League* (Routledge 2020), 19.

Instead, the *threat* of the right-wing is largely reduced in terms of 'lone wolves', something which is articulated within the policy itself. The 'lone wolf' perpetrator is the idea that the perpetrator is a single terrorist who is carrying out an attack 'individually and independently from established terrorist organisations'.¹⁶⁸ Lone actor terrorists are expected to have prepared the attacks and are 'rarely sudden and impulsive', with some actors favouring firearms or basic homemade devices.¹⁶⁹ Prevent connects RWE with this phenomena by saying 'extreme right-wing terrorist plots have predominately been undertaken by people acting on their own'.¹⁷⁰ Hoffman suggests that there has been a demonstrable increase in these attacks committed by individuals who lack connection 'to established or identifiable terrorist organisations'.¹⁷¹ However there is scarce research to draw firm conclusions from these trends, generally, the attacks struggle to fit into pre-existing and traditional theories as they are 'based on organizational definitions' that lack relevancy.¹⁷² These problems create significant difficulties for counter-terrorism policy, as it allows RWE to remain an elusive issue whose boundaries are 'fuzzy and arbitrary'.¹⁷³ There is discomfort in even declaring these actors as terrorists at all, it is easier for society to either see these acts of extreme, targeted violence as either the actions of a 'rational terrorist or an irrational mentally unstable civilian'.¹⁷⁴ Generally speaking, white people tend to get the latter labelling. The

¹⁶⁸ Ramón Spaaij, 'The Enigma Of Lone Wolf Terrorism: An Assessment' (2010) 33 *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism*; Amit Lavie-Dinur, Moran Yarchi and Yuval Karniel, 'The Portrayal Of Lone Wolf Terror Wave In Israel: An Unbiased Narrative Or Agenda Driven?' (2018) 24 *The Journal of International Communication*, 2.

¹⁶⁹ Paul Gill, John Horgan and Paige Deckert, 'Bombing Alone: Tracing The Motivations And Antecedent Behaviors Of Lone-Actor Terrorists,,' (2013) 59 *Journal of Forensic Sciences*, 434.

¹⁷⁰ Ramón Spaaij, 'The Enigma Of Lone Wolf Terrorism: An Assessment' (2010) 33 *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism*; 5.10 Prevent

¹⁷¹ Ramón Spaaij, 'The Enigma Of Lone Wolf Terrorism: An Assessment' (2010) 33 *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism*, 2; Bruce Hoffman, 'Al Qaeda, Trends In Terrorism, And Future Potentialities: An Assessment' (2003) 26 *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism*, 17.

¹⁷² Bruce Hoffman, 'Al Qaeda, Trends In Terrorism, And Future Potentialities: An Assessment' (2003) 26 *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism*, 16.

¹⁷³ Ramón Spaaij, 'The Enigma Of Lone Wolf Terrorism: An Assessment' (2010) 33 *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism*, 4.

¹⁷⁴ Emily Corner and Paul Gill, 'A False Dichotomy? Mental Illness And Lone-Actor Terrorism.' (2015) 39 *Law and Human Behavior*, 23.

conflation with these actions as a mentally ill 'lone wolf' works to mitigate the fear as one cannot perceive serious risk for every individual they see on the off chance that one is an 'irrational and unstable individual'.¹⁷⁵

Therefore the risk of terrorist and extremist activity by white terrorists in the United Kingdom are reduced into narratives of either public order issues or unstable individuals – which are not worse than the 'serious' threat of Islamic extremism. The risk of terror from white people is mitigated and compared to that of non-white people at every single opportunity in the policy. Which draws the boundaries from who the government deem to be a risk and should be part of 'suspect categories'. To create suspicion within this community could cause the social contract to collapse in its entirety, the careful balance which has been tested for centuries cannot begin to teeter by eroding personal liberties for white people in the United Kingdom (such as extending stop and search to this community on the street, subjecting them to length airport checks, surveilling their internet activity). To counteract this, the risk is ignored, masked and rewritten into palatable narratives in policy and legislation. One of the ways this is ensured, is through the controversial enforcement of 'Fundamental British Values' within schools and using them to define the concept of extremism.

Fundamental British Values (FBVs)

The 2011 Prevent strategy introduces 'Fundamental British values' (FBVs). It is argued that in its construction within the policy and beyond, it becomes almost impossible to enable application to far-right terrorist groups. Additionally, in its labelling and within the wider discourse surrounding it, most notably in speeches by David Cameron, it is suggested that through these values we can understand the government's boundaries as to their perception of the population, alienating individuals who fall foul and labelling them as outsiders.

FBVs are within the Prevent strategy and detail that bound organisations must 'comprehensively subscribe' to them.¹⁷⁶ There is further additional advice to maintained schools to centre them under their s.78 Education Act 2002 duty to promote

¹⁷⁵ Emily Corner and Paul Gill, 'A False Dichotomy? Mental Illness And Lone-Actor Terrorism.' (2015) 39 Law and Human Behavior, 24.

¹⁷⁶ Home Department, 'Prevent Strategy' (2011), 34.

the 'spiritual, moral, cultural, mental and physical development' of their pupils.¹⁷⁷ The FBVs are: democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty and mutual respect and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs.¹⁷⁸ There is additional importance regarding FBVs in the Prevent strategy as they are integral to the construction of the government's definition of extremism, that being the 'vocal or active opposition to fundamental British values'.¹⁷⁹ Therefore, whenever extremism is noted in governmental policy FBVs are engaged, they are woven into every counter-extremism debate, policy, discussion and decision. Furthermore, there is a need to consider FBVs both in very close detail but also holistically, taking account of the wider context and discourse surrounding them to fully understand whether or not they could be mitigating the effectiveness of policy in the United Kingdom. The values and their context has been interrogated in a lot of literature about the effect on Islamic communities, as has already been indicated in the literature review – however, there is a need to consider the additional dimension of how they relate to the far-right. The values themselves are representative of the core values of political liberalism and for the vast majority of the population are more than likely to be considered uncontroversial. If we compare them with Alex Schmid's four principles to prevent terrorism: good governance, democracy, the rule of law and social justice, there are demonstrable parallels between them. However, there is an element of hypocrisy in the rigid implementation of so-called liberal values and the subsequent labelling of extremism to those who do not wish to partake.¹⁸⁰

Boukalas suggests that in its construction as being fundamentally British it posits the 'non-liberal' as being 'un-British' which creates a substantial tension.¹⁸¹ By placing these values as being inherent to Britishness causes a presumption that these values are therefore *exclusive* to being British, within which creates an element of moral

¹⁷⁷ Education Act 2002, s.78.

¹⁷⁸ Home Department, 'Prevent Strategy' (2011), 107.

¹⁷⁹ Home Department, 'Prevent Strategy' (2011), 107.

¹⁸⁰ Tore Bjorgo, *Root Causes Of Terrorism* (Routledge 2005), 13.

¹⁸¹ Christos Boukalas, 'The Prevent Paradox: Destroying Liberalism In Order To Protect It' (2019) 72 *Crime, Law and Social Change*, 471.

superiority in stark contrast to the insidious historical past of the British Empire.¹⁸² The 'British' aspect was centralised in their creation as demonstrated by David Cameron, who described them as being as "British as the Union Flag, as football (and) as fish and chips".¹⁸³

The additional issue that arose in Boukalas's article was that by creating a codified definition of the construction of British identity, it essentially prevents societal evolution – creating a perception that these values are now fixed and inherent to being British.¹⁸⁴ In the past century, social values have evolved dramatically that it feels short-sighted to decide in 2011 to suddenly attach nationality and make them the cornerstone to fighting terrorism. Crawford considers whether or not 'British' is too contested as an identity to be the integral key to navigate across the vast number of cultures in the UK.

On the other hand, these values could be seen as aspirational to the country Britain would like to be – rather than attempting to distinguish itself from other countries.

The sticking point with the presentation of FBVs and the union jack covered posters shown around public institutions to promote them, is the clear parallels that they can draw from the nationalist parties that were reaching the height of their popularity in the years prior. With the vast majority of RWE having white nationalist elements in their ethos and packaging themselves as being representative of Britain, either through their use of symbols, anti-immigration chants and slurs and general desire to preserve Britain as a white European country – to then have a counter-terrorism policy which presents extremism as opposing something 'British', it inherently weakens its ability to target dangerous nationalism. Despite the fact that these nationalist parties do not align with the values at all, in particular, the requirement to have mutual respect for all beliefs.

In the construction of these values as being inherently *British*, as opposed to being liberal for example, there creates an incompatibility between extremism and

¹⁸² Claire E. Crawford, 'Promoting 'Fundamental British Values' In Schools: A Critical Race Perspective' (2017) 37 Curriculum Perspectives, 199.

¹⁸³ Claire E. Crawford, 'Promoting 'Fundamental British Values' In Schools: A Critical Race Perspective' (2017) 37 Curriculum Perspectives, 199.

¹⁸⁴ Christos Boukalas, 'The Prevent Paradox: Destroying Liberalism In Order To Protect It' (2019) 72 Crime, Law and Social Change, 472.

Nationalism which substantially weakens the 2011 Prevent policy. Through positioning them in line with the British symbolism of the Union Jack and 'fish and chips' it is impossible to remove the nationalist element from their construction.¹⁸⁵ Herein lies the most significant sticking point in counter-terrorism policy and its inability to target RWE. The policy explicitly plays into the nationalist tropes and binaries, that has been prevalent since 9/11 in such a way that it is unable to target white, British extremists. For as long as extremism is constructed as countering FBVs, it is only going to target non-white, non-Christian extremism and allow RWE to continue to thrive.

C: 2015- Present

Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015 and CONTEST 2018

In terms of the Prevent strategy, there was a major shift in the nature of its implementation through the Counter-terrorism and Security Act 2015 which created a new legal duty on certain sectors to implement the strategy. s.21 of the Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015 binds certain specified bodies to have 'due regard to the need to prevent people from being drawn into terrorism'.¹⁸⁶ This has had an impact on professionals in these fields, resulting in the mass awareness to the new state-mandated training. The effect of this law was to force specified sectors in high-risk environments to implement a highly controversial, aged and outdated Prevent strategy which invokes loose and unnecessary concepts such as FBVs. The majority of the attention at the time was on the role of this new duty in classrooms (both in schools and universities), some staff felt that this was a standard extension of their pre-existing safeguarding and legal duties to protect children from harm, whereas others felt that this was an imposition and 'undermining relations of confidentiality and trust'.¹⁸⁷ Ragazzi considers the 'enlistment' of these sectors and the effect this duty will have on relationships built on 'confidentiality and trust', comparing the safeguards built into

¹⁸⁵ Claire E. Crawford, 'Promoting 'Fundamental British Values' In Schools: A Critical Race Perspective' (2017) 37 Curriculum Perspectives, 199.

¹⁸⁶ Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015, s.21.

¹⁸⁷ Francesco Ragazzi, 'Countering Terrorism And Radicalisation: Securitising Social Policy?' (2016) 37 Critical Social Policy, 3.

medical professions (Hippocratic oath), lawyers (privileged relation with their clients) and priests (confidentiality of the confessional) with the complete lack in this new, forced dynamic.¹⁸⁸ It has produced a situation where the role of teachers, for example, becomes securitised and surveillance begins to be incorporated into their duties.

The policy had been affecting communities, on a small scale, in the peripheries since its conception – but in the widespread Nationalised distribution, using the ‘big-data’ approach, Prevent becomes more and more entrenched into society. It centralises the state’s conceptualisation of radicalisation and terrorism as a severe and constant threat, despite the low level occurrence. Additionally, the perception of terror threat is fuelled and dictated by the media who have enormous monopoly on public understanding of issues such as terrorism and radicalisation. For example, Awan refers to the media’s conflation and increasing association with ‘terrorism’ and ‘jihad’ with Islam and Muslims.¹⁸⁹ This language feeds into Islamophobia and ‘risks’ further hate crimes and alienation of Muslims. For the majority of people in Britain, they will be largely unaffected by this change. However, for members of communities who have been subject to unfair police stop and searches, as a result of the extension of powers in the Terrorism Act, who are unable to walk through an airport without additional security checks and who are labelled a threat by the media for no reason larger than their religion – this new Duty represents a further erosion of their privacy. A new version of CONTEST was also produced in 2018, to overrule the previous iteration.¹⁹⁰ However it does not overrule the 2011 Prevent strategy, and a comprehensive replacement has not been produced, but it does recognise some of its weaknesses and seeks to provide clarity. Notably, the training used for relevant sectors has not changed in light of the new version of CONTEST. The new version arose in response to the spate of Islamic extremist attacks that occurred in London, and the 2017 Manchester bombing.¹⁹¹ This version is the most balanced piece of counter-terrorism strategy produced in the United Kingdom. There is a definite attempt to strip

¹⁸⁸ Francesco Ragazzi, 'Countering Terrorism And Radicalisation: Securitising Social Policy?' (2016) 37 *Critical Social Policy*, PAGE NUMBER

¹⁸⁹ Imran Awan, "'I Am A Muslim Not An Extremist": How The Prevent Strategy Has Constructed A "Suspect" Community' (2012) 40 *Politics & Policy*, 1171.

¹⁹⁰ Home Department, 'CONTEST: The United Kingdom's Strategy For Countering Terrorism' (2018).

¹⁹¹ Home Department, 'CONTEST: The United Kingdom's Strategy For Countering Terrorism' (2018), 9.

back the coded language, recognise the threat of the Right and update the terminology i.e. using Daesh instead of Al-Qaeda.¹⁹² There is also a heightened and more specific awareness as to the role of the internet in indoctrinating the individual, it being 'firmly established as a key medium for the distribution of propaganda, radicalisation of sympathisers and preparation of attacks'.¹⁹³ In CONTEST there are clear and specific objectives related to the monitoring of the internet and engaging the government with Communications Service Providers, there is a desire to continue to research and better understand terrorist use of the internet, the progress of the CTIRU is updated and clear goals have been set with a time-frame.¹⁹⁴ This is very encouraging information and as 2021 is the end of the three-year target it will be interesting to see whether these approaches have been successful.¹⁹⁵

The difficulty with the new policy, despite its more balanced approach and demonstration that there has been a greater level of research, is that the harm to Muslim communities (through the early versions of CONTEST, the 2011 Prevent, the political speeches and the mainstream press) has already been done. These policies have given validation to hatred towards Islam which in turn, built RWE and allowed extremist hate groups to participate in mainstream politics.

The Migrant Crisis, Brexit and Trump

On the 23rd June 2016 the United Kingdom voted, by a thin margin, to leave the European Union. The discourse surrounding the debate was primarily framed on the issue of immigration and regaining control. Large scale political campaigns were distributed across the country for example, vote leave famously emblazoned '[w]e send the EU £350 million a week' on the side of the bus, a claim that was later proven to be incorrect.¹⁹⁶ While membership of the EU allowed freedom of movement between its Member States (although this is not without some restriction) there was a clear xenophobic narrative around refugees and a potential influx of Muslims, feeding into

¹⁹² Home Department, 'CONTEST: The United Kingdom's Strategy For Countering Terrorism' (2018), 7.

¹⁹³ Home Department, 'CONTEST: The United Kingdom's Strategy For Countering Terrorism' (2018), 24.

¹⁹⁴ Home Department, 'CONTEST: The United Kingdom's Strategy For Countering Terrorism' (2018), 28.

¹⁹⁵ Home Department, 'CONTEST: The United Kingdom's Strategy For Countering Terrorism' (2018), 14.

¹⁹⁶ Where

the Islamophobia of the far-right. Nigel Farage, a political figure, was pictured in front of a billboard depicting hundreds of 'Muslim-looking' migrants crossing the Croatia-Slovenia border with the strapline 'BREAKING POINT'.¹⁹⁷

The 'European Migrant Crisis' occurred during 2014-2019 and saw a high level of forced migration occurring from many countries, in particular Syria and Afghanistan as a result of their conflicts. While the UK posits itself as being overrun by migrants, they have actually accepted a very small proportion of refugees in comparison to other Member States.¹⁹⁸ Nevertheless, the conversation has been one of fear, threat, crime and terrorism, with a strong resistance by large fractions of the mainstream public to welcome refugees from Muslim majority countries. Much of this sentiment has been fuelled by the mainstream media, with 'most people having a media-based impression of immigrants and immigration'.¹⁹⁹ Muslims are presented as being a threat to both 'health and stability of modern Britain'. Crawford cites examples of this from *The Sun*, '1 in 5 Brit Muslims' sympathy for jihadis', *The Times*, 'Hundreds more UK Muslims choose jihad than army' and the *Daily Express*, 'Muslims tell us how to run our schools'.²⁰⁰ The idea of Muslims infiltrating the British population works to play into the perception of the social contract in the UK, despite priding itself on being a 'melting pot' of multiculturalism some of the British public used the Brexit vote to resist immigration and a subsequent widening of the population.

Later in 2016, television personality turned politician, Donald Trump was elected the president of the United States. While many of his policies revolved around tax cuts, the scaling back of federal healthcare and other more traditional republican values – there was a distinct call back to an 'America First' foreign policy. His slogan was 'Make America Great Again' and he centralised pursuing a specific version of this

¹⁹⁷ Heather Stewart and Rowena Mason, 'Nigel Farage's Anti-Migrant Poster Reported To Police' *The Guardian* (2016).

¹⁹⁸ United Refugees, 'Asylum In The UK' (*UNHCR*, 2021) <<https://www.unhcr.org/asylum-in-the-uk.html>> accessed 4 February 2021.

¹⁹⁹ Marijn van Klingeren and others, 'Real World Is Not Enough: The Media As An Additional Source Of Negative Attitudes Toward Immigration, Comparing Denmark And The Netherlands' (2014) 31 *European Sociological Review*, 3.

²⁰⁰ Claire E. Crawford, 'Promoting 'Fundamental British Values' In Schools: A Critical Race Perspective' (2017) 37 *Curriculum Perspectives*, 197.

country's identity as his magnum opus. Immigration was here a key issue too, however, it was partially aimed at Mexico and a desire to 'build a wall' between Mexico and America in an attempt to reduce 'illegal immigration'.²⁰¹ During Trump's presidency he also signed Executive Order 13769, entitled 'Protecting the Nation from Foreign Terrorist Entry into the United States', colloquially labelled the 'Muslim ban'.²⁰² While short-term in nature, the ban resulted in a dramatic reduction of refugees admitted into the United States, suspending Syrian refugees indefinitely. Citizens from Iran, Iraq, Libya, Somalia, Syria etc. were no longer able to access the United States. The obvious targeting of Islam was widely condemned by politicians and the public alike, it represented a drastic and disproportionate move. However, such Order did not exist within a vacuum and represents a two-decade long vilification of Islam by the West.

These large political changes during this period show a general lurch in the West towards the right. This is key, as with the shift came a new acceptable standard of racism, xenophobia and Islamophobia – which was now becoming unchecked and normalised in mainstream political and media discourse. The issue with this is that language that may have once been perceived as radical and extreme in line with the Prevent and CONTEST strategy understanding of extremism becomes no longer as obvious and shocking. Television broadcasters such as FOX and Murdoch-owned newspapers regularly produce content that easily verges on Islamophobic, divisive and discriminatory. Pundits like Katie Hopkins and Alex Jones begin to be absorbed into the mainstream and away from the peripheries that their views once existed in.

Terrorist attacks and the role of the internet

This period saw an influx of terrorist attacks in the West, by both RWE and Islamic extremists. RWE attacks included: the Charleston church shooting (June 2015, US); the murder of Jo Cox MP (June 2016, UK); Finsbury Park attack (June 2017, UK); Charlottesville car attack (August 2017, US); the Pittsburgh synagogue shooting

²⁰¹ Amanda Holpuch, 'Trump Re-Ups Controversial Muslim Ban And Mexico Wall In First Campaign Ad' *The Guardian* (2016).

²⁰² Federal Register, 'Executive Order 13769 Of January 27, 2017: Protecting The Nation From Foreign Terrorist Entry Into The United States' (2021).

(October 2018, US) the Christchurch mosque shootings (March 2019, New Zealand); El Paso shooting (August 2019, US); the storming of the US Capitol (January 2021, US).

Major Islamic attacks included: the Paris attacks (November 2015, France); San Bernardino attack (December 2015, US); Orlando shootings (June 2016, US); Westminster Bridge attack (March 2017, UK); Manchester Arena bombing (May 2017, UK); London Bridge attacks (June 2017 and November 2019, UK).

The spate of RWE attacks demonstrate the growth of communities on the internet and the mobilisation of forums on the dark web to help organise attacks cross-continently. This deconstructs the 'lone wolf' and solo-attacker idea, provoking inquiry into what exactly a 'terrorist group' is. Furthermore, many of recent Islamic extremist attacks in the West also follow suit, being perpetrated by a single individual using many of the same methods. This demonstrates the similarity amongst different terrorist groups.

Some RWE attackers have also left manifestos that are publicly accessible through a simple web-search, these have allowed greater insight into how multi-faceted and complicated the far-right are and demonstrate that any attempt to harness them is going to be difficult and needs to be research-led. The Christchurch perpetrator murdered fifty-one individuals in nineteen minutes in New Zealand, last year.²⁰³ His manifesto was littered with conspiracy theories referring to 'birthrates' and the idea that 'European people [will] spiral[] into decay and eventual death', referencing the 'white genocide'.²⁰⁴ Within his Q&A section, the perpetrator self-identifies as an eco-fascist and ethnonationalist – but not a neo-Nazi, an anti-Semite or even explicitly right-wing. The shifting conceptualisation of the far-right is an aspect that needs to be heavily monitored, as it distorts and moves into different spaces potentially infiltrating its environment. The other issue with finding appropriate strategy against RWE is that there is often a shifting target, in Christchurch the focus was on Muslims. Whereas in Charleston, Dylann Roof targeted a bible study group at a black church, this attack was entirely racially motivated. In contrast to the Christchurch perpetrator, Roof was

²⁰³ The perpetrator of this attack will not be named in this thesis in line with Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern's call to render them nameless

²⁰⁴ Brenton Tarrant, *The Great Replacement* (2019) <https://img-prod.ilmfoglio.it/userUpload/The_Great_Replacementconvertito.pdf> accessed 15 June 2021, 4, 5.

pictured with neo-Nazi and white supremacist symbols.²⁰⁵ In his manifesto, he referred to 'Blacks', 'Jews', 'Hispanics', 'East Asians'. And in Norway, Anders Behring Breivik targeted a Workers' Youth League (AUF) summer camp. The AUF is the youth wing of the Norwegian labour party and is founded upon socialist and democratic values.²⁰⁶ The motivation here was entirely political, not racial or religious. Nevertheless, Breivik identifies as a neo-Nazi and white supremacist.

Crucially, despite the differences between these attacks in terms of their approach, targets and country – both Roof and Breivik were cited as direct inspiration for the Christchurch perpetrator.²⁰⁷ For RWE there are no mosques, meeting houses or traditional fixed community structures for the government to label as a terror threat and begin to start Prevent procedures in, there is instead an unregulated dark web that has been able to unite likeminded individuals, build a global community between them and share beliefs and conspiracy theories. The Christchurch perpetrator states that his beliefs developed on 'the internet, of course', implying that there is information being put out there by *someone* that is partly responsible for the deaths of fifty-one people in New Zealand.²⁰⁸ No longer is the internet a vague entity with only positive utility, it connects like-minded individuals building these communities for which they all seek inspiration from each other.

In the past five years, in the era of Trump appointed 'fake news', however, many of these theories that are suggested to be extremist ideology have begun to enter the mainstream through social media and certain news sites. It is in these virtual communities that the group 'QAnon' was able to emerge. The group is infamous for a

²⁰⁵ Rebecca Hersher, 'What Happened When Dylann Roof Asked Google For Information About Race?' (*National Public Radio*, 2017) <<https://www.npr.org/sections/thetwo-way/2017/01/10/508363607/what-happened-when-dylann-roof-asked-google-for-information-about-race?t=1625163138243>> accessed 15 June 2015.

²⁰⁶ Rebecca Hersher, 'What Happened When Dylann Roof Asked Google For Information About Race?' (*National Public Radio*, 2017) <<https://www.npr.org/sections/thetwo-way/2017/01/10/508363607/what-happened-when-dylann-roof-asked-google-for-information-about-race?t=1625163138243>> accessed 15 June 2015.

²⁰⁷ Brenton Tarrant, *The Great Replacement* (2019) <https://img-prod.ilfoglio.it/userUpload/The_Great_Replacementconvertito.pdf> accessed 15 June 2021, 24.

²⁰⁸ Brenton Tarrant, *The Great Replacement* (2019) <https://img-prod.ilfoglio.it/userUpload/The_Great_Replacementconvertito.pdf> accessed 15 June 2021, 23.

range of conspiracy theories from the bizarre Pizza-gate to Hilary Clinton eating babies to the damaging anti-vaccination and COVID-denial discourse.²⁰⁹ Many of the group's theories are underpinned by anti-Semitic, Islamophobic and racist discourse which elevates the potential harm that they are able to cause to society. These theories have moved through social media, targeting susceptible individuals with the goal to open their eyes to the 'real truths'. The crescendo of QAnon's influence was the January 6th insurrection, where the greatest symbol of democracy in the United States was rioted and destroyed by white Nationalists, an event that many still struggle to declare as terrorism. Because, for the reasons addressed in this thesis, terrorism is seen and constructed as an 'international', Muslim problem.

²⁰⁹ Jamie Doward, 'Quite Frankly Terrifying': How The Qanon Conspiracy Theory Is Taking Root In The UK' *The Guardian* (2020).

Conclusions

This thesis has considered the different tensions evident in discourse that present British counter-terrorism policy as being racist, ignorant to the empirical evidence and masking the reality of the threats. The language used in policy in reference to Islamic extremism creates an 'us and them' dichotomy, relegating Islam as being fundamentally un-British and worked to construct 'suspect communities'.²¹⁰

Language post 9/11 was absolutist, e.g. 'war on terror' and elevated the risk of harm to the public onto the highest level. This creation of two clear sides, either you are in support of the terrorist or you are a patriot wanting to support your country, draws connection to secularist theories. In particular Huntington's clash of the civilisations, it posits Islam and the West as incompatible, which became a theme that ran through policy and legislation for the next two decades. This type of language does not allow space for nuance or alternative interpretations and can only create a binary. Within this, space for conversation and creative solutions was lost irreversibly changing the dynamic between British governance and their Muslim communities.

In labelling terrorism as an 'international' issue, separate from the British nation, responsibility for a complex social issue of extremism and radicalisation became relegated to being a Muslim problem as opposed to an educational, social or political issue. Through New Labour's governance, Islamophobia was able to thrive in the United Kingdom. Counter-terrorism policy became racially and religiously rooted, with accountability for global issues being moved onto Muslim leaders. Islam was portrayed as a single problematic entity, demonstrating the lack of knowledge and understanding into the complicated multi-denominational worldwide religion. The government have never shown awareness as to the effect that their foreign policy has had destabilising the Middle East, and the subsequent mass migration that arose as a result. The framing of the Refugee Crisis has never been one where the government sought to take accountability for their role in its creation. Rather Britain has presented itself as being overrun and infiltrated by potential terrorists. Despite most of these individuals fleeing those same terrorists.

²¹⁰ Imran Awan, "I Am A Muslim Not An Extremist": How The Prevent Strategy Has Constructed A "Suspect" Community' (2012) 40 Politics & Policy.

Through the problematisation of Islam, rooted in a post-enlightenment conceptualisation of religion, the far-right were given appropriate ammunition by which to entrench their values. As the threat of RWE began to grow, there was refusal to consider the threat with any degree of severity, with the State continuing to downplay the risk and refocus Islamic extremism as the most significant threat to the Nation. This was clearly demonstrated in the construction of the 2011 version of Prevent, that sought to continually situate RWE in comparison with the larger Islamic extremist threat. It is argued that this is evidence of the government trying to maintain the equilibrium of the social contract, with the Islamic population seen as an unnecessary group to consider. The perceived British population is the white, Western European population who the government have to treat cautiously in order to achieve a workable balance. Their approach was to instead consider RWE as a public order issue which invokes substantially shorter criminal sentences. This demonstrates a deliberate attempt to quash the severity of the growing threat amongst white British communities.

This is also further supported by the mis-labelling of RWE as 'lone wolves' and 'mentally unwell'. This has been the case in the United States for many years, but emerged as a narrative in the murder of Jo Cox by an individual with connections to the National Front and the EDL who used the rationale of 'keep[ing] Britain independent' as grounds for her murder. Pundits highlighted that the Murdoch-owned newspaper, the Daily Mail, declined to cover the death of Jo Cox on their front page. Favouring stories about the upcoming referendum and 'migrants' as opposed to the first murder of an MP in twenty six years. In the coverage that they *did* provide it labelled him as a 'loner' with 'mental health' issues. This demonstrates the attempts of certain media outlets to rationalise and mitigate the threat, blaming extraneous factors that are unpredictable and difficult to prevent. Furthermore, there is evidence that 'right-wing lone actors were less likely to have been under active investigation [...] than religiously inspired individuals'.²¹¹ This situation needs to be evaluated as a process of complex right-wing radicalisation processes that have been occurring in the United Kingdom and resulted in the murder of Jo Cox. The lone wolf phenomenon is wildly unresearched and growing Islamic extremist cases demonstrate that it is not just a right-wing narrative

²¹¹ Craig J. J. McCann, *Prevent Strategy And Right-Wing Extremism: A Case Study Of The English Defence League* (Routledge 2020), 2.

(Westminster and London Bridge attacks; Charleston car attack; Manchester bombing and others). However, emphasis and acknowledgement of this has been scarce.

The recent 2018 CONTEST policy is a positive step towards a more researched, less biased counter-terrorism policy that has recognised the shortfalls of its predecessor. However, the lack of accompanying comprehensive Prevent to overrule the 2011 version in its entirety suggests that there is still policy that feeds into Islamophobic narratives, that sectors are now legally duty-bound to implement.

Prevent and CONTEST cannot simply be revised again to suit the 2021 context, it is too entrenched in difficult history and resulted in the mass marginalisation of a substantial religious community in the UK. All counter-terrorism policy needs to be overhauled and a thoroughly researched, nuanced approach that rigorously analyses a breadth of causal factors needs to be implemented in the United Kingdom. In particular, Fundamental British Values need to be scrapped as a priority as it is argued that they work counter to the aims of the values themselves. Counter-terrorism policy that rests on these Nationalist ideals are incapable of working to defeat the ongoing threat from the Right.

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