

# **The London School of Economics and Political Science**

*Contesting Identity and Preventing Belonging? An Analysis of British Counter-terrorism Policy Since the Terrorism Act 2000 and the Selective Use of the Terrorism Label by the British Government.*

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## Declaration

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## **Abstract**

In 2013, Lee Rigby was murdered in Woolwich. In retaliation, there were several attacks on the Muslim community. Both series of events fall under the Terrorism Act 2000 legal definition of terrorism. Nonetheless, only Rigby's murder was treated as an act of terror by the government. This begs the question, as terrorism is defined in a broad and neutral way legally, what explains the selective use of the label of terrorism by the UK government? Answering this question begins by looking at terrorism from the perspective of Critical Terrorism Studies, approaching the label of terrorism as an act of securitization. As such, the thesis goes beyond the legal definition of terrorism, seeking to unearth the official policy narrative of terrorism on the UK. In order to do this, it analyses the three versions of *Contest: The United Kingdom's Strategy for Countering Terrorism*, the government's official terrorism policy papers.

The analysis reveals an official policy narrative of terrorism which securitizes Islam, Muslims and Muslim identity, by constructing a causal story that places ideology and identity at the heart of the explanation for terrorism. Moreover, the concern with identity gives the narrative a strong nationalist characteristic. This is further deconstructed using the boundary-security nexus. The boundary-security nexus incorporates boundary and nationalism theory into securitization, which better helps to understand and explain how discursive constructions of security and identity work in a dialectic relationship. Once the nexus is introduced, it becomes clear how the selective use of the terrorism label by the government may not just further securitize Islam and the Muslim Community, but also act as a way of protecting and reinforcing the bounded community of the nation state.

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## **Introduction**

In a statement to the House of Commons on 07 September 2015, Prime Minister David Cameron emphasised that the threat to the United Kingdom from terrorism is more acute than ever before (Cameron 2015b). At the time of submission, the terrorist threat level to the UK was set as ‘severe’, meaning that an attack is asserted to be highly likely. With over ten separate pieces of terrorism-related legislation enacted over 15 years, and a new Extremism Bill having been announced, terrorism is the foremost national security concern for Britain. But what exactly is the government talking about when it talks about terrorism?

When giving evidence to the Joint Committee of Human Rights, David Anderson, the UK Independent Reviewer of Terrorism Legislation was asked to name the three most pressing challenges posed by counter-terrorism to effective human rights protection in the UK (JCHR 2014). He highlighted the issues of surveillance and privacy, executive orders and, significantly, the definition of terrorism (JCHR 2014, 2). Anderson’s chief concern is with the breadth of the definition, namely that it may serve to encourage the belief in the police and the public that the definition of terrorism ‘can be used against anyone at any time’ (Anderson 2013, 36). And yet, terrorism is not used against anyone, at any time.

The United Kingdom’s legal definition of terrorism is found in the Terrorism Act 2000. Special measures against terrorism have been a constant feature of the political and legal landscape of the United Kingdom for several years (Walker 2009). However, it was only with the Terrorism Act 2000 that terrorism law became a permanent fixture in British law. After further minor amendments in



the Terrorism Act 2006 and the Counter-terrorism Act 2008, the official UK legal definition of terrorism is:

The use or threat of action where—

- (a) the action falls within subsection (2),
  - (b) the use or threat is designed to influence the government or an international governmental organisation or to intimidate the public or a section of the public, and
  - (c) the use or threat is *made for the purpose of advancing a political, religious, racial, or ideological cause*.
- (2) Action falls within this subsection if it—
- (a) involves serious violence against a person,
  - (b) involves serious damage to property,
  - (c) endangers a person's life, other than that of the person committing the action,
  - (d) creates a serious risk to the health or safety of the public or a section of the public, or
  - (e) is designed seriously to interfere with or seriously to disrupt an electronic system.

(Terrorism Act 2000, s1 (1) (2) emphasis added)

In short, the UK defines terrorism as the use or threat of serious violence made for the purpose of advancing a political, religious, racial or ideological cause. Nonetheless, the government does not refer to all events that qualify under the legal terrorism definition, as terrorism.

In 2013, Drummer Lee Rigby was killed in Woolwich, London, by two men shouting extremist rhetoric, claiming that the murder was 'an eye-for-an-eye' revenge for the killings of Muslims by British troops stationed abroad (Greenwald 2013, Rayner and Swinfrod 2013). His brutal murder was

immediately portrayed as a terrorist by the government (and also the media) (Cameron 2013, Carter 2013, Rayner and Swinfrod 2013, HM Government 2013, Greenwald 2013). On the day after the murder, Prime Minister David Cameron proclaimed that Britain would 'be absolutely resolute in its stand against violent extremism and terror'(Cameron 2013). He further announced the creation of a new task-force to tackle extremism (Cameron 2013, HM Government 2013).

A string of retaliatory attacks on Muslim communities started soon after Rigby's murder. None of these was labelled terrorism by the government, even though most neatly fall under the legal definition of terrorism as stated in the Terrorism Act 2000. A couple of weeks after Rigby's killing, a Somali Islamic Centre in North London was burned to the ground in a suspected arson attack (Post 2013a, b). Graffiti referring to the English Defence League was found at the scene, causing the counter-terrorism unit of the Metropolitan Police to launch an investigation. That same week, a Muslim faith school in Kent was evacuated after a suspected arson attack (Collis and Evans 2013). In August of the same year, a mosque in Essex was subject to another arson attack. Around the same time, two former British Soldiers threw petrol bombs at an Islamic Cultural Centre in Grimsby (Channel 4 2013). In March 2014, a man pleaded guilty to arson with intent to endanger life and a racially and religiously-aggravated public order offence after he set fire to a mosque in Milton Keynes (BBC 2014). Ryan McGee, who had downloaded a video of apparent executions committed under a Nazi flag, openly supported the English Defence League and had a cache of weapon in his room, including a nail bomb (Dodd 2014). McGee also wrote in his diary of how he vowed 'to drag every last immigrant into the fires of

hell’(Dodd 2014). And yet, McGee was not labelled a terrorist. These events were never treated as terrorist attacks by the British government.

However, all of the above falls under the definition of terrorism outlined in the Terrorism Act 2000. Attacks on mosques involve serious damage to property, satisfying section 2(b), they serve to intimidate a section of the public, satisfying section 1(b), and, when linked to the far-right, they can be seen to be advancing a political cause, satisfying section 1(c). Even if there is no link to the far-right, as the attacks were racially and religiously aggravated, this would also satisfy section 1(c).

Whilst an individual can be convicted of terrorism offences, technically people cannot be convicted of terrorism. Michael Adebajo and Michael Adebawale, Rigby’s killers, were convicted of murder, not terrorism. Similarly, Pavlo Lapshyn, who in 2013 killed 82-year old Mohammed Saleem in a racist attack, was also convicted of murder, not terrorism. And yet, the governmental response to these events is very different. Due to a single incident, Rigby’s murder, Britain now has a new task-force to fight extremism. But Saleem’s murder warranted minimal government response. Speaking after Lapshyn’s sentencing, Theresa May, the Home Secretary, released the following statement:

This is a satisfying outcome to a highly distressing case where Pavlo Lapshyn's hatred has robbed a family of a loved one and attempted to cause fear and division within our communities.

(Dodd 2013)

Lapshyn went even further than Adebajo and Adebawale as he planted three bombs near mosques in Walsall, Tipton and Wolverhampton around the time of Saleem’s murder. And yet, at no point did May, or anyone else from the

government, refer to Lapshyn as a terrorist, even as the judge and several members of the police did.

Lapshyn's actions and the string of attacks on the Muslim community described above, all of which fall under the British definition of terrorism, did not result in the Prime Minister chairing a COBRA meeting or announcing a task-force of any kind. Since all of the above examples fall under the British definition of terrorism, what makes Lee Rigby's murder terrorism in the eyes of the government, but not these other incidents?

This political inconsistency in deploying the terrorism label at the political level has not gone unnoticed. In 2014, an anonymous Home Office official spoke out against the British government's sole focus on Islamic extremism. They argued that British far-right was as much of a threat as the so called Islamic State, but the government failed to see that (Kinder 2014). This echoed a 2013 statement by James Brokenshire, a Home Office minister at the time, highlighting the need to focus on right-wing extremism in the UK (BBC 2013a). Further, a 2014 report by the Institute of Strategic Dialogue on the far-right in Europe, argued that violent action by far-right extremism was on the rise, and yet there was no proportionate response from the governments in Europe (Ramalingam 2014). This is significant because, whilst extremism is different than terrorism, most of the incidents described above had clear far-right extremism connections. It further argued that the bulk of the threat posed by far-right is felt through lower-level harassment, which tends to be relegated to 2<sup>nd</sup> tier of offences and not treated as terrorist acts (Ramalingam 2014).

Even more significantly, a 2016 research project on lone-wolf terrorism conducted by the Royal United Services Institute in conjunction with Chatham House, the Institute for Strategic Dialogue and the University of Leiden warned that the focus of European Governments on Islamic terrorism overlooked the threat from the far-right (Smith, Barton, and Birdwell 2016). After analysing 31 countries over a 15 year period, the report found that whilst 38% of lone-wolf terror attacks in Europe were linked to Islamic extremism, 33% were connected to right-wing extremism. From the 72 attacks that were deemed successful, i.e., not thwarted by the security services, only 8% could be attributed to Islamic extremism. Right-wing terrorist attacks constituted less total executed attacks, but almost 50% of deaths. This surprised the researchers behind the project:

Given the intense public focus on religiously inspired terrorism, the finding that rightwing [sic] extremists account for a similar proportion of perpetrators within the database is particularly significant.

(Quinn and Malik 2016)

Adebalajo, Adebawale, and Lapshyn were all examples of lone-wolf terrorism, events committed by individuals not attached to or coordinated by an organization. So the government's response to Rigby's murder could not be because it was part of a plot by a wider organization. The issue seems to be not only that the UK government focuses only on terrorism coming from Islamic extremists, but that it does not seem to consider anything else to be terrorism. The legal definition of terrorism is broad enough to encompass Lapshyn, McGee, and all the above examples of far-right activities, and yet the government is very

selective in its use of the terrorist label. And here lies the central puzzle of the thesis:

### **According to the British government, just what is terrorism?**

As such, this thesis investigates not the legal construction of terrorism, but its official construction at the governmental, political level.

### **What is terrorism? Who Decides?**

‘What is terrorism?’ is the question at the heart of terrorism studies. And it is essentially a question with no answer. Terrorism can be understood to be a tactic, a strategy, a concept, or a social or a political phenomenon (Horgan and Boyle 2008). The focus on the ‘what is terrorism’ question in terrorism research arises from a desire for ontological certainty and policy relevance (Jarvis 2009). But what if terrorism is in fact only a label? As a label, terrorism involves the normative judgement of an action as being an act of terror. As such, terrorism scholars are very much aware that ‘it is an ineluctably normative concept, subject to value judgements’ (Horgan and Boyle 2008, 56). As such, investigating what terrorism is invariably involves questioning how events and actors are labelled, respectively, ‘terrorism’ and ‘terrorist’.

Labels are inherently contested. As the popular dictum goes: ‘one man’s terrorist is another man’s freedom fighter’. Therefore, the question of what terrorism is cannot be answered without investigating how an actor, an action or an event comes to be labelled as terrorist. Investigating the terrorism label therefore inevitably involves taking a discourse-centred approach, focusing on how

particular events are classified as terrorism (Hülse and Spencer 2008). Focusing on *how* rather than *what* deepens the research agenda of terrorism study to include an enquiry into the processes and motivations behind the construction of an action, an event or a person as a 'terrorist'. This addresses the question of how Nelson Mandela could have won the Nobel Peace Prize in 1993 whilst remaining on the United States Terrorist Watch List until 2008. Looking at terrorism as a label takes a constructivist approach to terrorism studies, focusing on 'how social actors use the category of 'terrorism' to make sense of and act during unfolding events' (Stump and Dixit 2012, 207).

The lack of a precise academic definition of terrorism happens precisely because terrorism scholars have realised that deciding what terrorism is involves a highly contested judgement (Horgan and Boyle 2008). But of course this has not stopped nation-states from codifying their own definitions into law. This stems from the perspective that terrorism is a different type of threat, not already covered under general criminal law. Additionally, when organised around the Hobbesian principle that the safety of the people is the supreme law, states will need to officially define the threat they are trying to counter. So investigating what is behind the selective use of the terrorist label by the government requires one to investigate how the government understands terrorism.

The first step in figuring out the official definition of terrorism in the UK, lies on approaching terrorism as a social construction. When two events fall under the same legal definition of terrorism, but only one is considered to be terrorism according to the government, then what we have is not an objective definition of terrorism. Instead, we have a normative, socially constructed label.

As such, the thesis sets out to investigate the social construction of terrorism in official British counter-terrorism policy. Treating terrorism as a social construction involves treating it as a 'social fact produced in discourse' (Hülse and Spencer 2008, 572). Social construction holds that human beings are active, conscious agents in the construction of a shared reality (Berger and Luckmann 1991). In other words, human beings have agency, and it is through this agency that meaning is attributed to social and political processes. The manner in which humans act, collectively and individually, ultimately depends on the meaning that is attributed to their situation and behaviour (Day and Thompson 2004). Research based on the social constructivist perspective is then essentially about investigating the social basis of meaning and the power relations attached to specific constructions.

This constructivist approach to terrorism studies has important implications for research on counter-terrorism. Rather than being a discussion on the methods and tactics of official responses to the terrorist threat, the constructivist approach points to an in-depth enquiry into what constructions these counter-terrorism measures are producing, reproducing and what consequences such constructions and reconstructions might have. Taking this approach to terrorism studies stops the scholar from seeing terrorism as an objective fact that can be solidified into law. Rather, it is a label that is dependent on the construction of a narrative. As such, how the government reacts to terrorism is dependent on and flows out of how it sees it (Hülse and Spencer 2008). This being the case, official counter-terrorism policy papers provide a fertile ground for investigating the official British label of terrorism at the governmental, political level.



I propose that this investigation be done through a policy narrative analysis of the UK counter-terrorism strategy. As such, in order to understand the mechanisms behind the selective use of the label of terrorism by the UK government, an investigation into the constructions of security present in British counter-terrorism policy must be initiated. This thesis will therefore investigate the constructions and policy narratives that are present in the British government's flagship counter-terrorism policy, *Contest*. *Contest: The United Kingdom's Strategy for Countering Terrorism* is divided into five sections: the definition of the threat, Pursue (pursuing terrorists), Prevent (stopping people from becoming terrorists), Protect (protecting the U.K. from attack) and Prepare (preparing the U.K. infrastructure for a possible attack). *Contest* was created as a direct response to the 9/11 attacks and has gone through several reviews, each supposedly reflecting the evolution of the terrorism threat to the UK. The thesis will focus on the section of *Contest* which defines the current terrorist threat and the *Prevent* strategy as it is in both these sections that the construction of 'terrorism' and 'the terrorist' are at their strongest.

There is a small but growing body of scholarly research on the *Prevent* strategy in particular (Heath-Kelly 2012, 2013, Martin 2014, Ohana 2010, O'Toole, DeHanas, and Modood 2012, Richards 2011, Thomas 2010, 2009). This is not surprising since it is an ambitious and controversial strategy, with its stated aim being to stop radicalisation before it happens. (Thomas 2010, 445) provides the most comprehensive summary of all the criticism levelled at *Prevent* (in his terms PVE) to date:

PVE has focused on Muslim communities only....  
[this] focus has been a vehicle for surveillance and

intelligence-gathering by police and security services, so antagonising the very communities that PVE is trying to win over. This focus on Muslims is in stark contradiction to wider government priorities of community cohesion, and may well be having damaging consequences as a result. Finally, the actual design and implementation of PVE has led to very significant tension between government departments at national level, and between different agencies at a local level.

*Prevent* has been continuously identified as problematic by targeting Muslim communities exclusively. As such, it problematizes the Muslim community. This focus on Muslim communities is what (Thomas 2010, 443) calls the ‘unhelpful and broad monocultural focus on the Muslim community’. Thomas (2009) further argues that, even by advocating thorough engagement with Muslim communities, *Prevent* actually failed to engage with them in a robust way. Moreover, Kundnani (2009) has found that the increased surveillance on communities, had the reverse desired effect of further alienating those communities.

*Prevent* is part of a wider trend of de-radicalisation policies in Europe, which arguably suffers from the same problem. As Lindekilde (2012) argues, counter-radicalisation in Europe has been centred on Muslim communities, often problematizing entire communities rather than the few individuals that do become radicalised. The work cited above takes a largely traditional approach to its research on *Prevent* and counter-radicalisation more generally. Gad (2012) takes a different approach in his analysis of counter-radicalisation policies in Denmark. He argues for reading counter-radicalisation policies as narratives,

with a view to identifying how they may cause conflict escalation. In this vein, O'Toole, DeHanas, and Modood (2012) argue that *Prevent* is a 'revealing lens' through which to analyse the dynamics of the engagement between the state and its Muslim communities. Further, (Martin 2014, 2) develops this argument to include an understanding of how *Prevent* is a deeply political strategy, playing a central role in the normalisation of a version of Britishness.

The existing literature is thus unanimous in accusing *Prevent* specifically, and *Contest* more generally, of targeting British Muslims. However, none of the previous works interrogates the policy paper in a systematic way. Significantly, the overwhelming focus on *Prevent* overlooks the importance of other sections of the *Contest* strategy, specifically the one tasked with defining and explaining the threat. This is usually the first part of the policy paper, preceding the discussion on the four 'Ps' forming the core of the strategy. Yet, this section is extremely important when investigating the selective use of the label of terrorism by the British government UK. *Prevent* can be understood as related to the process part of terrorism, in other words, the government's understanding of how and why people turn to terror. The sections on explaining the threat therefore correspond to the label aspect of terrorism, in other words, what the government understands terrorism to be. It is only through analysing and deconstructing both sections of counter-terrorism policy that an understanding of the official narrative of terrorism will be achieved.

As such, the thesis will argue that the official definition of terrorism in the UK, leading to the selective way successive governments have deployed the terrorist label, happens as a result of a narrative which securitizes Islam and Muslims. Moreover, this selective use may also act as a tool in the construction and

reinforcement of national identity, acting as a way of regulating membership and belonging in the United Kingdom.

In order to pursue this argument, the thesis is split into three parts. Part 1 explores the theoretical framework of the thesis, firstly by further exploring the issues with the definition of terrorism and locating the thesis in the interpretivist, discourse-oriented branch of Critical Terrorism Studies (CTS). This first part also includes the description of the chosen method for the textual analysis of *Contest* and *Prevent*, Critical Policy Narratives Analysis (CPNA). The puzzle leading this research project, is regarding how the government reacts differently to events which all fall under the legal definition of terrorism in the UK. The leading research question is:

- How is terrorism constructed politically in the UK?

In light of the CTS research orientation discussed in Part 1, this question is divided into two interdependent research questions:

- How does the UK government construct terrorism through its flagship counter-terrorism policy?
- How does this construction constitute particular actors and legitimize certain actions?

Part 2 particularly addresses the first question by presenting the deconstruction of the counter-terrorism policy papers, using the CPNA method. As indicated earlier, the analysis will focus on those sections of *Contest* which define the current terrorist threat and also the *Prevent* section on *Prevent*. Finally, Part 3 addresses the second question, investigating how the narrative of terrorism is constituted in a nationalist way through the use of boundaries, before exploring

the types of actions that such a narrative would legitimize. Part 3 does this primarily by introducing the concept of the boundary-security nexus, showing how the narrative simultaneously constructs security and national identity, affect concepts of membership and belonging in the UK.

## **Part 1 – Critical Terrorism Studies: Theory and Method**

Approaching terrorism as a social construction makes this thesis part of the field of Critical Terrorism Studies (CTS). Traditional terrorism is generally more focused on the actions of groups and individuals, and interested in the causes of terrorism. CTS, on the other hand, emphasises the role of discourse, and a willingness to engage in greater reflexivity in terrorism studies (Breen Smyth et al. 2008a, Jackson 2007b, Breen Smyth et al. 2008b). CTS has four main criticisms of traditional terrorism studies: it is ahistorical, state-centric, financed by the ‘terrorism industry’ and focused on problem-solving rather than critical work (Jackson 2007b). These points, however, have been firmly rebutted by those in the traditional terrorism studies field, arguing that traditional terrorism studies does indeed consider the historical context, focus on state-sponsored terrorism and is also open to constructivist perspectives (Horgan and Boyle 2008, Weinberg and Eubank 2008).

Part 1 locates the thesis as part of the wider CTS approach to terrorism studies. This approach is best understood as discourse-oriented, investigating the rhetorical and discursive devices that construct both terrorism and the terrorist (Holland and Jarvis 2014). This approach has allowed scholars to apply terrorism research from different perspectives, analysing subtle dehumanising framing

present in official translations of Arabic transcripts (Baker 2010), looking at pragmatic persuasion in government's justification of counter-terrorism measures (Pisoiu 2012), the role of metaphors in mass media's construction of the terrorist subject (Hülse and Spencer 2008), how *The West Wing* reinforced George W. Bush's rhetoric on the War on Terror (Holland 2011) and how *Spooks* and *24* are part of the background noise making possible the construction of 'terrorism' and 'terrorist' in the public discourse (Erickson 2008).

Moreover, this discursive approach to terrorism is augmented by securitization theory. The construction of terrorism is essentially the construction of (in)security, and securitization theory provides a discursive approach to understanding how this construction happens. One of the most significant developments of the widening and deepening of the security studies agenda after the end of the Cold War was a focus on the role of language in the construction of security. Language is not a 'pure instrument for describing an objective reality' but is in fact a 'form of power, exercised consciously or unconsciously' (Hook 1985, 67). Scholars saw language then as source of social power, structuring and influencing the world (Hook 1984). This not only differentiates language from reality, but places language as the source of reality. Language is ontologically significant as it is only through language that things are given meaning (Hansen 2006). This linguistic turn in security studies would result in the development of what has been called 'discursive security' (Buzan and Hansen 2009, 212). Securitization was developed by the Copenhagen School, a term encompassing the work of Barry Buzan, Ole Wæver and others working at the Centre for Peace and Conflict Research (now the Conflict and Peace Research Institute) in Copenhagen (Buzan 1990, 1991, Buzan, Wæver, and Wilde 1998, Wæver 1993,

1995). Securitization describes a ‘move that takes politics beyond established rules of the game and frames it as a special kind of politics, or above politics’ (Buzan, Wæver, and Wilde 1998, 23). Through a speech act, securitization frames an issue as a matter of national security, therefore placing it as a matter of existential survival. The Paris School encompasses work by scholars such as Jeff Huysman, Didier Bigo, Thiery Balzacq and Anastasia Tsoukala (Huysmans 1998, 2000, Bigo 2008, 2002, Balzacq 2011a). The thesis merges both the Copenhagen and Paris Schools of securitization in order to open up securitization theory to arenas beyond speech-acts. A significant development is the conceptualisation of security as a thick signifier

In a thick signifier analysis, one tries to understand how security language implies a specific metaphysics of life. The interpretation does not just explain how a security story requires the definition of threat ... but also how it defines our relations to nature, to other human beings and to the self. (Huysmans 1998, 231)

Bigo (2008) further expands the concept of securitization by claiming that securitization depends on people producing statements and solutions for the management of unease. These managers of unease do not necessarily come from the political elites. Furthermore, securitization happens through a field-effect, as

a result of the creation of a continuum of threats and unease in which many different actors exchange their fears and beliefs in the process of making of a risky and dangerous society.

(Bigo 2002, 63)

Securitization is, then, something that is embedded in a social, historical and political process. Securitization is thus a constructivist approach to security studies which recognises the importance of context, explaining how the terrorist label is constructed differently depending on the context.

### *Critical Policy Narrative Analysis*

As this thesis is part of the CTS research agenda, its methodology has been developed according to its parameters. There has been an explosion in CTS research projects in recent years, including the start of the flagship academic journal in the field, *Critical Studies on Terrorism*, and the seminal *Routledge Handbook of Critical Terrorism Studies*, edited by Richard Jackson in 2016. The methodological aspect of this thesis is particularly indebted to the work done by Stump and Dixit (Dixit and Stump 2011, Dixit and Stump 2016, Stump 2009, Stump 2013, Stump and Dixit 2012, 2013). Both *Critical Terrorism Studies: An Introduction to Research Methods* and *Critical Methods in Terrorism Studies* explore the role of method and methodologies in producing knowledge about terrorism and attempt to lay out a consistent, methodological core of CTS. This at first seems like a daunting task, considering how CTS work encompasses a diversity of methods such as ethnography, post-colonial analysis, feminism, discourse analysis, social network analysis amongst many others (Stump and Dixit 2013, Dixit and Stump 2016). However they have one thing in common: they are all discourse-oriented approaches to terrorism.

It is important to mention that whilst the method of analysis will follow the CTS discourse-oriented approach to terrorism studies, the unit of analysis chosen for this thesis is not discourse. Rather, this thesis will focus on investigating



narratives using an original approach called Critical Policy Narrative Analysis. In a nutshell, CPNA is a form of textual analysis that deconstructs policy texts in order to uncover the central story being told, a story which contains within it different elements of power dynamics and patterns of inclusion and exclusion. So CPNA approaches terrorism as not just a label, but a narrative.

Narrative analysis has its roots in history, literary theory, and linguistics as exemplified in particular by the works of Hayden White (1980, 1981), Gérard Genette (1982, 1980, 1988) and George Lakoff (2006, 2002), Lakoff and Johnson (2003), Lakoff and Turner (1989). When it comes to history, White questioned the roles historians play when transcribing ‘real events’ into historical accounts, such as annals and chronicles. He was interested in analysing whether the world presented itself in the form of well-made stories, or as ‘sequences of beginnings which never terminate’ (White 1980, 27). Additionally, in the field of literary theory, Genette devised a systematic theory of literary narrative, developed mostly through an analysis of Proust’s *A la recherche du temps perdu* (Genette 1980). Accordingly, narratives should be understood through their relationship with the story it is telling, and through its relationship with the narrator (Genette 1980).

Both Genette and White influenced the emergence of narrative analysis in the beyond history and literature. Riessman (1993) in particular contributed to this emergence with her research on the qualitative value of personal stories for research on women’s lives and health. Further aiding the development of narrative analysis in the social sciences is the work of Patricia Ewick and Susan S. Silbey in legal sociology (1995, 2003). As they argue, ‘the process through which an event is made into a story is sociologically significant’ (Ewick and

Silbey 2003, 1331). Transplanting the narrative insights from historiography and literary theory to the wider social sciences, further filtered into the field of policy analysis, taking the shape of policy narrative analysis. It was Emery Roe (1994) who best exemplified this move to policy narrative analysis in his seminal book *Narrative Policy Analysis*, arguing that focusing on the narrative could be immensely helpful in addressing major policy issues. Roe defines policy narratives as

[s]tories (scenarios and arguments) which underwrite and stabilize the assumptions for policymaking in situations that persist with many unknowns, a high degree of interdependence, and little, if any agreement.

(Roe 1994, 35)

This makes policy narrative analysis very suited for a CTS-focused, discourse-oriented approach to terrorism studies, especially one that is interested in exploring counter-terrorism policy texts.

According to Stone (1989) policy narratives are fundamentally about attributing cause, blame and responsibility through the creation of causal stories. The selective privileging of specific causal stories will position different social actors in the policy vis-à-vis each other (Scuzzarello 2013). This privileging of one link in the causal chain over other possibilities is known as selective appropriation, and results in elaboration of different characters and the roles they play in the narrative of a particular policy (Baker 2010). Then, CPNA is concerned with the creation of a causal story, the attribution of blame and the allocation of roles to different social actors within the narrative.

CPNA works as an interpretivist, deconstructive method, relying on both micro and macro levels of analysis. Predicates, presuppositions and subject positioning form a micro-analysis which will help to critically deconstruct the text to its basic assumption and role allocations. In the macro-level, the analysis will focus on the dual mechanisms of inclusion and exclusion, which are staples of causal stories. As such, it will be looking at what is being foregrounded in this particular story of terrorism, and what is being pushed to the background. Moreover, the macro-analysis also relies on Boswell, Geddes and Scholten's three criteria of successful policy narratives: they must be cognitively plausible, dramatically and/or morally compelling, and must chime with particular interests (Boswell, Geddes, and Scholten 2011). In other words, narratives must make sense, they must be stirring, and they must not happen in a vacuum. Micro and macro analytical tools therefore complement each other, interacting in the deconstruction of the text and the illuminating of the narrative of terrorism.

CPNA thus follows the strictures of the CTS research design according to Stump and Dixit (2013): it is critical, it approaches terrorism as an analytical category and it is focused on a constitutive question. When applied to terrorism policy analysis, CPNA allows for a deconstruction of the official British construction of terrorism as present in the official counter-terrorism policy texts.

## **Part 2 – The Narrative**

In Part 2, the thesis focuses on the analysis of British counter-terrorism policy. It presents the analysis of the three versions of the UK government's policy on counter-terrorism, entitled *Contest: The United Kingdom's Strategy for*

*Countering Terrorism*. There are actually four versions of this policy, but the first one, from 2003, has never been released to the public. As such, the versions from 2006, 2009 and 2011 will be the source of analysis. The textual analysis will focus on two sections of the strategy papers, the section dealing with explaining the threat (henceforth referred to as *Contest*) and the one detailing the Prevent strategy (*Prevent*). As explained above, these two sections are crucial when deconstructing the official narrative of terrorism in the UK, as one reveals what the government understands terrorism to be and the other how it explains how people turn to terrorism. Together they form the clearest picture of the official policy narrative of terrorism in the UK.

That official policy narrative relies on a causal story that has two key elements at its core: ideology and identity. These elements are developed and mutually reinforced throughout the three strategy papers. *Contest 2006* establishes that terrorism is caused by an ideology, and that ideology cannot be separated from Islam. As such, *Contest 2006* securitizes Islam, especially since the geopolitical, historical context is removed from the narrative. This is achieved through the assimilation of disparate terrorist groups and events into a single threat, which is presented without any context. The only explanation given is the ideology. And this ideology is consistently connected with Islam, resulting in the securitization of Islam in the narrative. The causal story of terrorism in *Contest 2006* therefore holds that terrorism is caused by an ideology that is Islamic in nature.

*Contest 2009*, on the other hand, securitizes Muslim communities. It does so by developing the narrative of terrorism by adding two new developments: the framing of terrorism as a ‘foreign problem’, and the inclusion of the language of shared values. Firstly, *Contest 2009* builds a genealogy of terrorism, assimilating

events as disparate as the 1987 *intifadah*, the Algerian Civil War and 9/11 under a single history of terrorism, unified by ideology. This happens alongside a dissociative process which undermines grievances and downplays geopolitical issues such as the Iraq and Afghanistan War from the causal story of terrorism. This results in the framing of terrorism as a ‘foreign’ problem, literally as a problem that comes from abroad. Further, Muslim Communities are continually framed as passive, whilst having a strong connection with the threat. The narrative uses this passivity to imply a form of complicity, further justifying intervention in these communities, resulting in their securitization. Finally, the 2009 strategy adds a nationalist characteristic to the narrative with the inclusion of a discussion on shared values. By framing terrorism and extremism as being against British values, the narrative frames the Muslim Community, which is already implicated in terrorism and extremism, as an Other.

*Contest 2011* is a testament to the strength of the narrative constructed in the previous two policy papers. The 2011 policy was brought out by the coalition government of the Conservatives and the Liberal Democrats, whilst the 2006 and 2009 policies were created by Labour governments, first that of Tony Blair, then the administration headed by Gordon Brown. And yet, the 2011 text reads as an extension of the previous policies. This is in spite of the presence of a weak alternative narrative, brought about by the new government’s need to respond to the criticism levelled at the 2009 policy. This results in a situation where the new policy ends up reinforcing, reproducing and developing on the narrative it set out to correct. That is because the nationalist characteristic of the narrative is further developed in *Contest 2011* with the placing of identity and lack of integration as key parts of the causal story.

Moreover, the 2011 fully endorses the previous narrative, going to lengths to differentiate terrorism coming from Northern Ireland and the far-right from Islamic terrorism. The difference lies in the Muslim character of the ideology and in the lack of integration of the Muslim community. As such, *Contest 2011* securitizes identity alongside the continued securitization of Islam and Muslims. The official UK narrative of terrorism thus rests on a causal story that places ideology as the central cause of terrorism. This ideology is deeply connected with Islam. Consequently, Muslims and their identity are implicated in the causal story.

Moreover, the narrative has clear nationalist characteristics, and it draws a clear binary between the UK and Islam. As terrorism is connected with Islam and Muslims, both are also framed as being on the opposite side of the binary to the UK. This narrative of terrorism is thus cognitively plausible, for it stems directly from a consistent presupposition that terrorism is wrong and urgent, and an unchallenged causal story that places ideology as the explanation for terrorism and implicates identity in the causal story. As such, the narrative of terrorism developed by the government securitizes Islam, Muslim Communities – and identity. The selective use of the terrorism label by the government is thus a result of the label of terrorism anchored in a narrative which views terrorism as distinctively connected with the Muslim Community. Nonetheless, due to the nationalist character of the narrative, this selective use of the terrorism label by the government may also act as a tool in the construction and reinforcement of national identity.

### **Part 3 - Counter-terrorism and National Identity**

In order to understand more completely how the selective use of the terrorism label by the government may act as a tool in the construction and reinforcement of national identity, it is important to look at how the construction of security exists in a dialectic relationship with the construction of identity. The thesis thus develops traditional securitization theory into the boundary-security nexus, incorporating boundary and nationalism theory. As with the terms ‘security’ and ‘terrorism’, this thesis approaches nationalism as an act of social construction. As Day and Thompson argue, ‘nationalism is all about the construction and contestation of concepts of identity’ (Day and Thompson 2004, 86). Boundary theory explains the mechanism behind this construction of identity. Boundaries happen at the ‘small scale of interpersonal dialogue, at the medium scale of rivalry within organizations, and at the large scale of genocide’ (Tilly 2004, 213). Boundaries suggest demarcations between people, making identities inherently relational. That is because, as socially constructed collective imaginations, they depend on a ‘dialectical opposition to another identity’ (Göl 2005, 121). So the construction of identity relies on the construction of boundaries between who belongs and who is the outsider. This characteristic of identity formation was first highlighted by Frederick Barth (1969) in his influential social interaction model of identity. He argues that, rather than being primordial, ethnic identities are the result of on-going interactions with other ethnic groups (Barth 1969). In other words, identities are not created in isolation, but through contact with the identity of others.

This is where the theoretical frameworks of boundaries, nationalism and securitization interlock. As Zimmer argues,

particular definitions of identity rise to prominence in particular historical situations, where they serve to address and resolve specific political problems.

(Zimmer 2003, 180)

The construction of both security and identity results in the construction of the Other. The boundary-security nexus then investigates how the construction of security results/reinforces particular constructions of identity and vice-versa.

Effective national security therefore depends on defining both *who* the people are, and *who* they should be protected from. The nationalist aspect of the narrative of terrorism suggests that the label of terrorism is doing precisely that. As such, the selective use of the terrorism label, resulting in the triggering of terrorism powers, is part of the social control of membership and belonging in the UK. As such, the construction of security is marked by the ‘discursive ability to produce an image of the enemy with which the audience identifies’ (Collective 2006, 458). Therefore, both the construction of security and the promotion of identity are techniques of government, working to control membership and belonging. Both identity and security rely on the construction of boundaries between people, be it between us and them or between friend and foe, as a form of social control.

Broadly speaking, social control is the aspect of society that regulates behaviour (Chriss 2007). More specifically, social control refers to attempts targeted at regulating deviance and conformity through purposive action that defines, responds and controls deviant behaviour (Horwitz 1990). The narrative of nationalism through the nexus results in the promoting of a particular set of norms, values and behaviours as national. Likewise, security constructions lead



to certain actions and behaviour being labelled as threatening. Thus constructing norms, values and behaviours as national and as safe requires a process of differentiation. Likewise, the construction of deviance is part of constructing normalcy, and vice-versa (Pfuhl and Henry 1993). Therefore, through the boundary-security nexus, national identity is constructed as the normal, whilst threats, potential or otherwise, are constructed as emanating from the Other. In other words, the boundary-security nexus reinforces otherness as a form of deviance. The narrative of terrorism uncovered in Part 2 is an example of the boundary-security nexus at work. As such, due to its deeply nationalist character, it is possible that the selective use of the terrorism label not only further securitizes the Muslim Community, but it also partakes in the construction of national identity.

The final chapter takes this analysis further, by examining how the narrative of terrorism both legitimizes is being reproduced in terrorism legislation, such as the Counter-terrorism and Security Act 2015 (CTSA 2015) and the citizenship deprivation powers present in the Immigration Act 2000, the latest in a long series of terrorism legislation to grace British statute books. CTSA 2015 represents the culmination of the narrative of terrorism and the past 15 years of terrorism legislation. CTSA 2015, as well as its predecessors, works with the narrative in order to affect the concept of British citizenship in line with the boundary-security nexus, where those deemed as security threats, i.e. deviants, are placed outside the official boundary of belonging.

The nationalist narrative of terrorism that frames it as a problem of the Other, which does not place terrorism from Northern Ireland and far-right terrorism as against British values, yet securitizes Islam, Muslims and identity, is being

mirrored in terrorism legislation. The label of terrorism is thus anchored in a narrative that has strong nationalist characteristics. Consequently, the terrorism label as used in the political level is also being used as a way of regulating membership in the United Kingdom.

The narrative legitimizes and is reproduced through mechanisms in the CTSA such as the changes in the Terrorism Prevention and Investigation Measures (TPIMs) and the elevation of the *Prevent* strategy into the statutory level. These measures work together with previous developments in counter-terrorism legislation and policy to securitize the Muslim Community and, due to the nationalist nature of the policy narrative, also weaken the position of Muslims inside the British boundary. By casting a wide net of suspicion over the entire Muslim community, directly echoing the narrative developed in *Contest*, these powers allow for Muslims to be seen as deviant Others.

Also echoing the policy narrative of terrorism, The Immigration Act 2014 amended the previous legislation to allow for deprivation of citizenship when the Secretary of State has grounds to believe that the individual can achieve another nationality. Therefore, the Immigration Act 2014 narrows the boundaries of fully-fledged citizenship to exclude those who might have been born in the UK, but have familial connections abroad which may lead to a second nationality. The broadening of the British power to strip British citizens of their nationality is an example of the ways political anxieties about terrorism redefine the idea of citizenship and who is worthy of protection (Gibney 2013a).

More data is needed in order to show whether or not the powers to deprive citizenship are discriminatory towards Muslims. Nonetheless, the power to

deprive someone of their citizenship does operate alongside both a narrative of terrorism which directly securitizes the Muslim community and the selective deployment of this label by government officials. This is by itself a cause of concern. Further, these powers do indeed reflect the narrative of terrorism as a foreign problem. As such, these powers mirror how the boundary-security nexus seeks to control what it marks as a foreign deviance. As Zedner (2010b, 382) argues, citizenship has become ‘a potent tool by which those at the margins of the political community are policed by the state’. The power to use the label of terrorism and activate terrorism powers thus has a strong consequence for British society. It is a disciplinary instrument used in identifying and controlling those considered to be aliens (Bigo 2008), with the label of terrorism in the UK being used in a way that regulates belonging and controls membership in the national community. Consequently, its selective deployment at the political level is a form of contesting membership and ultimately preventing belonging in the United Kingdom.

### **Notes on Style**

For ease of reference, the term ‘official narrative of terrorism’ will be used to refer to the narrative constructed and used by the government. Additionally, during the CPNA analysis in Part 3, the section regarding the definition of the threat on the policy papers will be referred in the text as *Contest*. The section on the Prevent strategy will be referred to as *Prevent*.

# **Part 1: The Theoretical Framework**

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## **Chapter 1: Beyond the Legal Definition of Terrorism.**

### **Chapter Overview**

This chapter lays out the theoretical framework of the thesis. It begins by showing how the legal definition of terrorism is not neutral in practice. This is illustrated by the murder of Lee Rigby, and the string of retaliatory attacks on the Muslim community. None of those attacks were considered to be acts of terrorism, even though they all fell under the official definition of terrorism. This indicates that terrorism, rather than an objective description of an event or an action, is in fact a normative label.

Moreover, this chapter will show that viewing terrorism as a label aligns the thesis with the constructivist, discourse-oriented approach to terrorism study, belonging to the school of Critical Terrorism Studies. The chapter further augments the discourse-oriented approach to terrorism by introducing securitization theory, which highlights how important language and discourse are in the construction of security.

### **Introduction**

When giving evidence to the Joint Committee of Human Rights, David Anderson, the UK Independent Reviewer of Terrorism Legislation was asked to name the three most pressing challenges posed by counter-terrorism to effective human rights protection in the UK (JCHR 2014). He highlighted the issues of surveillance and privacy, executive orders and, significantly, the definition of terrorism (JCHR 2014, 2). It is often said that one of the weaknesses of the field

of terrorism studies has been the inability of to reach a consensus on an academic definition of terrorism (Schmid 2014). This consensus has also proven elusive in the wider world, as there are over 100 definitions of terrorism as the search for a universal definition appears fruitless (Silke 2004a). Accordingly, the thesis begins with an exploration into the problems of defining terrorism in both the academic environment and the UK.

Whilst broadly agreeing with Anderson's concerns regarding the definition of terrorism codified in the Terrorism Act 2000, this thesis differs from him in a significant way. Anderson's chief concern is with the breadth of the definition, namely that it may serve to encourage the belief in the police and the public that the definition of terrorism 'can be used against anyone at any time' (Anderson 2013, 36). However, the puzzle lies in how the definition is being constructed at the political level in a narrow way, and as such, is *not* being used by politicians and the government against everyone and everything that qualifies for it.

### **The British Definition**

This thesis seeks to explore the political construction of the terrorism label in the United Kingdom, that is, how a 'common-sense' of what terrorism is has been constructed by successive British governments since the enactment of the Terrorism Act 2000. The Terrorism Act 2000 provided the UK with a legal definition of terrorism. As politicians supposedly operate under the framework of this definition, which was after all created by Parliament, it is important to first examine this legal definition and how the government engages with it. Before the Terrorism Act 2000, terrorism legislation was made up of a series of temporary, but renewable measures. The Prevention of Violence Act 1939 (Temporary Measures) was brought into law in response to the IRA. It expired in 1953 and

was repealed in 1973. It was followed by the Prevention of Terrorism Act 1974, which was originally intended to last just six months, requiring annual renewal in the House of Commons. Instead, it lasted for 25 years. However, even in the height of The Troubles, those measures were regarded as temporary.

The Prevention of Terrorism (Temporary Provisions) Act 1989 defined terrorism as

the use of violence for political ends, and includes any use of violence for the purpose of putting the public or any section of the public in fear.

(Carlile 2007)

The major drawbacks with this definition included the exclusion of the qualifier of ‘serious’ violence and limiting the aims to only political ones (Carlile 2007). The problems with legally defining terrorism were part of debates and reports calling for permanent terrorism measures to replace the temporary, renewable ones. Lord Lloyd of Berwick, one of the early reviewers of terrorism legislation, famously said that ‘none of us will succeed’ in finding a satisfactory definition of terrorism (Carlile 2007, 4).

The quest for a better definition of terrorism was one of the reasons behind the creation of the Terrorism Act 2000. This definition is remarkable for its breadth (Anderson 2011). Section 1 of the Terrorism Act 2000 defines terrorism as:

- 1) In this Act “terrorism” means the use or threat of action where—
  - (a) the action falls within subsection (2),
  - (b) the use or threat is designed to influence the government or an international governmental

organisation or to intimidate the public or a section of the public, and

(c) the use or threat is made for the purpose of advancing a political, religious, racial or ideological cause.

(2) Action falls within this subsection if it—

(a) involves serious violence against a person,

(b) involves serious damage to property,

(c) endangers a person's life, other than that of the person committing the action,

(d) creates a serious risk to the health or safety of the public or a section of the public, or

(e) is designed seriously to interfere with or seriously to disrupt an electronic system.

(3) The use or threat of action falling within subsection (2) which involves the use of firearms or explosives is terrorism whether or not subsection (1)(b) is satisfied.

(4) In this section—

(a) “action” includes action outside the United Kingdom,

(b) a reference to any person or to property is a reference to any person, or to property, wherever situated,

(c) a reference to the public includes a reference to the public of a country other than the United Kingdom, and

(d) “the government” means the government of the United Kingdom, of a Part of the United Kingdom or of a country other than the United Kingdom.

(5) In this Act a reference to action taken for the purposes of terrorism includes a reference to action taken for the benefit of a proscribed organisation.



(Terrorism Act 2000 Section 1)

Although a very long definition, it is worth quoting it in full for no other reason than the fact that the current UK definition has strongly influenced the formulation of several other official definitions, particularly in the Commonwealth, but also in the EU (Anderson 2013).

The Terrorism Act 2000 represents the first permanent piece of terrorism legislation in the UK, marking the moment terrorism legislation became entrenched in British society. According to its definition, terrorism involves the threat or use of serious violence, serious damage to property, endangerment of life, risking the health or safety of the public or interferes or disrupts an electronic system. These actions, or the threat of them, must be designed to influence the government, or international governmental organisations, or to intimidate the public or a section of the public. Also, the action or threat of action must be made for the purpose of advancing a political, religious, racial or ideological cause, except when firearms or explosives are involved, where the purpose requirement is not needed. Further the action or threat of action may be in the UK or abroad.

The definition is deliberately written in a broad way, in order to reflect the changing landscape of terrorism and the myriad ways it can take shape. However, the broadness of this definition means terrorism legislation may be applicable to just about anyone and anything (Anderson 2011). As (Anderson 2014b) further argues:

The UK quite rightly has very tough laws against terrorism. When terrorism is suspected, people can

be arrested more easily, detained for longer, prosecuted for behaviour falling well short of attempt, conspiracy or incitement and made subject to restrictions by ministerial order on their finances and their movements. The public accepts special terrorism laws so long as they are used only when necessary. But they can currently be applied to journalists and bloggers, to criminals who have no concern other than their immediate victim, and to those who are connected with terrorism only at several removes.

But, in reality, not everything is treated as terrorism and the definition is not applied everywhere or to everyone. Legally, this happens because there is an amount of discretion contained within terrorism legislation. As Anderson (2013) argues, the Terrorism Act 2000 grants unusually wide discretions to the police. Moreover,

these discretions become wider still when conduct ancillary in only the broadest sense to terrorism is criminalized.

(Anderson 2013, 93)

This feature of the terrorism definition was picked up as being of concern by the Supreme Court judges, in particular Part 8, section 117 of the Terrorism Act 2000, which prevents any prosecution under the terrorism acts without the consent of either the Director of Public Prosecution (DPP) or if abroad, the Attorney General. The Supreme Court was of the view that,

this has in effect delegated to an appointee of the executive, albeit a respected and independent lawyer, the decision whether an activity should be treated as criminal for the purposes of prosecution... [This] *leaves citizens unclear as to whether or not their actions or projected actions are liable to be treated by the prosecution*

*authorities as effectively innocent or criminal* – in this case seriously criminal.

(R v Gul (Mohammed) [2013] 3 WLR 1207, paragraph 36. Emphasis added)

This means that an action is not considered to be a terrorist action, under UK law, until the Director of Public Prosecution decides it is so. Terrorism, even when part of permanent statute books, depends on a judgment call. This can be illustrated by the powers granted to police under Schedule 7 of the Terrorism Act 2000. Under Schedule 7, UK police can stop, examine and search passengers at ports, airports and international rail terminals without the requirement for reasonable suspicion that someone is involved with terrorism. The DPP is not involved in Schedule 7, and the discretion lies entirely with the police. Terrorism, even with a legal definition, remains a subjective label to be attached to an action.

### **Terrorism as a Social Construction**

As seen above, even when an official legal definition of terrorism exists, it remains a subjective label. This subjectivity allows the thesis to approach terrorism as a social, discursive construction, thus placing it within the field of Critical Terrorism Studies (CTS). CTS incorporates a more discourse-centred approach, focusing on how particular events and actors are classified as terrorist (Hülse and Spencer 2008).

One of the biggest criticisms of terrorism study regards the inability of the field to reach a consensus on the definition of terrorism (Saul 2006). For scholars such as Saul (2006, 2005), the many failed attempts to define terrorism in international

law represent a challenge for both human rights and effective counter-terrorism . As (Schmid 2014, 588) argues, a lack of universal agreement on a definition is seen as an obstacle not just for effective counter-terrorism, but it also ‘also stands in the way of greater cumulateness in academic research’. It may be for this reason that terrorism studies is traditionally actor-oriented, focused on studying the process of terrorism, rather than the label (Sageman 2014b, a), Stern (2014). Some tougher critics, like Mark Sageman {Sageman, 2014 #279), argue that this lack of a consensus on a definition and the failure to have a clear casual explanation for terrorism means the field has stagnated.

However, the two are connected. Schmid (2014), Stern (2014) and Taylor (2014) criticise Sageman’s lack of contextual awareness. For example, he deliberately chooses ‘not [to] deal with more historical and global analyses of political violence, the consequences of terrorism, or even counter-terrorism’ (Sageman 2014b, 1). This impedes him from recognising that terrorism is context-dependent and that there is a contingent, complex reciprocity characterising all human behaviour (Schmid 2014, Taylor 2014). In other words, the label of terrorism (the definition) and the process (why terrorist events occur), are two sides of the same coin. Returning to the Woolwich example, when looking at the process of terrorism, the focus would be on what drove Michael Adebolajo and Michael Adebowale to kill Lee Rigby, not on what allowed for their actions to be labelled as terrorism (a focus on the label). The label of terrorism should be under analysis just as much as the process of terrorism.

The question of what causes people to turn to terrorism cannot be fully answered without also answering the question of what makes a particular action an act of terrorism and what does it mean to call an event an act of terror:

An act of violence can be criminal and political at the same time, making it a political crime or a criminal offence with political repercussions. An act of terrorism can be committed in the context of warfare or can be a peacetime equivalent of war crimes. An act of terrorism can be primarily an act of propagandistic communication to impress one audience or to reach another audience which otherwise would not 'listen' to a protest. An act of terrorist violence can also be interpreted as a sacrifice with religious connotations, born from humiliation in the face of overwhelming power.

(Schmid 2004, 213-214)

Disagreements about what terrorism is are essentially disagreements about who is allowed to exercise violence in a particular situation (Saul 2006). As Golder (2004) argue, the lack of consensus on what constitutes terrorism is best encapsulated in the aphorism that 'one person's terrorist is another person's freedom fighter'. As such, the thesis will take a more discourse-oriented approach to terrorism studies, rather than an actor-focus one. Therefore, the ambiguity and normativity surrounding the definition of terrorism makes a constructivist approach to studying the label of terrorism appropriate. That is, one would have to investigate terrorism with an understanding that the manner in which humans act, collectively and individually, ultimately depends on the meaning that is attributed to their situation and behaviour (Day and Thompson 2004). The focus in terrorism studies in the thesis then shifts from an actor-oriented, to a discourse-oriented approach, looking at terrorism as a social fact produced in discourse (Hülse and Spencer 2008). Terrorism studies, from this

perspective, investigates ‘how social actors use the category of ‘terrorism’ to make sense of and act during unfolding events’ (Stump and Dixit 2012, 207) instead of investigating what caused actors to turn to terrorism.

In other words, approaching terrorism from a social constructivist perspective allows us to investigate the other side of the terrorism coin. Not so much what causes people to turn to terrorism, but what causes certain actions and events to be treated as terrorism. It recognizes that identifying terrorists is not about ticking off items on a list (Gearty 1991). Rather, it involves a value judgment, since terrorism is inherently value-laden, ‘an ineluctably normative concept, subject to value judgements’ (Horgan and Boyle 2008, 56). Moreover, it recognises that the label of terrorism is moulded by government, media, culture and history (Gearty 1991).

By taking this discourse-oriented approach, this thesis then belongs to the field of Critical Terrorism Studies (CTS). CTS is a research orientation, challenging the perceived ontological, epistemological and ideological commitments of traditional terrorism studies (Breen Smyth et al. 2008a, b, Gunning 2007, Jackson 2007b). It purports to be a break from traditional terrorism studies, as it is willing to challenge dominant knowledge and understanding of terrorism and is sensitive to the politics of labelling in the terrorism field. The key criticism levelled by CTS to traditional terrorism studies is that it is state-centric, directly linked to state institutions and that it focuses on an ideal-type problem solving approach. There are three basic commitments to CTS that challenge these perceived shortcomings of traditional terrorism studies: epistemological; ontological; and ethical-normative (Jackson 2007b).

Epistemologically, CTS differs from traditional terrorism studies in that it is firmly embedded in the interpretivist approach, choosing not to privilege empiricist and positivist approaches to research. Scholars such as Holland (2011), Holland and Jarvis (2014), Hülse and Spencer (2008), Jarvis (2009) and Stump and Dixit (2012) have argued for the constructivist turn in terrorism studies. In this respect, the epistemological dimension merges with the ontological one where CTS acknowledges that whilst terrorism is a social fact, it should be looked at as a term of judgement, not analytics. This way, CTS questions the 'nature and politics of representation', questioning why, when and how groups and individuals come to be named as terrorist and the consequences of this representation (Jackson 2007b, 248). Therefore, this approach is less concerned with actor-oriented, empirical problem solving than with interpretive enquiries regarding the construction and discourse of terrorism. Terrorism is then approached as a meaning-making practice (Stump and Dixit 2012). In other words, the focus shifts to an investigation into the label of terrorism, looking at how it is constructed and how it is applied. Terrorism is therefore a powerful signifier (Breen Smyth et al. 2008b).

This concern with representation is reflected in CTS's belief that traditional terrorism studies is too state-centric, ignoring the role of state-sponsored terrorism or terrorism committed by states (Breen Smyth et al. 2008a). This leads to the ethical-normative concerns about the close relationship that exists between governments and conventional terrorism studies. The concern is that this close relationship prevents the questioning of the status-quo and perpetuates the dominant view that acts of political violence by states are not acts of terror (Breen Smyth et al. 2008a, Jackson 2007b). Further, this ethnic-normative

dimension refers to a concern that conventional terrorism studies is more concerned with national security than with human rights (Breen Smyth et al. 2008a, Jackson 2007b).

The ethnic-normative dimension and CTS in general has been authoritatively criticised by John Horgan and Michael J. Boyle who claim that CTS is essentially a straw-man, unfairly portraying 'almost 40 years of multi- and interdisciplinary research' (Blakeley 2008, 52). They argue that CTS assumes that terrorism scholars have worked for years without being aware of the normative, methodological and definitional problems of the field. This is untrue as terrorism studies is a deeply self-reflective field, with several volumes written on the problems of the field (Silke 2004b, Ranstorp 2007). Further, they counter that it is wrong to assume that empiricists do not challenge the status-quo (Horgan and Boyle 2008).

Moreover, they strongly criticise the vagueness of CTS's commitment to emancipation, adding, rightly, that a commitment to human rights and empowerment is not unique to CTS (Horgan and Boyle 2008). Regarding the criticism that traditional terrorism studies is blind to the role the state plays in terrorism, they add that many respected scholars recognise that the state does play a role in terrorism. This is certainly evident in the work of scholars such as Fawaz Gerges (2005, 1999, 2011) and Fred Halliday (2002, 2001). Furthermore, Horgan and Boyle (2008) counter that just because research is funded by the government, does not automatically mean that it will cancel out the moral responsibility, independence and scholarly judgement of academics funded by the government.



Horgan and Boyle's closing argument is that CTS is a redundant exercise, as there is no need to challenge the orthodoxy when 'there really is no 'orthodoxy' worthy of the name to be found' (2008, 62). In other words, traditional terrorism studies is a diverse field, already comprising scholars working with the approach advocated by CTS, so there is no need to create a separate research school. They warn that bifurcating the field of terrorism will be counter-productive, a warning which is also embraced by leading CTS scholars (Breen Smyth et al. 2008b).

But the fact remains that traditional terrorism studies still is primarily actor-oriented, with a focus on empirical research on the causes of terrorism. One needs only to look at *Terrorism and Political Violence*, the leading academic journal on the field of terrorism studies, to see an overwhelming focus of actor-oriented, traditional approaches on the causes of terrorism which do not look at the constructivist dimension. Commenting on the dominance of research on terrorism by non-state actors, Ruth Blakeley argues that maybe this happens because terrorism researchers are 'walking the road most travelled' (Blakeley 2008, 158).

Whilst traditional terrorism studies and CTS are not mutually exclusive, the advent of CTS, as an umbrella research orientation, is still a welcome development in the field of terrorism studies. CTS and its flagship academic journal, *Critical Studies on Terrorism*, have encouraged a different approach to terrorism research that has been generally overlooked in the traditional field, which can only lead to further understanding of terrorism. After all, the question of what causes terrorism comprises of several questions, for example: Why do people commit terrorist acts? How do those acts get labelled as terrorism? Who decides what terrorism is? How does the label of terrorism change? It is only by

incorporating the discourse-oriented approach, the most significant contribution from the development of CTS, that a more complete answer may be found.

### **Securitization**

Terrorism theory, critical or otherwise, must be augmented by security theory as the construction of terrorism is essentially the construction of (in)security. The social construction of security refers to the process through which security issues and corresponding threats are brought into being in particular contexts (McDonald 2008). Regarding security as a social construction is not to deny the existence of real security threats; rather, it is to interrogate how certain issues become framed as security threats. In other words, looking at security as a social construction involves an investigation of the social and political construction of threats. As (Balzacq 2011b, xiii) argues,

threats are not separable from the intersubjective representations in which communities come to know them. In short, insecurity partakes of a distinctive type of shared knowledge.

Security then is deeply contextual and reliant on constructions of expected common norms of behaviour. The development of constructivist approaches to security came from the need, after the Cold War, to widen and deepen the security studies spectrum. Traditional security studies was characterised by a military, state-centric focus, devoted to explanations of state behaviour. It relied on the Realist perception that states are rational actors in an anarchic state system (Buzan and Hansen 2009). To scholars concerned with expanding the concept of security, the focus on a 'military, state-centric agenda was analytically, politically and normatively problematic' (Buzan and Hansen 2009, 187). Non-traditional

approaches to security flourished after the Cold War, including different subsections such as Conventional Constructivism, Critical Constructivism, Feminist Security Studies, Critical Security Studies and Poststructuralism. Other than Conventional Constructivism, which holds that security is a behaviour to be explained, what all these subsections of security studies have in common is an understanding of security as a concept that is inherently contested and political (Buzan and Hansen 2009). Therefore, rather than seeing states as stable entities capable of behaviour, these approaches to security focused on the construction of threats and national security as the primary sites of analysis.

One of the most significant developments of the widening and deepening of the security studies agenda was a focus on the role of language in the construction of security. Language is not a 'pure instrument for describing an objective reality' but is in fact a 'form of power, exercised consciously or unconsciously' (Hook 1985, 67). Scholars saw language then as source of social power, structuring and influencing the world (Hook 1984). This not only differentiates language from reality, but places language as the source of reality. Language is ontologically significant as it is only through language that things are given meaning (Hansen 2006). This linguistic turn in security studies would result in the development of what (Buzan and Hansen 2009, 212) 'discursive security', encompassing Poststructuralism and Securitization theory.

Securitization theory was developed by the Copenhagen School, a term encompassing the work of Barry Buzan, Ole Wæver and others working at the Centre for Peace and Conflict Research (now the Conflict and Peace Research Institute) in Copenhagen (Buzan 1990, 1991, Buzan, Wæver, and Wilde 1998, Wæver 1993, 1995). According to the Copenhagen School, securitization

happens through a speech act, where a political leader, or someone in a position of power lays out the new threat. The key to the securitization process is the use of language:

“the utterance itself is the act... by uttering ‘security’, a state-representative moves a particular development into a specific area, and thereby claims a special right to use whatever means necessary to block it.”

(Wæver 1993, 55)

In other words, just by uttering the word ‘security’, a threat is constructed. The definition of security and the definition of the threat are both dependent on their construction in discourse (Buzan and Hansen 2009).

Securitization describes a ‘move that takes politics beyond established rules of the game and frames it as a special kind of politics, or above politics’ (Buzan, Wæver, and Wilde 1998, 23). In other words, it described the construction of an existential threat. There exists a spectrum of public issues where issues fall outside the interest of the state (non-politicised), to where the issue is part of public policy (politicised) (Buzan, Wæver, and Wilde 1998). When an issue is securitized, it is raised above public policy, being dealt in an urgent, accelerated manner which ‘may violate normal legal and social rules’ (Buzan, Wæver, and Wilde 1998, 23). When issues are securitized, they become part of emergency politics. Securitization is thus constituted within national security discourse, implying an emphasis on authority, constructing threats and enabling the adoption of emergency measures (Buzan and Hansen 2009). It is important to highlight that this state of exception will be constructed and justified through the

speech-act. Securitization then highlights how security threats are constructed and how emergency measures to deal with these threats are justified.

There are three main criticism to securitization theory, what McDonald (2008) terms three types of narrowness. First, the *form* of the act constructing security is too narrow, focusing on the speech of dominant actors (McDonald 2008). Second, the *context* of the act is also too narrow (McDonald 2008). Third, the nature of the act is too narrow, focusing only on the moment of intervention (McDonald 2008).

Firstly, the *form* of the act of constructing security, focusing only on the speech of dominant actors, is too narrow, excluding acts of securitization that do not necessarily rely on language and the role of the audience in securitization (Balzacq 2005, McDonald 2008, Williams 2003). After all, language is only one way through which meaning is communicated (Möller 2007, Wilkinson 2007). The focus on speech-acts as the key source of political communication overlooks the increased impact of the role of televisual images (Williams 2003). The subfield of visual securitization has emerged from this concern, with scholars highlighting that visual representations are also a form of language (Hansen 2011). Visual securitization has resulted in works investigating the visual construction of security as varied as in the Mohammed Cartoons (Hansen 2011), televisual images on 9/11 (Williams 2003), photographic exhibitions of 9/11 (Möller 2007) and photographs of injured women in Afghanistan (Heck and Schlag 2013).

Hansen (2000) also warns of the dangers of grounding security in speech, as it prevents those without a voice from articulating their security concerns. As such,

the thesis accepts that securitization should focus on language in general, visual or otherwise, not just speech-acts. That is, visual, written, non-verbal and spoken language are crucial in understanding the construction of security threats. Securitization then retains its focus on language as not just representational, but constitutive of reality (Balzacq 2011b).

The second aspect of narrowness of form is the focus on the role of dominant actors. Traditional securitization primarily relies on the role of political leaders in the construction of the threat (McDonald 2008). In the Copenhagen School, securitization happens through securitizing actors, defined as political leaders, bureaucracies, governments, lobbyists, and pressure groups which define a security act then act on it (Buzan, Wæver, and Wilde 1998). This has led to the traditional approach to securitization being labelled as both state-centric and elite-centric (Booth 2005, 2007).

In order to counter these criticisms, it is important to incorporate the Paris School of securitization. The Paris School, encompasses work by scholars such as Jeff Huysman, Didier Bigo, Thierry Balzacq and Anastasia Tsoukala (Huysmans 1998, 2000, Bigo 2008, 2002, Balzacq 2011a). The Paris School opens up securitization theory to arenas beyond speech-acts. A significant development is (Huysmans 1998, 231) conceptualisation of security as a thick signifier

In a thick signifier analysis, one tries to understand how security language implies a specific metaphysics of life. The interpretation does not just explain how a security story requires the definition of threat ... but also how it defines our relations to nature, to other human beings and to the self.

Bigo (2008) further expands the concept of securitization by claiming that securitization depends on people producing statements and solutions for the management of unease. These managers of unease do not necessarily come from the political elites. Furthermore, securitization happens through a field-effect, as

a result of the creation of a continuum of threats and unease in which many different actors exchange their fears and beliefs in the process of making of a risky and dangerous society.

(Bigo 2002, 63)

Securitization is, then, something that is embedded in a social, historical and political process. The Paris School emphasises the practices, audiences and contexts that construct security (Collective 2006). By incorporating the view of security as a thick signifier and the field effect, this thesis recognises that rather than relying solely on spoken language of dominant actors, the construction of security is deeply contextual. The form of the act of securitization, then rather than being narrow, is broadened to include the role of context and different number of actors. The narrowness of context is also addressed by the incorporation of the Paris School of securitization. Narrowness of context refers to the fact that classical securitization focuses only on the moment of intervention, overlooking the potential for security to be constructed over time (McDonald 2008).

Finally, narrowness of nature refers to how classical securitization overlooks context (McDonald 2008). By incorporating the Paris School's focus on context, these criticisms are lessened. When security is seen as a thick signifier, relying on a continuum of threat, securitization will depend on constructions of security

available in the specific context, and as such will not only be reliant on the moment of intervention.

Rather than being widely diverging schools, both the Copenhagen and the Paris Schools of securitization are best understood as being part of a common framework which views threats as discursive, social constructions. As such, securitization theory, as understood by this thesis, is connected with the Poststructuralist approach to international relations. Post-structuralism is particularly concerned with attempts to uncover the unquestioned modes of signification that sustain the social and political world. As such, Poststructuralism is an inherently Foucaultian approach, where language is closely connected with systems of power (Foucault 2002).

Discursive constructions of security directly relate to the construction of terrorism as a politically constructed label. As (McCulloch and Pickering 2009, 630) argue

The label 'terrorism' precedes, extends beyond and exists independently of reasonable suspicions and evidence-based criminal justice processes.

The act of labelling an individual or an event as 'terrorist' imbues the situation with a specific meaning, which would not exist without the act of labelling.

It is therefore easy to see how terrorism is a securitized issue, requiring a deviation from normal politics. For example, during the IRA campaign in the UK, terrorism legislation amounted to emergency measures, introduced in parliament and subject to renewal, demonstrating a move away from normal politics towards emergency politics. This has been reinforced after the attacks of



9/11 and 7/7. For example, after 9/11, Alastair Campbell, the director of communications for Prime Minister Tony Blair, met with senior government officials in order to discuss the need to change human rights law (Campbell and Stott 2007, 567). After the 7/7 attacks, Tony Blair, exclaimed that the rules of the game were changing, promising to wage a battle against the Human Rights Act 1998 and the European courts in the name of national security (Wintour 2005). The UK now has one of the most extensive systems of terrorism legislation, encompassing six different, permanent terrorism acts: The Terrorism Act 2000, Anti-Terrorism Crime and Security Act 2001, the Prevention of Terrorism Act 2005, the Terrorism Act 2006, the Counter-terrorism Act 2008, the Terrorism Prevention and Investigation Measures Act 2011 and the Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015. These permanent acts may seem to demonstrate a normalisation of emergency politics, but rather, they reinforce the strength of the securitization of terrorism, where the state of exception is long-lasting.

A material example of the break from normal legal and political norms can be found in the Anti-Terrorism, Crime and Security Act 2001. Part 4 of the act allowed for the indefinite detention without trial of individuals suspected of terrorism, which required derogation from Article 5 of the ECHR, the right to liberty. A derogation is the ability to temporarily exclude the application of one or more of the articles of the ECHR, except Article 2, the right to life (except in a time of war) Articles 3, freedom from torture, Article 4 freedom from slavery and Article 7, freedom from retrospective punishment rights. The right for states to derogate is provided by Article 15 of the ECHR, and is only to be used in a time of war or other public emergency threatening the life of the nation. Further illustrating the state of heightened anxiety, the UK was the only state in the

Council of Europe to regard the terrorist attacks of 9/11 as requiring a derogation from the ECHR (Tomkins 2011).

It is easy to see how terrorism is securitized in the UK, being in the realm of emergency politics with the possibility of violating normal and legal rules. Nevertheless, securitization theory adds to the study of terrorism in a more fundamental way. If terrorism is a label, then it is a discursive construction which may be implicated in the maintenance of specific social structures. The legal neutrality of the definition of terrorism, betrayed in its application, suggests a series of mechanisms active in the background, where something more than terrorism is being securitized in the construction of the label of terrorism. After all, if terrorism is a socially constructed label, then those who study terrorism must investigate how that label is being constructed, how it is being deployed and what are the structures that both keep it in place and are held in place by the terrorist label. These questions follow from the call from Stump and Dixit (2012) for terrorism scholars to adopt a fully constructivist approach to terrorism, organised around three central questions:

How do people rhetorically deploy the sign of 'terrorism' in the course of everyday life? What does it do in practice? How do varying contexts and available symbolic resources change the particular identities and policies produced through the terrorism discourse?

In order to uncover just what this label is, the policy papers detailing British counter-terrorism policy must be analysed. These are the papers that explain the terrorism threat, legitimising state action. Therefore, they are primed for being

deconstructed in search of the official understanding of terrorism in the United Kingdom.

## **Chapter 2: Critical Policy Narrative Analysis**

### **Chapter Overview**

As seen in previous chapters, terrorism is a normative label, rather than an independent action/actor or event. This chapter takes the discursive approach to terrorism outline in Chapter 1 further by developing a method of textual analysis that fully relates to CTS's discourse-oriented approach to terrorism studies. In CPNA Policy Narratives research is augmented by aspects of CDA and as such it is concerned with how causal stories are developed in official government policy papers. Narratives are uncovered using CPNA through a combination of micro and macro tools. Micro tools deconstruct the text for its predicates, presuppositions and subject positioning. Macro tools look at process of exclusion and inclusion, and whether or not the narrative fits the three criteria for successful policy narratives: they must cognitively plausible, dramatically and/or morally compelling, and they must chime with perceived interests.

In order to understand the selective use of the terrorism label in the UK, one must look at how the government defines terrorism beyond the legal definition. As such, the official policy paper outlining the UK counter-terrorism policy, *Contest*, will be analysed. Specifically the sections outlining the threat (usually Section 1 of the policy) and *Prevent*, the section exploring how to prevent it will be analysed. As such, the CPNA method outlined is key for it allows us to look at the government as story-tellers and at the terrorism policy as a story. CPNA thus provides the tools for the deconstruction of the terrorist label, revealing the narrative which allows for its selective use by politicians.

## **Introduction**

If terrorism is a normative construction, a methodology is needed for textual analysis that takes this normativity into account. Specifically, we want to find out what constructions of terrorism are present in the British counter-terrorism policy and how do these constructions contribute to the inconsistent use of the terrorist label by government officials. As the thesis is rooted in CTS, it is paramount that its methodology stems directly from it.

The thesis therefore employs an original methodological approach called Critical Policy Narrative Analysis (CPNA), where Policy Narratives research is augmented by aspects of Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA). Policy narratives research is concerned with exploring the different stories told by different government policies. Stories are a more pervasive factor in our daily lives than we sometimes realise, and it is important to investigate their role in the creation of an official narrative (Kaplan 1986). Additionally, CDA brings a normative concern with critique and power relations, which will help unearth the power relations present in the official policy narratives. By incorporating aspects of both CDA and Policy Narratives, Critical Policy Narratives (CPNA), provides a narrative analysis centred on power relations. As such, CPNA follows CTS's discourse-oriented approach to terrorism studies and is an ideal method for uncovering the normative constructions in counter-terrorism policy. CPNA thus fits with the overriding emphasis of the thesis on the socially constructed aspect of security and terrorism. More specifically, CPNA directly addresses how descriptions of events and situations may take normative dimensions label.

It is very difficult to textually analyse legal documents in the statute books. Legislation is, after all, written in a very precise and supposedly value-free

language. As the thesis is trying to uncover the official construction of terrorism according to successive British governments since 9/11, it is appropriate that it searches for it in the documents outline the logic of the UK's counter-terrorism strategy. In order to answer these questions, the thesis will analyse the three versions of the UK government's policy on counter-terrorism, entitled *Contest: The United Kingdom's Strategy for Countering Terrorism*. There are four versions of this policy, but the first one, from 2003, remains classified. As such, the versions from 2006, 2009 and 2011 will be the source of analysis. The strategy papers will not be analysed in their entirety. Rather, the first section of the strategy, concerned with the definition of the current terrorism threat (henceforth *Contest*), will be analysed in order to distil the official narrative of terrorism endorsed by the government. Secondly, an analysis of the *Prevent* section of the three papers (*Prevent*) will be conducted, investigating the narrative of the 'potential terrorist'. Before outlining the central assumptions of CPNA it is important to explore the methodological framework underpinning CPNA.

### **Critical Terrorism Studies: Methodological Considerations**

As this thesis is part of the CTS research agenda, its methodology has been developed according to its parameters. There has been an explosion in CTS research projects in recent years, including the start of the flagship academic journal in the field, *Critical Studies on Terrorism*, and the seminal *Routledge Handbook of Critical Terrorism Studies*, edited by Richard Jackson in 2016. Both the journal and the handbook attest to the diversity and richness of the field and indicate a need for more thorough methodological discussion of such a vast

field of enquiry. As a response to this, books such as *Critical Terrorism Studies: An Introduction to Research Methods* by Jacob L. Stump and Priya Dixit in 2013, and *Critical Methods in Terrorism Studies*, edited by the same authors in 2016 have been published.

The methodological aspect of this thesis is particularly indebted to the work done by Stump and Dixit (Dixit and Stump 2011, Dixit and Stump 2016, Stump 2009, Stump 2013, Stump and Dixit 2012, 2013). Both *Critical Terrorism Studies: An Introduction to Research Methods* and *Critical Methods in Terrorism Studies* explore the role of method and methodologies in producing knowledge about terrorism and attempt to lay out a consistent, methodological core of CTS. This at first seems like a daunting task, considering how CTS work encompasses a diversity of methods such as ethnography, post-colonial analysis, feminism, discourse analysis, social network analysis amongst many others (Stump and Dixit 2013, Dixit and Stump 2016). However they have one thing in common: they are all discourse-oriented approaches to terrorism.

In this regard, CTS's discourse-oriented approach is indebted to the notions of discourse and power as developed by Foucault. For Foucault, discourses are 'the practices that systematically form the object of which they speak' (Foucault 2002, 54). This represents one of the core concerns of CTS, namely its commitment to interrogating the label of terrorism (Stump and Dixit 2013, Dixit and Stump 2016). In this sense, taking a discourse-oriented approach means that the focus of the analysis is in the different practices that systematically form both the terrorist subject, and the object of terrorism. A discourse-oriented approach to terrorism studies then recognises that the construction of terrorism must be socially situated. Fairclough (1995) argues that discourses are both socially shaped and

also shaped by society, in other words, discourses are 'socially constituted'. So is the CTS approach to terrorism studies: terrorism as a construct both shapes society and is shaped by it.

Nonetheless, it is important to stress that being discourse-oriented does not mean these approaches are using discourse analysis as a methodology. Rather, it means that they approach terrorism from an interpretivist, constructivist perspective.

Another Foucauldian influence on CTS is its underlying concern with power. The Foucauldian concept of governmentality is central to how CTS approaches the construction of truth. Governmentality is about the relationship between truth and power. As Foucault argues

What rules of right are implemented by the relations of power in the production of discourses of truth? What type of power is susceptible of producing discourse of truth that in a society such as ours are endowed with such potent effects?

(Foucault and Gordon 1980, 93).

Security discourses are plays of power which mobilize rules, codes and procedures to construct knowledge. So producing truth and knowledge about a security issue, say by defining terrorism and producing a policy document which explains the threat, suggests differing power structures. These power structures in turn, are revealed by deconstructing the narrative in order to find exactly what is being securitized in the construction of a security threat, in this case, terrorism.

This summarises the discourse-oriented, social constructivist approach to terrorism studies, which holds that the terrorist actor is a product of discourse. As such, the social constructivist approach to terrorism is, as Stump and Dixit (2012)



argue, best suited to studying how representations of terrorism are socially and politically produced through linguistic and non-linguistic practices. In other words, terrorism does not make sense unless it is articulated and communicated in practice (Stump and Dixit 2012). This means that terrorism does not exist outside the label. As such, how people deploy the label terrorist and for what purpose is the focus of a discursive approach to security and terrorism.

CTS therefore incorporates governmentality as a way of both interrogating the construction of terrorism, and how certain constructions persist and become common-sense, serving as a way to justify actions such as war. This relates directly to one of CTS's key criticisms of traditional terrorism studies, namely that it remains too close to those who benefit from a regime of truth, be it the government or security agencies (Breen Smyth et al. 2008a, Jackson 2005, 2007b, 2016). This is what causes CTS scholars to question the role of both terrorism experts which are part of or funded by governments and the role that academics themselves play in knowledge creation on the subject of terrorism (Jackson 2007a, Jackson, Smyth, and Gunning 2009a, Miller and Mills 2009, Miller, Mills, and Harkins 2011).

The underlying concern with truth and power is also what causes CTS to re-orientate the role of the state in terrorism studies. Stump and Dixit (2013) identify three ways in which the state can be studied in terrorism studies: states that produce terrorism by funding them, states that counter terrorism, and state terrorism. In traditional terrorism studies, the state is usually situated as either a victim of terrorism or a sponsor of terrorism. CTS flips the analysis to investigate how the state can itself be a source of terrorism, and also to interrogate how the state may portray itself as a counterterrorist state. In this case, CTS takes:

labelling and language-use seriously and stud[ies]  
labelling practices as co-constituting terrorist threats as  
well as the counterterrorist state.

(Stump and Dixit 2013, 121)

CTS's discourse-oriented approach allows it to interrogate the common-sense behind a particular construction of terrorism, how contested that common-sense is, and how it ceases to exist. For example, it was once common-sense to speak of Nelson Mandela as a terrorist, but this is no longer the case. The common-sense is that state action is excluded from terrorism, so atrocities such as genocide, when committed by state actors, are not considered acts of terror. As explained in the introduction, the British government appears to have a selective understanding of what terrorism is. Since multiple items fall under the legal definition of terrorism, but only some, are treated as acts of terror, this is an indication that there is a common-sense active in the background of this labelling process by the government. Taking the CTS discourse-oriented approach to terrorism studies means that students of terrorism should focus on how terrorism is invoked to stabilise existing social and political structures (Stump and Dixit 2012). As such, it is the goal of this thesis to interrogate this common-sense. Accordingly, the rest of this chapter will lay out the research design and the analytical method chosen to best pursue this line of enquiry.

### **Building a CTS Research Design**

Stump and Dixit (2013) identify four core aspects of a CTS methodology: a critical focus; approaching terrorism as an analytical practice, deconstructing identity, and a focus on constitution. Firstly, CTS research is critical research by definition. This is due to a lot of CTS being heavily influenced by the Frankfurt School and critical theory. Consequently, a concern with emancipation has been

identified as a core commitment of the CTS project (Breen Smyth et al. 2008a, Jackson, Smyth, and Gunning 2009b, Jackson, Smyth, and Gunning 2009a) However, when it comes to methodology, Stump and Dixit argue that the critical aspect of CTS research is best understood as a spectrum. In one end, critical can be associated with the Frankfurt and its concern with emancipation, while the other end of the spectrum has a broader critical agenda:

Critical in this broader sense of the term means to interrogate the commonsense [sic] assumptions that inform our analyses of security issues more broadly and terrorism in particular.

(Stump and Dixit 2013, 5)

This broader critical agenda, they argue, is a unifying theme of all CTS methodology. This is a direct result of its discourse-oriented approach, which drives scholars to take reflexive, interpretivist stands.

Another core aspect of any CTS methodology is approaching terrorism as an analytical practice, not a political practice:

As an analytical practice... terrorism should be understood as a more or less useful, ideal typical tool employed by researchers to study some empirical events. Conversely, a political practice is what the subjects of our research do or say. In short, it is important to keep separate the analytical tools we use from the phenomena we study.

(Stump and Dixit 2013, 8)

This reflects a concern with the possible reification of terrorism through research. Most definitions of terrorism, both political, legal and academic ones reify terrorism as a form of violence (Stump 2013). As Stump and Dixit (2013) argues, CTS is concerned with interrogating not just what terrorism is, but how it is

contested and constructed, such reification would both limit the type of research projects that can be done under CTS and run contrary to its discourse-oriented approach.

Therefore, the thesis attempts to avoid what Stump and Dixit (2012) have called the problem of ontological gerrymandering in terrorism studies, when terrorism is treated as both a social construction and an independently existing state of affairs. Saying that terrorism does not exist outside the label, means that it does not exist independently of the label. Terrorism (and security) are thus analytical categories which can vary considerably depending on the context. In other words, what is being securitized in the construction of the terrorism label, and for what purpose, will change.

Likewise, the third methodological consideration of CTS, is its similar commitment to not reifying identity. In CTS research, identity is reconceptualised and made available for analysis, in other words, it is approached as an ongoing, contextually dependent process (See for example, (Jackson 2005, Lynch 2013, Appleby 2010, Fierke, 2009 #485, O'Toole, DeHanas, and Modood 2012, Richards 2011, Thomas 2010, 2009)).

Finally, all these commitments converge on the core focus on constitution, that is, the commitment to ask *how* questions. In particular, (Stump and Dixit 2013, 5) identify seven leading questions driving CTS research:

1. How do some actor(s) come to be (or not be) a terrorist and/or counterterrorist?
2. How does becoming a terrorist and/or counterterrorist change the kind of actions one performs?

3. How does some specified community make sense of events deemed terrorism and/or counterterrorism [sic]?
4. How do some actions come to be called terrorism and some do not?
5. How do violent actions mean to the actors who carried them out and/or to the community on which the violent actions were perpetrated?
6. How does the rhetoric of terrorism and/or counterterrorism [sic] legitimate certain actions and constitute particular actors and identities?
7. How has the meaning of terrorism and/or counterterrorism [sic] changed over time and in different places?

Asking such constitutive questions allows the researcher to take a more exploratory and interpretivist approach. Moreover, it is these constitutive questions that answer directly to CTS's discourse-oriented approach to terrorism studies. As such, a CTS methodology is one that starts by looking at terrorism and identity as analytical categories, that approaches emancipation as a spectrum, that is critical in the sense that it interrogates the common-sense assumptions of terrorism and security, and that asks constitutive questions.

These core aspects of a CTS methodology directly inform the research design of this thesis. The puzzle leading this research project, as identified in the introduction, is regarding how the government reacts differently to events which all fall under the legal definition of terrorism in the UK. The leading research question is:

- How is terrorism constructed politically in the UK?

In light of the CTS research orientation, this question can now be divided into two interdependent research questions:

- How does the UK government construct terrorism through its flagship counter-terrorism policy?
- How does this construction constitute particular actors and legitimize certain actions?

In order to answer this question, the thesis will undertake a textual analysis of the three versions of the UK's policy on counter-terrorism.

### *The Data*

The source of empirical analysis of the thesis are the three versions of the UK government's policy on counter-terrorism, entitled *Contest: The United Kingdom's Strategy for Countering Terrorism*. *Contest* is divided into five sections: the definition of the threat, Pursue (pursuing terrorists), Prevent (stopping people from becoming terrorists), Protect (protecting the U.K. from attack) and Prepare (preparing the U.K. infrastructure for a possible attack).

The data selected allows for a three-dimensional study of the United Kingdom's counter-terrorism strategy: an analysis of how the government understands the threat, how it understands the process of terrorism, and how this has changed after three successive administrations. Firstly, there are actually four versions of this policy, but the first one, from 2003, remains classified. As such, the versions from 2006, 2009 and 2011 will be the source of analysis. Analysing these three versions will provide an interesting political dimension to the study, as they were all released under different prime ministers, Tony Blair, Gordon Brown and David Cameron, respectively. It will be interesting to see how construction of terrorism has progressed, changed or remained the same over the years.

As indicated earlier, the enquiry will focus on two specific sections of the Contest policy: the definition of the terrorism threat (henceforth *Contest*), and the Prevent strategy (*Prevent*). Both analyses are important, as they correspond to two aspects of the construction of terrorism: what is terrorism and what causes it, i.e. the label and the process of terrorism. All three versions of *Contest* have a section dedicated to explaining the threat. In *Contest 2006*, this is found in the Introduction, and comprises four pages. In *Contest 2009*, it is in 'Part 1: Strategic Context', comprising of 28 pages. And in *Contest 2011*, it is also called 'Part 1: Strategic Context', and it has 18 pages. These sections explaining terrorism will reveal how the government sees the terrorist threat. Likewise, all three versions of *Contest* have produced a *Prevent* strategy. *Prevent* is an ambitious strategy, concerned with stopping radicalization. It presents the government's understanding of the process of terrorism, what causes it and why it exists. Whilst the sections on *Pursue*, *Prepare* and *Protect* are also relevant, I believe that it is in the interlinked sections explaining the threat and what causes it that will better aid in the deconstruction of the terrorist narrative in the UK. This way, both sides of the equation of terrorism, the label and the process, will be investigated. Accordingly, the empirical part of the thesis will attempt to answer the puzzle of the selective deployment of the terrorism label by uncovering the official British narrative of terrorism.

I recognise that it is a limitation to look only at the policy papers. After all, the official narrative of terrorism will be also found in parliamentary debates, speeches by government members, interviews, etc. However, the policy papers were chosen because they are self-contained and comprehensive explanations of how the UK government understands terrorism. As such, the policy papers

directly address the research questions guiding the thesis. Therefore, it is important to develop a method for the analysis of text which embraces terrorism and security as discursive constructions, thus helping the interpretation and the deconstruction of the narratives which construct the label of terrorism. This thesis then follows the CTS tradition of terrorism studies, interrogating the common sense behind the political selective labelling of events as terrorism.

### **Critical Policy Narrative Analysis (CPNA)**

It is important to mention that whilst the method of analysis will follow the CTS discourse-oriented approach to terrorism studies, the unit of analysis chosen for this thesis is not discourse. Rather, this thesis will focus on investigating narratives using Critical Policy Narrative Analysis. CPNA embraces the CTS discourse-oriented approach to terrorism by drawing upon two complementary research agendas: policy narratives analysis and critical discourse analysis (CDA). In a nutshell, CPNA is a form of textual analysis that deconstructs policy texts in order to uncover the central story being told, a story which contains within it different elements of power dynamics and patterns of inclusion and exclusion. So CPNA approaches terrorism as not just a label, but a narrative.

Narratives are everyday stories we live by (Baker 2005). As a unit of analysis, narratives are more concrete and accessible than the abstractedness of discourse (Baker 2005). Consequently, narratives are the principle and inescapable mode by which we experience the world. As (White 1980, 5) argues,

[to] raise the question of the nature of narrative is to invite reflection on the very nature of culture and, possibly, even on the nature of humanity itself. So



natural is the impulse to narrative, so inevitable is the form of narrative for any report of the way things really happened, that narrativity could appear problematical only in a culture in which it was absent...

After all, we all tell stories about where we are from, our families and our jobs. We read books and newspapers and as such, are fully embedded on the concept of stories. Therefore, stories provide the main interface between human beings and the world (Baker 2010).

Narrative analysis has its roots in history and literary theory, as exemplified in particular by the works of Hayden White (1980, 1981), Gérard Genette (1982, 1980, 1988) and George Lakoff (2006, 2002), Lakoff and Johnson (2003), Lakoff and Turner (1989). When it comes to history, White questioned the roles historians play when transcribing 'real events' into historical accounts, such as annals and chronicles. He was interested in analysing whether the world presented itself in the form of well-made stories, or as 'sequences of beginnings which never terminate' (White 1980, 27). Additionally, in the field of literary theory, Genette devised a systematic theory of literary narrative, developed mostly through an analysis of Proust's *A la recherche du temps perdu* (Genette 1980). Accordingly, narratives should be understood through their relationship with the story it is telling, and through its relationship with the narrator (Genette 1980). Lakoff developed the field of narrative further by bringing in the insights of cognitive linguistics. In particular, Lakoff and Johnson argues that individuals are significantly influenced by the central metaphors used to explain complex phenomena (Lakoff and Johnson 2003). This metaphor theory has been used to explain the differences between conservative and liberal voters (Lakoff 2002),

George Bush's use of metaphors to justify the Gulf War (Lakoff 1991), and the competitiveness metaphors making up Barack Obama's administration (Lakoff 2011).

Both Genette and White influenced the emergence of narrative analysis in the social sciences beyond history and literature. Riessman (1993) in particular contributed to this emergence with her research on the qualitative value of personal stories for research on women's lives and health. As she argues,

Individuals become the autobiographical narratives by which they tell about their lives. These private constructions typically mesh with a community of life stories, deep structures about the nature of life itself.

(Riessman 1993, 2)

Further aiding the development of narrative analysis in the social sciences is the work of Patricia Ewick and Susan S. Silbey in legal sociology (1995, 2003). As they argue, 'the process through which an event is made into a story is sociologically significant' (Ewick and Silbey 2003, 1331). Transplanting the narrative insights from historiography and literary theory to the wider social sciences, further filtered into the field of policy analysis, taking the shape of policy narrative analysis. It was Emery Roe (1994) who best exemplified this move to policy narrative analysis in his seminal book *Narrative Policy Analysis*, arguing that focusing on the narrative could be immensely helpful in addressing major policy issues. Roe defines policy narratives as

[s]tories (scenarios and arguments) which underwrite and stabilize the assumptions for policymaking in situations that persist with many

unknowns, a high degree of interdependence, and little, if any agreement.

(Roe 1994, 35)

This makes policy narrative analysis very suited for a CTS-focused, discourse-oriented approach to terrorism studies, especially one that is interested in exploring counter-terrorism policy texts. This is also because policy narratives reinforce the need to focus on the relationship with the narrator, which in the field of public and international policy, is often government officials involved in political power plays.

As such, policy narrative analysis and research forms the basis of the CPNA method of textual analysis. Policy narratives research is concerned with investigating how ‘political actors construct meaning through the stories they tell’ (Gray and Jones 2016, 4). Policy narratives thus have a beginning, middle and end, which serve to justify decision-making under conditions of high ambiguity (Roe 1994). As Bevir and Rhodes (2003) argue, we as human beings typically like to impose order by reducing complex and multiple narratives into a monolithic entity. As such, policy narratives are essentially stories told by the government, simplifying complex problems in order to make them digestible to a non-specialist public. Policy narratives therefore will create ‘storylines which act as sense-making organizational devices’, tying different elements of a policy challenge together into a coherent narrative (ÓTuathail 2002:617). Story-lines serve to suggest unity in the face of highly complex and contested policy situations (Hajer 1995). In view of this, policy narratives will produce knowledge claims about policy problems and the appropriate interventions (Boswell, Geddes, and Scholten 2011). This way, they act to structure the acceptable

responses to developing events (Freedman 2006). Consequently, CPNA looks at policy narratives as stories used to explain and justify government policy.

On a 2011 special issue of the *British Journal of Politics and International Relations* on narratives and policy making, Boswell, Geddes, and Scholten (2011) set out the following criteria for successful policy narratives: they are cognitively plausible, dramatically or morally compelling and if they chime with perceived interests. Additionally, policy narratives are also normative. As expected, policy makers are often under pressure to produce simple and plausible narratives about the causes of a problem and the effect of their policy (Boswell 2011). As such, policy narratives will often privilege one particular version of events in order to justify a preferred policy solution. Therefore, narrative texts are packed with sociological information, telling us about differences in relationships between text and social reality (Franzosi 1998). Social events are complex, and the simplifying of their causes will inevitably leave out some aspects. It is in this inclusion and exclusion aspect of the construction of policy narratives where unequal power relations will play a part. Stone (1989) terms this selective aspect of policy narratives as the dynamics of causal stories. As such, it is important to consider that accepting a narrative as official government policy involves a rejection of other narratives (Bennett and Edelman 1985). CPNA then follows Riessman (1993) in asking why the story was told in a particular way.

Through policy narratives a serious problem is seen as having a solution (Dudley 2013). In order to identify that solution, the narrative needs to define the problem

and the reasons for the problem. As such, policy narratives promote causal beliefs about how social and political processes operate (Antoniades, Miskimmon, and O'Loughlin 2010). Problem definition is fundamentally about attributing cause, blame and responsibility through the creation of causal stories (Stone 1989). Causal stories have both empirical and normative dimensions. The empirical dimension is about showing how things have happened, whilst the normative dimension is about the attribution of blame (Stone 1989). Nonetheless, even the empirical dimension is in itself normative. That is because the official policy narrative is one of many possible narratives and as such, it tends to privilege a specific version of the truth in order to legitimise a particular political trajectory. Narratives can never contain all the available facts related to a given event, rather, the presence and presentation of even empirical facts in any given narrative is a deliberate choice. As such, narratives reproduce patterns of domination and oppression that exclude the experience of some whilst promoting others (Baker 2005). Policy narratives manipulate and prioritise certain issues whilst making it seem that they are simply describing facts (Stone 1989). This is particularly so in the creation of causal stories. Stone illustrates this point by detailing how there are many causal chains in any policy choice. She claims that causal links such as between alcohol and car accidents, tobacco and cancer deaths and cocaine and overdose are inherently logical, this logic being reproduced in statistics and having become common sense (Stone 1989).

However, each of those problems has a long chain of causation, and privileging a particular aspect of the chain over another will create different causal stories and a different policy solution. For example, in regards to alcohol and car accidents, the blame can be placed with the driver, with the seller, the manufacturer, the

advertising and media, happy hour, peer-pressure etc. The choice to prioritise one over the other will create different causal stories and different policy solutions (Stone 1989, Baker 2010). This decision making process is what (Baker 2010, 352) calls selective appropriation, where evaluative criteria is employed in choosing 'a set of events or elements from the vast array of open-ended and overlapping events that constitute experience'. More specifically, each causal story will attribute blame and responsibility differently, thus creating different social relations between the different social actors present in the policy narrative.

This aspect of policy narratives is of great relevance when it comes to finding out different role allocations and power relations within causal stories. Narratives, through the selective privileging of one link in the causal chain, will position different social actors in the policy vis-à-vis each other (Scuzzarello 2013). This may result in a policy which endorses a hierarchical view of society, where some social actors are privileged over others. Narratives then also tell stories about the relations between citizens and the state in selective ways which will impact on social relations (Scuzzarello 2013). In this aspect, CPNA takes a distinctive social constructivist view of policy problem, for it understands real situations not as givens, but as mediated by ideas created, changed and fought over in politics (Scuzzarello 2013). A critical analysis of power structures present in official policy narrative helps determine the patterns of dominance and role allocation presence in a narrative.

It is here that CPNA is inspired by aspects of Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA). CDA includes a variety of approaches towards the analysis of discourse, which can differ both in theory and methodology (Fairclough 2005, Fairclough and Fairclough 2012). As Ainsworth and Hardy (2004) argue, CDA should be

understood in a broad sense, as it encompasses work done in a variety of discipline from linguistics, to history, to media studies and International Relations. For this reason, CDA is better understood as a school or a research programme, rather than a specific methodology with specific guidelines:

simply put, CDA involves the use of discourse analytical techniques, combined with a critical perspective to interrogate social phenomena.

(Ainsworth and Hardy 2004, 236)

However, in spite of the diversity of the field, what unites seemingly disparate studies under the umbrella of CDA is a common interest in demystifying power through the systematic and transparent investigation of semiotic data such as text, speech and image (Wodak and Meyer 2009b, a).

According to Foucault, discourse is a system of representation (Foucault 2002). As such, discourses are what can be known in a particular place and time. Discourse thus is also about power, for they decide what is sayable, doable and thinkable in a particular place and time (Foucault 2002). Through CDA, language is therefore understood as a social practice. The dialectic aspect of discourse shows how discourse needs to be socially explained as much as social life must be explained in regards to the effects of discourse (Fairclough and Fairclough 2012, Fairclough 2001, 1995, 2003, 1992). Discourse is thus understood as 'a social practice determined by social structures' (Fairclough 2001, 14).

Both CDA and policy narratives research share this common preoccupation with the social construction of meaning through language. By focusing on narrative, CPNA emphasises the importance of a causal story. This allows the researcher to

focus on the narrative constructed through government policy. CPNA thus highlights policy texts as containing

a concrete story of some aspect of the world,  
complete with characters, settings outcomes or  
projected outcomes and plots.

(Baker 2010, 349)

The concern with different role allocations is also at the centre of CDA. As van Dijk (1993) argues, CDA has a clear socio-political stance, combined with a focus on power relations as they are reproduced in text and speech. This is found particularly within the work of Theo van Leeuwen (van Leeuwen 1993, 1996, 2008). Drawing from critical linguistics, which refers to the inventory of the ways in which social actors can be represented in text, he developed a method of CDA known as social actor analysis (van Leeuwen 1996). This model allows the researcher to bring to light systematic omissions and distortions or actors' role within a discourse (van Leeuwen 1993). Similarly, the selective appropriation aspect of narrative theory highlights the selective foregrounding and backgrounding of individuals, groups and their features as it elaborates characters that will play different roles in the causal story (Baker 2010).

There are three central and constitutive concepts of CDA: critique, power and ideology (Wodak and Meyer 2009a). Critical Policy Narratives adopts all three. Critical social analysis, at the root of CDA, has two fundamental aspects, the normative and explanatory. The normative aspect evaluates social beliefs and practices, providing a critique of unequal relations of power and forms of domination in the discourse of the specific social problem (Fairclough and Fairclough 2012). The explanatory aspect seeks to explain how and why the



social problems remain as they are, and persist despite its damaging effects (Fairclough and Fairclough 2012). CDA is essentially problem-oriented, using as a starting point the selection of a perceived social problem.

This thesis as a whole draws on critical theory, weaving through critical terrorism studies and the construction of identity and security. This is a normative approach it starts with a value judgement about a specific problem. This creates the need for high ethical standards in CDA research, mirrored in CPN, exemplified by the need for the scholar to make their position explicit and for the analysis of the text in question to be done as transparently as possible (Wodak and Meyer 2009a). These standards will be further detailed below as part of a general discussion of the standards in qualitative research.

Nevertheless, in CPN, the focus of the analysis is not simply evaluating and explaining the permanence of social problems, but figuring out how social problems are constructed and reproduced through narrative. For that, we need an analysis of ideology and power. The general goal with CDA is both to reveal structures of power and unmask the ideology which supports this power structure (Wodak and Meyer 2009b). Narratives, especially those attributing blame and responsibility, may also reproduce different social hierarchies, where some individuals are more privileged than others in the story. That is why Habermas claims that language is a medium of domination, as it legitimises unarticulated relations of organised power (Wodak and Meyer 2009a). Here, the concern is not with ideology in a descriptive sense, referring to different political allegiances. Rather, ideology is a stable and coherent idea which contributes to establishing, sustaining and reproducing power relations (Wodak and Meyer 2009a).

Ideology works as a meta-narrative. In narrative theory, meta-narratives refer to powerful public narratives which persist over long periods of time and have influence on a wide range of settings (Baker 2010). It has power and a sense of inescapability (Baker 2010). In CPN, meta-narratives refer to the primacy of the causal story being told. As such, it represents the common sense of the narrative, a reality which is deemed to be self-evident (Milliken 1999). This common sense is an imposed framework, which heavily influences what can be said and done (Purvis and Hunt 1993). This common sense is the Foucaultian discourse, working in the background, making possible the social actors and the practices themselves (Doty 1993). That is, this common sense is what allows the causal story, the narrative to make sense.

With CDA, the contextual embeddedness of narratives is also investigated as both a construction and as influencing the story. This normative, critical understanding of common sense is an important way in which CDA can augment the policy narrative methodology. The policy narrative framework highlights the importance of knowledge claims, that is, the role of empirical claims about the phenomena in question, and the role they play in the attribution of cause and effect (Boswell, Geddes, and Scholten 2011). These knowledge claims create a cognitive criteria specific to policy narratives: the relationship between cause and effect and the role of expert knowledge (Boswell, Geddes, and Scholten 2011). By incorporating the critical concern with power, typical of CDA, to the policy narratives methodology, it will be possible to analyse how facts and experts are often manipulated to fit a particular, official narrative, and the consequences of this narrative for different role allocations and power relations. As such, by merging policy narrative analysis with aspects of CDA, CPNA sets a critical turn

in the policy narratives methodology and allows for a deconstruction of official narratives. CPNA thus follows the strictures of the CTS research design: it is critical, it approaches terrorism as an analytical category and it is focused on a constitutive question. When applied to terrorism policy analysis, CPNA allows for a deconstruction of the official British construction of terrorism as present in the official counter-terrorism policy texts. CPNA reveals that this label is thus embedded in a rich narrative detailing what terrorism is, where it comes from and who is responsible for it. Once the narrative is revealed, it will be easier to understand the constructions responsible for the disparate application of the terrorism label in the United Kingdom by successive government officials.

### *The Analysis*

To begin with, this thesis draws on the definition of the three textual mechanisms proposed by Roxanne Lynn Doty that work together to create common sense: presuppositions, predicates, and subject positioning (Doty 1993).

The first step is an analysis of the presuppositions in the text. In simple terms, presupposition analysis is the uncovering of the basic common sense suggested by the text. As Doty (1993) argues, presupposition is the background knowledge taken to be true by the discourse. For example, take the normative assumption that terrorism is bad. A brief presupposition analysis would reveal the following assumptions which are taken to be true:

- There is such a thing as terrorism.
- And terrorism is something that should be condemned.

These presuppositions are not questioned by the sentence, and must be true for the sentence to make sense. Consequently, presuppositions form the backbone of the common sense created in the narrative under analysis. After all, background knowledge 'constructs a particular kind of world in which certain things are recognized as true' (Doty 1993, 306). In other words, according to the example above, it is common sense that terrorism exists and that one must condemn it. Presupposition also calls us to pay attention to the voice of the narrative, as those speaking are regarded as having the authority to speak about certain subjects (Doty 1993). Presuppositions do not just authoritatively create a world where things are true, but allow for specific types of action. Therefore, an awareness of presuppositions is the first step in uncovering the common sense of the discourse.

Predication analysis is perhaps the most revealing of the three textual mechanisms outlined by Doty, as it helps unearth the attributes attached to subjects. Predication happens through the attaching of adverbs, verbs and adjectives to words in such a way to modify them and given a specific quality (Doty 1993). This is important for constructing identities and telling us what subjects do. For example, the word woman is modified according to which predicates are attached to it, such as tall, short, beautiful, strong etc.

Predicate analysis then evaluates how words serve to construct things as a particular sort of thing, with particular features (Milliken 1999). The predications attached to different actors and events in the text will help reveal the role it plays in the discourse's construction of common sense. As Milliken (1999) argues, a text never constructs only one thing, instead, in implicit or explicit parallels and contrasts, it also constructs other things. In other words, predicates are helpful when trying to understand the binaries created by the narrative.

Predicates and presuppositions work together to form subject positioning, where the text creates a reality and places the social actors involved in the narrative into specific positions. A reality is created when particular things are linked to each other (Doty 1993). So, far from being neutral, predicates and presuppositions usually organize subjects in terms of binary oppositions. As a result, binaries create a taken-for-granted relation of power, so that some elements of the narratives are privileged over the other (Milliken 1999). In other words, subject positioning helps the search for power relations within the common sense reality of the text. Predicates, presuppositions and subject positioning form a micro-analysis which will help to critically deconstruct the text to its basic assumption and role allocations.

In the macro-level, the analysis will focus on the dual mechanisms of inclusion and exclusion, which are staples of causal stories. As such, it will be looking at what is being foregrounded in this particular story of terrorism, and what is being pushed to the background. After all, 'events become meaningful because of their placement in a narrative' (Riessman 1993). This dynamic is revealing in the sense that it shows different role and blame allocations in the narrative. Moreover, the macro-analysis also relies on Boswell, Geddes, and Scholten (2011) three criteria of successful policy narratives: they must be cognitively plausible, dramatically and/or morally compelling, and they must chime with particular interests. In other words, narratives must make sense they must be stirring and they must not happen in a vacuum. Micro and macro analytical tools therefore complement each other, interacting in the deconstruction of the text and the illuminating of the narrative of terrorism.

## **Research Quality**

CPNA is a normative method of analysis, as is most CTS inspired methodology. That is because, rather than being concerned with measures of correlation and variance, the discourse-oriented approach, as is the general qualitative method is primarily concerned with meanings and interpretations (Bauer and Gaskell 2000). This creates a particular onus on the CTS qualitative researcher to meet quality criteria which are often less clear than the quantitative quality measures of validity, reliability and representativeness. As such, Bauer and Gaskell (2000) have developed alternative quality measures for qualitative research including quality markers such as triangulation, reflexivity, corpus construction, thick description, surprise and transparency (Bauer and Gaskell 2000). I believe transparency is the chief quality marker, encompassing all the others, and as such, the thesis as a whole, as well as the research design, attempts to be as transparent as possible.

The marker of transparency is intimately connected with the ethical demands of critical research itself. As Wodak and Meyer (2009b) repeatedly argue, the CDA researcher must always make his own normative position clear. This is also true for those adopting the CPNA method. I believe this position is already very clear, since the thesis believes that security and identity constructed through the boundary-security nexus is highly negative. Additionally, I have attempted to outline the research design above as transparently as possible. This transparency will be taken over to the following chapters, where readers will be able to trace the same method being used in the different stages of analysis. Because of the sheer volume of the text, it is not possible to attach the policy papers as an appendix to the thesis. However, they are freely available on the internet.

The quality marker of triangulation is a little harder to achieve in this thesis, a CPNA is the only method used in the textual analysis. Further, it is hoped that its micro and macro-level tools of deconstructions, combined with thick description and transparency, will help with the rigorousness of the interpretation. Moreover, the results on the CPNA analysis will be further dissected in Part 3 of the thesis, both theoretically and practically. As an interpretivist method, CPNA is deeply normative, but it is hoped that by prioritising transparency, reflexivity and thick description, the analysis will still meet most of the markers of qualitative research quality.

The selection of the corpus to be analysed has been detailed above, but it is important to reiterate that the selection of two sections of the policy, rather than the entire *Contest* strategy, does not affect the representativeness of the data. The sections chosen are the ones that are relevant for the research project, where the narratives of threat and prevention of terrorism will be more apparent. The confidence marker of reflexivity is linked with the relevance marker of surprise. They both also chime in quite nicely with the need to be transparent in the analysis and document the different discourses present in the text, especially those that go against expectations. These quality markers are quite fitting when it comes to CPNA both CDA and policy narrative acknowledge the presence of competing discourses and narratives in a single text. The next chapters will then strive to meet the criteria of surprise and reflexivity, with the aid of copious quotes from the texts analysed. This meets the criteria of thick description, which avoids the appearance of selective editing. It is not be possible or proper to reproduce the text in its entirety during the analysis, but every attempt will be made to corroborate every discourse and narrative found in the texts.

As a final note on style, most of the text in the policy papers have paragraph numbers, but sometimes information is contained in a box or summary. Those are presented in this thesis with page numbers only.



## **Part 2: The Narrative of Terrorism**

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### **Chapter 3: *Contest 2006* – Securitizing Islam**

#### **Chapter Overview**

Published soon after the 7/7 attacks on the London transport network, *Contest 2006* represents the beginning of the UK's official policy narrative of terrorism. It is the first time since the Terrorism Act 2000 that the government set out to explain in detail how it understood the terrorist threat, and what it was going to do about it. The presupposition was stated early on: terrorism is an unjustified, urgent threat. It is unjustified because nowhere does the narrative validate what it sees as the terrorist motivation. Instead, any geopolitical, historical context is removed from the narrative, framing terrorism as a result of an ideology.

This chapter will show how the focus on ideology is achieved through the assimilation of disparate terrorist groups and events into a single threat, which is presented without any context. The only explanation given is the ideology. And this ideology is consistently connected with Islam, resulting in the securitization of Islam in the narrative. Moreover, the way the Muslim community is portrayed as passive, with problems of integration, resulting on their implication in the causal story. As such, the narrative constructed in *Contest 2006* both reproduces and reinforces wider patterns of anti-Muslim prejudice, but it also reflects a clear policy agenda which problematizes Muslims and securitizes Islam.

#### **Introduction**

Critical Policy Narrative Analysis (CPNA) aims to deconstruct policy texts in order to uncover the central story being told, a story which contains within it different power dynamics and patterns of inclusion and exclusion. Security

narratives in general, and terrorism narratives in particular, serve to construct knowledge about a specific security problem. This knowledge often takes the shape of a causal story, where a problem is defined and blame is attributed. As stated previously, CPNA is thus directly linked to the discourse-oriented, social constructivist approach to terrorism, where the terrorist actor is a product of discourse. As such, terrorism, as a social construction, does not exist outside the label. And official constructions of that label, through government policy, for example, will serve to both reproduce and reinforce patterns of power, inclusion, exclusion and existing social structures.

The United Kingdom is no stranger to attacks assigned the label of terrorism. From the 1970s to 2001, there were over 60 terrorist attacks on British soil, averaging about two a year. These happened primarily in England and were mostly related to Northern Ireland and the IRA. As stated previously, it was only with the Terrorism Act 2000 that Britain had its first piece of permanent terrorism legislation. Instead, the regular terrorist attacks of the previous 30 years were dealt with by a series of emergency legislation, which were subject to expiry and renewal. However, from the Terrorism Act 2000 to the publication of the first *Contest* strategy, there were four separate pieces of terrorism legislation: The Anti-Terrorism, Crime and Security Act 2001, the Criminal Justice Act 2003, the Prevention of Terrorism Act 2005, the Terrorism (United Nations Measures) Order 2006 and the Terrorism Act 2006.

2001 saw the 11 September attacks on the World Trade Centre and the Pentagon in the United States of America. 2001 also saw four separate instances of IRA bombings in England, although there were no casualties. After 2001, there were no attacks in the UK until the 7 July 2005 bombings on the London transport

network. The 7/7 attacks, as they have become known, were committed by four suicide bombers. They were British citizens and Islamic extremists, and the attacks killed 56 people, injuring 700. On the 21 July, another terrorist attack in London was foiled, as bombs failed to explode. In the aftermath of the attacks, Prime Minister Tony Blair gave a speech claiming that the rules of the game had changed, that the country was facing an evil ideology, a battle of ideas, hearts, minds, and that now was the time to defend common values (Wintour 2005). Less than a year after 7/7, in March 2006, the Terrorism Act 2006 received royal ascent. The new terrorism legislation created new offences such as glorifying terrorism, and was considered to be a necessary response to an unparalleled terrorism threat. Two months later, in July 2006, the *Contest* strategy was published. *Contest* had existed since 2003, but this was the first time the strategy was made public.

*Contest 2006* is a short policy document, comprising of 33 pages in total. All of its paragraphs are numbered and whilst the text is divided into sections, these sections serve as headings rather than separate chapters. The goal of *Contest 2006* is established early on as:

To help the public understand this issue better, we are setting out in this paper an explanation both of the threat that we face and what we are doing to deal with it.

(HM Government 2006, 5, paragraph 20)

*Contest 2006* is thus openly concerned with creating a policy narrative – a story – explaining a problem as well as explaining the actions taken to deal with the problem. It is, in essence, setting out the official narrative of the terrorist threat.

Therefore, the declared objective of the policy is to explain both the threat of terrorism and the government's response to the threat, i.e. the marked and unprecedented increase in terrorism legislation. The Terrorism Act 2000 was the first of 11 separate pieces of legislation related to terrorism, including six direct terrorism acts passed by the Labour governments of Tony Blair and Gordon Brown. Although there were no terrorist attacks from 2002 to 2005, the period still saw the enactment of three pieces of terrorism legislation: The Anti-Terrorism, Crime and Security Act 2001, The Criminal Justice Act 2003 and the Prevention of Terrorism Act 2005. Interestingly, the Anti-Terrorism, Crime and Security Act 2001 was not enacted in response to the six separate IRA bombings in England during 2000 and 2001. Rather, it was a direct response to the 11 September 2001 terrorist attacks in New York, and it specifically targeted Islamic extremism.

*Contest 2006* thus immediately establishes a problem:

The current threat from Islamist terrorism is *serious and sustained*... it is *indiscriminate*... *potentially still increasing and is not likely to diminish significantly for some years*.

(HM Government 2006, 1, paragraph 4, emphasis added)

The position of this paragraph at the very beginning of the policy, in addition to the compounding effect of the predicates *serious, sustained, indiscriminate, still increasing* and *not likely to diminish* work together to construct a sense of urgency, serving as pre-emptive justification for government action.

Continuing with its goal to explain terrorism to the general public, *Contest 2006*

further describes the threat as coming from:

radicalized individuals, who are using a *distorted and unrepresentative interpretation of the Islamic faith to justify violence*. Such people are referred to here as Islamist terrorists.

(HM Government 2006, 6, paragraph 25, emphasis added)

This paragraph, coming on page six of the document, is the first time the strategy deals with the causes of terrorism. As such, this marks the beginning of the causal story of the document. The problem has been identified previously: the urgent and real threat of terror. The strategy now begins the blame allocation. By placing ideology at the centre of this paragraph, it ensures that it takes centre stage in the causal story. Paragraphs four and 25 therefore work together to reinforce the basic causal story: terrorism presents an urgent threat to the UK, and it is caused by Islamist terrorists, using an unrepresentative and distorted interpretation of the Islamic faith. This is significant considering the history of IRA attacks, and the complete absence of the IRA from this policy document. As such, the policy agenda is clear in the way the causal story is shaping up: the main security concern is not terrorism in general, but Islamic terrorism in particular.

The predicates *distorted* and *unrepresentative* are salient for they provide disclaimers differentiating Islam from terrorism. This would suggest an attempt to differentiate Islam from terrorism. However, as will be seen below, Islam is effectively securitized in *Contest 2006* due primarily to the dual mechanism of assimilation and disassociation present in the narrative.

## The Assimilation Process

In order to further educate the public, the paper goes on to explore the history of terrorism, and the particular characteristics of the threat. This is part of building a causal story that explains who is responsible for the threat as well as a narrative justifying counter-terrorism powers. The policy outlines different terrorist attacks carried out by Islamist terrorist groups that have happened during the 1990s. These attacks are presented without any context or detail on their motive or what group carried them out. For example:

First, the threat is *genuinely international*. Compared with earlier terrorist threats, attacks have been carried out, or attempted, *against a very wide range of targets* in many countries...

(HM Government 2006, 7, paragraph 32, emphasis added)

And

Second, *the threat comes from a variety of groups, networks and individuals*. These range from larger groups organised around clear hierarchic and bureaucratic structures, to much looser and smaller groups of like-minded individuals. These different elements often cooperate and assist each other, *but often also pursue separate goals*.

(HM Government 2006, 7, paragraph 33, emphasis added)

The incidents are presented without any context. Causal stories rely on the inclusion and exclusion of facts, and the exclusion of local context serves to assimilate all terrorist attacks and groups that have happened since the 1990s into a common threat. This assimilation is exacerbated by the strategy's constant use of 'the terrorists', for example:

*The terrorists* have sought protection of sponsorship from states s, as was provided in the 1990s in Sudan and under the Taliban regime in Afghanistan... *These terrorists* are, however, essentially non-state actors – they do not need state support to operate... *These terrorists* intend to cause mass casualties. They are indiscriminate: aiming to cause the most death and destruction that they can, regardless of the age, nationality, or religion of their victims... And *these terrorists* are often prepared to kill themselves as a means of killing many others. This is not unique to these groups, but it has not been a feature of previous threats that the UK has faced.

(HM Government 2006, 7, paragraph 34-36,  
emphasis added)

In *Contest 2006*, ‘the terrorists’ refers to all terrorists everywhere, suggesting that they all work for the same cause:

The threat to UK *comes from different quarters*... terrorists inspired by Islamist extremism *may come from within British communities*... In recent years, terrorist suspects investigated in the UK have come originally from countries as diverse as *Libya, Algeria, Jordan, Saudi Arabia, Iraq, Somalia and elsewhere* – as well as those who have lived most or all of their lives in the UK.

(HM Government 2006, 8, paragraph 38, emphasis added)

The implications of this are two-fold. Firstly, it reinforces the enormity of the risk. Not only is it serious, sustained and increasing, but it is also coming from multiple sources. Secondly, and more significantly, the assimilation of all these different actors and events into a single threat suggest the presence of a single unifying element:



... A *common thread* linking many of the planned or successful terrorist attacks in the UK, the rest of Europe. The Middle East, South Asia and North America over the past decade has been that those involved have claimed to be *acting in defence of Islam*.

(HM Government 2006, 7, paragraph 37, emphasis added)

So ideology, in particular the defence of Islam, is the common thread unifying disparate terrorist groups.

#### *Ideology: The Common Thread*

The assimilation around Islamic ideology continues throughout the document. It is notable that other possible explanations for terrorism are completely excluded. For example, a box on page 7-8 entitled '*What do the terrorists say?*' identifies four common points which unite all the disparate terrorist group, all ideology based:

- 1- Islam:  
"The terrorists adopt a *particular* and *malignant misinterpretation* of Islamic teaching which they believe places an obligation on believers to fight and explicitly to kill to achieve their aims."
- 2- Belief that some Muslim governments are apostate:  
"The terrorists brand the current governments of many Muslim states as 'apostate' – that is as *having turned away from true Islam* – on the basis that those states do not conform to the terrorists idea of how a Muslim state should be run."
- 3- The desire to remove Western influences:

“The terrorists seek to remove what they believe are *un-Islamic* and alien ‘Western’ influences from the Muslim world.”

- 4- The belief that Islam is under attack from the West:  
“The terrorists argue that Islam itself is facing an active, sustained, and long-term attack from what they characterise as *the Christian and Jewish* inspired, but *secular, West*. This *illusion* is sustained by characterising relations between Muslims and Westerners as a long history of injustices and grievances, whilst downplaying any evidence to the contrary.”

(HM Government 2006, 7-8, emphasis added)

The subject positioning of these four points is significant. Islam is the very first theme, and whilst the predicates *particular* and *malignant* attempt to separate what the terrorists believes from Muslims in general, its positioning at the very top reinforces a connection between Islam and terrorism. Even with the disclaimer provided by the predicates, this connection remains. This is because all of the other common points are connected to Islam. Terrorists believe that some Muslim governments are apostate; Western influences are undesirable because they are un-Islamic; and Islam is under attack from the West. All of the four supposed tenants of terrorist ideology revolve around Islam. This section does not contain any geopolitical, social or historical context. So the desire to remove Western influences and the belief that Islam is under attack from the West are not based on experiences of imperialism or Western foreign policy. Rather, it is a belief, not fact; a matter of opinion which is dismissed by the strategy by the use of the conditional predicates. Once again context is removed from the narrative, resulting in a causal story where terrorism is inexorably linked an ideology that is presented as being inseparable from Islam.

This places ideology at the centre of the causal story of terrorism. Moreover, this ideology is presented with no nuance, being almost unquestionably characterised as Islam. The disclaimers attached to Islam, such as *particular*, *malignant*, *misinterpretation* and *distortion* provide weak counterpoints to the detail given to explaining the Islamic character of the ideology. Moreover, predicates such as *malignant*, *misinterpretation* and *distortion* carry with it a normative judgement. In other words, *Contest 2006* is not just saying that the ideology is unrepresentative of Muslims in general, but that it is evil. As such, ideology becomes the villain of the causal story.

Furthermore, no detail is given as to how Islam is being distorted and misinterpreted by terrorists. There are no sentences about Islam without it being connected with terrorism. Therefore, the constant association of words such as *Muslim*, *Islam* and *Islamic* with the word terrorism result in the weakness of the disclaimers. The assimilation of disparate terrorist threats, the removal of the local context and the weakness of the disclaimers distinguishing the ideology from Islam in general, all serve to securitize Islam. As a result of this securitization the narrative places Islam at the heart of the causal story of terrorism.

### **The Roots of a Binary**

The securitization of Islam in *Contest 2006* lays out a dichotomy. According to the policy document, terrorists believe that Islam is being attacked by the 'Christian and Jewish inspired, but secular West'. As such, terrorist ideology, according to *Contest 2006*, places the West and Islam in opposite sides of a boundary. What is interesting is that *Contest 2006* effectively reinforces this dichotomy, also placing Islam and the West in opposite sides of a binary.

For example, the Government is the primary actor in *Contest 2006*. It is also the actor with the most power, as it is the one telling the story. The power of the actor telling the story lies primarily in its ability to exclude information and set the parameters of the presupposition. Causal stories rely on a pattern of inclusion and exclusion, which reveal the existence of unequal power relations within the text. There is no indication of any UK or Western action being related to terrorism. There is a complete exclusion of discussion of foreign policy, geopolitics or history. As such, the government is actively choosing remove itself from the causal story.

Unsurprisingly, the government has a positive construction as it is the one responsible with protecting the public from terrorism:

The United Kingdom faces a continuing threat from extremists... *To combat this threat, the government has developed a counter-terrorism strategy and set up programmes and plans to give effect to it.*

(HM Government 2006, 1, paragraph 1, emphasis added)

Additionally, words such as *UK* and *government* are used interchangeably in the text. There is also no differentiation between the government, the UK, and the West. This is reinforced by the accounts of terrorist incidents, which did not all happen in the UK or to UK targets. Nonetheless, they are assimilated as a generalised attack on the West. This works together with the assimilative process where disparate threats are grouped into one to form a binary the West on one side, and terrorist groups on the other.

### *The Passive Muslim Community*

The Muslim Community, on the other hand, is constructed in a passive way. As seen with predicates such as *distorted reading*, *tiny minority*, *particular* and *malignant misinterpretation*, *Contest 2006* does attempt to differentiate the terrorist's version of Islam from Islam in general:

What the terrorists in fact draw on is *a particular and distorted* form of Islam.

(HM Government 2006, 7, paragraph 37, emphasis added)

The principal terrorist threat is currently from radicalised individuals who are using a *distorted and unrepresentative interpretation* of the Islamic faith to justify violence.

(HM Government 2006, 6, paragraph 25, emphasis added)

These are significant disclaimers, attempting to distinguish between the Muslim community and extremists. However, these efforts are ineffective, because they give no detail between what is actually different between Islam and the Islamic ideology distorted by terrorists. Further, they serve to separate Muslims from the West. For example:

In any response to this threat, it is important to recognise that terrorists using these distorted readings of Islam are a tiny minority within Muslim communities. *Muslim communities themselves do not threaten our security – in fact. We rely on the huge contribution they make to the economic, cultural and social life of the UK...*

(HM Government 2006, 6, paragraph 26, emphasis added)

The highlighted section of the quotation distinguishes the Muslim Community and the UK as different actors in the text. By saying that Muslims do not threaten *our* security and that *they* make contributions to the social life of the UK, a subtle us v. them binary is constructed. As such, there are three principal actors in the narrative: the government (which includes the UK and the West), the terrorists, and the Muslim Community. The government is positively constructed as the active, powerful actors, whilst the terrorists are the antagonists of the story. The Muslim community is constructed in a more passive way, as being somewhere in the middle between the government and the terrorists. Nonetheless, the text does separate the Muslim community from the UK, which suggests the presence of a subtle binary. The presence of this indirect dichotomy in the narrative is a direct result of a causal story that securitizes Islam for it is this securitization that allows an ambivalent, ambiguous light to be shone on the Muslim Community, setting them apart in the narrative.

### **The *Prevent* Strategy - The Dissociative Process**

The subtle binary setting British Muslims apart is further developed on the *Prevent* section of the strategy. *Contest 2006* is the first time the 4 Ps (prevent, pursue, protect, prepare) of UK counter-terrorism are presented. The section on *Prevent* is longer than the ones on the other P's, suggesting its importance. It begins by outlining the aim of *Prevent*:

The Prevent strand of Contest is concerned with tackling the radicalisation of individuals, both in the UK and elsewhere, which sustains the terrorist threat.

(HM Government 2006, 9, paragraph 47,  
emphasis added)

There are three key aspects to *Prevent*: Tackling Disadvantage and Supporting Reform; Deterring those who Facilitate Terrorism; and the Battle of Ideas. The strategy frames tackling disadvantages as the first arena of battling radicalisation:

The first area of action to counter radicalisation lies in *addressing structural problems in the UK and elsewhere that may contribute to radicalisation*. In the UK, this forms part of the Government's broader equality agenda and we are working with communities and the public and private sectors to address these wider issues. Many Government programmes that are not specifically directed at tackling radicalism nevertheless help to *build cohesion in communities* across the country...

(HM Government 2006, 11, paragraph 49, emphasis added)

By positioning tackling disadvantage first, the strategy seems to acknowledge that it plays a role in the terrorism story. However this is a partial acknowledgement for it comes with the conditional predicate *may*. The structural problems may contribute to radicalisation, but not necessarily so. As such, even though they are presented first, structural problems are framed as conditionals. This is in stark contrast with the unconditional, absolute way ideology is presented in the previous section.

#### *Problematizing Muslim Communities*

In this section of the strategy, there is a strong dissociative process at work, where the reasons behind disadvantage are never brought up. For example, a box under this section outlines the ways in which the government aims to tackle disadvantage and its connection to radicalisation. It starts by explaining that:

Many Muslims suffer high levels of disadvantage and work has been underway for some time on

addressing the inequalities they experience. The Government's broader race and community cohesion strategy ... outlined a cross-government response to reducing inequalities, particularly those associated with race and faith, and to increasing community cohesion.

(HM Government 2006, 11)

The creation of a Faith Communities Capacity Building Fund is also announced, with the purpose of helping faith-based organisations better engage with the government, civil society and other faiths.

Disassociation happens when the technique of exclusion in policy narratives is being used to completely separate two possible explanations of the causal story. By disassociating non-ideological problems such as advantages and inequality from the account of terrorism, the narrative is strongly placing them outside the causal story. As such, the earliest incarnation of *Prevent* actively disassociates non-ideological factors, such as disadvantages and inequality, from the account of the process of terrorism:

Another potential factor is *a sense of* personal alienation or community disadvantage arising from socio-economic factors such as discrimination, social exclusion, and lack of opportunity. While an individual may not be relatively disadvantaged, he or she may identify with others seen as less privileged...

(HM Government 2006, 10)

However, these structural problems are preceded by the predicates *a sense of* which further frames non-ideological issues as conditionals. Consequently, when discussing the structural problems faced by Muslim communities in the UK,



there are no details of work to tackle racism and Islamophobia, institutional barriers to success, employment, education and further economic issues. The only line on these issues is the one below:

In particular, the strategy includes actions being taken to help Muslims improve their educational performance, employment opportunities, and housing conditions.

(HM Government 2006, 11)

The section on *Prevent* thus claims tackling disadvantage is a key part of stopping people from becoming terrorists whilst claiming that the same disadvantaged is caused by lack of community cohesion and weak faith-relations. This results in the problematization of the Muslim community. This is further seen in the section concerning the deterrence of those who facilitate terrorism, In this area, the strategy focuses on

...changing the environment in which the extremists and those radicalising others can operate; deterring those who facilitate terrorism and those who encourage others to become terrorists.

(HM Government 2006, 12, paragraph 50, emphasis added)

This section is barely a page long, and is dominated by a box discussing both the Terrorism Act 2000 and the Terrorism Act 2006. Nonetheless, this section also brings up the influence of Mosques and the possibility of radicalisation in prisons. This further reinforces the need to intervene within Muslim communities:

The Government will be working with local communities to identify other areas where

radicalisation may be taking place and to help communities protect themselves and counter the efforts of extremist radicalisers.

(HM Government 2006, 13, paragraph 52, emphasis added)

The *Prevent* section thus creates a specific role for the Muslim community in the causal story. The passivity of the Muslim community when it comes to terrorism is not just reinforced, but linked with questions of integration. Further, the Muslim community itself is assimilated into one homogenous group, as there are no efforts to distinguish between different cultural and ethnic groups or even between different Muslim sects. This adds another layer to the narrative of terrorism, where not just with Islam, but the Muslim Community have a role to play.

#### *Invalidating Grievances*

The dissociative process is further evident in how grievances are invalidated in the strategy's account of radicalisation. For example, a box on the page 48, attempts to explain the root causes of radicalization. It begins by acknowledging that the process is complex, with a multitude of potential factors:

Potentially radicalising factors include the development of a *sense* of grievance and injustice... the terrorist *version* of history and recent events *is highly negative*, and *partial* in its *interpretation* of past interactions between Islam and the West.

(HM Government 2006, 10, emphasis added)

The predicates in this sentence are telling. They highlight that the terrorists rely on a *version* and *interpretation* of history, presenting the terrorists' narrative as conditional. This is in contrast to factual presentation of the role of Islamic

ideology. By presenting them as conditional, the *sense* of grievances is thrown into question. This serves to further highlight the importance of ideology in *Contest 2006*'s narrative of terrorism, where the geopolitical and historical context is excluded from the narrative. The disassociation of context, coupled with the assimilation of disparate terrorist events and groups, singles out ideology as the single factor not only in explaining what terrorism is, but in explaining why people turn to terror. It is the central aspect of the causal story. After all, the language surrounding ideology, as seen in the previous section, does not contain conditionals.

Further, the general public, as an actor, is completely absent from the policy text, and consequently, the narrative. This is particularly evident when the policy discusses the role of structural disadvantages such as unemployment and discrimination above. By excluding the general public from the narrative of terrorism, *Contest 2006* is actively removing it from the causal story. In other words, it is saying that the British public have no role to play in the story of terrorism, not even when it comes to discrimination. Nonetheless, the Muslim Community is included, which immediately sets them apart from the general public, further contributing to the beginning of a binary in the narrative of terrorism. Excluding the general public from the causal story is another example of disassociation at work.

The dissociative process continues in the invalidation of grievances in the causal story of terrorism. This section on how terrorists perceive globalization is a good example of this process at work:

Given the impact on local ways of life, those already predisposed to be suspicious of the West

can seek to portray these changes as a deliberate attempt to replace traditional structures with Western models, rather than the consequences of... modernization.

(HM Government 2006, 10)

Talking about globalization and modernity, rather than specific actions, suggests that that the terrorists have no specific grievances, but are instead railing about abstract concepts. This further removes geopolitical and historical context from the causal story and reinforces the role of ideology.

Further, when specific grievances are mentioned, they are presented as conditionals:

Also, *some argue* that the West does not apply consistent standards in its international behaviour. Conflicts such as Bosnia and Chechnya are cited ... *and it is argued* that the Western nations have failed to act quickly or effectively enough to protect them, ignoring many positive interventions. Specific events – for example, the Coalition action to restore sovereignty in Kuwait, the UN authorised actions in Afghanistan to remove the Al-Qaeda organisation and the Taliban... and US and UK action in Iraq *to remove a serious threat to international security and subsequently to promote a democratic and pluralist government* - are *sometimes portrayed* as attacks on Islam itself, regardless of the actual rationale for the action.

(HM Government 2006, 10, emphasis added)

Every example of a specific grievance is prefaced with conditional predicates such as *some argue* and *it is argued*. The sentence on the Iraq War, for example, is revealing. Two interpretations of the war are given, however, only one is presented as conditional. The strategy presents the war as UK action in Iraq to remove a serious threat. This is presented as fact, without any conditionals.

However, the conditionals *sometimes portrayed as* are attached to the view that the war was an attack on Islam.

This undermining of grievances continues with a list on page 15 detailing the many different ways the UK has supported Muslim countries, for example, in Kosovo, supporting Turkey's entry into the EU, by providing aid to the Pakistan earthquake, commitment to a Palestinian state and helping the crisis in Darfur (HM Government 2006, 16). These acts of support, which are presented as unproblematic and uncontested, further invalidate possible grievances. The process of disassociation is thus profound in the narrative of the process of terrorism. It practically erases the role the West in general, and the UK in particular, in the causal story of terrorism. Radicalisation is thus presented as a result of forces apart from Western intervention and policies. By reducing specific grievances to a 'virulent anti-Westernism', the importance of ideology to the narrative of terrorism is solidified.

### *The Primacy of Ideology*

The primacy of the ideology is further confirmed in the presence of a section called the *Battle of Ideas*. This section is significantly larger than any other section under Prevent, comprising of three whole pages. So although it comes towards the end of the document, its size reinforces its importance. The section opens with a quote from Tony Blair, the Prime Minister at the time:

This terrorism will not be defeated until its ideas, *the poison that warps the minds* of its adherents, are confronted, head-on, in their essence, at their core.

(HM Government 2006, 13, paragraph 55, emphasis added)

The language used by Blair to describe the ideology is highly normative and negative, leaving no room for a nuanced approach to the ideology. Further, he states that the threat will not be over until the ideas are challenged. This further invalidates grievances and structural reasons for radicalisation. The solution to the problem of terrorism thus lies in defeating the ideology. And defeating the ideology relies on extensive intervention within the Muslim Community, both in the UK and abroad:

The Prime Minister met 25 Muslim community leaders on 19 July 2005. The meeting was to make a united reinforcement of the need to work together to prevent extremism in our communities...In May 2006, the Prime Minister and Ruth Kelly hosted an event for 40 Muslim women at Downing Street, aimed at boosting understanding of the community through meeting a wider range of people from within it.

(HM Government 2006, 13, emphasis added)

*Prevent 2006* also presents a redirected focus from the Foreign Office towards scholarship programmes particularly tailored to dealing with the terrorist threat. The paper talks about how 119 candidates from Organisation of the Islamic Conference secured scholarships in 2005/6 and the creation of special fellowship courses on the themes of ‘Engaging with the Islamic World’ and ‘International Security and Governance’. This further locates the problem within the Muslim community, serving to differentiate them from the general British public. This justifies the extensive examples of intervention and engagement with the Muslim community cited in this section:

More than 30 countries receiving UK development assistance have sizeable Muslim populations. Some of our largest bilateral development programmes are focussed on predominantly Islamic countries, for

example in 2004/5 we provided £122 million in Bangladesh; £72 million in Afghanistan; and £56 million in Pakistan. The Department for International Development (DfID) contributes to modernisation through working on improving governance, including anti-corruption, reform of security services and justice systems, reform of education systems, and laws on private sector development in order to help create educational and employment opportunities for disaffected youths.

(HM Government 2006, 12)

This further problematizes Muslims and securitizes Islam, as it is a continuation of the dissociative process which places the causes of terrorism in a particular ideology, which is linked to a specific community. Ideology is thus the active component of the causal story of terrorism developed in *Contest 2006*. In other words, it is both the central element of both what terrorism is and why people turn to it.

As a final note, it is important to highlight that *Contest 2006* actively differentiates between extremists and terrorists:

An alienated individual who has become highly radicalised is not necessarily a terrorist. Only a tiny minority of radicalised individuals actually cross over to become terrorists: by financing, lending facilities to, or encouraging active terrorists, or by actively participating in terrorist attacks.

(HM Government 2006, 10)

This is significant for two reasons. Firstly, by saying that highly radicalised individuals are not necessarily terrorists, the strategy falls short of criminalising them. As such, it is narrowly concerned with those that engage with terrorist activities such as financing, facilitating, encouraging or participating in attacks.

All of those activities correlate with terrorist offences present in statute books. So whilst the narrative does acknowledge that extremism plays a role in radicalisation, the focus remains with terrorist individuals. The significance of this will become clearer as the next two strategy papers are analysed, for both *Contest 2009* and *2011* broaden the field of concern to include first violent extremists, then extremists in general, signifying a more extensively securitizing narrative.

### **The Policy Narrative**

*Contest 2006* represents the beginning of the UK's official narrative of terrorism. It is the first time since the Terrorism Act 2000 that the government set out to explain in detail how it understood the terrorist threat, and what it was going to do about it. It is clear, and unsurprising, that the narrative views terrorism as an objective reality, not as a label or a construction. As such, the presupposition was stated early on: terrorism is an unjustified, urgent threat. It is unjustified because nowhere does the narrative validate what it sees as the terrorist motivation. Instead, any geopolitical, historical context is removed from the narrative, framing terrorism as a result of a virulent ideology.

This is achieved through the assimilation of disparate terrorist groups and events into a single threat, which is presented without any context. The only explanation given is the ideology. And this ideology is consistently connected with Islam, resulting in the securitization of Islam in the narrative. The causal story of terrorism in *Contest 2006* therefore holds that terrorism is caused by an ideology that is Islamic in nature. This reflects statements given by key policy actors such as Tony Blair and Gordon Brown in the aftermath of 9/11 and 7/7. In the aftermath of the 9/11 attacks, Prime Minister Tony Blair gave a speech in which



he said that mass terrorism was the new evil of our world and that Britain stands ‘shoulder to shoulder with our American friends in this hour of tragedy and we like them will not rest until this evil is driven from our world’ (Blair 2001). Moreover, in February 2006, the Chancellor and future Prime Minister Gordon Brown gave a speech about the 7/7 attacks, claiming that the threat from Al-Qaeda was different in scale than the IRA threat of the previous 30 years (Brown 2006). The narrative thus represents an effort to place political violence from Muslim individuals at the core of the label of terrorism.

It is important to now check whether or not the above policy narrative is successful. The success of a narrative is measured by using the policy narrative criteria developed by Boswell, Geddes, and Scholten (2011): are they cognitively plausible, dramatically or morally compelling and do they chime with perceived interests. Firstly, the cognitive plausibility of a narrative requires it to be simple. The causal story that terrorism is caused by an ideology inherently linked with Islam is straightforward and never contradicted in the policy papers. The disclaimers used to distinguish Islam from the terrorist ideology are weak when contrasted with the weight given to the ideology. This is especially so since the ideology acts as the golden thread connecting disparate threats and is the only characteristic given to it is its connection to Islam. Moreover, the way the Muslim community is portrayed as passive, with problems of integration further reinforced the cognitive plausibility of the causal story, which relies on the uncomplicated link between Islam and the terrorist ideology. The dismissal of grievances plays a similar role, since grievances add an extra layer to the causal story which would downplay the role of ideology. The narrative of terrorism in *Contest 2006* is thus cognitively plausible.

Further, the narrative is also dramatically compelling. The presupposition is one of urgency and imminent danger. Terrorism is a real threat, and it is caused by people distorting one of the world's biggest religions for the sake of violence. Strong, powerful predicates such as *malignant*, *poison* and *distortion* are used to describe the ideology behind the threat. This is not only dramatic, but it ensures that a normative judgement is being attached to the causal story, where terrorism and the ideology behind it, are not just wrong, but evil.

Furthermore, the narrative responds to the policy agenda seeking to justify and legitimise the fight against Islamic terrorism. As such, the perceived interests it chimes with are those of national security. It is thus not surprising that the presupposition of the narrative relies on a normative judgement that terrorism is an unjustified evil and an urgent threat. If terrorism was constructed as being justified, it would be harder to explain the threat in a way that legitimised state action. This adds a moral flavour to the drama of the narrative: the UK government, by fighting terrorism, is righting a wrong; it is protecting its people from the evils of terrorism. The narrative of terrorism in *Contest 2006* is thus cognitively plausible, as it is not contradictory and all the points presented reflect the presupposition necessary in order for the narrative to make sense. It is dramatic and morally compelling, framing terrorism as an urgent evil that needs to be challenged. It chimes with the basic perceived interest of justifying and legitimising the fight against terrorism.

As stated previously, CPNA is thus directly linked to the discourse-oriented, CTS research agenda, where definitions of terrorism should be analysed to see what role allocations and power relations it legitimizes. Official constructions of terrorism, such as the one present in *Contest 2006*, will serve to both reproduce

and reinforce patterns of power, inclusion, exclusion and existing social structures. *Contest 2006* makes ideology the key factor in the causal story of terrorism, and as a result, it both begins to securitize Islam and create a binary which problematizes Muslims. This both reflects on and contributes to the climate of Islamophobia surrounding Muslims in Britain.

Islamophobia did not start with 7/7, or even 9/11. As early as 1997 the Runnymede Trust produced a report on Islamophobia, claiming that it was prevalent in all sectors of British society (Runnymede 1997). Further, in her examination of British newspaper coverage of Muslims in the period ranging from January 1994 and December 2006, Poole (2002) found that stories featuring British Muslims highlighted their differences and negative behaviour. Moreover, Poole noted that

the associated negative behaviour is seen to evolve  
out of something inherent in the religion, rendering  
any Muslim a potential terrorist

(Poole 2002, 4)

This negative portrayal was independent of terrorism. For example, she details the cultural signifiers that were present in the newspaper coverage of the corruption scandal surrounding the politician Muhammed Sarwar. Stories surrounding Sarwar's corruption scandal used predicates highlighting difference. Sarwar was clearly identified as a Muslim in 77.7% of all articles, mobilising his Muslim identity, allowing the press to associate his negative behaviour with his Muslim identity (Poole 2002). This association between negative behaviour and Islam is repeated in *Contest 2006*.

There have been several studies conducted which document anti-Muslim prejudice in the UK and Europe since 9/11 (Cesari, 2010, McGhee 2005, Githens-Mazer and Lambert 2010, Copsey et al. 2014, O'Toole, DeHanas, and Modood 2012, Moosavi 2015a, b, Pantazis and Pemberton 2009, Poynting and Mason 2007, Qureshi and Sells 2003). It seems that rather than arising from 9/11, the rise in Islamophobia was a development of existing patterns (Poynting and Mason 2007). It is a pattern that is reflected in the narrative of terrorism developed by *Contest 2006*, as a direct result of the causal story which places ideology as the key to terrorism. The narrative is thus both reproducing and reinforcing pre-existing patterns of prejudice which frame Muslims as security threats.

Moreover, research has shown that politicians, especially the 1997-2007 New Labour government of Tony Blair also relied on generalisations, assumptions and stereotypes of Muslims and Islam when talking about security and minority communities (Moosavi 2015a). After doing a discourse analysis of 111 speeches of New Labour ministers from 2001 to 2007, Moosavi found that the New Labour government essentialised Muslims as Others, associating them with negative qualities. Furthermore:

The ministers often spoke about Muslims rather than to them, reflecting a tendency to treat Muslims as outsiders rather than as respected citizens. Muslims were often portrayed as troublemakers who require special attention because of their inadequacies. Although the ministers often spoke about Al Qaeda [sic] and extremists as the problem makers, the generalised discussion of Muslims often implicated the broader Muslim community as just as dangerous as the very small extreme minority.

Moosavi (2015a) also talks of the existence of a party line on Islam and Muslims, where statements by different politicians were almost identical, mirroring each other, suggesting that they were briefed centrally on what to say. As such, the narrative constructed in *Contest 2006* not simply reproduces and reinforces wider patterns of anti-Muslim prejudice, but it also reflects a clear policy agenda which problematizes Muslims. Specific aspects of this policy agenda will be discussed in the next chapter, as they were carried on and developed by the 2007-2010 Labour government of Gordon Brown. But it is important to mention the significance of the relationship between the narrative of terrorism, Islamophobia and the policy agenda. This highlights the discourse-oriented, social constructivist nature of the label – and the narrative – of terrorism. *Contest 2006* did not happen in a vacuum and it represents how the label of terrorism is not neutral and static, as it appears to be in legislation. Rather, the label of terrorism is moulded by patterns of inclusion and exclusion which reflect the wider social structure. As such, the construction of knowledge present in a government policy which aims to explain terrorism and terrorism policy to the wider public is entangled in the social context.

## **Chapter 4: Contest 2009 - Securitizing Muslims**

### **Chapter Overview**

*Contest 2009* was published under a new administration, the Labour government of Gordon Brown. Nevertheless, it is a further development of the previous strategy. *Contest 2006* constructed a narrative where ideology was at the centre of the causal story, resulting in the securitization of Islam. *Contest 2009* builds on this narrative by adding three new, interrelated developments: the framing of terrorism as a problem that comes from abroad, the securitization of the Muslim Community and the inclusion of the language of shared values. All this is achieved whilst the focus on ideology as the heart of the causal story intensify.

This chapter will show that *Contest 2009* now holds that terrorism is a ‘foreign problem’, literally a problem that comes from abroad. The Muslim community play a larger role in the causal story this time, especially as the narrative incorporates the community cohesion strategy developed in response to the 2001 riots. Consequently, terrorism is framed as being a problem of integration and belonging. This is intensified by the inclusion of the language of shared values, which creates a nationalist binary between Islam and the UK. The result is the specific securitization of the Muslim community alongside the broader securitization of Islam. If the narrative of terrorism is also framing it as a problem of the Other, a ‘foreign problem’, then the selective use of the terrorism label by the government may be about more than the construction of security – but also about the construction of identity.

## Introduction

A year after the publication of *Contest 2006*, there was a change in administration. Tony Blair resigned on 27 June 2007, and Gordon Brown became Prime Minister. Two days later on 29 June, two car bombs were discovered in central London, and were disabled before they could be detonated. The very next day, a dark green Jeep leaded with propane canisters was driven into the glass doors of Glasgow International Airport. There were no casualties. The two attacks were linked. In the subsequent years, four new terrorism-related laws were enacted: The Counter-Terrorism Act 2008, The Coroners and Justice Act 2009, and The Terrorism (United Nations Measures) Order 2009. There was also a change in government. As the Chancellor of the Exchequer, Brown was a key figure in the Blair administration, so it will be interesting to see how the 2009 strategy differs from the 2006 one, and if there is a change on the party line regarding terrorism.

*Contest 2009* takes UK counter-terrorism to another level. Whilst *Contest 2006* numbered only 33 pages, including annexes, *Contest 2009* has 178 pages. The section explaining the threat grew sevenfold, from four to 28 pages, whilst the *Prevent* section now has 22 pages. This change is significant, for it illustrates *Contest*'s development into the UK's flagship counter-terrorism strategy. It also illustrates a greater concern not only with terrorism, but with the public justification of terrorism policy. *Contest 2009* remains a policy document, with a narrative used to educate the public on government policy as well as justify it. This is evident in the foreword by then Prime Minister Gordon Brown, when he explains the decision to publish such a comprehensive outline of the UK counter-terrorism strategy:

I believe that if people are better informed about the threat they will be more vigilant, but also more assured ... I believe this updated strategy leaves us better prepared to meet the terrorist threat, and to achieve our objective of ensuring that the people of the United Kingdom can go about their normal lives in confidence and free from fear.

(HM Government 2009, 6)

The goal of the strategy is thus the same as *Contest 2006*. It begins in the same place that the previous strategy did: explaining the threat. The explanation of the threat in *Contest 2009* is found in Part 1: The Strategic Context. Part 1 is divided into six sections: Background; the Impact on the UK, The Current Threat to the UK, How the Terrorist Threat Has Changed, Strategic Factors and The Future. These six sections work together to develop the causal story started in the previous policy.

### **The Official History of Terrorism**

The first two sections of *Contest 2009*, Section 1: International Terrorism and the UK: Background and Section 2: The Impact on the UK, work together to construct a historical narrative of terrorism. *Contest 2009* begins by discussing Northern Ireland, thus acknowledging that there are other forms of terrorism than the ones motivated by Islamic ideology:

Between 1969 and the signing of the Belfast Agreement in April 1998, over 3,500 people died in the UK as a result of Irish-related terrorism. Since then there have been attacks by dissident republican terrorist groups, including the Omagh bombing of August 1998, and most recently the murder of two Army personnel and a Police Service of Northern Ireland officer in separate incidents in March 2009.



(HM Government 2009, 23, paragraph 1.02)

Nonetheless, on the third paragraph of this section, the strategy succinctly specifies international terrorism as its central concern:

However, this counter-terrorism strategy is specifically addressed at the recent resurgence in international terrorism, which remains the greatest current threat both in this country and to our overseas interests.

(HM Government 2009, 23, paragraph 1.03)

International terrorism is different than other types of terrorism:

Contemporary international terrorist group pose new challenges to this country and its interests. To date, their modus operandi *has not been directly comparable to that of Irish-related terrorists or to international organisations which have threatened this country before*. Their distinctive features *have had a major impact on all our counterterrorism [sic] work*, including our legislation, the tactics and methods of our law enforcement and security and intelligence agencies, on our work with communities and on our international partnerships.

(HM Government 2009, 38, paragraph 4.06,  
emphasis added)

This is a significant development from *Contest 2006*, which did not contain any detailed description of what terrorism was. In *Contest 2009*, the threat is defined as unique. The problem of the causal story is therefore not general terrorism, but what the strategy calls *international terrorism*. It is interesting that the predicate *international* is attached to terrorism in *Contest 2009*, especially since *Contest 2006* mostly used the predicate *Islamic* when describing terrorism. This in theory

should suggest a move away from focusing on Islam as a key characteristic of the threat. However, as will be argued below *Contest 2009* further reinforces the connection between Islam and terrorism.

### *The Genealogy of Terror*

From the very beginning, we see a repetition of the assimilation trend present in *Contest 2006*, beginning with the definition of international terrorism present in the strategy:

International terrorism is conducted primarily by organisations with a transnational capability, which aims to conduct attacks *in and from a number of countries* and, increasingly, claim to have an *international cause*. The distinction between international and domestic terrorist organisations is *not exact*: the terrorist threat we face now comes from an *international movement which makes use of and is affiliated to some domestic groups around the world*.

(HM Government 2009, 23, paragraph 1.04,  
emphasis added)

This definition is significant for its vagueness. International terrorism can be anything; domestic as well as international and from anywhere in the world. This definition provides a base for continuing with a causal story that assimilates disparate terrorist events and organisations into a simple narrative.

The assimilative process is more sophisticated this time around. For example, terrorist incidents are presented chronologically with little to no context. Spanning pages 23 and 24, a paragraph on the Lockerbie bombing (1.07) is swiftly followed by one on the assassination of Egyptian President Anwar Sadat

(1.08). This is then followed by a discussion of the Afghanistan Mujahideen in 1979 and the 1987 *intifadah* (1.09), before a paragraph on the Armed Islamic Group (GIA) in Algeria (1.10), then finally, the 1993 World Trade Center attack in New York (1.11). The strategy excludes all mentions of the geopolitical, historical context. For example, when referring to the PLO, there is no mention whatsoever of the Israeli/Palestinian conflict:

The first modern international incident has been dated back to 1968, when a faction of the Palestine Liberation Organisation hijacked an Israeli commercial flight from Rome. Two years later, the same organisation took over a British commercial aircraft as part of a multiple hijacking and later destroyed it on the tarmac at an airfield in Jordan... over the next 20 years other groups motivated by *Palestinian issues* and principally comprising Palestinians, conducted a range of attacks in the UK and against UK interests as part of a wider pattern of operational activity.

(HM Government 2009, 23, paragraph 1.06,  
emphasis added)

This lack of context becomes even more noticeable when discussing the 1987 *intifadah*:

The growing influence of radical and militant Islamism was seen elsewhere, notably in the first *intifadah* in the Occupied Territories from 1987 onwards.

(HM Government 2009, 24, paragraph 1.09,  
emphasis on the original)

The only explanation given for the *intifadah* is ideological: the rise of Islamism. At no point does the strategy discuss the political or historical context of the

Palestinian/Israeli conflict. Similarly, the conflict in Chechnya is presented solely from the ideological position:

From the early 1990s onwards terrorist attacks were also conducted in Russia and against Russian interests, in connection with the war in Chechnya. *Al Qa'ida frequently referred to Russia as an enemy of the order of the US...* Veterans of the Afghan war and others from across the Islamic and non-Islamic world travelled to fight in Chechnya. Some had links to Al Qa'ida. *Many saw the war in Chechnya as a successor to the war in Afghanistan.*

(HM Government 2009, 26, paragraph 1.20,  
emphasis added)

Whilst it can be argued that the lack of context is justified in regards to widespread knowledge of the Palestinian/Israeli Conflict, the same cannot be said for the lack of context given to the situation in Chechnya. Further, the historical and political context is further excluded when the Algerian Civil War is mentioned:

In 1992, Afghan Arab veterans created the Armed Islamic Group (GIA) in Algeria, which again sought to overthrow the Government and establish what they regarded as an Islamic state; over the next six years the GIA killed many civilians and members of the security forces. *Over 100,000 people died in the Algerian civil war.*

(HM Government 2009, 24, paragraph 1.10,  
emphasis added)

This paragraph is significant for it exemplifies the power the story teller has when using the inclusion/exclusion technique. Mentioning the Algerian Civil War with only reference to GIA creates the presupposition that the Algerian Civil

War was about religion, and that 100,000 people died in an essentially religious conflict. Whilst the Algerian Civil War was indeed fought between the government and various Islamic factions, painting it as a solely religious conflict excludes the political dimension of a complex conflict. Similarly, whilst there is a religious element to the Israeli/Palestinian conflict, it is essentially one about territory and politics. The conflict in Chechnya also contains a large dose of Russian politics. Yet, by excluding the local geopolitical context, the narrative foregrounds ideology as the central element in these conflicts.

Furthermore, the subject positioning in this section is revealing. These organisations and a myriad of terrorist events are discussed in a vague chronological order, suggesting an unbroken continuity. This continuity congregates disparate organisations and events into a neat lineage of terrorism, going from the PLO to Al Qa'ida; from the 1987 *intifadah* to the Algerian Civil War and finally, to 9/11. This assimilative process creates a narrative which makes a direct link between the Palestine Liberation Organisation's (PLO) 1968 hijacking of an Israeli plane to the Bali nightclub bombings of 2002.

### *A Foreign Problem*

Al Qa'ida is thus presented as the latest stage in the long line of international terrorism. In *Section 3: The Current Threat to the UK*, Al Qa'ida is swiftly framed as the primary threat to the UK:

The current threat to the UK and its interests overseas from international terrorism comes primarily from four interrelated sources: the Al Qa'ida leadership and their immediate associates, located mainly on the Pakistan/Afghanistan border; terrorist groups affiliated to Al Qa'ida in North Africa, the Arabian Peninsula, Iraq, and Yemen;

‘self-starting’ networks, or even lone individuals, motivated by the same ideology as Al Qa’ida, but with no connection to that organisation; and terrorist groups *that follow a broadly similar ideology as Al Qa’ida but which have their own identity and regional agenda*. All these groups respond to local challenges and grievances but *Al Qa’ida have sought to aggregate them into a single global movement*.

(HM Government 2009, 33, paragraph 3.01,  
emphasis added)

Even this explanation of Al Qa’ida is a process of assimilation around Islamic ideology. After all, what unifies self-starting networks in Yemen and other terrorist groups with their own identity and agenda is ideology. Al Qa’ida's role is thus that of an umbrella organisation, unifying disparate threats into a global movement unified by ideology.

Moreover, this assimilation around ideology further constructs the threat as being foreign.

The groups of most concern to the UK and to UK interests have a very wide geographical range: the Near East (Palestine, Israel and Lebanon); Iraq; South Asia (Afghanistan, Pakistan, India); North Africa (the Maghreb, Libya and Egypt) and the Horn of Africa; and South East Asia (primarily Indonesia). *Many of these groups have had or still have a presence in the UK itself*. Some members of these groups (notably those motivated by Kashmiri-related issues) have been implicated in Al Qa’ida related operations in the UK.

(HM Government 2009, 35, paragraphs 3.15 - 3.16,  
emphasis added)

This section also provides a long list of Al Qa'ida and its affiliate's attacks, but no direct explanation of its motivations. This is where subject positioning in the narrative is paramount. Al Qa'ida is mentioned for the first time at the very end of the chronological listing of terrorist organisations and events in Section 1. It happens four paragraphs after the introduction of militant Islamist ideology into the listing. Therefore, there is a strong suggestion of continuity. Al Qa'ida is thus presented as the latest stage in the genealogy of international terrorism. This continuity places Al Qa'ida's roots in both previous terrorist organisations in the Middle East and the Islamic ideology.

When ideology acts as a golden thread, even Hizballah is included in the causal story of terrorism:

Its initial objective was to attack and remove Israeli forces then occupying south Lebanon *and try to establish an Islamic republic in Beirut*. Though a Shia organisation, it resembled some other modern international terrorist groups considered here, *in having an explicitly religious agenda and objective*.

(HM Government 2009, 26, paragraph 1.21,  
emphasis added)

The religious agenda and objective of Hizballah, without the local geopolitical context, is enough for the *Contest 2009* to assimilate it into the threat story, even though Hizballah, as a Shia group, is in fact often a target of Sunni organisations. The assimilation technique is so intense that it glosses over the long history of conflict between Sunni and Shia Islam. The fact that both factions share the Muslim faith and have groups with a history of violence is enough to conflate them as part of a unified international threat.

What unifies these events and groups is made evident in the following sentence:

From the early 1980s onwards a quite different kind of terrorism began to emerge in the Middle East *in conjunction with the resurgence of militant Islamist ideology...* They drew upon *a long history of Islamist thinking in Egypt and* in particular on the work of Sayyid Qutb, who in turn was greatly influenced by the Indian born Islamist thinker Abul-Ala al Mawdudi.

(HM Government 2009, 24, paragraph 1.08,  
emphasis added)

Moreover, the discussion of technology, treated by the section as a separate strategic factor, also serves to reinforce ideology as the key issue with terrorism:

The communications revolution has made easier the spread of violent extremist ideology and propaganda... Contemporary terrorist organisations design, conduct and record their operations with a view to publicity... Al Qa'ida's ideology forces local events into a global narrative; technology constructs and illustrates that narrative and conveys it to a global audience.

(HM Government 2009, 43, paragraphs 5.14-5.15)

Whilst the strategy does mention how communication technology aids terrorism in general, such as improving dialogue, fundraising, recruitment and planning and allowing terrorists to learn new tactics, the focus is still on its use to disseminate the terrorist ideology. This further contributes to the assimilation of terrorist groups into a unified threat which contributes to the further securitization of Islam.



Significantly, all the groups, events and countries mentioned in the historical section of the text have one thing in common: they are primarily in the Middle East or from predominantly Muslim countries. By focusing on ideology, the almost sequential story telling assimilates terrorist threat into a uniform history of Middle Eastern origins guided by an Islamic ideology. This continues to securitize Islam. Furthermore, *Contest 2009* builds on the causal story of *Contest 2006* by developing a genealogy of terrorism which shows that the threat, historically and ideologically, comes from the so-called Muslim world. The roots of terrorism – both historically and ideologically – lie outside of the UK and are, consequently, foreign.

#### *Ideology as a Golden Thread*

For all the importance of the ideology, it is not until much later in the text that Islamic ideology is actually defined. In fact, the only explanations of the ideology on the entire section on the history of the threat is that terrorist groups want to establish a ‘true Islamic state’ (1.08) and that they are ‘avowedly religious in outlook, claiming both a religious justification for acts of terrorist and describing their objectives in religious terms’ (1.08).

A more detailed explanation only comes in Section 5 of the text:

This ideology considers most Islamic governments to be ‘un-Islamic’ or apostate. It challenges the legitimacy of Israel and claims that western states sustain ‘un-Islamic’ governments and are engaged in a global attack on Islam. It therefore tries to turn grievances about specific regional issues into grievances about the West. Citing historical precedent and religious doctrine, the ideology states that militant *jihad* against the so called oppressors (be they Muslim or western governments ) is a religious duty incumbent upon all Muslims and that

those who follow the call will be rewarded in the afterlife. The ideology calls for the overthrow (by militant *jiḥād*) of Islamic governments and the imposition of shari'a under a new pan-Islamic Caliphate. It urges attacks on western states and civilians and seeks the removal of any western presence from the Islamic world.

(HM Government 2009, 42, paragraph 5.09,  
emphasis added)

This section even quotes directly from bin Laden:

... any of the hypocrites in Iraq, or Arab rulers who have helped America in their murder of Muslims in Iraq, anyone who approved of their actions and followed them into this Crusader war by fighting with them or providing bases or administrative support... should be aware that they are apostates who are outside the community of Islam; it is therefore permitted to take their money and their blood.

(HM Government 2009, 42, paragraph 5.10,  
emphasis added)

So according to *Contest 2009*, the terrorists believe in a strict dichotomy between the West and Islam. This mirrors the subtle binary present in the 2006 strategy. What is interesting is that, by securitizing Islam and framing terrorism as coming from abroad, this dichotomy is actually reinforced by the policy. This dichotomy is cognitively plausible for it stems directly from both the presupposition and the assimilation process detailed above. In fact, the need for cognitive plausibility further reinforces the causal story. After all, the intense assimilation of disparate groups and events around an ideology only makes sense if ideology is seen as

central in the causal story. Repeatedly, international terrorism is connected to Islam:

International terrorist activity in and against the UK since the early 1990s has been very different. Reflecting earlier international trends, it draws explicitly on the language of religion and its objectives are linked to a religious cause.

(HM Government 2009, 37, paragraph 4.03)

The connection between terrorism and Islam starts to turn into a presupposition, the necessary parameter for the narrative to make sense.

#### *Strengthening the Binary*

The binary in the narrative is intensified by the continued process of disassociation, which acts as a form of subject positioning. The process of disassociation is much more evident than in *Contest 2006*. For example, when discussing the background to the terrorist threat in Section 1, the Iraq War is not mentioned at all. Instead, when Iraq is mentioned, it is without any mention of the war:

Following the fall of Saddam Hussein in 2003, radical Islamist groups emerged in and travelled to Iraq to take part in what they regarded as a new jihad against coalition forces and the Iraqi Government.

(HM Government 2009, 25, paragraph 1.16,  
emphasis added)

And

After 2003 Iraq was used as a base for terrorist attacks in other countries.

(HM Government 2009, 25, paragraph 1.17,  
emphasis added)

No explanation is given for what happened in 2003, the fall of Saddam Hussein, or the presence of coalition forces. As policy narratives engage in a process of inclusion and exclusion, the UK government is choosing to exclude the war in Iraq from the story of terrorism. This is a powerful act by the story teller, for excluding the Iraq War positions the actions of the British government outside the causal story.

The first direct mention to the Iraq War happens in the summary of Section 2:

By late 2000, the UK had itself become a target: the police and Security Service disrupted an attempt to conduct an attack in Birmingham city centre, *well before the attacks in the US on 11 September 2001, the subsequent conflict in Afghanistan and the 2003 Iraq war.*

(HM Government 2009, 28, emphasis added)

The logic is that since the terror threat to the UK existed before the war in Iraq, as such, British military involvement in the Middle East plays no significant role in the story of terrorism. This serves to downplay political motivations for terrorism and further disassociate the UK from the threat story. This is significant, because both the Iraq and the Afghanistan wars are frequently cited by extremists as a key motivation for their behaviour. For example, the 7/7 bombers explicitly mentioned the conflicts in Iraq and Afghanistan as a reason for the attacks (Agencies 2006). This is a successful process of disassociation,

which explicitly removes British foreign policy from the causal story, whilst simultaneously invalidating geopolitical concerns as motivators for terrorist attacks.

This disassociation is intensified when the strategy is discussing specific grievances that may lead to radicalisation:

Many Muslims as well as non-Muslims *believe* that the West (notably the US and the UK) has either caused conflict, failure and suffering in the Islamic world or done too little to resolve them. Military intervention in Iraq and Afghanistan (and consequent civilian casualties), *perceived* western inaction in Palestine and *alleged* support for authoritarian Islamic governments have all created controversy and anger. The treatment of detainees in Guantanamo Bay (and previously in Abu Ghraib) is *widely felt* to demonstrate an unacceptable inconsistency in the commitment of the West to human rights and the rule of law. In recent polling across four Islamic states a significant majority *judged* that it was the aim of the US to ‘weaken and divide the Islamic world’; a significant minority *thought* the purpose of the ‘war on terror’ was to achieve US political and military domination ‘to control Middle East resources’.

(HM Government 2009, 43, paragraph 5.20,  
emphasis added)

These are not discussed in any detail whatsoever. More importantly, they are preceded by conditional predicates. Muslims and non-Muslims *believe* the West has caused conflict, *perceived* inaction in Palestine has caused controversy. Grievances are based on thoughts, judgements, perceptions and beliefs, rather than objective facts. Further, the documented torture of detainees in Guantanamo Bay and Abu Ghraib are referred to only as *treatment* that was *widely felt* to

discredit Western action. These conditionals reduce the events of Iraq, Afghanistan, Guantanamo Bay and Abu Ghraib as matters of opinion, suggesting that complaints arising from these issues are contestable. Further, these are significant attempts of disassociation which further remove the UK from the causal story. This disassociation is necessary for the cognitive plausibility of the narrative. After all, if details of the torture of detainees in Guantanamo Bay and Abu Ghraib were included, together with the number of civilians killed in the Iraq and Afghanistan War, it would diminish the role of ideology. Worse still, it may even weaken the framing of terrorisms as unjustified violence. Keeping the construction of terrorism as unjustified violence in the name of an ideology is thus necessary in order to justify the existence of the counter-terrorism policy. Consequently, the narrative remains cognitively plausible precisely because of this process of disassociation.

This disassociation continues even when the strategy identifies four distinct strategic factors that play a role in causing terrorism:

Four factors have led to the emergence of the contemporary international terrorist networks that pose a threat to the UK and its interests overseas: *conflict and instability, ideology, technology, and radicalisation*. Each has had important effects and these effects have then reinforced one another. None of these factors on their own would create the threat we face. It is a combination of them all which has a significant impact.

(HM Government 2009, 41, paragraph 5.01,  
emphasis added)

Although ideology is framed as a distinct strategic factor, it effectively blends into the other three. For example, radicalisation is inherently connected with the ideology:

Grievances do not always or often lead to radicalisation and to violent extremism. But they can make people more open to the *ideology* associated with Al Qa'ida, *support for which may then lead to acts of terrorism*. It appears to be the intensity of political and economic grievances that often motivates and characterises members of terrorist networks; *people who believe that the aim of western foreign policy is to weaken and divide the Islamic world are more likely to approve of terrorist attacks against civilians*.

(HM Government 2009, 44, paragraph 5.23,  
emphasis added)

This paragraph places ideology as the vital ingredient in the terrorist cocktail. Grievances alone are not enough for terrorism. Ideology is needed. Additionally, the intensity of the grievance is measured in ideological terms. A grievance is intense if people believe the aim of Western foreign policy is to weaken and divide the Muslim world. It is not how passionate one feels about the grievance, but how it is linked with the ideological narrative that matters. The strategic factor of technology is also presented in a way that reinforces the importance of ideology:

The communications revolution has made easier the spread of violent extremist ideology and propaganda. The number of websites related to terrorist groups or supporting violent extremism has increased from as few as 12 in 1998 to over 4,00090. Al Qa'ida has its own media organisation, Al-Sahab, which produced just six audio and video

messages in 2002 but nearly 100 in 2007<sup>91</sup>. Contemporary terrorist organisations design, conduct and record their operations with a view to publicity. On violent extremist websites films of terrorist attacks are routinely combined with other pictures from conflict areas which record the suffering of Muslim communities. Al Qa'ida's ideology forces local events into a global narrative; technology constructs and illustrates that narrative and conveys it to a global audience.

(HM Government 2009, 43, paragraph 5.14-5.15)

Technology is therefore a key strategic factor for it allows the amplification and the dissemination of the terrorist ideology. This echoes the narrative of terrorism constructed so far in this policy document, furthering the securitization of Islam in the narrative.

Moreover, failed states are presented as key strategic factors:

Terrorist groups can also thrive in fragile and failed states. States become fragile and fail for a range of reasons of which conflict is itself one (of the top 20 failed states in a 2008 Failed States Index, almost all are currently experiencing violent conflict or political violence). But state fragility and failure have wider causes, including economic collapse, poor governance, the abuse of human rights, the ready availability of weapons and breakdown of law and order, and rapid population increases.

(HM Government 2009, 41, paragraph 5.04)

This would suggest an acknowledgement of context, but the way they are presented is another example of disassociation at work:

*Fragile and failed states are unable to meet the needs of their population and lack the capacity to effectively tackle violent extremism. They can*



provide uncontrolled spaces in which the infrastructure of terrorism may flourish, where terrorist organisations not only run training facilities but also provide material support and protection to the local population which would normally be provided by the state itself. Al Qa'ida grew under the Taliban regime in Afghanistan and now depends on a safe haven in the FATA of Pakistan. Al Qa'ida affiliates exploit ungoverned areas in Yemen, the Sahel, and Somalia.

(HM Government 2009, 41, paragraph 5.05,  
emphasis added)

The language used in this section is revealing. The text is unequivocal about stating that conflict and failed states create grievances. However, the disassociation technique is still present. Context is acknowledged for the first time, but only in so far as it further implicates non-Western in the causal story. This continues to place the UK outside the causal story of terrorism. Not only is this dissociative process reinforcing the importance of ideology, but it is acting as a form of subject positioning, placing different actors in opposite sides of the causal story. This creates a dichotomy, a binary between the UK and not just Islam, but countries with a predominantly Muslim population. As discussed in the previous chapter, *Contest 2006* contains a subtle binary against Islam and the UK. In *Contest 2009*, this binary is thus developed and expanded to include not just an ideology, but a visual, geographical element.

Further, *Section 2: The Impact on the UK*, is positioned straight after the section detailing the historical dimension of the threat. The subject positioning of these two sections is significant. It suggests that the historical narrative has had a direct impact on the UK. The nature of this impact is evidenced from the first paragraph:

*The impact of militant Islamism on the UK was profound. In 1989 Ayatollah Khomeini issued a fatwa calling for the murder of Salman Rushdie. Later that year, a suspected member of Hizballah was killed by his own explosive device while preparing an attack on Salman Rushdie in London. By the early 1990s propagandists for terrorism in Algeria and Egypt had settled in the UK. Some provided fatwas purporting to legitimise the activities of terrorist organisations. The GIA published a magazine here. In 1994 a media information centre linked to Al Qa'ida was established in London.*

(HM Government 2009, 29, paragraph 2.01,  
emphasis added)

The predicate *militant* is added to Islamism for the first time. Its presence directly after the section on the background of international terrorism suggests that militant Islamism is related to international terrorism. As such, the historical narrative presented in the previous section was not just a history of international terrorism, but of militant Islamism which further reinforces the role of ideology and Islam in the narrative of terrorism.

This paragraph again assimilates separate entities into one singular threat. Ayatollah Khomeini, Hizballah, GIA and Al Qa'ida are all treated as a singular threat to the UK, with militant Islamism as the one thing they have in common.

And militant Islamism provides a significant threat to the UK:

Throughout this period, *emerging British violent Islamist organisations* publicly encouraged participation in violent jihad overseas. Some of these organisations sought to take over the management of prominent mosques (notably at Finsbury Park in London) which they used as a base

for radicalisation. *British nationals and others living in the UK were recruited by Al Qa'ida when they travelled to Afghanistan and later to Pakistan.*

(HM Government 2009, 29, paragraph 2.02,  
emphasis added)

In paragraph 2.01 above, it is mentioned that 'propagandists for terrorism' had settled in the UK, bringing the threat from the Middle East to the UK. The word propaganda not only refers to ideology, but to the falseness of this ideology. By using this word, the policy is making a normative judgement in regards to the motivations of the supposed terrorists. Moreover, there is the suggestion of the threat becoming embedded in Britain, with British citizens going to fight abroad and the emergence of British violent Islamist organisations. The narrative is therefore clear: the threat to the UK comes from abroad.

Evidence of the strength of the narrative is further found in the relative weakness of the disclaimers surrounding Islam and Muslims in this strategy paper. Missing are the explicit predicates of *Contest 2006*, openly saying that the Muslim community was opposed to this ideology. The disclaimers are more conditional this time:

Al Qa'ida's ideology is rejected by *many* Muslims worldwide and by the *vast majority* of Muslims in the UK. It is based upon a *selective* interpretation of Islam: Al Qa'ida and its associates are vulnerable to effective theological challenge.

(HM Government 2009, 49, paragraph 6.04,  
emphasis added)

These disclaimers are weak in comparison to the narrative constructed until now and reinforce the position of Muslims in the causal story. This is because ideology continues to be framed as central to the causal story. Moreover, its connection with Islam also intensifies. For example:

*Outside the Islamic world* a very small proportion of Muslims will also be prepared to endorse Al Qa'ida's operational agenda.

(HM Government 2009, 48, paragraph 6.01,  
emphasis added)

At first, this sentence looks like a disclaimer. After all, it is saying that only a very small proportion of Muslims support Al Qa'ida. However, the key point in the statement are the words *outside the Islamic world*. This suggests that inside the Islamic world, a bigger proportion of Muslims will be sympathetic to Al Qa'ida. As such, disclaimers like the one below essentially get lost in the noise:

It follows from this very brief review that although many contemporary terrorist organisations have titles which draw on religious concepts and purport to have explicitly religious objectives, *people do not join them only or often mainly for simply religious reasons. Indeed, many terrorists who associate with Al Qa'ida have little or no religious understanding or knowledge.*

(HM Government 2009, 44, paragraph 5.26,  
emphasis added)

This is a strong disclaimer attempting to disconnect Islam, the religion, from the ideology associated with terrorism. However, this disclaimer is the only one of its kind and not strong enough to stand up against the securitization of Islam

which is so prevalent in the narrative. This is especially so now that the narrative has developed to include the framing of terrorism as foreign. That is because this foreignness is particularly associated with countries that have a predominantly Muslim population.

For example, discussion on the key strategic factor of conflict and instability further connects terrorism and the world outside the UK:

Terrorism has usually been related to unresolved regional disputes and conflicts. The *current wave* of international terrorism is specifically connected to disputes and conflicts *which involve Muslims and the Islamic world*. Palestine, Afghanistan, Bosnia, Chechnya, Lebanon, Kashmir and Iraq have become focal points for terrorism over the past 20 years.

(HM Government 2009, 41, paragraphs 5.02 - 5.03, emphasis added)

The area outside the UK, where international terrorism comes from, is thus explicitly framed as Islamic in character. These countries are presented with no context or reasons as to why they have become focal points for terrorism. Following the pattern of disassociation, these countries are presented with no context or reasons as to why they have become focal points for terrorism. No reasons are given for the conflict. This is not an isolated paragraph, and it comes at the heels of a profound pattern of assimilation and exclusion which together work to securitize Islam and reinforce a boundary between the UK and countries with a majority Muslim population.

### ***Prevent 2009: Securitizing British Muslims***

The *Prevent* Programme is detailed in Section 9 of *Contest 2009* and it comprises of 22 pages. *Prevent 2009* has the following objective

The aim of the Prevent workstream is to stop radicalisation, reducing support for terrorism and discouraging people from becoming terrorists.

(HM Government 2009, 82, paragraph 9.02)

This is essentially a mirror of the 2006 objective. *Prevent 2009* is thus not just concerned with stopping people from becoming terrorists, but with reducing support for terrorism. Its aim is to stop both radicalisation and terrorism. This results in the weakening of the differentiation between terrorists and extremists as the focus is not just on terrorists, but those who support terrorism. *Prevent 2009* thus presents, from the very beginning, a concern with extremism which was not present in the 2006 version.

The concern with extremism therefore causes the broadening of the *Prevent* strategy, a broadening that is reflected in the increase in budget and reach:

The revised Prevent strategy is a significant development of the old: it includes more Departments; has more thoroughly integrated the significant contribution of policing; aims to link local and international delivery; is based on better metrics; and has a significantly larger budget<sup>137</sup>, the cost of the key deliverables in the Prevent Delivery Plan for 2008/09 alone totals over £140 million.

(HM Government 2009, 83, paragraph 9.09)

This broadening is also visible in the greater number of agents involved with the programme:

The Prevent programme depends not only on communities but on the local authorities, education, health, cultural and social services, UKBA [United Kingdom Border Agency] and those responsible for offender management.

(HM Government 2009, 85, paragraph 9.15)

The widening of the *Prevent* remit is consistent with the framing of the threat as being urgent and ever-increasing. It is cognitively plausible in the light of the assimilative efforts of the section detailing the threat. The breadth of services involved with the programme further reflects an increased concern with radicalisation as a priority of counter-terrorism work.

#### *Disassociating from Radicalization*

Since the focus of the narrative is ideology, it is not surprising that radicalisation will be the key concern of terrorism prevention. The strategy defines radicalisation as

the process by which people come to *support terrorism and violent extremism and*, in some cases, then to join terrorism groups.

(HM Government 2009, 82, paragraph 9.01,  
emphasis added)

The definition of radicalisation further increases the breadth of the strategy, where terrorists and violent extremists and those who support them are for the first time explicitly framed as objects of concern.

The section on *Prevent* further implicates the Muslim community, highlighting its role in the causal story. *Prevent* aims to

challenge the ideology behind violent extremism and support mainstream voices; disrupt those who promote violent extremism and support the places where they operate; support individuals who are vulnerable to recruitment, or have already been recruited by violent extremists; increase the resilience of communities to violent extremism, and address the grievances which ideologues are exploring.

(HM Government 2009, 83, paragraph 9.11)

The narrative further continues to invalidate grievances, even though it dedicates its largest section to discussing the importance of addressing grievances. But the section opens with the familiar predicates immediately framing them as conditional:

Apologists for violent extremism *both exploit and create grievances* to justify terrorism. *Some of these grievances reflect the experiences of individuals living in this country:* racism, discrimination, inequalities, lack of social mobility, under employment, the experience of criminality. A wide range of well established Government policies and measures are already addressing these issues. We also recognise that actions taken in support of the *Pursue* agenda *can be exploited by apologists for violence and indirectly facilitate radicalisation.*

(HM Government 2009, 91, paragraph 9.26,  
emphasis added)

By saying that violent extremists both *exploit* and *create* grievances, the narrative is makes violent extremists the source of those grievances. So whilst the section lists a series of issues such as inequality and racism, it frames them as something



violent extremists would exploit, rather than important issues in their own right. Grievances themselves are thus assimilated, as none of them are explored with any detail.

For example, there is no acknowledgement that the *Pursue* strand may be a source of grievances. Rather *Pursue*'s focus on police work, arrests, deportations etc. is instead only considered an issue because it may be exploited for radicalisation purposes. The source of grievances are all laid at the feet of the extremists. This is disassociation at work, which is further reflected in the examples of work done to support this objective:

Several police powers which are important to the Pursue workstream *have attracted negative comment from some communities.*

(HM Government 2009, 91, paragraph 9.28,  
emphasis added)

The language continues to only acknowledge that some *Pursue* powers have attracted negative comment, not that the powers themselves may cause problems. This is another demonstration of the power of the story-teller. The government is responsible for the creation and implementation of the *Pursue* powers. The invalidating of concerns regarding *Pursue* thus continues to place the UK government outside the causal story of terrorism. This invalidating is thus necessary for the narrative to be cognitively plausible. After all, if the government was somehow implicated in causing terrorism, then ideology's place at the centre of the causal story would have to shift.

This power is further seen in paragraphs surrounding foreign policy related grievances:

Other grievances are based *on a perception* of this country and Government policy, notably foreign policy. *Many of these perceptions are misinformed.* We will *explain and debate* our policies and *refute claims* made about them by those who support terrorism.

(HM Government 2009, 91, paragraph 9.27,  
emphasis added)

Therefore, grievances based on foreign policy are once again framed as conditional, as misinformed perceptions which need to be explained and rebutted, rather than issues that need to be addressed.

As such, *Prevent 2009* continues to endorse the narrative of a threat with primarily Muslim characteristics:

The greatest terrorist threat we currently face is from terrorists who claim to *act in the name of Islam* and who seek to recruit people to their cause from Muslim communities around the world... *At this stage much Prevent activity takes place with Muslim communities. But the principles which are the basis for this work can apply to different contexts too.*

(HM Government 2009, 85, paragraph 9.14,  
emphasis added)

This is an interesting paragraph, for it acknowledges that the *Prevent* principles can be used in different contexts. This type of acknowledgement was absent from *Prevent 2006*. However, the acknowledgement that *Prevent* can work in different contexts, like other disclaimers, gets lost in the narrative where Islam has been framed as a problem. The continued securitization of Islam will result in the

strengthening of the binary setting Muslim Communities apart from the UK. This binary was subtle in the 2006 strategy, but now it intensifies. This happens due to two things: the securitization of the belief and behaviour and the construction of the foreigner within.

Up until now, it has been very clear that Islam has been securitized in the official causal story of terrorism in Britain. This securitization has also resulted in the construction of boundaries between Islam, the Muslim World, the Muslim Community and the UK. The construction of boundaries pretty much reflected the typical security boundary of the insider and the insider, but what we start to see in *Prevent 2009* is the outside moving in. In other words, British Muslims Communities in particular start being securitized. This is a natural progression of the causal story's placement of Islamic ideology as the central piece of both the label and the process of terrorism, which continues to happen in *Prevent 2009*.

The new strategy takes this to a new level. *Contest 2006* securitized Islam, but in *Contest 2009*, certain types of behaviour and belief are also securitized. This is illustrated by the increased police role in Prevent:

the role of law enforcement agencies is as important to Prevent as it is to Pursue. A Major new police Prevent Strategy and Delivery Plan was launched in 2008 with 300 new ring-fenced staff being recruited in 24 forces to work alongside the national and regional counter-terrorism policing structure... *The police will identify and take action against individuals who are promoting violence and are intent on recruiting often vulnerable young people into terrorist networks. The police can also identify places where radicalisers may operate and where vulnerable individuals may be located and provide assistance to them.*

(HM Government 2009, 85, paragraph 9.16,  
emphasis added)

The focus on policing was entirely absent from *Prevent 2006* and reflects a new focus on early intervention in stopping terrorism. Moreover, the second part of the quote reflects the overarching concern with ideology. Unlike in *Pursue*, where the police are focused on terrorism offences and disrupting plots, police officers in *Prevent* are focused on stopping the extremist ideology spreading. The focus is then not on open criminal behaviour, but on belief. The involvement of police work automatically adds an element of criminality to behaviour and belief which is not necessarily criminal.

This is exacerbated by the creation of the Channel programme, a counter-radicalisation programme:

[The Channel programme is] coordinated by the police and local authorities, which aims to identify those at risk from violent extremism and provide help to them, primarily through community based interventions. There are currently 11 Channel sites; another 15 are planned.

(HM Government 2009, 90, paragraph 9.24)

This is the only mention of Channel in the *Prevent* section of the strategy save from a small footnote on a later page. So based on the information contained in the narrative, Channel fosters a situation where Muslims will be under intense scrutiny from different directions. As such, the narrative develops from its previous incarnation to include the securitization of the behaviours of British

Muslims, framing them as being in constant need of surveillance and intervention.

*Disempowering the Muslim Community*

Intervention is also justified through the continued framing of the Muslim community as passive actors in the causal story. For example, one of Prevent's objectives is supporting individuals vulnerable to violent extremism, which further rationalises intervention:

Apologists for violent extremism very often target individuals who, for a range of reasons, are vulnerable to their messages. Vulnerability is not simple a result of *actual or perceived grievances*. It may be the result of family or peer pressure, the absence of positive mentors and role models, a crisis of identity, links to criminality including other forms of violence, exposure to traumatic events (here or overseas), or changing circumstances (eg a new environment following migration and asylum). The Government will continue to prosecute those who commit criminal offences but it is also our intention to provide early support to those who are being drawn into offending.

(HM Government 2009, 89, paragraph 9.23,  
emphasis added)

There are a number of different circumstances that may lead to radicalisation. It can be anything from peer pressure to trauma; criminality to immigration. This casts the web of vulnerability to radicalisation quite widely, problematizing a wide range of behaviour and circumstances. Vulnerable individuals are thus presented as passive victims under attack from outside forces. As such, they are understood as incapable of reacting against terrorism on their own. The

implication is that left to their own devices, terrorism and violent extremism would develop unencumbered within the Muslim community.

This passivity is exacerbated by the way radicalisers are presented:

*Radicalisers exploit open spaces in communities and institutions, including mosques, educational establishments, prisons youth clubs and a wide range of private venues.* The Government will work with communities to disrupt these radicalisers using the full range of legislative powers and with those responsible for the places they use to ensure it is much harder to operate.

(HM Government 2009, 88, paragraph 9.22,  
emphasis added)

At no point in the text is there discussion of work from the Muslim community themselves to fight terrorism. However, included are extensive accounts of work done by the Government in regards to the Muslim community. The exclusion of efforts from inside the community disempowers Muslims, framing them as passive. This passivity makes Muslims complicit in the causal story of terrorism. This perceived Muslim complicity results in their securitization and their position on the them side of the us/them binary constructed in the causal story of terrorism.

The need for intervention in Muslim communities is further evident in the strategy's concern with education. With the objective of challenging ideology and disrupting those who support extremism, education is foregrounded:

working alongside Muslim scholars, faith groups and many other credible and influential voices the Government and Devolved Administrations will challenge the ideology that supports violent

extremism and support those who develop positive alternatives. Priority programmes will provide advice on communications regarding terrorist ideologies, sponsor *the wider teaching of Islam and religious education and develop citizenship education in mosque schools*.

(HM Government 2009, 88, paragraph 9.21,  
emphasis added)

The work to be done under this section remains concerned with religion. Examples include counter-ideological work and working with Muslim scholars, leaders and academics. Furthermore, there is an entire objective dedicated to increasing the resilience of communities:

*The overwhelming majority of people in all communities in this country reject violent extremism but they may not have the capacity and information to effectively challenge it.* The Government will support individuals and networks across *all sectors* (voluntary, faith, public and private) that are able to do so and provide positive alternatives to those who may be drawn to violent extremist activity.

(HM Government 2009, 90, paragraph 9.25,  
emphasis added)

There are several significant points in this paragraph. We once again have a disclaimer saying that the majority of people reject violent extremism. But this disclaimer is accompanied by the qualifier that people may not have the capacity and information to effectively challenge it. This further portrays the community as passive when it comes violent extremism. They do not support it, but are unable to challenge it. This is significant for it both problematizes communities, associating them with violent extremism and it places the responsibility of countering terrorism on them. The narrative of prevention then places the blame

for terrorism on an ideology that Muslims have a specific responsibility to challenge.

And regardless of previous disclaimers, it is clear from the examples of work given in this section that the Muslim community remains the major focus when it comes to prevention:

During 2008/09, CLG are funding over 30 national projects through the Preventing Violent Extremism Community Leadership Fund that will build the capacity of communities *and key groups such as Muslim women, young people and faith leaders...* Young people themselves can be the most credible voices and strongest advocates against violent extremism. *A Young Muslims Advisory Group has been established* to advise the Government on their role in tackling violent extremism and will now take forward a programme of *work to engage young Muslims across the country*, including holding a National Youth Conference in March 2009... *A National Muslim Women's Advisory Group* has been established with three priority areas for further work: civic participation; theological understanding; and the identification of role models... CLG are supporting a range of training programmes for *Muslim faith leaders* and facilitating an independent community-led review of training for *Muslim faith leaders* which will report in 2009.

(HM Government 2009, 90-91, paragraph 9.24,  
emphasis added)

So although the *Prevent* programme is supposed to involve all communities, in practice it focuses only on the Muslim community. This is an inevitable consequence of the causal story of terrorism being told. As we saw above, the strategy states early on that the greatest threat is from Islamic inspired terrorism.



Moreover, the narrative further explains terrorism as having Islamic roots. If the roots are in Islam, then prevention relies in intervening in the Muslim community.

The goal of *Prevent* is explaining the process of terrorism, that is, what causes people to turn to terrorism and how to prevent it. As terrorism is herein understood as caused primarily by a Islam inspired ideology, prevention will depend on countering that ideology. Since such ideology has roots in Islam, prevention will depend on intervention and change in the Muslim community. This implicates Muslim communities, creating an inherent link between them and terrorism, resulting in their placement at the centre the strategy and the narrative of terrorism, ultimately resulting in their securitization.

#### *The Foreigners Within*

If terrorism is a foreign problem, and Muslim Communities are part of the causal story, then it follows that they also have a connection with the foreign, international aspect of terrorism. The international element of *Prevent* continues to reinforce the narrative of terrorism as something coming from abroad.

Prevent work in this country has to be a part of an international strategy. *The sources and, to a large extent, the inspiration for much of the terrorism ideology are overseas.* Terrorist from or resident in the UK have at times been radicalised as well as trained overseas and *some communities here are closely connected to their countries of origin.*

(HM Government 2009, 85, paragraph 9.17,  
emphasis added)

There is clear disassociation here as the strategy directly places the sources of terrorism overseas, reinforcing the historical narrative of terrorism developed in the previous chapter. Further, this paragraph directly connects Muslim communities in the UK to foreign countries. This both implicates these communities in the story of terrorism and frames them as being Other:

As Part One of this strategy makes clear, the terrorist threat that we now face is international. In seeking to stop people becoming or supporting violent extremists, we *therefore need to work overseas, just as much as at home*, in order to understand the process of radicalisation, *to reduce the vulnerability of our diaspora communities and the countries and regions from which they come, to strengthen the voice of mainstream Islam to counter the propaganda of the extremists, and to tackle the grievances which are exploited by those extremists*. Our commitment to protecting and promoting human rights underlies all Prevent overseas efforts.

(HM Government 2009, 96, emphasis added)

This reinforces a narrative where terrorism has roots, geographically as well and ideologically, outside of the UK. By implication, the Muslim Community also begins to be strongly associated with the international, foreign aspect of the threat. This connection is made explicit in the following paragraph:

As the Home Secretary announced on 28 October 2008, UKBA will make enhanced use of the power of exclusion to ensure that those who promote violent extremism and stir up hatred in the community are excluded from entering the UK. UKBA will also make all possible use of the power to deport such people where they are UK residents, *if necessary following removal of their British Citizenship*.

(HM Government 2009, 89, paragraph 9.22,  
emphasis added)

Even if those involved in terrorism are British, their Otherness is reinforced by highlighting their immigrant connections. Consequently, Muslim Communities start to be given the condition of the Other. This is a significant development in the identity concerns present in the previous strategy. *Contest 2006* talked about community cohesion and integration playing a key role in the fight against terrorism. *Contest 2009*, on the other hand, brings with it the language of shared values. There is even a page in the *Prevent* called ‘Promoting our Shared Values’. Its location at the front of the document suggests its importance. Shared values are about national identity. The mere fact that this exists in a counter-terrorism policy reveals a nationalist, identity element to the causal story.

Firstly, this section differentiates between Islamic terrorism and other types of political violence:

As part of this strategy we will take action against those who defend terrorism and violent extremism. The Government will continue to take action outside this *strategy against those who try to defend the use of violence to further other causes (for example animal rights)*.

(HM Government 2009, 87, emphasis added)

This paragraph distinguishes between terrorism, extremism and the use of violence for other causes. As we have seen, one key difference is its framing as a foreign problem, a framing which is intensified when the strategy talks about shared national values. This is highly significant and reinforces the narrative of

terrorism as having roots, ideologically and otherwise, in Islam. It is the first differentiation between terrorism and other forms of political violence in both sections under analysis. And its subject positioning on the special page devoted to shared values is telling. By placing other forms of political violence outside this strategy, the narrative suggests that they are different from the terrorist threat and so is their relationship with national shared values. In other words, there is something about international terrorism that is different from other types.

Further,

As a Government, we will also continue to challenge views *which fall short of supporting violence and are within the law*, but which reject and undermine our shared values and jeopardise community cohesion... *We have no intention of outlawing these views or criminalising those who hold them...* But we will not hear these views in silence... *The duty on all of us – Government, citizens and communities – is to challenge* those who, for whatever reason or cause, reject the rights to which we are committed...

(HM Government 2009, 87, emphasis added)

This is referring to the behaviour and belief which is implicated in the causal story. As such, the behaviour and belief problematized in *Contest 2009* is framed as being against shared values. This gives a nationalist flavour to the binary developed through the causal story. This is further reinforced in the final sentence of this section:

We want to make it harder for violent extremists to operate in our country and win support for their activities and ideologies. *But we also need to be*

*clear about the kind of country which we want for ourselves.*

(HM Government 2009, 87, emphasis added)

This is very clear nationalistic language, and its inclusion in the policy document both reinforces the narrative that has been constructed and fundamentally changes its character. The inclusion of this section on shared values and the above paragraph are significant. They do not happen in a vacuum and are present in a strategy that places the focus of terrorism and violent extremism on Muslim communities. By implication, it suggests that Muslim communities may not share in British values, which further suggests a lack of integration and a problem with identity. As the roots of terrorism are abroad, this questions the identity of the communities, further making terrorism a problem of the Other. This is the language of nationalism and identity. As such, the causal story that began by securitizing Islam, now not only does it securitize Muslim Communities, but it frames them as Other in a nationalist binary. The government, as a story-teller, is thus disassociating itself from the Muslim Community and Islam.

### **The Policy Narrative**

*Contest 2006* constructed a narrative where ideology was at the centre of the causal story, resulting in the securitization of Islam. *Contest 2009* builds on this narrative by adding three new, interrelated developments: the framing of terrorism as a problem that comes from abroad, the securitization of the Muslim Community and the inclusion of the language of shared values. All this is achieved whilst the focus on ideology as the heart of the causal story intensifies. The narrative of terrorism now holds that terrorism is a foreign problem against shared British values, and the Muslim community plays a role in the causal story.

It is interesting to note that the new government of Gordon Brown developed the narrative constructed under Tony Blair further, rather than contradicting it or changing it entirely. There is thus a high degree of intertextuality between *Contest 2006* and *Contest 2009*, where the norms, values, and justifications for the policy mirror and reinforce each other. This suggest that the party line in regards to terrorism, Islam and Muslims remains the same across the two different governments. This is not surprising, as Gordon Brown agreed with Tony Blair on national security. What is surprising is the extent to which *Contest 2009* builds on the broader policy agenda of the previous government.

For example, community cohesion was briefly mentioned in *Contest 2006*, and yet, together with the promotion of shared values, it plays a key role in the narrative of terrorism developed in *Contest 2009*. The community cohesion strategy was a central New Labour policy, developed in the aftermath of the 2001 Northern Riots.

On the weekend of the 26<sup>th</sup> and 27<sup>th</sup> of May 2001, violence erupted across Oldham, sparked by National Front incursions, the mugging of an elderly white male and the attack by a group of white men on a house in the predominantly Asian Glodwick area of Oldham. Less than a month later, the unrest spread to Burnley, where violent clashes between white and Asian youths erupted. An Asian taxi driver was attacked by white youths and in response to rumours that white youth gangs were getting ready to attack Asian homes and businesses, a large group of young Pakistani men attacked the Duke of York pub. The next day, Asian businesses were attacked in retaliation. Finally, on the 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> of July, the violence erupted in Bradford. As we have seen, the language of

community cohesion is at the heart of *Contest 2009*, particularly the *Prevent* strategy.

The community cohesion policy has been extensively researched and critiqued (Alexander 2004, Burnett 2004, Flint and Robinson 2008, Kalra and Kapoor 2009, Kassimeris and Jackson 2012, McGhee 2005). The consensus is that the policy problematizes Asian communities, highlighting cultural difference and socioeconomic and structural problems as the background for social disturbances. The result is that, in spite of the fact that there is consistent evidence of poor housing, poorer health, and higher unemployment among minority groups in Britain, issues regarding ethnic minorities are perceived through a prism of identity and culture (Kalra and Kapoor 2009).

This is what Kassimeris and Jackson (2012) have termed the central narratives of blame and threat present in the community cohesion discourse, where structural issues such as historical policies and inequality are dismissed in favour of a focus on cultural difference. Similarly, Burnett (2004) argues that through the community cohesion prism, the causes of the riots were not found in any discriminatory political action or historical exclusion in housing and employment, but in identity. Likewise, Alexander (2004) also argues that the riots were constructed as being about foreign cultures and failed integration, rather than structural problems. This assimilates problems faced by Asian minorities into a cultural problem whilst disassociating through the dismissal of structural problems. If the underlying cause is identity, then no change in employment, education or housing could stop it from happening.

Portraying lack of integration as the cause of the disturbances further mirrors the narrative's securitization of Muslim communities. The 2009 strategy is thus an extension of the community cohesion policy, and the inclusion of shared values reflects earlier statements by Tony Blair. So although the key policy actors have shifted somewhat between the Blair and Brown administrations, the policy agenda remains the same. This is significant, for as we saw in the previous chapter, the policy agenda of New Labour reproduced and reinforced stereotypes and generalisations which contributed to anti-Muslim prejudice. As such, the differing power relations between the Muslim community and the government, is being reflected in the narrative of terrorism.

This extended narrative remains cognitively plausible because of the intensification of the process of assimilation and disassociation present in *Contest 2009*. This is particularly salient in the section presenting a historical account of the threat. In this section, groups such as the PLO, GIA and Hezbollah are assimilated into the umbrella of international terrorism, an umbrella that is specifically constructed around a perceived Islamic ideology. Like in *Contest 2006*, there is no detailed attempt to differentiate between the ideology implicated in terrorism, and Islam in general. The *Contest 2009* disclaimers on this issue are noticeably weaker than in the previous strategy. Moreover, the government exercises its power as story-teller by completely removing itself and the UK from the causal story, by invalidating grievances and presenting events such as the Iraq War and Guantanamo Bay using conditional language. These dialectic assimilative and dissociative processes work together to construct a simple causal story where terrorism is a problem of the Other, which is never contradicted in the policy papers. As such, the inclusion of shared values to the



narrative is also cognitively plausible, after all, the narrative places the roots of terrorism, both geographically and ideologically, outside the UK. So framing terrorism as being against shared national values makes sense.

The dramatic stakes of the terrorism narrative are also raised in the 2009 policy documents. This assimilation of disparate threats onto a genealogy of terror allows for the strategy to frame terrorism as a threat of enormous proportions. Not only that, but the 'us versus them' binary constructed through the narrative is in itself very dramatic. This binary and the emphasis on shared British values add another layer of drama, suggesting an existential threat. Further, by excluding the Iraq War and other instances of Western action in the Middle East from the causal story, the narrative remains morally compelling. After all, the UK is presented as the victim of a senseless, unjustified attack. If its role in terrorism was acknowledged, then the morally compelling aspect of the narrative would have weakened.

Finally, the inclusion of shared values alters the character of the narrative of terrorism giving it a certain nationalist flavour. It is telling that a concern with shared values surfaces in the Prevent section of the strategy, that is, the section concerned with the process of terrorism. This strongly suggests that lack of shared values plays a central role in the process of terrorism, in the official government's explanation of why people turn to terror. As such, another perceived interest begins to emerge. The Blair government appeared to be solely constructing a narrative of terrorism in order to legitimise and justify its actions. But the introduction of nationalist language in *Contest 2009*, especially in the imperative that 'we need to be clear what kind of country we want for ourselves', suggests that the Brown government is also partaking in the construction of

national identity. So as *Contest 2009* seeks to construct knowledge about terrorism, it develops a narrative which securitizes Islam and Muslim using the nationalist language of shared British values. This is significant, because up to now, the reason behind the selective deployment of the terrorist label rested only on the narrative framing terrorism as a Muslim problem. But if the narrative is also framing terrorism as a problem of the non-British Other, a ‘foreign problem’, then the selective use of the terrorism label may be about more than the construction of security – but also about the construction of identity.

## **Chapter 5: Contest 2011 – Further Securitizing Identity**

### **Chapter Overview**

*Contest 2011* is the product of a completely new administration, the coalition government of the Conservatives and the Liberal Democrats. It was conceived as a direct response to the criticism levelled at *Contest 2009*, namely that it stereotyped and spied on Muslims. Not only does *Contest* and *Prevent 2011* reinforce the construction of terrorism as a ‘foreign’ problem, it frames British Muslims as Others. This is achieved by the development of the language of shared values and the connection made between identity, extremism and terrorism, which results in the securitization of identity.

This chapter will demonstrate that the 2011 policy was riddled with contradictions and so struggled to satisfy the criteria of cognitive plausibility. This is a direct result of the change in key policy actors with the new coalition government and the desire to set the new policy apart from the previous incarnations. However this, and the possible clashing policy agenda between the Liberal Democrats and the Conservatives, resulted on the presence of an alternative narrative. However, that narrative was weak and contradictory and could not stand against the might of the original narrative.

As the final version of the UK counter-terrorism policy, at least for the time being, *Contest 2011* and *Prevent 2011* provide the latest developments of the causal story of terrorism in the UK. The latest British narrative of terrorism in the still rests on a causal story that places ideology as the central causal factor. This ideology is framed as deeply connected with Islam. Consequently, Muslims are implicated in the causal story. Moreover, the narrative has clear nationalist

characteristics, as it constructs binaries which securitize identity. As such, the narrative of terrorism developed by the government securitizes Islam, Muslim Communities, their behaviour and their identity. The selective use of the terrorist label by the British government is thus anchored on a nationalist narrative of terrorism, which places Muslims and their identity at the core of the terrorist threat. As such, this selective use of the terrorist label is more than a reflection of the securitization of Muslims. It is also an active tool in the social construction of British national identity.

### **Introduction**

Unlike *Contest 2006*, *Contest 2009* faced a lot of scrutiny and criticism, particularly in regards to the *Prevent* strategy. Thomas (2010, 445) provides the most comprehensive summary of all the criticism levelled at *Prevent* to date:

PVE has focused on Muslim communities only.... [this] focus has been a vehicle for surveillance and intelligence-gathering by police and security services, so antagonising the very communities that PVE is trying to win over. This focus on Muslims is in stark contradiction to wider government priorities of community cohesion, and may well be having damaging consequences as a result. Finally, the actual design and implementation of PVE has led to very significant tension between government departments at national level, and between different agencies at a local level.

The focus on Muslims was an inevitable consequence of the causal story constructed through the previous strategies. After all, by securitizing Islam and Muslims and overlooking other explanations for the threat, it was inevitable that *Prevent* would target the Muslim community in Britain. This logic is present

quite vividly in the Preventing Violent Extremism Pathfinder Fund, *Prevent's* funding procedure. The strategy distributed money to help local authorities fight violent extremism to priority areas based solely on demographics. Any Local Authority with a Muslim population of at least 5% was automatically given *Prevent* funding (Wandsworth Borough Council 2010).

Basing funding priorities on demographics is a clear example of the narrative which places Islam and Muslims at the heart of the causal story. Under the 2006 and 2009 strategy, British Muslims were considered targets of counter-terrorism strategy based solely on their presence in a local authority area, whether or not there was any evidence of extremism. The implication from the following strategy is clear, the bigger the Muslim population, the bigger the threat. This mirrors the way minority communities were seen as sites of instability and insecurity after the 2001 riots (Alexander 2004).

As a result *Prevent* money was consistently spent in community cohesion projects affecting the Muslim community. For example, the London Borough of Merton received a total of £394,596 *Prevent* funding from 2008 to 2010 (Merton Borough Council 2010). Some of this money was spent on funding for cultural and identity projects in Ricard's Lodge High School, a Sports day run by the South London Tamil Welfare Group and after-school lessons to the South London Refugee Association (Merton Borough Council 2010). Merton also funded a Muslim Heritage Project run by the Asian Youth Alliance, Islamic Awareness Workshops and work with Muslim girls and young women. It is interesting that the South London Tamil Welfare Group was funded using counter-terrorism money (Merton Borough Council 2010). The Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (widely known as the Tamil Tigers) was an organisation that

fought a nationalist campaign for independence during the Sri Lankan Civil War. The Tamil Tigers would be considered a terrorist group in line with the legal British definition and approach. But overall, the money was overwhelmingly spent in either community or religious projects affecting Muslims. This further reflects the association between Islam and security, where interfaith projects and spaces are viewed through the prism of national security. Critics argued that these projects are indeed valuable at a community level, but the problem is that official engagement with the Muslim community was done through the lens of national security.

This association is further highlighted by the surveillance aspect of *Prevent* (Birt 2009, Kundnani 2009). In the funding period of 2008-2009, Bromley Borough Council used *Prevent* money to buy an Automatic Number Plate Recognition (ANPR) system as well as a CCTV System (Bromley Borough Council 2013). The lack of ring-fencing allows for this type of purchase, but there is no denying the suggestion of spying on communities when counter-terrorism money is used to purchase methods of surveillance. In 2010, it was revealed that hundreds of surveillance cameras were targeted at two predominantly Muslim areas of Birmingham in a police project called Project Champion (Lewis 2010b). About 150 ANPR cameras were installed in these areas, three times the number of cameras used to monitor Birmingham's city centre. The cameras were purchased with a £3 million grant from the Terrorism and Allied Matters (TAM) fund. TAM is a government fund administered by the Association of Chief Police offices and not associated with *Prevent*. The council argues that the cameras were to be used to monitor general criminal activities and anti-social behaviour, but the funding criteria for TAM states that the police force must prove a project

will deter, prevent or help to prosecute terrorist activity (Lewis 2010a). Following public outcry, Project Champion ceased within a few weeks and the cameras were removed after never being switched on (Lewis 2010b).

So turning back to the question of the selective use of the terrorist label by the government, it would seem again to rest on the relentless association between Islam, Muslims and terrorism in the government's official understanding of terrorism. And it would also seem that this relentless association was being noticed and criticised from different quarters. One of those quarters, the Liberal Democrats, would soon find themselves part of a government that would published a revised version of Contest. The coalition government of the Conservatives and the Liberal Democrats, led by David Cameron as Prime Minister, came to power in May 2010. Nick Clegg, the leader of the Liberal Democrats, became Deputy Prime Minister. One of the priorities of the new coalition government was a review of counter-terrorism strategy.

### ***Contest 2011: Endorsing the Causal Story***

*Contest 2011* was published in June 2011. It is markedly different than its predecessors. *Part 1: The Strategic Context*, the part of the strategy concerned with explaining the threat is fairly small, only 16 pages. It is very descriptive, comprising mostly of lists of arrests and terrorist events. It begins by actively endorsing the narrative constructed in the previous strategy papers:

*This chapter briefly traces the development of the terrorist threat since 2009 with specific reference to the UK. It reflects on the planning assumptions which guided the earlier CONTEST [sic] strategy, and were used as a basis for the CONTEST response. In 2009 we judged that Al Qa'ida was unlikely to survive in its current form; that its*

affiliates would develop more autonomy; that terrorists would seek to use new technologies to conduct lethal operations; and that the threat to the UK was likely to diversify. These assumptions have proved to be substantially correct.

(HM Government 2011a, 21, paragraph 2.3,  
emphasis added)

So ideology continues to be the centre point of the causal story. Interestingly, the nationalist binary, developed in the 2009 strategy is reflected in how the strategy differentiates between local and foreign threats..

*Downplaying Northern Ireland Related and Far-Right Terrorism.*

The most significant development in the section explaining the threat is the discussion on what it refers to as Northern Ireland Related Terrorism (NIRT) and the inclusion of far-right terrorism, the latter of which had been excluded from both previous incarnations of *Contest*. This is a direct response to criticism of the 2009 strategy, which claimed that it disproportionately focused on the Muslim Community (Kundnani 2009, Martin 2014, Heath-Kelly 2012, 2013). Nonetheless, although it is included in the narrative, the threat from far-right terrorism is considered to be minimal:

In recent years, extreme right-wing terrorism in the UK *has been much less widespread, systematic or organised than terrorism associated with Al Qa'ida*. There are 14 people currently serving prison sentences in this country for terrorism offences who are known to be associated with extreme right-wing groups, *though none of these groups are themselves terrorist organisations*. In 2010 two people motivated by extreme right-wing ideology were convicted for preparing a terrorist attack using a simple poison; another was jailed for 11 years *for assembling one of the largest arms*



*cache found in recent years in England;* and another person was convicted for disseminating terrorist publications.

(HM Government 2011a, 30, paragraph 2.39,  
emphasis added)

Notably, the discussion of far-right extremism is filled with disclaimers. At the same breath that the strategy claims a right-wing extremist was found with the largest arm cache in recent years, the threat is downplayed by predicates such as *much less widespread*. A direct comparison is made with terrorism associated with Al Qa'ida, and Al Qa'ida is still considered to be the biggest threat. Further, the above paragraph mentions that people were motivated by right-wing ideology to carry an attack, but no detail or discussion on right-wing ideology is provided. The inclusion of far-right extremism is thus interesting, for the strategy downplays its significance. As such, it even though it is included in the strategy, it does not play a role in the causal story.

Something similar happens to the discussion on Northern Ireland Related Terrorism (NIRT):

Despite the significant and continuing progress in stabilising the political situation in Northern Ireland, some republican terrorist groups continue to carry out terrorist attacks. *Support for NIRT remains low and dissident groups do not represent mainstream opinion across Northern Ireland*. But the frequency of these attacks has increased significantly, from 22 in 2009 to 40 in 2010. There have been 16 attacks to the end of June 2011 including the murder of Police Constable Ronan Kerr in April 2011. Many more attacks have been successfully disrupted... Between January 2009 and December 2010 there were 316 arrests in connection with terrorism-related activity in Northern Ireland... In May 2011 a number of

coded warnings were received which suggested a bomb had been left in a central London location. These were the first coded warnings related to Great Britain from Northern Ireland terrorist groups for ten years.

(HM Government 2011a, 30, paragraph 2.35 - 2.37, emphasis added)

The language is absolute in stating that NIRT is not a problem. Again, this is contrasted with the general information in the paragraph that the threat from NIRT has increased by quite a significant margin. However, the text is careful to temper the threat with a firm disclaimer that this threat is unrepresentative of the population of Northern Ireland. This is in stark contrast with the way the strategy continues to frame what it calls Islamic inspired terrorism:

Al Qa'ida, Al Qa'ida affiliates, other terrorist groups and lone terrorists have all been active in the UK over the past two years. They have tried to conduct attacks, recruit people in the UK to conduct attacks overseas, raise funds and distribute propaganda.

(HM Government 2011a, 26, paragraph 2.24)

There are no disclaimers saying that the threat from Al Qa'ida's and its affiliates are unrepresentative of the Muslim Community. But unlike the disclaimers to do with the Muslim Community seen in the previous strategies, the one involving far-right extremism and NIRT do not have to contend with qualifying predicates. Policy narratives must be cognitively plausible in order to be successful. The inclusion of a discussion on NIRT and far-right extremism could have in theory changed the causal story carefully constructed in the previous two strategies, removing the focus on the Muslim community. Perhaps this is what the strategy

was aspiring to do. However, in practice, that does not happen. The strong disclaimers attached to the discussion on far-right extremism and NIRT do not challenge the cognitive plausibility of the narrative constructed in the previous two strategies and they do not change the causal story.

This is especially so as *Contest 2011* reinforces the importance of the ideology, even as it acknowledges that Al Qa'ida has weakened:

It would be premature to conclude that because Al Qa'ida has comprehensively failed, its ideology has been widely or conclusively discredited. We continue to believe that aspects of that ideology has now been more visibly exposed to more people than at any time before: this represents a strategic opportunity for us and other countries around the world.

(HM Government 2011a, 36, paragraph 2.58)

Ideology is still framed as the key aspect of the threat story:

*Central to the development of any movement or group is an ideological framework. Ideology offers its believers a coherent set of ideas that provide the basis for organised political action, whether it is intended to preserve, modify or overthrow the existing system of power. Ideology may also inform strategy and also acts as a binding factor in the absence of hierarchical organisational command structures or leaders.*

(HM Government 2011a, 35, paragraph 2.50,  
emphasis added)

So ideology is still the central cocktail, and it continues to securitize Islam. However, this leads to a series of contradictory positions in the narrative. At the

same time as the strategy states that the threat from NIRT and far-right extremism has increased, it downplays it. After all, even though the threat from NIRT and far-right extremism has, it is not part of the narrative of terrorism constructed in the policy papers. This suggests a conflict between the authors of the story. This conflict is reflected in the continued presence of small contradictions in both *Contest* and *Prevent 2011*. This contradiction constructs a small, weak counter-narrative running through the text. A counter-narrative which, if successful, would have significantly changed the causal story, removing Islam and ideology from its centre. As will be explored below, this counter-narrative pales in comparison with the strength of the endorsement of the original narrative. The need for narrative to be cognitively plausible results in the discarding of the counter-narrative.

#### *Local vs Foreign Threats*

One of the ways in which the original causal story is reinforced, is by the continued presence of a binary with nationalist undertones. This is reflected in the way the strategy differentiates between local and foreign threats. For example, Al Qa'ida is still framed as the greatest threat and the effort is made to differentiate them from right-wing extremism:

People involved in extreme right-wing groups have not received the same training, guidance or support as those who have engaged with Al Qa'ida or Al Qa'ida influenced organisations. Nor have they ever aspired or planned to conduct operations on the scale of those planned by Al Qa'ida.

(HM Government 2011a, 30, paragraph 2.40)

The threat from right-wing groups is thus downplayed, and relegated to the background. Contrast this to the reoccurring foregrounding of the connection made between terrorism, Islam, and countries with predominantly Muslim populations:

In 2009 there were about 11,000 terrorist attacks around the world causing nearly 15,000 casualties. *Attacks took place primarily in Pakistan, Afghanistan and Iraq.* The victims of the attacks were mainly Muslim and the perpetrators primarily Al Qa'ida linked terrorist groups. In 2010 over 11,500 terrorist attacks caused more than 13,000 fatalities; the vast majority of the attacks were *still carried out by Al Qa'ida and associated terrorist groups.* *Most attacks continue to take place in Afghanistan, Pakistan, Somalia and Iraq and the majority of the victims are Muslim.*

(HM Government 2011a, 21-22, paragraphs 2.4-2.5, emphasis added)

Moreover, the way that the threat is presented almost exactly mirrors the way NIRT and far-right extremism are framed. As we have seen, NIRT and far-right related threats are clearly stated to be increasing, but this information is followed or preceded by strong disclaimers saying that this is unrepresentative of the population, coming from small minorities, or unsophisticated groups. This is in stark contrast to the way Al Qa'ida or Islamic inspired terrorism is framed. At one stage, there is a discussion on how Al Qa'ida is less operationally capable 'than any time since September 11 2001' (HM Government 2011a, 22). Moreover, page 27 contains several pie-charts showing that the threat from international terrorism has declined whilst the threat from NIRT has increased. The following paragraph also tells a similar story:

The number of arrests made in the UK on suspicion of terrorism in 2010 was 6% higher than in 2009 (335 arrests in 2010 compared to 315 arrests in 2009). The number of arrests on suspicion of international terrorism in 2010 was 50% lower than in 2009 (down from 155 arrests in 2009 to 76 arrests in 2010); but the number of arrests in connection with terrorism-related activity in Northern Ireland in 2010 was 98% higher than in 2009 (up from 106 to 2010). The number of Northern Ireland Related Terrorism (NIRT) arrests in Great Britain was relatively small over the same period, dropping from six arrests in 2009 to one arrest in 2010).

(HM Government 2011a, 26, paragraph 2.29,  
emphasis added)

Nonetheless, in spite of the statements saying international terrorism declined whilst NIRT increased, it is international terrorism that is continually portrayed as the biggest threat. Therefore, in spite of these slight contradictions, *Contest 2011* continues to follow the narrative of terrorism developed in the previous two strategies. The presupposition of terrorism being an urgent threat with Islamic characteristics is not challenged in any significant way. Furthermore, there is no normative language accompanying the discussion on NIRT and far-right extremism. At no point are they described as malignant, poisonous or distortions, all words used to describe the threat associated with Islamic extremism in the previous strategies. When it comes to intentionality, the government may have indeed used these words to distinguish Islamic extremism from Islam in general. Nonetheless, the predicates used in this case carry a persistent, normative, pejorative tone, which is absent from the discussion on NIRT and far-right extremism. This is the fact that NIRT and far-right extremism is never placed

in any binary, never presented as being against shared values, contributes to the securitization of the Muslim community. It is important to note that the language of shared values is only brought up when discussing Islamic extremism. This in turn causes NIRT and far-right extremism to be localised, not considered to be international and, by extension, not foreign. Islamic extremism, on the other hand, is always described using normative language, and consistently associated with the Other.

Conversely, threats that fall under the 'Islamic' label remain in a nationalist dichotomy, treated as an all-encompassing international problem directly affecting the UK. This is seen in the way other terrorist groups continue to be assimilated into a global concern. For example, the strategy has this to say regarding Pakistani terrorist groups:

Many other terrorist groups remain active in the FATA and more widely in Pakistan. Some have a purely sectarian agenda; others regard the West, India and Indian administered Kashmir as priority targets. We judge that Lashkar-e Tayyiba (LeT, meaning 'Army of the Pure or Righteous') is the most capable. Although in theory banned since 2002 LeT has a front organisation (Jamaat-ud-Dawa) in Pakistan which engages in relief work, social welfare and education programmes. It conducts attacks in Afghanistan. In the West, it recruits, raises funds and has also planned operations.

(HM Government 2011a, 24, paragraph 2.18,  
emphasis added)

Other groups mentioned are Al Shabaab in Somalia and Boko Haram in Nigeria, with the strategy claiming a connection between all of them, Al Qa'ida, and with

the UK. This continues with the pattern of assimilating diverse threats into a monolithic international threat unified around what it considers to be Islamic ideology.

For example, the strategy has this to say on the threat to India:

Many Al Qa'ida inspired terrorist groups continue to plan attacks across South, and South East Asia. India faces terrorist attacks not only from Kashmiri inspired terrorist groups but also from an increasingly active Maoist 'Naxalite' insurgency; terrorist and insurgents killed almost two thousand people in 2010. Jemaah Islamiya continues to operate in Indonesia and aspires to conduct attacks against local and western targets.

(HM Government 2011a, 25, paragraph 2.21,  
emphasis added)

Kashmiri inspired terrorist groups have a very specific historical and geopolitical characteristic. Likewise, Naxalite groups do not share the same ideology as Jemaah Islamiya. Nonetheless, these disparate groups continue to be assimilated, reinforcing the presupposition that the threat is urgent, increasing and from abroad.

The contrast between local and foreign threats further extends to terrorist threat in Europe as a whole. For example, pages 31 to 32 are dedicated to explaining that most terrorist attacks in Europe come from separatist groups:

Most terrorist attacks in Europe in 2010 and 2009 were conducted or attempted by separatist groups and since 2007 the majority of those arrested for terrorist offences in reporting countries have been from separatist groups.

(HM Government 2011a, 31)



The information on this box is taken from the EU Terrorist Situation and Trend Report. Tellingly, the box ends with the following paragraph:

*But some important and relevant points are not picked up in the European data summarised here: in countries which face the greatest threat from Islamic terrorism, threat levels have either stayed static in the past few years or have increased; the Islamist plots disrupted across Europe have been more ambitious than those of any other groups and have sought to kill more people.*

(HM Government 2011a, 31, emphasis added)

Unlike the other claims in this section, this is not backed up anywhere. It is peculiar and further reinforces the narrative of terrorism as primarily Islamic in nature. One threat is local, the other international. Only the so called international threat is significant and treated as an actual threat. This continues to reproduce binary developed through the causal story. International terrorism comes from outside and is against shared values. Far-right extremism and NIRT are threats coming from inside. Separatist movements in Europe are also framed as coming from inside. Further, at no stage are they associated with a lack of shared values. This in essence gives the dichotomy of the causal story a nationalist characteristic. As such, the threat from Al Qa'ida and related terrorism is international, not just because it comes from abroad, but because it is against shared national values. It is not just outside the physical boundary of the country, but outside the boundary of belonging. This will become even clearer in the revised *Prevent* strategy, to be analysed below.

## **Prevent 2011**

*Prevent 2011* is an entirely different document than the previous incarnations. It is a policy paper apart from the *Contest 2011* review. And it is significantly larger than the previous strategies, comprising over 100 pages. This new policy document is 113 pages long, with 11 chapters, two annexes and with a dedicated foreword by Theresa May, the Home Secretary. It is more sophisticated, having hundreds of footnotes directly citing research as well as annexes with extra information. It includes information on *Prevent* in the devolved administrations as well as a lot more technical details regarding delivery, accountability and governance. Its size and breadth is indicative of an increased concern with radicalisation of British Muslims and the bigger role *Prevent* plays in UK counter-terrorism. After all, *Prevent* is primarily a national strategy. This increased concern is reflected in the narrative, as it begins to rely on more nationalist language.

The strategy opens with the foreword by Theresa May, which sets out the key themes of the review:

Intelligence indicates that a terrorist attack in our country is 'highly likely'. Experience tells us that the *threat comes not just from foreign nationals but also from terrorists born and bred in Britain*. It is therefore vital that our counter-terrorism strategy contains a plan to prevent radicalisation and stop would-be terrorists from committing mass murder. Osama bin Laden may be dead, but the threat from Al Qa'ida inspired terrorism is not. The Prevent programme we inherited from the last Government was flawed. It confused the delivery of Government policy to promote integration with Government policy to prevent terrorism. It failed to confront the extremist ideology at the heart of the threat we face; and in trying to reach those at risk of radicalisation,

funding sometimes even reached the very extremist organisations that Prevent should be confronting.

(HM Government 2011b, 1, emphasis added)

The predicates used to explain where the threat comes from in the above sentence, present on the first page of Prevent, are revealing: the *threat comes not just from foreign nationals but also from terrorists born and bred in Britain*. This reinforces the nationalist binary, because even though the threat also comes from inside Britain, the terrorists are never described directly as British. Rather, the predicates *born and bred* are used. This has a distancing, dissociative effect. *Prevent 2011* is thus notable for two reasons. Firstly, it demonstrates the strength of the narrative of terrorism constructed in previous strategies and secondly, it provides the clearest use of nationalist language in the UK counter-terrorism strategy.

#### *The Strength of the Original Narrative*

The weak counter-narrative present in the section discussing the threat continues is further weakened in the *Prevent* paper. For example, the focus on Islam is constant, even when the strategy directly addresses criticism levelled at the previous incarnations:

*It should be the role of Government to address some of the claims made by terrorist and extremist groups, for example the assertion that the West is at war with Islam and that it is deliberately mistreating Muslims around the world. Challenging other parts of terrorist and extremist narratives is at least partly a role for Government; but can equally be a task better addressed by people and organisations in communities in this country whose*

own experiences often best disprove the claims made for and about them. *But dealing with the theology of Al Qa'ida is only a role for Government in certain well-defined and exceptional situations. Although the Government may provide support and assistance, it must avoid seeming either to want or to endorse a particular kind of 'state Islam'.* That is certainly not our purpose. The vast majority of this work can and should only be done by communities and scholars in this country or overseas.

(HM Government 2011b, 47, paragraph 8.23-8.24, emphasis added)

The government does not want to be seen to be promoting any type of state religion. Nonetheless, the promotion of a counter-ideological narrative remains central to the strategy through its continued involvement with RICU. The Research Information and Communications Unit (RICU) was established in 2007 and it is essentially the communications arm of the *Prevent* strategy, tasked with developing a counter-narrative:

*Its function was to coordinate Government communications about the terrorist threat and our response to it and to facilitate and generate challenge to terrorist ideology and the claims made by terrorist groups...* In its first few years, RICU developed proposals about ways to describe the terrorist threat which were accurate, likely to be understood and accepted but which would not inadvertently lend credence to the claims about counter-terrorism made by extremist and terrorist groups. *Some of these proposals were adopted by Government and reflected in the language which Government used* (the term 'war on terrorism', for example, was judged to be prone to misinterpretation and has generally been avoided in this country). RICU has also conducted research to show the impact of the language it recommended.. We note here that in some respects it erred in

*seeking to make language acceptable to some in Muslim communities, at the expense of candour; and in giving more weight to forms of expression which can reach people in British Muslim communities rather than all communities in this country.*

(HM Government 2011b, 47-48, paragraph 8.28-8.30, emphasis added)

RICU is only mentioned in the briefest ways in *Prevent 2009*. So the above reveals that the construction of a counter-ideological narrative was a sophisticated, extensive process in the intervening years. This is significant for it lends credence to the methodology chosen for this analysis. After all, the government was explicitly concerned with constructing a policy narrative, its own story and version of the terrorism threat. If this is a deliberate policy narrative, then deconstructing it using CPNA is an appropriate choice.

Moreover, the policy's evaluation of previous counter-narrative work responds to the general criticism of the previous policy, namely the disproportionate focus on Islam and Muslims:

*A clearer explanation is more likely to reduce misunderstandings and correct any misconceptions – in particular, that Government is taking upon itself the role of theological arbiter or that this part of Prevent means that Government is passing judgement on Islam itself. Second, some of the early work proceeded without a clear idea of the audience for whom it was intended... At worst, it gave the impression that the Government had to convince Muslim communities in this country of something which the vast majority know very well already – that terrorism is unacceptable and wrong.*

Third, it is not yet clear whether this work has had a direct impact on the small percentage of people in this country who may be vulnerable to recruitment by terrorist organisations.

(HM Government 2011b, 50, paragraph 8.42-8.44,  
emphasis added)

Not only is this a response to the criticism of the previous incarnation of *Prevent*, it is also, ironically, a criticism of the original narrative. However, this criticism is presented using the conditional predicates: *misunderstandings* and *misconceptions*. As such, the goal of this revised policy is not to correct the mistakes of previous governments in targeting the Muslim community, but to explain that there was no targeting in the first place. It is another attempt at disassociation and a show of strength by the story-tellers as they hold on to the original causal story. However the criticism of the previous policy does not result in a successful counter-narrative. For instance, the paragraph immediately after reinforces the dominant narrative:

Finally, work to date has not recognised clearly enough the way in which some *terrorist ideologies draw on and make use of extremist ideas which are espoused by apparently non-violent organisations very often operating within the law*. We have noted this issue in considering the context for and the proper scope of *Prevent*. In the context of this section, this means that *Prevent must also challenge extremist ideas where they form part of a terrorist narrative*.

(HM Government 2011b, 50, paragraph 8.45,  
emphasis added)

The government does not want to be seen as being an arbiter for Islam, by targeting extremist ideas as well as terrorist ideologies, this legitimises a wider scope of interference with Islam. This is especially so when the distinction between terrorist ideologies and extremist ideas is never explored. So the criticism of the previous strategy is weakened by the reinforcement of the causal story: terrorism is caused by an ideology.

The same happens when *Prevent* states that integration and community cohesion work is no longer part of the strategy. The more overt aspects of the focus on Muslim community have been removed, like the demographic aspect of funding:

In the terms of reference for this review, the Home Secretary directed that Prevent should be proportionate and focused. *We regard this as particularly important because of the view that the last Prevent strategy was disproportionate – in particular, that it stigmatised communities, suggested that they were collectively at risk of radicalisation and implied terrorism was a problem specific to Muslim communities.* We judge that the strategy we outline here is proportionate to the threat we face. It recognises that the vast majority of people of all faiths in this country reject terrorism without any qualification... *The strategy will not allocate resources according to a crude calculation of Muslim population density.* It will allocate resources on the basis of risk, an assessment in turn informed not by numbers of people of any faith but by the activity we have seen by terrorist organisations and terrorist sympathisers. This is a fundamental reorientation of our Prevent work. The strategy implies no judgment on particular communities: it reflects a judgment on the groups which intend to cause us harm.

(HM Government 2011b, 40, paragraph 7.5-7.7,  
emphasis added)

*Prevent 2011* then is at pains to state that counter-terrorism work will be separate from work done on integration and community cohesion. And yet, it recognises that complete separation is not possible:

The relationship between Prevent and cohesion and integration needs to be very carefully managed. *Prevent depends on a successful cohesion and integration strategy. But, as a general rule, the two strategies and programmes must not be merged together.* Combining the strategies risks using counter-terrorism funds and delivery structures for activities which have a much wider purpose and whose success will be jeopardised by being given a security label... *Prevent depends on a successful integration strategy but that strategy by itself will not deliver the Prevent objectives.* We recognise that in some circumstances there will be exceptions to these general rules. *Some projects whose purpose goes much wider than counter-terrorism will also have such a direct benefit to Prevent-related work that they justify Prevent funding. But these projects will be the exception not the norm.*

(HM Government 2011b, 30, paragraph 6.30-6.31, emphasis added)

The impossibility of separating integration and terrorism work is a direct result of the binary and the nationalist characteristic of the narrative established in the previous strategy. As seen in the previous two chapters, the narrative of terrorism has a a explicit concern with shared values, a concern embraced by *Prevent 2011*. As such, aspects of cohesion and integration cannot fully be separated from counter-terrorism work. This not only further reinforces the narrative, but it takes the nationalist characteristic of the binary to a more direct level. If preventing terrorism depends on a successful cohesion and integration strategy,



then it depends on the promotion of national identity. As such, *Prevent 2011* is engaged on a circular argument where the counter-narrative cannot flourish. The need for the narrative to be cognitively plausible makes it easy for these contradictions to be discarded.

This discarding is made simpler by the renewed connection between terrorism and Islam. Even as the strategy admits the importance of fighting far-right extremism and the high numbers of NIRT, the focus remains on Islamic inspired terrorism:

*We believe that Prevent should be flexible enough to address the challenge posed by terrorism of any kind. Prevent programmes should be able to support people being drawn into all forms of terrorism... it is vital to understand how, historically, terrorism has drawn recruits from all parts of societies and from many faith groups. However, it is also the case that the greatest terrorist threat we currently face comes from Al Qa'ida and groups associated with it. For as long as that remains the case resources must be prioritised accordingly and focused on this area.*

(HM Government 2011b, 25, paragraph 6.11-6.12,  
emphasis added)

The issue is not so much that the threat from Al Qa'ida is framed as the greatest one, but the language and predicates that are used as the problem is explained. As in the previous strategies, the causal story remains focused on ideology:

*We judge that radicalisation is driven by an ideology which sanctions the use of violence; by propagandists for that ideology here and overseas; and by personal vulnerabilities and specific local factors which, for a range of reasons, make that ideology seem both attractive and compelling.*

(HM Government 2011b, 13, emphasis added)

The focus on ideology is more explicit than ever before. The word *grievances* has been replaced by *personal vulnerabilities* and *specific local factors*. This change is significant, because the government continues to exercise its power, this time by taking the downplaying of grievances to a different level. Personal vulnerabilities and specific local factors further remove the role of the government in grievances. They are now reduced to personal and local issues. Moreover, they are presented as significant only in as much as they make the ideology seem more attractive. The continued foregrounding of ideology ensures that the causal story remains cognitively plausible and dramatically compelling, even in the face of contradictions in the narrative.

### *Broadening Extremism*

The emphasis on ideology is both the aspect of the strategy where the strategy most ties itself into knots and what ensures that the counter-narrative is weak. Ironically, the attempts by the strategy to remove the focus on the Muslim Community only serve to increase it. To begin with, *Prevent 2011* states that it is not primarily concerned with extremism:

Whereas *Prevent* is part of CONTEST, a counter-terrorism strategy, and deals with terrorism, the Government will address the challenge of extremism – and extremist organisations in particular – primarily through *other means*. They include: the Government's new approach to promoting integration, which DCLG is leading; other parts of the criminal justice system, notably

legislation regarding religious and racial hatred; and debate and civic challenge.

(HM Government 2011b, 24, paragraph 6.2, emphasis added)

In other words, *Prevent 2011*, the strand of *Contest* concerned with the process of terrorism, is framed as not being primarily involved in fighting extremism. This is strange since the strategy acknowledges in several places that there is a strong connection between extremism and terrorism. Moreover, this is a change from *Prevent 2009* which openly focused on extremism. Further, extremism work is moved to the Department of Communities and Local Government (DCLG), which continues to connect extremism with problems of integration and belonging. This continues to add a nationalist flavour to the narrative, where extremism is seen as being outside the national boundary.

Furthermore, the decision to confine extremism to the DCLG is not successful, there is a failure to fully separate extremism and cohesion work from Prevent: and as discussed above,

Government policy regarding groups who may be associated with extremism (notably policy regarding Ministerial or official engagement) *will also be coordinated by DCLG*. But the line between extremism and terrorism is not always precise. As we have said in the first part of this document, terrorist groups very often draw on extremist ideas developed by extremist organisations. Some people who become members of terrorist groups have previously been members of extremist organisations and have been radicalised by them. Others (though not all) pass through an extremist phase. *The relationship between terrorism and extremism is therefore complicated and directly relevant to the aim and objectives of Prevent. It will not always be*

*possible or desirable to draw clear lines between policies in each of these areas.* But the lines can be clearer than they have been hitherto. That will also bring greater clarity to the *Prevent* strategy.

(HM Government 2011b, 24-25, paragraph 6.3-6.6,  
emphasis added)

This is another example of the contradictory aspect of *Prevent* 2011. Government policy regarding groups associated with extremism is to be coordinated by the DCLG, not the Home Office, making it not part of *Prevent*. But as the lines between terrorism and extremism are not sharply drawn, it is inevitable that *Prevent 2011* will continue to work with extremism and reinforce a binary.

This inability to fully separate between extremism and terrorism is evident in several places. For example, no definition of extremism is provided. The closest the strategy comes to giving us one, is the following paragraph:

We note that previous Prevent documents used the phrase ‘violent extremism’. The review found that *the term is ambiguous* and has caused some confusion in the past, most notably by *giving the impression that the scope of Prevent is very wide indeed* and includes a range of activity far beyond counter-terrorism. *We avoid using the phrase here*, although we recognise that programmes comparable to Prevent are being run in other countries under the banner of preventing or countering violent extremism.

(HM Government 2011b, 25, paragraph 6.7,  
emphasis added)

By dropping the *violent* predicate, the strategy is claiming that it narrows the scope of Prevent. But removing the predicate violent actually broadens the scope,

rather than narrowing it. The concern is now not only with extremists with connections to violence, but with extremism in general. Further, as seen above, the language suggests that extremism is still part of the remit of Prevent. This is further amplified by the failure to differentiate between extremism and terrorism. The two words are used almost as synonyms:

*Some politically extreme organisations routinely claim that: the West is perpetually at war with Islam; there can be no legitimate interaction between Muslims and non-Muslims in this country or elsewhere; and that Muslims living here cannot legitimately and or effectively participate in our democratic society. Islamist extremists can specifically attack the principles of participation and cohesion, rejection of which we judge to be associated with an increased willingness to use violence* (see pages 24-25). Islamist extremists can purport to identify problems to which terrorist organisations then claim to have a solution.

(HM Government 2011b, 20, paragraph 5.35,  
emphasis added)

The word used here is extremism, not terrorism. And yet, extremism is supposedly not to be in the remit of Prevent. The description of extremism given above chimes in perfectly with the explanations of the ideology given in the dominant narrative. Policy narratives need to be logically coherent in order to be successful. The above rationale is not coherent. This is what allows for the causal story to remain unchanged in the 2011 version of the strategy.

Furthermore, the discussion on extremism and ideology reinforces the securitization of Islam and the construction of boundaries against Muslims. The

narrative of terrorism being connected to Islam is made clear in the following paragraph:

Extreme right-wing terrorism, like Al Qa'ida-influenced terrorism *is driven by a supremacist ideology, which sanctions the use of extreme violence as a response to perceived social injustice and dysfunction. That ideology is a response to and reflects a perception that identity itself is under threat from social change.* People can be drawn to right-wing terrorist ideology through the rhetoric and language of apparently non-violent right-wing extremist groups. Peer pressure and the prospect of personal benefit are also important: one of the most common routes into extreme right-wing extremism can be through contact with like-minded people. *But extreme right-wing terrorism is not driven or justified by religion; this has a substantial impact on how we may intervene to prevent terrorism of this kind.*

(HM Government 2011b, 21, paragraph 5.43-5.44,  
emphasis added)

That last sentence on religion is significant. Not only does it directly connect Islamic extremism with religion, but it is precisely this connection which makes it different from other forms of terrorism. At first glance, many of the aspects leading to far-right extremism are the same as the ones leading to right-wing extremism: an ideology, a threatened identity, contact with propagandists etc. However, the religious aspect is enough to ensure that the two threats are treated differently. It is paragraphs like this that ensure that the original narrative is reinforced and that the counter-narrative is weak. Further, the explicit connection with religion, followed by the complete lack of differentiation between Islam and the ideology used by terrorists, ensures that the causal story remains cognitively

plausible. This also helps in the strengthening of the role British Muslims play in the causal story, as their religion is directly securitized.

#### *Further Securitizing Muslims*

The securitization of the Muslim Community also intensifies. For example, any data on the scale of radicalization is presented in such a way that problematizes the Muslim Community, in spite of the counter-narrative. For example, on a section on the scale of the threat, *Prevent 2011* draws on data from the Citizenship Survey from 2010 to analyse the scale of potential radicalisation here in the UK:

Polling in this country, notably the last Citizenship Survey in 2010, *indicates that very small percentages among all faith groups support violence as a way of dealing with injustice or in the name of religion.* This survey is largely in line with other polls in this country since 9/11 intended to assess the level of support for terrorism here and overseas. It is important to emphasise, therefore, that the aspirations of Al Qa'ida and like-minded groups in this country have not been realised. *They attract very low levels of support. There is no evidence that this support base is growing.* In the Citizenship Survey, *approval of violent extremism is higher amongst young people and for people from lower income and socio-economic groups.*

(HM Government 2011b, 16, paragraph 5.18-5.19,  
emphasis added)

To begin with, the Citizenship Survey appears to conflate terrorism with extremism, which continues to ensure that extremism remains part of the narrative and that a wide range of behaviour and belief is problematized. This is further revealed in the exact wording and percentages of the survey, provided in

the footnotes on page 16. Respondents were asked two different questions, one about violent extremism and the other about violent extremism in the name of religion: 'How right or wrong do you think it is for people to use violent extremism in Britain to protest against things they think are very unfair or unjust?' and 'Please tell me how right or wrong you think each of the following is: people in Britain using violent extremism in the name of religion, to protest or achieve a goal.' 1% of all respondents said violent extremism in general was 'always' or 'often right'. A further 5% thought it was 'sometimes right, sometimes wrong'.

The language of the question is ambiguous. The question is not whether or not it is right to use violence to protest against things that are very unfair or unjust. But whether or not it is right to use violent extremism to protest. But protest what? How does one use violent extremism? Does this mean support for violent extremism or use violence in the name of extremism? And at any rate, the percentage of the population responding positively was minimal. Additionally, the results are also presented broken down by religion: 3% of Muslims thought it was 'always' or 'often right' to use violent extremism as compared to 1% of Christians, 1% of Hindus and 1% of those with no religion.

Even more revealing are the figures regarding violent extremism in the name of religion: Less than 0.5% said the use of violent extremism in the name of religion was 'always' or 'often right'. A further 1% thought it was 'sometimes right, sometimes wrong'. So support for violent extremism was even lower when religion was involved. And yet, the connection between Islam and terrorism remains the focus not only of this paragraph, but of the strategy as a whole.



Additionally, it is significant that the percentages of those who said it was never right to do so are not revealed in the document. The exclusion of this number is important, for saying that 97% Muslims in the UK do not think it is ever right to use violent extremism is different to saying 3% of Muslims support it. By excluding the numbers of Muslims that do not support extremism, the narrative is ensuring that the focus remains on the fact that some Muslims do. Nonetheless, the footnote also presents the combined percentages of those who said violent extremism was always/often right and those who said it was sometimes right, sometimes wrong. 14% of Hindus, 12% Muslims and 9% of those with no religion chose one of these responses, which is then contrasted with the number of Christians to do so, which is 6%. The numbers are still fairly small, but by showing the combined percentage returns the focus to Islam.

After all, although the numbers are fairly small, and represent support for violent extremism in society as a whole, the focus remains on Muslim community. This is evident when *Prevent 2011* sets out its understanding of radicalisation:

So we believe that radicalisation – in this country – is being driven by: an ideology that sets Muslim against non-Muslim, highlights the alleged oppression of the global Muslim community and which both obliges and legitimises violence in its defence; a network of influential propagandists for terrorism, in this country and elsewhere, making extensive use of the internet in particular; and by specific personal vulnerabilities and local factors which make the ideology seem both attractive and compelling. The strategy which we develop in the second part of this document is based on this assessment.

(HM Government 2011b, 18, paragraph 5.25)

It is significant that, as seen before, the word *grievances* has been once again removed from the assessment, instead being substituted by *personal vulnerabilities* and *local factors*. In order to better understand what these are, the strategy turns once again to the 2010 Citizenship Survey:

The 2010 Citizenship Survey sheds further light on what we describe above as personal vulnerabilities and local factors. It has shown that support for *all kinds of violent extremism* is more prevalent not only among the young but among lower socio-economic and income groups. It has also shown that people who distrust Parliament, who believe that ethnic and faith groups should not mix, and *who see a conflict between being British and their own cultural identity are all likely to be more supportive of violent extremism. Support for extremism is significantly associated with a perception of discrimination and the experience of racial or religious harassment. It is also associated with a negative view of policing.*

(HM Government 2011b, 18, paragraph 5.26,  
emphasis added)

The footnote associated to this data does not provide a numerical breakdown of these claims. Instead it says the conclusion was reached through unpublished logistical regression done by DCLG. The lack of evidence for this claim stands out on a strategy that has hundreds of footnotes and references. Moreover, the examples given after it further reinforce the original narrative:

In June 2009, qualitative research on issues relevant to Prevent was conducted in a small number of local areas. This research broadly corroborates the Survey. *Support for violence is associated with a lack of trust in democratic government and with an aspiration to defend Muslims when they appear to be under attack or unjustly treated.* Issues which

can *contribute to a sense* that Muslim communities are being unfairly treated include so-called ‘stop and search’ powers used by the police under counter-terrorism legislation; the UK’s counter-terrorism strategy; a *perception* of biased and Islamophobic media coverage; and UK foreign policy, notably with regard to Muslim countries, the Israel-Palestine conflict and the war in Iraq.

(HM Government 2011b, 18, paragraph 5.27,  
emphasis added)

The lack of trust in democratic government is linked in the same sentence with the aspiration to defend Muslims. Although personal vulnerabilities and local factors apply to all kinds of extremism, the examples given are firmly from within the Muslim community. And these examples are filled with conditional predicates. The aspiration is to defend Muslims that *appear* to be under attack or *appear* unjustly treated. The stop and search powers, the general counter-terrorism strategy and UK foreign policy contribute to *a sense* of unfair treatment, not to factual unfair treatment. It is *perception* of a biased and Islamophobic media coverage, not factual Islamophobia or actual biases. This language comes straight out of the original narrative of terrorism, contributing to the process of disassociation and the invalidating of the concerns facing the Muslim communities. It places the blame of terrorism on misguided feelings, rather than facts. This places the onus of change in the community, not with the government or British society as a whole. It is essentially a continuation of the process of disassociation by the story-teller which was present on the previous incarnations of the strategy. As such, the narrative continues to be cognitively plausible, as the counter-narrative is too weak to effectively change the causal story of terrorism.

### *Increasing the Scrutiny of the Muslim Community*

*Prevent* is at pains to distance itself from previous work that has stigmatised the Muslim community. And yet, the strategy ends up not just continuing with the securitization of Islam and British Muslims, but it ends up effectively securitizing identity. The strategy continues to problematize the behaviour and beliefs of a monolithic Muslim Community. For example, the following are the indicators that lead to a referral to the deradicalization programme, Channel:

Channel is about stopping people becoming terrorists or supporting terrorism. It must not be confused with a strategy to deal with extremist organisations. *Where people holding extremist views appear to be attracted to or moving towards terrorism they clearly become relevant to Channel multi-agency boards. Otherwise they do not.*

(HM Government 2011b, 60, paragraph 9.29,  
emphasis added)

This is a further example of the difficulty *Prevent 2011* has of differentiating between extremism, ideology and terrorism. There is no effort to distinguish between holding extremist views and being attracted to terrorism. This results in an urgent need to scrutinize the Muslim Community in the UK. It problematizes their behaviour and belief precisely because the lines between extremism, violent extremism, terrorism and ideology are not tightly drawn. This is an effect of the strength of the established narrative, which long ago has securitized Islam and, consequently, the Muslim Community. This continues to draw a sharp binary between a monolithic Muslim Community and the British public.

This securitization of the British Muslim Community is most evident when *Prevent 2011* outlines the goals of its third objective, ‘Supporting Sectors and

Institutions Where There Are Risks Of Radicalisation’. Objective three is the most extensive one of *Prevent 2011*, suggesting the importance of the objective, summarized on the first paragraph of this section:

In the UK, evidence suggests that radicalisation tends to occur in places where terrorist ideologies, and those that promote them, go uncontested and are not exposed to free, open and balanced debate and challenge.

(HM Government 2011b, 63, paragraph 10.1-10.2)

The sectors covered in this section include: schools, universities, prisons, charities and the health sector. This illustrates how wide the scrutiny of the Muslim community has become. It is also important to note that there are no mentions of grievances. Addressing grievances, which was an objective of all previous incarnations of Prevent, is entirely absent from this strategy. The concern is not that all these sectors are vulnerable to radicalisation, but that they are central in fighting radicalisation in general:

It is important to recognise that a Prevent strategy needs to engage with many of the sectors considered here because they have the capability of addressing and resolving challenges we face. *Schools are important not because there is significant evidence to suggest children are being radicalised – there is not – but because they can play a vital role in preparing young people to challenge extremism and the ideology of terrorism and effectively rebut those who are apologists for it.* The vast majority of people who attend mosques in this country will have no sympathy with terrorism. It is exactly for that reason that they can play a vital role in reaching out to young people who may be vulnerable to radicalisation.

As such, the point of including all these sectors in the strategy is not because they are sectors vulnerable to radicalisation, but because they can help in fighting it. This contradicts the rationale for the objective, which starts by stating that radicalisation occurs in places where terrorist ideologies are uncontested. Objective three is not titled 'Supporting sectors and institutions to fight radicalisation'. Rather, the title emphasises that there are risks of radicalisation in these sectors, which increases the scope of securitization. This is further emphasised in the discussion of the specific factors. For example, the concern with education is completely directed at the Muslim community, with the focus being on faith schools and after-school activities:

Children spend a substantial amount of time attending out of school clubs and classes, online and informal social activities. With the exception of activities organised by full-time schools, *none of these activities are subject to the rules and regulations that apply to schools, although some are bound by child protection and health and safety legislation...* For a significant number of children, at least some out-of-school learning will be about faith. *Many children in England (perhaps 100,000) attend Muslim supplementary schools, sometimes referred to as madrassahs.* As with other extra-curricular activities like Scouts, sports clubs and Christian Sunday schools, there is no formal regulation or registration process and so the exact number of madrassahs in the UK is not known. *Estimates put the number of madrassahs in the UK between 700 and 2,000. Madrassahs teach Arabic and Qur'anic studies and some also offer a wider programme of religious instruction.* Most mosques have a madrassah but more informal classes are also

held in local schools, community centres or in people's homes. Children, usually aged between four and fourteen, *attend madrassahs after school or at the weekend.*

(HM Government 2011b, 66-68, paragraph 10.26-10.28, emphasis added)

This redirects the concern back to Islam. Paragraph 10.29, immediately after the above, discusses the number of young people that have been convicted of terrorism, further connecting education with extremism:

The youngest person convicted of terrorism-related offences in this country in recent years was 16. He was 15 at the time when he was recruited by a terrorist group. At least 3 separate Al Qa'ida-related operations in this country (in 2003, 2005 and 2006) have involved people who, to varying extents, became involved in extremism while they were at school. Of the 127 convictions for terrorism-related offences associated with Al Qa'ida, 11 have been committed by people in the age range of 15-19.

(HM Government 2011b, 67, paragraph 10.29)

However, the following paragraph suggests that the focus on the Muslim Community and education happens even though there is no evidence of systemic radicalisation of young people:

We have seen no systematic attempt to recruit or radicalise people in full time education in this country, either in the state or independent sector. But we do know that some people who are supportive of terrorist groups and ideologies have sought and sometimes gained positions in schools or in groups which work closely with young people. One of the 7/7 bombers, for example, worked as a learning mentor with children at a school in Leeds.

(HM Government 2011b, 67, paragraph 10.30)

So there is no evidence of systematic radicalisation of young people. But the interference will come anyway because there is evidence that some radicalisers are interested in schools. The narrative thus justifies scrutiny of the Muslim Community at a very young age.

The rationale for involvement in universities is very similar, resting primarily on the fact that some convicted terrorists have been to university:

*More than 30% of people convicted for Al Qa'ida-associated terrorist offences in the UK between 1999 and 2009 are known to have attended university or a higher education institution. Another 15% studied or achieved a vocational or further education qualification. About 10% of the sample were students at the time when they were charged or the incident for which they were convicted took place. These statistics roughly correspond to classified data about the educational backgrounds of those who have engaged recently in terrorist-related activity in this country: a significant proportion has attended further or higher education. Some students were already committed to terrorism before they began their university courses... Other students were radicalised while they studied at university, but by people operating outside of the university itself... a third group of students appear to have been attracted to and influenced by extremist ideology while at university and engaged in terrorism-related activity after they had left.*

(HM Government 2011b, 72-73, paragraphs 10.61-10.63, emphasis added)

Further, the main concern in higher education appears to be with the potential presence of controversial speakers, which renews the focus on ideology:



Higher education institutions and student unions can be *challenged on whether they have given due consideration to the public benefit and associated risks notably when they, or one of their affiliated societies, invite controversial or extremist speakers to address students*. Student unions and higher education institutions should also take an interest in the activities and views being expressed within affiliated societies to ensure compliance with charities legislation, which includes provisions relating to human rights, equalities and political neutrality.

(HM Government 2011b, 72, paragraph 10.59,  
emphasis added)

But the text recognises that these controversial speakers are not necessarily terrorist supporters. This suggests an increased concern with the behaviour of Muslims, even if that behaviour falls short of actual support for terrorism. The increased concern with Muslim behaviour further causes their securitization.

This behaviour is securitized to a great extent. The focus on higher education is thus primarily about Muslim students. Paragraph 10.67 says that after the failed Detroit bombing, Universities UK, the main higher education umbrella body, found that the higher education sector does need to be vigilant and aware of extremism. Paragraph 10.72 says that in 2009 BIS identified about 49 English universities where there may be particular risk of radicalisation on campus. Some universities now have a dedicated police officer to deal with radicalisation (10.75). All of the above suggests a renewed securitization of Muslims not just Muslim communities, but the behaviour and beliefs of individuals.

The securitization of Muslim behaviour and belief is augmented by the inclusion of several new sectors in counter-terrorism policy. Muslim communities are thus

part of scrutiny in several sectors. *Prevent 2011* presents an all-encompassing, multi-agency approach where intervention on radicalisation happens at every level:

Wherever possible, the partnership should comprise social services, policing, children's services, youth services, UKBA, representatives from further and higher education, probation services, schools, local prisons, health and others as required by local need... In the past, local authorities have worked together effectively, sometimes sharing and pooling resources. We encourage greater levels of partnership working between local authorities and partners in future.

(HM Government 2011b, 97, paragraph 11.12)

As such, the fight against terrorism becomes part of almost virtually every sector of government, which matches the narrative of a continuous, persistent threat. For example, the health sector is identified as a key centre for helping with deradicalisation efforts because of the sheer size of the sector and the fact that healthcare workers may come into contact with people vulnerable to radicalisation:

*Given the very high numbers of people who come into contact with health professionals in this country, the sector is a critical partner in Prevent.* There are clearly many opportunities for doctors, nurses and other staff to help protect people from radicalisation. The key challenge is to ensure that healthcare workers can identify the signs that someone is vulnerable to radicalisation, interpret those signs correctly and access the relevant support.

(HM Government 2011b, 85, paragraph 10.143, emphasis added)

The involvement of the healthcare sector serves to further inflate the threat. It also contributes to the heightened scrutiny of the Muslim community. This is further illustrated by the stated need to include *Prevent* as a part of the undergraduate curriculum of students training for health qualifications:

There are some 12,000 students training for health qualifications within universities each year. *Work has started to ensure that Prevent is included in the undergraduate curriculum.* Current activity needs to be extended to cover the premises where university clinical training takes place within the healthcare estate.

(HM Government 2011b, 85, paragraph 10.139,  
emphasis added)

Suggesting that medical students should learn about preventing extremism reinforces both the enormity of the threat and the need to be vigilant about specific behaviours. As the narrative reinforces the connection between terrorism and Islam, it is thus likely to be reinforcing the positioning of Muslims outside the British boundary. If the threat comes from abroad, then behaviour and belief connected to the threat also comes from abroad.

Unsurprisingly, there is also a section on faith institutions and organisations. This is in spite of the fact that, as we have seen above, *Prevent 2011* is at pains to distance the government from intervening in religion. The section begins:

*Historically, many terrorist groups have tried to legitimise their actions by reference to theology. Religion has provided both a motivation and an apparent justification for their actions. Contemporary terrorist groups therefore belong to a tradition: Al Qa'ida and like-minded organisations seek to radicalise and recruit people using what purports to be a theological argument. Members of Al Qa'ida often also seek specific*

religious sanction and approval for terrorist operations. That approval is sometimes provided by other members of Al Qa'ida who claim religious credibility, sometimes by members of other organisations *and sometimes by people with no direct contact with any terrorist group but who broadly support their ideology, aims and objectives.*

(HM Government 2011b, 80, paragraph 10.114,  
emphasis added)

The first sentence claims that historically, many terrorist groups have sought to use religion as a legitimiser. But no examples of religious inspired terrorism are given other than Islam. This is the narrative at work. The final sentence is also interesting for it places people who have no direct contact with terrorist groups, but broadly support their ideology, aims and objectives as part of the *Prevent* strategy. This chimes in with the broadening effect of *Prevent 2011* and is in direct contradiction to the claim that work with extremism is outside the remit of the strategy. This further highlights the strength of the presupposition and the causal story in the narrative. After all, in spite of the contradictions, the narrative that terrorism is primarily caused by an ideology that comes from abroad and its connection to Islam remains unchallenged.

Although the policy states that all faiths have a history with terrorism, the only examples are related to Islam. As such, the counter-narrative is ineffective as by this point Islam and terrorism are intrinsically linked. This link is encouraged by the summary of the activity to date on *Prevent* and faith institutions where all examples given are related to work with mosques or madrassahs (10.119 – 10.123). One in particular, spoken of briefly in *Prevent 2009*, brings identity back into the equation:

DCLG and DfE have helped to develop lesson materials for madrassahs. The aim of this programme (Islam and Citizenship Education, or ICE) was *to provide teachers with the tools to demonstrate to young Muslims that their faith is compatible with wider shared values and that being a Muslim is also compatible with being a good citizen*. Using DCLG Prevent funding, some local authorities have also supported Prevent-related initiatives with mosques. The DCLG ‘Community Leadership Fund’ (under the auspices of Prevent) was intended to support Muslim organisations and communities.

(HM Government 2011b, 81, paragraph 10.123,  
emphasis added)

This paragraph directly says that Muslims need to be taught that their faith is compatible with shared values. Consequently, this is direct nationalist language, implicating that there is a boundary of belonging that British Muslims do not automatically fit into. This marks the beginning of the securitization of identity, which comes directly from the securitization of Muslim behaviour and belief.

### *Securitizing Identity*

The implicit concern with identity present in *Prevent 2009* and the nationalist binary now becomes explicit:

There is evidence to indicate that support for terrorism is associated with rejection of a cohesive, integrated, multi-faith society and of parliamentary democracy. *Work to deal with radicalisation will depend on developing a sense of belonging to this country and support for our core values*.

(HM Government 2011b, 13, emphasis added)

Extremism and terrorism are thus directly connected with a lack of a sense of belonging and lack of support for shared values. This is clear nationalist language which results in the framing of Muslims as Other, alongside international terrorism. Successful deradicalisation thus depends on developing a sense of belonging and promoting shared British values. In other words, it depends on promoting and strengthening a shared British identity. The focus on British identity questions the identity of the terrorists, especially those born in the UK:

Recent open source research provides insight into the background of people convicted of Islamist terrorism-related offences over the past ten years... *Most were British. Almost 25% had links to Pakistan – either as British nationals with Pakistani heritage or Pakistani nationals - and almost 15% to East Africa (notably Somalia)...* These statistics track very closely with classified analysis of people engaged in terrorism-related activity who have not yet been convicted. There are important overseas aspects to the radicalisation process in this country. A large number of people who have engaged in terrorism in this country have come here from overseas, notably from countries in the Muslim-majority world which have been affected by conflict and instability: *most of those convicted here between 1999 and 2009 were British nationals but fewer than half were born in this country. Similar percentages have been found among people who have engaged in terrorist-related activity and who have not been convicted.* Many people who have been radicalised here have been significantly influenced by propagandists for terrorism who are based overseas and in many cases they have spent time in a current or historic theatre of conflict in the Muslim-majority world. Some have been influenced by the time they have spent in religious institutions in their countries. Many have been recruited while they have been travelling or resident overseas.

(HM Government 2011b, 19, paragraph 5.30-5.33,  
emphasis added)

The above paragraph reinforces the foreign aspect of both the threat and those responsible for the threat. Now that identity is a concern, it is not just the foreign aspect of terrorism that is important. Rather, there is an effort to highlight the foreign connections of those involved with extremism. If terrorism is international, so are the people involved in it. This is further highlighted during a discussion of immigration and visa policy:

FCO and UKBA are considering how to deliver unambiguous messages about extremism and terrorism, and the penalties involved, *through the visa application and issuing process. Such an approach would also include advice about our core values, including our belief in human rights, democracy and the rule of law.* UKBA will consider which communications messages and channels would be most effective as a priority and will offer solutions to Ministers.

(HM Government 2011b, 53, paragraph 8.68,  
emphasis added)

This suggests not only that terrorism comes from abroad; reinforcing the original narrative, but that it also is due to a lack of shared values. Therefore, there is a new level of securitization, where not just Muslim communities are being securitized, but Muslim identity. This development chimes in with the previous strategies, providing a reason behind the passivity of the Muslim community and the need to intervene: the Muslim community are unable to fight terrorism on its own, because of the Muslim identity. This is further seen in the exclusion of grievances from *Prevent 2011*. Previously, challenging grievances was an

objective of both previous strategies. This time, it is barely mentioned at all. Adhering to extremist values can no longer be explained through grievances, but through identity issues. *Prevent 2011* further marks the complete disassociation of the UK from the causal story, as no discussion of British or even Western foreign policy is offered. This results in British Muslims being given the condition of the Other in the narrative.

This effect is compounded by placing the purported Islamic ideology of terrorism, which is at the heart of the government's causal story, on a direct binary with British values:

*Challenging ideology is also about being confident in our own values – the values of democracy, rule of law, equality of opportunity, freedom of speech and the rights of all men and women to live free from persecution of any kind. Challenge must be accompanied by advocacy of the very systems and values which terrorists in this country and elsewhere set out to destroy. To that extent, challenging ideologies is a collective responsibility.*

(HM Government 2011b, 44, paragraph 8.6,  
emphasis added)

It is the juxtaposition of these values with terrorism that gives the binary its nationalist characteristic. This concern with shared British values, relegated to a special box in *Prevent 2009* and completely absent from *Prevent 2006*, thus takes centre stage in 2011. The focus on shared values is thus present in virtually every sector of the strategy. For example, there is a concern with funding organisations that do not share our values:

We have noted above (pages 47-48) that some of the organisations funded to provide interventions to



people of particular backgrounds and in some specific geographical areas have held views that are *not consistent with mainstream British values*. We return to this below.

(HM Government 2011b, 58, paragraph 9.21,  
emphasis added)

The predicate *mainstream* is added, which adds a further layer of boundary creation. Not only are these values British, but they are also mainstream, suggesting that they are commonplace and uncomplicated. The need to constantly emphasise that British Muslims and sectors involved with them need to promote and match British values thus suggests that British Muslims are outside the mainstream, further setting them apart.

The focus on shared values is also important when it comes to schools:

There have been allegations that a *minority of independent faith schools have been actively promoting views that are contrary to British values*, such as intolerance of other cultures and gender inequality. There have also been reports that some independent faith schools have allowed extremist views to be expressed by staff, visitors or pupils. In 2009, Ofsted found that 8 out of 51 independent faith schools surveyed were found to be displaying teaching materials that had a bias in favour of one particular group. Some teaching materials were also seen to contain biased or incorrect information about other religions.

(HM Government 2011b, 68, paragraph 10.32,  
emphasis added)

There is no mention in this paragraph of a specific faith. And yet it is clear from the previous paragraphs, as well as the narrative being constructed that they are

talking about Islam. This illustrates the strength of the central aspects of the narrative of terrorism developed thus far. Even with the attempts to remove integration and community cohesion, the inclusion of NIRT and far-right extremism, and explicit statements to the contrary, Muslims and Islam are implicated in the UK Government's causal story of terrorism to such an extent that the above paragraph is clearly about Islam, even without mentioning it by name.

### **The Final Policy Narrative**

The latest policy continues to focus only ideology and the connection between this ideology and Islam. Not only are Muslim Communities securitized, but the intense focus on Muslim behaviour and beliefs ensure that this securitization is amplified. Consequently, securitization takes a nationalist character. Not only does *Contest* and *Prevent 2011* reinforce the construction of terrorism as a 'foreign' problem, it frames British Muslims as Others. This is achieved by the development of the language of shared values and the connection made between identity, extremism and terrorism, which results in the securitization of identity. The coalition government presented this review of the counter-terrorism strategy as a radical change, and yet, the core of it remained the same.

The 2011 policy provided the biggest challenge to the cognitive plausibility of the narrative of terrorism, as it was riddled with contradictions. This is a direct result of the change in key policy actors with the new coalition government and the desire to set the new policy apart from the previous incarnations. However this, and the possible clashing policy agenda between the Liberal Democrats and the Conservatives, resulted in the presence of an alternative narrative. The counter-narrative was characterised by acknowledging that terrorism coming

from Northern Ireland and far-right extremism pose a threat and by attempting to remove community cohesion from the policy. This was an attempt to respond to key criticism of previous versions of *Contest* and *Prevent*. If successful, this alternative narrative could have removed the focus on Islam and Muslim security, maybe even desecuritizing it. After all, it did try to include other sources of political violence, and to remove the overt concern with community cohesion and integration.

However, this alternative narrative failed, and it failed because it was not cognitively plausible in the context of the policy papers. For example, in regards to the threat from far-right extremism, the policy accepted it as a threat whilst at the same time downplaying it completely. It accepted that the *Prevent* section could also apply to far-right extremism, whilst quickly claiming that far-right extremism was not about religious ideology and thus not completely suited to *Prevent*. Similarly in regards to Northern Ireland, the policy claimed that the threat had increased, whilst spending no time whatsoever talking about how to deal with it. Further, it claimed it separated community cohesion work from counter-terrorism, whilst also claiming it is impossible to separate them. As such, the alternative narrative is contradictory, weak, and not cognitively plausible.

Conversely, the original narrative of terrorism not only remains cognitively plausible, but is reinforced and developed in *Contest 2011*. The latest narrative of terrorism in the UK still rests on a causal story that places ideology as the central cause of terrorism. This ideology is deeply connected with Islam. Consequently, Muslims are implicated in the causal story. Moreover, the narrative has clear nationalist characteristics, as it constructs binaries which securitize identity. This nationalist narrative of terrorism is thus cognitively plausible, for it stems

directly from a consistent presupposition that terrorism is wrong and urgent, and the unchanged causal story that places ideology as the explanation for terrorism. As such, the narrative of terrorism developed by the government securitizes Islam, Muslim Communities, their behaviour and their identity.

The dramatic element of the narrative is further increased, for the nationalist language suggests the existence of a suspect community; of the foreigner within. This heightens the sense of threat as well as painting a portrait of a fractured society. This further adds to the moral element of the narrative. The strategy is no longer simply about protecting the public, but also about defending British values and promoting British identity. This is a compelling and powerful story, even more so because its causal story has remained virtually unchanged throughout the years.

Taking terrorism to be an analytical category, as suggested by Stump and Dixit (2012), has allowed the analysis in the previous chapters to distil a causal story and therefore unearth the central tenants of the current official construction of terrorism in the UK. The central characteristics of this narrative are the focus on ideology, the securitization of Islam and Muslims, and the nationalist binary of identity running through the causal story. Moreover, in order to be coherent, let alone persuasive, the narrative depended on the common-sense that terrorism is wrong; an illegitimate action with no justification. At no stage in the document is this said in an explicit way, however, this presupposition is nonetheless clear. As seen in the previous chapters, this happens because terrorism is presented without any context. According to the above narrative, terrorism is not a product of particular historical or political circumstances which can be addressed. It is not justified by grievances or politics. It is the result of a *malignant* ideology. The

official narrative thus presents a normative judgement on terrorism. The securitization of Islam, Muslim and Muslim identity thus represents the meta-narrative, the guiding ideology of the causal story. It is the stable and coherent idea which unifies the three different policy papers. As such, it represents the common sense of the narrative, a reality which is deemed to be self-evident (Milliken 1999). This common sense is an imposed framework, which heavily influences what can be said and done (Purvis and Hunt 1993).

In this light, the fact that the British government is selective in its deployment of the terrorism label is underpinned by a narrative of terrorism which views it as an issue distinctively connected with the Muslim Community. It is thus not surprising that it is applied so selectively. Though perhaps neutral in the legal text, the definition of terrorism is not so in the policy texts. This allows a situation where an individual can build a nail bomb, have clear connections with far-right extremism and still not be charged with terrorist offences. That is, as stated in the introduction, the case of Ryan McGee, who had downloaded a video of apparent executions committed under a Nazi flag, openly supported the English Defence League and had a cache of weapon in his room, including the nail bomb (Dodd 2014). McGee also wrote in his diary of how he vowed ‘to drag every last immigrant into the fires of hell’ (Dodd 2014). And yet, he was prosecuted under the Explosive Substances Act, the Crown Prosecution Service having decided that it was never McGee’s intention to use the device for any terrorist or violent purpose, and that he had no firm intention to activate the device (Dodd 2014). Once we know that the government narrative of terrorism in the UK favours of a causal story that securitizes Muslims, the selective deployment of the terrorism legislation by politicians starts to make sense.

However, the focus on Muslims is not the only characteristic of the causal story. Significantly the securitization is done through the construction of a binary with distinct nationalist characteristics. The binary first appears in *Contest 2006*, and it takes the shape of a traditional inside/outside national security dichotomy. However, it is in the 2009 strategy that the binary starts to take a nationalist shape. This is never clearer than in the following extract:

We want to make it harder for violent extremists to operate in our country and win support for their activities and ideologies. *But we also need to be clear about the kind of country which we want for ourselves.*

(HM Government 2009, 87, emphasis added )

This paragraph comes at the very end of the box on values present at the beginning of *Prevent 2009*. This is unequivocally nationalist language. Here we have a security policy explicitly stating that it is also concerned with the construction of national boundaries. As such, the perceived interest the narrative must chime with to be successful is not just the need to justify government policy and the prerogative of national security. Rather, the narrative is chiming with the perceived nationalist interest of promoting British national identity. After all, being clear about the kind of country which we want for ourselves means being clear about whom we want to belong, and who we do not.

This explains why, in the 2011 strategy, NIRT and far-right extremism are never placed in a binary against shared values. It may also lie behind why far-right terrorism is not treated the same as Islamic-inspired terrorism by government officials. Only Islamic terrorism is considered to be against shared values. It is

thus not surprising that the 2011 *Prevent* review, in particular, directly securitizes Muslim identity by claiming that deradicalisation depends on developing a sense of belonging in the UK. The securitization of Islam, Muslims and identity is thus being done using nationalist language. As such, the binary created by the causal story is not just a binary, but a boundary of identity. The selective deployment of the terrorist label at the political level is thus anchored on a nationalist narrative of terrorism, which places Muslims and their identity at the core of the terrorist threat. As such, the selective use of the terrorist label by the government is more than a reflection of the securitization of Muslims, but an active tool in the social construction of national identity.

As the final version of the UK counter-terrorism policy, at least for the time being, *Contest 2011* and *Prevent 2011* provide the latest developments of the causal story and the narrative of terrorism in the UK. With a new Conservative government having come into power in May 2015, there is a strong likelihood that both *Contest* and *Prevent* will be reviewed and a new strategy will be published. Nonetheless, it seems that the causal story will not necessarily change. For example, on a recent speech on Extremism, David Cameron (2015a) mirrored the narrative constructed over the 2006, 2009 and 2011 policy the central tenants of the causal story:

Some argue it's because of historic injustices and recent wars, or because of poverty and hardship. This argument, what I call the grievance justification, must be challenged.

So when people say "it's because of the involvement in the Iraq War that people are attacking the West", we should remind them: 9/11 – the biggest loss of life of British citizens in a terrorist attack – happened before the Iraq War.

When they say that these are wronged Muslims getting revenge on their Western wrongdoers, let's remind them: from Kosovo to Somalia, countries like Britain have stepped in to save Muslim people from massacres – it's groups like ISIL, Al Qaeda [sic] and Boko Haram that are the ones murdering Muslims.

Now others might say: it's because terrorists are driven to their actions by poverty. But that ignores the fact that many of these terrorists have had the full advantages of prosperous families or a Western university education.

Now let me be clear, I am not saying these issues aren't important. But let's not delude ourselves. We could deal with all these issues – and some people in our country and elsewhere would still be drawn to Islamist extremism.

No – we must be clear. The root cause of the threat we face is the extremist ideology itself.

This is essentially the same narrative, down to the downplaying of the Iraq War as a factor, the invalidating of structural factors and grievances, and the unmistakable placing of ideology as the key driver of terrorism.

Further, Cameron (2015a) returns to the idea that terrorism is about identity:

For all our successes as multi-racial, multi-faith democracy, we have to confront a tragic truth that there are people born and raised in this country who don't really identify with Britain – and who feel little or no attachment to other people here. Indeed, there is a danger in some of our communities that you can go your whole life and have little to do with people from other faiths and backgrounds.

This reflects almost exactly the securitization of Muslim communities and their identity, which formed one side of the binary created in the narrative. The direct focus on identity thus seems a hallmark of the Conservative government. For example, at a speech at the Munich Security Conference in 2011, Prime Minister



David Cameron argued that the weakening of British identity through multiculturalism was at the heart of the current terrorist threat:

I would argue an important reason so many young Muslims are drawn to [extremist ideology] *comes down to a question of identity...* These young men also find it hard to identify with Britain too, because we have allowed the weakening of our collective identity.

(Cameron 2011)

So not only does the new government endorse the narrative of extremism developed by the previous three governments, it also emphasises the role identity plays in the causal story. As such, it is likely that identity will continue to play a central role in any new counter-terrorism strategy. This is significant. Stump and Dixit (2013) argue that when analysing how the state constructs terrorism, one should also be able to see how it constructs itself as a counter-terrorism state. Following from this analysis of the construction of counter-terrorism narrative in the official policy texts, it is apparent that the UK positions itself, in the narrative, as a counter-terrorism state with deeply nationalist undertones. This has important implications for investigating how the UK official counter-terrorism policy constitutes specific actors, namely the British state and Muslims, particularly the Muslim citizen, and what actions this narrative legitimizes. These two points form the basis of Part 3 of this thesis, which investigates the implications of a nationalist terrorism policy narrative in identity and belonging in the UK.

## **Part 3: Counter-terrorism and National Identity**

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## **Chapter 6: The Boundary-Security Nexus**

### **Chapter Overview**

This chapter expands on the analysis of the narrative of terrorism uncovered in the previous chapters by how the narrative constitutes particular actors, namely the British state and Muslims, supported by the narrative. It introduces the boundary-security nexus as the best way of explaining the presence of boundaries in the narrative of terrorism. The boundary-security nexus incorporates boundary and nationalism theory into securitization, which better helps to understand and explain how discursive constructions of security and identity work in a dialectic relationship. Moreover, the nexus introduces the concept of institutional boundaries, which show how constructions of identity and security are reified and given solid form within the UK narrative of terrorism. This is the case because institutional boundaries act as tools of social control, delineating what is acceptable in society. As such, narratives play a key role in legitimizing those institutional boundaries.

Further, once the nexus is introduced, it will become clear the selective way the government uses the terrorism narrative acts as a way of protecting and reinforcing the bounded community of the nation state. As such, constructions of identity and security present in the narrative will be revealed as a form of social control of membership.

### **Introduction**

*Contest* and *Prevent* are examples of persuasive narratives. The goal of the counter-terrorism strategy papers is stated, as early as 2006, as informing the

public of the threat. With the advent of the Research, Information and Communications Unit (RICU), which began with *Prevent 2009* and was consolidated in *Prevent 2011*, this goal became even more explicit. As such, the UK counter-terrorism strategy is a deliberate act of narrative construction. In other words, the narrative uncovered in the previous chapters reveals the official British construction of terrorism. The narrative has the deliberate aim of setting the terms of the debate on terrorism in British society. As the official narrative, it sets the criteria by which alternative arguments will be judged (McDonald and Merefieid 2010). It both persuades the audience to accept a specific representation of the threat and enables the government to deliver its counter-terrorism policy. It is what Pissou (2012) calls pragmatic persuasion.

As seen in the previous chapters, the securitization present in the narrative happens alongside the construction of binaries of identity. Therefore, the official narrative of terrorism partakes in the construction of national identity. This is significant as it helps us shed light on the second research question of the thesis, namely: how does this construction constitute particular actors and legitimize certain actions?

This chapter will focus on the first part of this question, looking to interrogate the constitution of the British state and Muslims present in the narrative uncovered in the previous chapter. In order to further understand the selective deployment of the terrorism label by the UK government and its implications, one must look at what constructions of identity are present in the narrative of terrorism. Therefore, this chapter develops traditional securitization theory into the boundary-security nexus. Traditional securitization theory does not adequately address how the social construction of security threats is achieved through the drawing of

nationalist boundaries of belonging. The boundary-security nexus fills that gap by incorporating boundary and nationalism theory, making an explicit connection between constructions of security and constructions of identity.

This chapter will show how the nexus helps to further deconstruct the narrative of terrorism constructed in official UK policy and explain the selective deployment of the terrorist label at the political level. It will do this firstly by exploring nationalist and boundary theory, showing how it helps to explain the nationalist character of the securitization done in the strategy papers. It will then explore the ways in which the boundary-security nexus explains how the dialectic construction of identity and security works to regulate membership in a bounded national community. This is done through the introduction of institutional boundaries to securitization theory, helping to explain how constructions of identity and security are reified and given solid form. This is especially so since institutional boundaries often acts as tools of social control, delineating what is acceptable in society. The placement of Muslims in a nationalist binary effectively places them outside the British boundary of belonging not just theoretically, but also in practice. Consequently, the selective deployment of the terrorist label at the political level does more than stereotype Muslims, it also contributes to the construction of British national identity.

### **The Boundary-Security Nexus**

The boundary-security nexus as theoretical framework further elucidates the dialectic relationship between security and identity, explaining the presence of nationalist language and binaries in the counter-terrorism policy papers. Like security and terrorism, this thesis approaches nationalism as an act of social

construction. As (Day and Thompson 2004, 86) argue, a constructive interpretation of reality

insists that nationalism is all about the construction and contestation of concepts of identity in the social conditions specific to modernity... Society is a human creation, not a given fact.

The construction of nation-states and their equivalent national identity is reproduced and reinforced daily, mostly unconsciously, by banal nationalism, that is, the ideological habits which enable established nation-states to be reproduced (Billig 1995).

People participate in the construction of the reality of nation states, not just by passively accepting this reality, but by actively contributing to it. This is what caused Billig to argue that nationalism is partly ‘an ideology of the first person plural’ (1995, 70). In other words, nationalism is about imagining a unique and unified idea of ‘we’. Benedict Anderson is the most influential scholar to propose this idea of the nation as an ‘imagined community – and imagined as both inherently limited and sovereign’ (1996, 6).

Imagining does not mean that the nation-state and national identity exist only in people’s heads. Rather, it means that instead of it being a primordial given, national identity is malleable and dependent on constant public reproduction. That is why Calhoun (1997) argues that nationalism is a discursive formation, for national identity depends on it being reproduced. Understanding nationalism as a discursive formation means approaching it as a way of thinking, talking and understanding the world. This way, nations

are constituted largely by the claims themselves, by the way of talking and thinking and acting that relies on these sorts of claims to produce national identity

(Calhoun 1997, 27)

In other words, national identity, just like security and terrorism, is constructed through a narrative made-up of claims aiming to create knowledge.

### *Boundaries of Belonging*

National identity is thus dependent on the creation of boundaries. Boundaries can be understood as the essential raw materials of identity (and security). Boundaries explain mechanisms behind social exclusion and identity creation. According to (Tilly 2004, 213), they

happen at the small scale of interpersonal dialogue, at the medium scale of rivalry within organizations, and at the large scale of genocide. Us-them boundaries matter.

Identities are inherently relational. That is because, as socially constructed, collective imagination, they depend on a ‘dialectical opposition to another identity’ (Göl 2005, 121). So the construction of identity relies in the construction of boundaries between who belongs and who is the outsider. This characteristic of identity formation was first highlighted by Frederick Barth (1969) in his influential social interaction model of identity. He argues that, rather than being primordial, ethnic identities are the result of on-going interactions with other ethnic groups (Barth 1969). In other words, identities are not created in isolation, but through contact with the identity of others.

The interlock between identity and security is found in their shared concern with the construction of the Other. The constructions of boundaries automatically divides people into groups. Further, the construction of security will differentiate between the threatening and the non-threatening. Identity and security are then caught in a deep tangle, working alongside each other in the construction of an Other. When security and identity constructions interlock, the Other is framed as a threat.

The idea of a threatening Other is not foreign to security studies. On the contrary, it forms the basis of much of the classical neo-realist approach to security, which relies on a strict divide between friend and enemy. However, non-traditional security studies approach the question of the enemy differently. Rather than asking how the state can become more secure and protect itself against enemies, it asks how an issue becomes a security issue, and how enemies are constructed. In securitization, they are constructed through the speech act, where managers of unease (the government, the media etc) construct security threats. Further, poststructuralists believe that security politics is fundamentally about the construction of national identity and a threatening Other (Buzan and Hansen 2009). As such, according to poststructuralists, security politics depends on the construction of a radically different, inferior and threatening other (Buzan and Hansen 2009). As (Hansen 2006, 2) argues,

foreign policy relies upon representations of identity, but it is also through the formulation of foreign policy that identities are produced and reproduced.

Therefore construction of security both results in, and relies on, the construction of boundaries of belonging. The nationalist aspect of the terrorism narrative is



thus a result of the dialectic relationship between constructing identity and constructing security.

Nonetheless, the boundary-security nexus takes the connection between identity and security construction further. The direct inclusion of boundary and nationalism theory ensures that the identity aspect of national security is fully accounted for. Moreover, boundary theory adds an extra dimension towards understanding just how identity and security are constructed.

#### *Boundary Characteristics and Behaviour*

As seen in the previous chapters, both Islam and Muslims are successfully securitized in the counter-terrorism narrative. This securitization results in the construction of boundaries in the official narrative of terrorism. The securitization of Muslim communities and their identity causes their placement outside the British boundary of belonging as the narrative questions their place more explicitly through the introduction of identity and shared values. This happens firstly with the values language of *Prevent 2009*, then with the explicit references to identity in *Prevent 2011*. Securitization theory has the tools to determine whether or not a speech-act is a successful act of securitization. However, it has no tools to deconstruct the speech-act itself. The incorporation of boundary theory into the boundary-security nexus fills that gap by allowing researchers to investigate boundary mechanisms, resources and behaviour which allows for the successful act of securitization to occur.

Zimmer defines a set of four boundary resources that provide the raw material for the above boundaries: political values/institutions, culture, history and geography (Zimmer 2003). When it comes to national identity, symbolic

boundaries rely on resources such as a myth of common descent and common traditions. These symbolic boundaries will feed into social and institutional boundaries, guiding understandings of identity and security.

Zimmer (2003) further distinguishes between two boundary mechanisms, the organic and the voluntarist. The organic mechanism is deterministic whilst the voluntarist is more malleable. Organic boundaries are based on precise distinctions of difference, often resorting to boundary resources of kinship, culture and history (Zimmer 2003). Organic boundaries require an unchanging identity, and thus, a strict definition of belonging. On the other hand, voluntary boundaries see identity as a malleable construction, shaped by citizenship boundary resource sand changing over time (Zimmer 2003). This categorisation of organic and voluntarist reflect the civic/ ethnic nationalism dichotomy. Civic Nationalism happens when collective identity emerges from an attachment to a shared set of political practices and values (Shulman 2002). Civic nationalism, contrasted with ethnic nationalism, is understood as being a more inclusive way of affirming national identity, since it focuses on an idea of identity that is not based on the exclusive ideas of common descent which are central to ethnic nationalism (Shulman 2002). The boundary resources and mechanisms developed by Zimmer (2003) directly reflect the civic ethnic dichotomy.

As seen above, the narrative present in *Contest* and *Prevent* constructs the British boundary using resources of values and citizenship. Take for example, the following extract from the 2011 review of Prevent:

There is evidence to indicate that support for terrorism is associated with rejection of a cohesive, integrated, multi-faith society and of parliamentary

*democracy. Work to deal with radicalisation will depend on developing a sense of belonging to this country and support for our core values.*

(HM Government 2011b, 13, emphasis added)

In theory, identities constructed using boundary resources of values and citizenship will be voluntarist (civic nationalism) whilst those constructed using boundary resources of ethnicity will behave in an organic way (ethnic nationalism). However, boundary resources are not predictors of boundary behaviours. National identity constructed on liberal values does not mean it will be inclusive. The narrative of terrorism securitizes the Muslim community in such a way that the boundaries behave in exclusive ways, regardless of what boundary resources are used.

In the above extract, deradicalisation is framed as dependent on developing a sense of belonging and supporting core national values. Core national values thus behave in an organic way towards Muslims who are perceived to be radicalised as you cannot both have a strong sense of belonging in the UK and be an extremist at the same time. Zimmer's definition of boundary mechanisms therefore helps to explain how the narrative of terrorism took a nationalist character. Terrorism and extremism were defined using primarily the organic mechanism of boundary construction. Terrorism was constructed as an unjustified threat, and set firmly outside the British boundary. Moreover, the threat was constructed based on a monolithic understanding of both Islam and the Muslim community. This failure to account for diversity resulted in a deterministic look at the Muslim community, where they were believed to be bounded by culture and religion. This ensured that whilst the British boundary

was constructed using voluntarist mechanisms such as shared values, it was still sharply drawn against Islam.

Moreover, the distinction between bright and blurred boundaries developed by Alba (2005) sheds further light on the behaviour of the above boundaries. A bright boundary happens where the distinction involved is unambiguous and harsh, so that individuals know at all times which side of the boundary they are on (Alba 2005). Blurred boundaries on the other hand, are ambiguous and allow for different types of allegiance (Alba 2005). If national identity is constructed in a bright way, then it will be exclusive, regardless of what symbolic boundaries are used in its construction. Zimmer's definition of boundary resources and Alba's bright/blurred dichotomy reinforce the concept of national identity as socially constructed and malleable. Different boundary resources may be appropriate in different ways to form social boundaries, which will in turn be either bright or blurred in different contexts. The boundaries present in the official narrative of terrorism undergo a movement from blurred to bright. In *Prevent 2006*, a lot of time is spent on disclaimers regarding the Muslim community. By the time *Prevent 2011* came along, those disclaimers were all but gone. Similarly, the narrative begins by problematizing Islam, but with each new strategy paper, it broadened its securitization.

In the 2009 policy, Muslim communities were securitized and in 2011, so was their identity. The path towards bright boundaries is also mirrored by the length of the narrative's concern with identity. Virtually absent in the 2006 policy, it was the core of the narrative's causal story in 2011. The British boundary, constructed using voluntarist mechanism of shared values, behaves as a bright boundary. That is because the Other is constructed around the organic,

deterministic mechanism of religion, presented as the central characteristic of the ideology in the text. The boundary against terrorism in the narrative is very bright, and as a consequence, so is its boundary against Islam and Muslims. The boundary-security nexus thus incorporates Zimmer's and Alba's descriptions of boundary characteristic and behaviour, adding a different layer to the deconstruction of the speech-act.

### **The Boundary-Security Nexus and Social Control**

Effective national security depends on defining both *who* the people are, and *who/what* they should be protected from. The nationalist aspect of the narrative of terrorism suggests that the label of terrorism is doing precisely that. As such, the label of terrorism is a tool in the construction, promotion and regulation of national identity. In this case, the construction of national security through the boundary-security nexus actively constitutes the actor of the British state, as presented in the narrative. It is a central tool in the state's search for legitimacy. As such, the construction of security is marked by the 'ability to produce an image of the enemy with which the audience identifies' (Collective 2006, 458). Therefore, both the construction of security and the promotion of identity are techniques of government, working to control membership and belonging. Whilst boundary theory helps with the deconstruction of the speech-act, this aspect of the narrative of terrorism and the constitution of the British state actor, is better explained by the incorporation of nationalism and social control theory into the boundary-security nexus.

### *Nationalism and Legitimacy*

Identity and security can scarcely be understood without their relationship to the nation-state. Significantly, the nation-state is also a result of social construction. The world system of equivalent nation-states is reinforced and reconstructed everyday by the existence of passports, national sports teams, immigration rules and the ever-present national flag; the world of banal nationalism (Billig 1995). The question then becomes one about investigating the processes that reproduce and reinforce the Westphalian system of nation-states as a social reality solidified into maps and passports. This process is, essentially, nationalism.

As the boundary-security nexus adopts the constructive paradigm, it sheds light on the relationship between national security, identity and power. After all, if identity is not a static given, it can be manipulated for political and security purposes. So in order to understand how the boundary-security nexus works as a technique of government, we must look at how both nationalism and security work as political processes. In order to do this, the paper's approach to nationalism is further anchored in Ernst Gellner's definition of nationalism as a theory of political legitimacy. He argues that nationalism is

primarily a political principle which holds that political  
and national unit should be congruent

(Gellner 1983, 1)

As such, he sets up the requirement that the political apparatus of the state needs to reflect the people, not just the will of the people. Nationalism and nationalist movements are then likely to invoke a desire for homogeneity as the foundations of political life (Gellner 1983). It is only when the government reflects the people

that rule will be legitimate. The state then claims legitimacy by claiming to express the will of the people (Brubaker 1992). The nationalist narrative is then used to justify and reinforce the supposed congruency between the people and the government.

Moreover, those competing for state power will most likely use different national narratives, as they claim to better represent the people. John Breuilly's theory of nationalism and the state helps to shed light on this aspect of nationalism. He argues that nationalism is used by political groups seeking or exercising state power and justifying such actions with nationalist arguments (Breuilly 1993). Breuilly's analysis suggests that arguments regarding national identity will be deployed by different groups seeking to obtain or maintain power. Those in power will claim that they represent the national identity and those seeking power will claim to represent it better. The congruency of the national identity of the government and of the people is a central political concern and national identity is thus open for manipulation.

Whilst Breuilly focuses on nationalism as a type of politics, especially opposition politics, it also plays the role of power maintainer. That is, when those in power frequently use nationalist arguments to maintain their position and, especially, justify their policy choices. Nationalism is then a process of producing and reinforcing the nation-state. Democracies are thus exclusionary entities, as they are bounded communities bound by territory and membership (Barker 2013). Nationalism therefore works with security through the boundary-security nexus as a way of maintaining and legitimising that bounded community.

If nationalism is at the heart of legitimatising the bounded national community, then the promotion of national identity will inevitably be a core concern of the government. The narrative of nationalism through the nexus thus is about promoting a particular set of norms, values and behaviours as both national and secure. But constructing a norms, values and behaviours as national requires a process of differentiation. As such, the construction of a nationalist narrative will carry with it the construction of the Other, which is often framed as a security threat.

Nationalism has indirectly been a part of securitization theory, especially in regard to the Copenhagen School's concept of societal security. According to the Copenhagen School, society is a 'clustering of institutions combined with a feeling of common identity' (Wæver 1993, 21). The nation is the security unit, the organising concept of the societal sector (Buzan, Wæver, and Wilde 1998). Societal security is therefore dependent on nationalism and the nationalist construction of identity. Security threats to societal security will happen when members of a community view a development as posing a threat to their survival as a community (Olesker 2014). Threats are then existential by default.

The Copenhagen School further distinguishes societal security from political security. Whilst societal security is about security threats constructed around identity, political security is about non-military threats to sovereignty (Olesker 2014). The political sector of society is concerned with the construction of threats to sovereignty and the ideologies that give governments legitimacy (Buzan, Wæver, and Wilde 1998). However, once nationalism is incorporated to securitization theory, as it is in the boundary-security nexus, sovereignty and identity become inexorably linked for both politics and identity are required for



the legitimacy of a bounded national community. This is evident in how the Other is often constructed as a threat to both societal security and political security. This is clear when the narrative of terrorism frames it as against shared values and as a problem of the Other, literally coming from outside the political community.

### *The Other as a Political and Existential Threat*

As seen in Part 2, the narrative of terrorism and the selective use of the terrorist label by the government constitutes the Muslim actor as an Other. The Other threatens both the community and sovereignty, since state legitimacy comes from the community. In order to protect both community and sovereignty, the theory goes, the Other must be excluded from the political project. Uniformity, even if seen only as a social construction, is therefore in the interest of the government. That is because social complexities, such as nation states, require an increased degree of conformity (Jackson-Preece 2006). That is why a state is a nation-state as long as it claims to be the state 'of' and 'for' a particular people' (Brubaker 1992, 28). Bigo (2002, 67) further develops this connection between sovereignty and community when he argues that sovereignty comes from understanding the state as an envelope:

the concept of sovereignty... structures our thoughts as if there existed a 'body' – an 'envelope' a 'container' – differentiating one polity from another... [sovereignty] justifies the national identity that the state has achieved.

The principle of state sovereignty then offers a spatial solution to state identity (Buzan and Hansen 2009). Therefore, the nexus follows the Hobbesian maxim of

the social contract where the safety of the people is the supreme law (Hobbes and Gaskin 1998). There can be no state without a people, no sovereignty without community, and no security without identity. It is thus unsurprising that securitization causes a break with normal legal order, as the safety of the people – and the state – require extreme measures.

In traditional understandings of security, sovereignty separates the ordered, safe national sphere from the anarchic, dangerous international order (Hansen 2006). It causes what Brubaker (1992) calls the domestic closure against non-citizens. It is this traditional understanding of security that is present at the 2006 strategy, since the binary then, and in early parts of 2009, reflect the inside/outside division of international relations. However, the diversity of nation-states allows for Others to exist inside the envelope of sovereignty. As Arendt (1972, 301) argues:

The reason why highly developed communities... so often insist on ethnic homogeneity is that they hope to eliminate as far as possible those natural and always present differences... because they indicate all too clearly... the limitations of the human artifice. The 'alien' is a frightening symbol of the fact of difference as such...

Constructions of identity through the boundary-security nexus will then value a degree of homogeneity – be it ethnic, racial or through 'shared values' – as a source of security. The state may then attempt to promote a particular national identity not only as a way of legitimising power, but also as a way of achieving security. As (Campbell 1992, 55) argues, securing an ordered world, particularly one as complex as a state, 'involves defining elements that stand in the way of order as forms of otherness'. The narrative of terrorism developed in the strategy

paper places shared values in a binary against Islamic extremism and terrorism. This is an example of national identity being used as a way of achieving security; of the comforting aspect of national homogeneity. The securitization of Islam and the framing of Muslims as Other thus reflects the domestic closure against those considered to be outside the bounded community.

### *Counter-Terrorism as Social Control*

Broadly speaking, social control is the aspect of society that regulates behaviour (Chriss 2007). More specifically, social control refers to attempts targeted at regulating deviance and conformity through purposive action that defines, responds and controls deviant behaviour (Horwitz 1990). Deviant behaviour is itself socially constructed, as it is about more than simple rule violation. The construction of the Other and consequently, of deviance lies in the interpretive judgement, which occurs in a specific historical, cultural and situational context (Pfuhl and Henry 1993). This can be illustrated with allusion to the changes in legislation and attitude regarding homosexuality in the UK. Less than 50 years ago, being gay was a criminal offence. In other words, the behaviours of homosexuality were deemed to be deviant, needing government control. But as social attitudes change, so did the construction of homosexuality as a form of deviance. After the Sexual Offences Act of 1967, homosexuality was no longer considered criminal behaviour. Further, with the Marriage (Same Sex Couples) Act of 2013, gay couples enjoy the same rights of matrimony as heterosexual ones. Whilst there are still groups which regard homosexuality as deviancy, in the UK at least, it is no longer institutionally approached as such. These changes happened due to changes in the social context. In other words, deviance happens when specific norms of behaviour are constructed as outside of normal. This is

the interactionist or transactional approach to deviance, which is concerned with investigating how society labels people as deviants (Cohen 2002).

Deviance is inherently linked with negative moral meanings, where behaviour is at variance with a group's definition of what is preferable (Pfuhl and Henry 1993). As such, social control refers to the construction of an individual or group as falling outside the boundaries of membership. That is why serious crimes are often portrayed in the media and by politicians as abnormal and not representing national values or characteristics. This directly reflects how Islamic terrorism and extremism are presented in the narrative. That is what Zedner (2013, 42) calls 'the public character of criminal wrongdoing', where crime 'is a wrong against the polity as a whole, not an individual victim'. Criminals are excluded from society, due to their criminal behaviour, which is antithetical to normal societal behaviour.

The narrative expectedly constructs terrorism as a deviance and the Muslim actor as a deviant. The narrative also problematizes Muslim identity and behaviour as potential sources of deviance. Through the boundary-security nexus, national identity is constructed as the norm, whilst the Other is constructed as deviant. National identity is signified by nebulous 'shared values', and terrorists and extremists do not share those values. As such, not only are they a security threat, but they are the Other. Therefore, deviance in the boundary-security nexus reifies the Other as a threat, and threats as emanating from the Other. This echoes the interactionist or transactional approach to deviance, which is concerned with investigating how society labels rule-breakers as deviants whilst simultaneous labelling certain norms as normal (Cohen 2002). This is what happens when the Muslim community is securitized in the causal story of terrorism. For example,

the 2009 and 2011 documents represent a widening of behaviour that is deemed to be problematic. The Prevent section of *Contest 2009*, has this to say on radicalisers:

Apologists for violent extremism very often target individuals who, for a range of reasons, are vulnerable to their messages. Vulnerability is not simple a result of *actual or perceived grievances*. It may be the result of family or peer pressure, the absence of positive mentors and role models, a crisis of identity, links to criminality including other forms of violence, exposure to traumatic events (here or overseas), or changing circumstances (eg a new environment following migration and asylum). The Government will continue to prosecute those who commit criminal offences but it is also our intention to provide early support to those who are being drawn into offending.

(HM Government 2009, 89, paragraph 9.23,  
emphasis added)

Vulnerability to violent extremism is framed as problematic, as it is something that violent extremists target. As such, behaviour linked to this vulnerability (family or peer pressure, absence of mentors, crisis of identity etc) is framed as potentially leading to deviance. This deviance then takes a nationalist characteristic when lacking a sense of belonging and shared common values is in itself presented as a deviance, as *Prevent 2011* frames it as an indicator of extremism.

The framing of Muslim behaviour and vulnerabilities as potential deviance is even more glaring when one contrasts it to the way terrorism coming from Northern Ireland and far-right extremism is presented in the narrative. At no point does the narrative frame them as a great concern, place them in a binary against shared values or even passes judgement on them. Terrorism coming from

Northern Ireland and far-right extremism are both presented as facts without urgent or normative predicates such as *malignant*, *distortion*, *poisonous* etc. all of which are predicates used when describing the threat from Islamic extremism or terrorism. Yes, these predicates are used to distinguish the extremist ideology from Islam in general, but they play a role in the wider narrative by continuously associating Islam with negative predicates, marking Islamic extremism as particularly deviant.

Social control therefore also constructs boundaries of belonging, where deviance falls outside the boundary of the normal. Discursive constructions of identity and security thus define normalcy in national terms, where the Other carries with it the potential for deviance. As Gellner (1983, 7) argues,

There is no sacred percentage figure, below which the foreigner can be benignly tolerated and above which he becomes offensive and his safety and life are at peril.

That is why security threats, and those perceived to be threatening, are dealt with by exclusion. This further constructs security threats as being outside the boundaries of society. That is why states have historically constructed security by constructing enemy countries, immigrants and communists as Others (Hansen 2006). If the threat comes from outside the boundary of belonging, then the solution is easy: removal. Further, when deviance is framed as coming from the Other, security further serves to control – and promote – a particular standard of national belonging. The managers of unease and the securitizing agents are then actively promoting a particular version of national identity at the same time as they regulate security. This is the boundary-security nexus at work.

Further, social control is about the construction of an individual or group as falling outside the normal behaviour of a community justifying controlling measures directed at them (Becker 1963). The narrative of terrorism goes to huge lengths to elaborate on the level of intervention that is required in the Muslim community. The need to intervene was present as early as the 2006 strategy, however it was the introduction of the demographic funding of *Prevent* in 2009, where local authorities with a minimum of 5% Muslim population automatically received funding, that the social control of Muslims became more obvious (Wandsworth Borough Council 2010). The 2011 review got rid of the demographic funding, however it instituted a comprehensive regime of intervention under the guise of ‘supporting sectors and institutions where there are risks of radicalisation’:

It is important to recognise that a Prevent strategy needs to engage with many of the sectors considered here because they have the capability of addressing and resolving challenges we face. *Schools are important not because there is significant evidence to suggest children are being radicalised – there is not – but because they can play a vital role in preparing young people to challenge extremism and the ideology of terrorism and effectively rebut those who are apologists for it.* The vast majority of people who attend mosques in this country will have no sympathy with terrorism. It is exactly for that reason that they can play a vital role in reaching out to young people who may be vulnerable to radicalisation.

(HM Government 2011b, 64, paragraph 10.10,  
emphasis added)

This objective results in schools, prisons, charities and even health practitioners being required to monitor Muslim behaviour.

And this monitoring has significant consequences. For example, as argued above, the nexus tends to reify both identity and security. National identity and nation-states are likewise prone to reification. Moreover, this reification is often propped up by institutional constructions and systems that keep this reification in place. Identity contains the most sophisticated scaffolding giving it the appearance of permanence, the nation-state. This can be illustrated with the example of maps. For example, Earth has no geographical centre, and yet, the majority of maps present Europe as the centre of the world (Calhoun 1997). Moreover, maps present the division of the world into nation-states as a social reality. As Calhoun (1997, 17) argues:

Maps lead us to take nation-states as given and fixed, as the obvious way in which the world should be represented. The globe has only been organized as a world-system of supposedly equivalent nation-states for a couple of hundred years.

Political communities are thus nationalised and tied to a specific territory (Barker 2013). The construction of the nation-state created an essentialised world based on borders with clear distinctions between the outside and the inside (Barker 2013).

Which takes us back to the research question regarding how the narrative of terrorism constitutes actors and legitimizes certain actions. The narrative of terrorism constructs Islam, Muslims and identity in a securitized way, explaining



the selective deployment of the terrorism label at the political level. But this narrative is also playing a role when it comes to controlling national belonging and regulating membership in the United Kingdom. In order to further explore this, it is important to introduce the concept of institutional boundaries.

### *The Institutional Boundary*

Boundaries are usually split into symbolic or social boundaries. Symbolic boundaries are everyday distinctions categorising people into different groups based on feelings of similarity (Lamont and Molnár 2002). In other words, symbolic boundaries are popular concepts regarding who does and does not belong in society. Social boundaries, on the other hand, are general forms of social difference (Lamont and Molnár 2002). The different types of boundaries build on each other, with symbolic boundaries preceding social boundaries:

only when symbolic boundaries are widely agreed upon can they take on a constraining character and pattern social interaction in important ways ... Only then do they become social boundaries, translating into identifiable patterns of social exclusion.

(Lamont and Molnár 2002, 169)

The move from symbolic to social boundaries happens through the boundary cycle, when certain conceptions of ‘us’ and ‘them’ becomes common knowledge, they tend to turn into more generalised forms of exclusion, such as racism, sexism and xenophobia.

In the boundary-security nexus, a third type of boundary is added to this typology: the institutional boundary. This is a step above social boundaries, for it represents constructions of identity and security at the institutional level, granting

it official legitimacy. The boundaries constructed in the narrative of terrorism are institutional boundaries. After all, the securitization of Islam and Muslim identity, and the consequent boundaries constructed in the narrative described in the previous chapters are happening at the institutional level. This reveals an institutional construction of national security that is resulting in boundaries of identity and boundaries of security.

Institutional, social and symbolic boundaries are not placed on a hierarchy. Rather, they mutually influence and construct each other, existing on a mutually reinforcing cycle. As such, boundaries do not exist in a vacuum. Boundaries constructed through national security policy are institutional boundaries, but they will have a relationship with social and symbolic boundaries. The thesis focuses on the institutional boundaries created by counter-terrorism policy. Focusing on the institutional level does not dismiss the importance of the social or symbolic level. Rather, this focus on the institutional level is necessary for it shows how normative policy constructions are. Moreover, the focus on the institutional level is important because if boundaries of identity are being created at the institutional level, it is likely they will affect institutional constructions of identity, such as citizenship policy, as will be argued in the following chapter.

Moreover, the concept of institutional boundaries helps explain the way discursive constructions of identity and security are reified in practice. Consequently, the bright institutional boundary present in the narrative is the reason behind the selective use of the terrorism label by the government. It also explains how this is being used as a tool for nationalist social control, giving Muslims, British or otherwise, in the condition of the Other.

The boundary-security nexus then argues that the power and prerogative of the state to regulate its territory and population is a form of nationalist social control. States, even democracies, reaffirm the naturalness of membership and territory, reinforcing the idea that people belong to a specific place in the map of the world (Barker 2013). As such, states will seek to maintain that naturalness of membership, by controlling otherness, promoting national identity at home and legitimising their rule through mechanisms such as the boundary-security nexus. This is the logic behind the narrative of terrorism as a ‘foreign’ problem, where threats are seen as being outside the boundary of identity, emanating from the Other.

The differential treatment for non-members, for those considered to be Other, is a paradox of liberal democracy:

by maintaining the legal categories of citizen, resident and alien, democracies maintain differential treatment and differential rights for citizens and non-citizens. This distinction creates a legal hierarchy of rights and protections.

(Barker 2013, 246)

The fact that the narrative of terrorism constitutes Muslims as Others, and is also partaking in language which regulates membership thus leaves British Muslims vulnerable to be treated as non-members of the bounded community. This is particularly so once one considers the bright boundary constructed against Islam and Muslims in the official narrative of terrorism, as described above. The existence of this narrative may result in an institutional boundary against Islam and Muslims, which is informing the selective deployment of the terrorism label at the political level. The next chapter will interrogate this by looking at what

kind of counter-terrorist institutional action this narrative legitimizes and whether or not these actions are serving as a way of regulating membership in the United Kingdom.

## **Chapter 7: Terrorism as a Foreign Problem**

### **Chapter Overview**

This chapter will show how the narrative of terrorism is being reproduced in terrorism legislation, such as the Counter-terrorism and Security Act 2015 (CTSA 2015), and the deprivation of citizenship powers enhanced in the Immigration Act 2014. CTSA 2015 represents the culmination of the narrative of terrorism and the past 15 years of terrorism legislation. CTSA 2015, as well as its predecessors, works with the narrative in order to affect the concept of British citizenship in line with the boundary-security nexus, where those deemed as security threats, i.e. deviants, are placed outside the official boundary of belonging.

Definitions of terrorism are used to legitimate certain actions. This chapter shows that the extent to which CTSA 2015 reproduces the narrative of terrorism indicates that the narrative is being used to legitimize such powers. And in a lot of ways, the narrative of terrorism that frames it as a problem of the Other, which does not place terrorism from Northern Ireland and far-right terrorism as against British values, yet securitizes Islam, Muslims and identity, is being mirrored in terrorism legislation. The label of terrorism is thus anchored in a narrative that has strong nationalist characteristics. Consequently, the terrorism label as used in the political level is also being used as a way of regulating membership in the United Kingdom.

This section is not conducting a CPNA of terrorism legislation, moving from the political realm to the legal realm. Rather, this section is exploring how the narrative uncovered in the policy papers is being reproduced in the legislation,

legitimizing certain actions and contributing to the formation of an institutional boundary. As such, this is not an analysis of how judges and/or the police interpret the law. Rather, it is an analysis of how the law, which is after all developed at the political level, is reflecting the nationalist narrative of terrorism present in the counter-terrorism policy. The possibility of undertaking a more detailed analysis of the legislation, in terms of what narrative or discourses it produces, is discussed in the Conclusion.

## **Introduction**

The boundary-security nexus holds that nationalism is a source of legitimacy which results in the social control of membership and belonging. As a result, security policy will enable the construction and reinforcement of boundaries of identity. The official British narrative of terrorism uncovered above is an example of the boundary-security nexus at work. By emphasising the importance of identity and values, the narrative suggests that counter-terrorism policy constructs and reinforces boundaries of belonging. This in turn chimes in with the pre-existing interest of the policy: protecting the people at the same time as defining who the people are.

Likewise, one of the key questions of CTS is how constructions of terrorism are used to legitimize certain actions. By providing simplified causal stories, policy narratives are also used to legitimize certain actions. The label of terrorism can be understood as an unlocking mechanism, being used to unlock certain powers, executive of otherwise (Gearty 2013). As seen in the previous chapters, the British government is selective in its use of the terrorism label, a label which carries with it a nationalist boundary-making function. This suggests a presence of an institutional boundary against Muslims.

This chapter will explore the Counter-terrorism and Security Act 2015 (CTSA) and the powers to deprive citizenship present in the Immigration Act 2014 as examples of powers legitimized by the narrative of terrorism and as a potential example of an institutional boundary against British Muslims. As such, it will suggest that the narrative constructed in the terrorism papers not only legitimises an institutional boundary against British Muslims, but it also may affect the concept of British citizenship. This way, the selective deployment of the terrorism label at the political level plays a role when it comes to regulating membership and belonging in the UK.

### **Reproducing the Narrative**

Before we begin, it is important to reiterate that this section is not analysing a different narrative or discourse. In other words, this section is not conducting a CPNA of terrorism legislation, moving from the political realm to the legal realm. Rather, this section is exploring how the narrative uncovered in the policy papers is being reproduced in the legislation, legitimizing certain actions and contributing to the formation of an institutional boundary. This is not an analysis of how judges and police officers interpret the law, but how the law, developed at the political level, is reflecting the nationalist narrative of terrorism present in the counter-terrorism policy. The possibility of undertaking a more detailed analysis of the legislation, in terms of what narrative or discourses it produces, is discussed in the Conclusion.

Looking at how the narrative legitimises certain legal actions and constructs institutional boundaries is important for the overall goal of the thesis, that is, the analysis of the construction of the official terrorism label in the UK. This is

especially so considering how much of the terrorism legislation is now at the hands of the executive, in other words, politicians, not the judiciary.

The presence of an institutional boundary, in the form of the CTSA 2015 and in the powers to deprive citizenship present in the Immigration Act 2014, also has important connotations when it comes to analysing the binary and boundaries present in the narrative of terrorism. Modern human rights frameworks provide not just the *ability* for the state to take action to counter threats to its subjects but rather impose a positive duty on the state to take appropriate action. Gearty identifies such duties as a corollary to the rights located within the European Convention of Human Rights (ECHR):

Putting security as a human rights model works in the following way: the state has a positive obligation to protect its people – security..... We have Article 2, which is the right to life, Article 5, security of the person, and Article I, the right to property. The state has a duty to protect its people and that fits with traditional approaches to the state's responsibility. We can characterise it as a human rights duty. (Gearty 2008)

If the state has a human rights duty to protect its people, then the question of just who the people are is a vital one. Notwithstanding the universal application of human rights, citizenship on a conceptual level, is altered when the nationalist narrative of terrorism legitimizes terrorism legislation.

The rule of law too is a key tenant of the relationship between a state and those within its jurisdiction. And the rule of law depends on the presumption of innocence. As Dicey argues in Barnett (2009, 66):



no man is punishable or can be made to suffer in body or in goods except for a distinct breach of law established in the ordinary legal manner before the ordinary courts of the land.

But counter-terrorism policy relies on a bevy of administrative and executive measures that happen before the criminal justice system becomes involved. As McCulloch and Pickering (2009) argue, due process protections that underpin the presumption of innocence and limit the role of the executive, have been severely undermined within the counter-terrorism framework. This represents the breaking of the established rules of the game after an issue has been securitized and it results in a certain legal otherness, where certain citizens are viewed solely through the lens of security are identified as prime targets for a wealth of terrorism powers to be mobilised against them. Counter-terrorism powers therefore directly reproduce the nationalist narrative constructed in the narrative of terrorism. This can be seen in several components of the CTSA 2015: the *Prevent* strategy, the operation of Terrorism Prevention and Investigation Measures (TPIMs), the Temporary Exclusion Orders and in the powers to deprive citizenship present in the Immigration Act 2014.

### *The Prevent Strategy*

The Counter-terrorism and Security Act 2015 (CTSA) was enacted in July 2015 and represents the latest piece of terrorism legislation in the UK. One of the key changes brought by CTSA 2015 is the creation of a statutory duty of prevent terrorism. The *Prevent* strategy is the biggest standout from the UK counter-terrorism policy. Its evolution into a separate strategy in 2011 has led to it

becoming part of legislation in Part 5 of the CTSA 2015. Part 5 effectively creates a statutory duty to prevent individuals being drawn into terrorism. S.21 establishes a duty on a specific authority to have due regard to the need to prevent people from being drawn into terrorism in the exercise of its functions. Schedule 3 lists the authorities to which this applies, including local councils, schools, NHS Trusts, and even nursery schools. As discussed previously, the way *Prevent* was implemented prior to 2011 showed the narrative of terrorism at work, as the Muslim community and the behaviour of its members was securitized. This is evident in the growing body of research claiming that *Prevent*'s exclusive focus on the Muslim community was detrimental and even counter-productive (O'Toole, DeHanas, and Modood 2012, Kundnani 2009, Martin 2014, Thomas 2010).

As introduced above, by bringing *Prevent* onto a statutory footing, CTSA 2015 suggests an institutional boundary against the Muslim Community, effectively turning it into a suspect community. Through this, even Muslim toddlers are viewed through the prism of security, as nurseries are one of the local authorities with a duty to prevent radicalisation and promote British values. Bringing *Prevent* into a statutory level reproduces the narrative of terrorism which securitizes the Muslim community and places them in a binary with the UK. This is unsurprising as the education system remained a priority in every incarnation of the *Prevent* strategy. Due to the high level of contact between teachers and students, it was felt teachers were in a prime position to spot early signs of radicalisation. Making *Prevent* law and turning the focus to nurseries is a logical extension of a narrative which frames Muslim communities as passively complicit in terrorism and extremism.

This substantial Othering in the form of an institutional boundary has an effect on the position of British Muslims inside the British boundary of belonging. However, it is the British Muslim community, and those assumed to be Muslim, that are under scrutiny. As such, turning the assumptions of the *Prevent* programme into law effectively reproduces the binary present in the narrative of terrorism. The framing of British Muslims as a suspect community, justifying unprecedented levels of control, sets British Muslims apart and weakens their position inside British boundary of belonging.

#### *Terrorism Prevention and Investigation Measures (TPIMs)*

Part 2 of CTSA 2015 delineates the reforms to the TPIMs regime. TPIMs have their roots in the Control Orders introduced in the Prevention of Terrorism Act 2005. Control orders replaced the indefinite detention measures in the Anti-Terrorism, Crime and Security Act 2001 (ATCSA), which in itself was a clear reproduction of the binary constructed in the narrative. ATCSA was justified as a response to an unprecedented terrorist threat (Walker 2009). Part 4 of the ATCSA allowed for suspected foreign terrorists to be deported or, if deportation was not possible, for their indefinite detention without charge or trial

Part 4 of the ATCSA is a clear case of traditional securitization. It was argued that the threat provided by terrorism was so great, that it required a break with normal politics, as Part 4 required derogation from Article 5 of the European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR), the right to liberty. Derogation is the ability to temporarily exclude the application of one or more of the articles of the ECHR, (except the three absolute rights). The right for states to derogate is provided by Article 15 of the ECHR, and is only to be used in a time of war or other public emergency threatening the life of the nation. Further illustrating the

break from normal politics required of securitization, the UK was the only state in the Council of Europe to regard the terrorist attacks of 9/11 as requiring derogation from the ECHR (Tomkins 2011). It was this derogation which set the stage for *A v Secretary of State for the Home Department* [2004] UKHL 56, a 2004 House of Lords case popularly referred to as the Belmarsh case. Under Part 4 of the ATCSA, the Home Secretary had the power to indefinitely detain foreign nationals who were reasonably suspected of being engaged in terrorism. As the detainees would be ineligible for deportation, the solution was to indefinitely detain them in the UK. This inability to deport them was a result of *Chahal v United Kingdom* (1997) 23 EHRR 413, where European Court of Human Rights (ECtHR) had ruled that the deportation of an Indian national would be a breach of Article 3, the prohibition against torture, inhuman or degrading treatment, as he would face a serious risk of torture if returned to India. *Chahal* solidified the absolute nature of Article 3 of the convention, and has become part of the British jurisprudence in deportation cases.

In *A v Secretary of State for the Home Department* [2004] UKHL 56, the prisoners claimed that the Part 4, Section 23 provisions of ATCSA, allowing for their indefinite detention, breached both Article 5, the right to liberty, in conjunction with Article 14, right to freedom from discrimination, of the ECHR, as it allowed the detention of suspected international terrorists in a way that discriminated against them by reason solely of their nationality, and that this discrimination was unjustified under the derogation power purportedly invoked by the Home Secretary. After losses in the lower courts, the House of Lords ruled in their favour, with 7 of the 9 judges (Lord Walker dissented; Lord Hoffman agreed with the outcome but on the wider ground that there was no emergency to

start with so no test of proportionality was required) recognising that the Act made an illegal distinction between citizens and foreigners, prioritising the human rights of British citizens over the rights of non-citizens and that the derogation was ineffective because while there was an emergency the action taken went too far in its determination to protect the state, was in the relevant legal language, disproportionate.

The House of Lords held that S23 of ATCSA was incompatible with Articles 5 and 14 of the ECHR, that the breach was not protected by the derogation, and that a declaration of incompatibility should be issued. This did not quash the legislation but rather referred the matter back to the executive and parliament, to decide what amendment, if any, to make to the legislation. Subsequently parliament did act, at the invitation of the executive, passing the Prevention of Terrorism Act 2005 substituting indefinite detention with Control Orders.

Control orders were specifically created to be applicable to both UK and non-UK nationals alike. They authorised a number of obligations to be imposed against the controlee for purposes connected with preventing or restricting involvement by that individual in terrorism related activity. Such obligations included restrictions on his or her place of residence, a curfew and restrictions on association or communications.

Aspects of control orders were later found to be incompatible with human rights obligations, specifically in regard to Article 6, right to fair trial, and Article 5 right to liberty (*Secretary of State for the Home Department v AF* [2009] UKHL 28; (*Secretary of State for the Home Department v JJ and Others* [2007] UKHL 45 respectively). Notwithstanding this, the control orders regime survived until

its repeal and replacement (see below) in 2011, with the government, during this time, apparently recognising and successfully navigating the limitations placed upon the measures by Human Rights legislation (for examples see *Secretary of State for the Home Department v MB* [2007] UKHL 46; and *Same v E* [2007] UKHL 47). TPIMs were introduced in 2011 (Terrorism Prevention and Investigation Measures Act 2011 (TPIM 2011)) by the new Conservative/Coalition government. The TPIMs are based upon the structure of the control order regime following the government's review of counter-terrorism security powers in January 2011 and follow many of the key elements of its predecessor. Special Advocates and closed evidence are key features of the procedure, as they were under control orders (TPIM 2011, sch 4). Apparent reductions in the obligations include no ability for forced geographic relocation and removal of 16 hour curfews, with now only overnight residence requirements permissible.

S. 12 of the new TPIM regime introduced by CTSA 2015 reintroduces the ability of the Home Secretary to require individuals to move geographical location. This power can cause individuals to be removed from their family and community and be placed in effective isolation. S. 13 increases the maximum sentence for breaching a TPIM to 10 years imprisonment. Here we have criminalisation by executive order. Someone may be facing 10 years in prison even though they have committed no crime other than disobeying the order of a non-judicial official. Clause 16 raises the threshold for imposing a TPIM from 'reasonably believes' to 'is satisfied on the balance of probabilities'. But it remains the case that these are entirely administrative orders, with almost no recourse to the criminal justice system or a fair trial, where the burden of proof is less than for

criminal convictions. And it also remains the case that no terrorist conviction has resulted from either a control order or a TPIM, even though they include an investigatory purpose.

As already observed Control Orders and TPIMs were introduced so to be applicable to both British citizens and foreigners. As of May 2014, there are no TPIM notices in force (Anderson 2015). Before then, there have been a total of 10 TPIM subjects, 9 of whom were transferred from Control Orders in 2012. All but one were British citizens (Anderson 2014a). This is significant because TPIMs, as control orders before them, severely weaken the bond between the state and the citizen. Helpful here is to look at these interventions as pre-crime measures. The logic of social control is the logic of preventative exclusion. Traditional social control looked at how those constructed as criminals were imprisoned and thus excluded from society. However, more and more national security is concerned with prevention, and controlling behaviour that may lead to crime. This has led several commentators to note a distinct move away from the criminal justice system to a model of security guided primarily by the logic of prevention (McCulloch and Pickering 2009, Zedner 2010a, 2007).

The concept of pre-crime is useful in understanding this dynamic. Pre-crime is a term created by the science-fiction writer Philip K. Dick (Dick 2002) in *The Minority Report*. It refers to a future where police rely on psychic mutants capable of seeing the future and so arrest people for crimes before they are committed. It was introduced into criminology by Lucia Zedner, who argues that pre-crime is concerned with the calculation of risk and the prevention of future harms in the name of security (Zedner 2007). In other words, pre-crime is not simply about crime prevention, but about acting on labels. As we have seen,

terrorism is a label that is well suited to pre-crime measures. After all, most terrorist offences are concerned with behaviour before acts of terrorism have actually been committed. These offences have inexorably moved further away from the act of terrorism itself and include such offences as Encouragement of Terrorism and Preparation of Terrorist Acts, (Terrorism Act 2006, S1 and S5 respectively). These offences are examples of the pre-crime model expanding the remit of the criminal law further than the usual inchoate offences of soliciting, conspiring etc.

Control orders and TPIMs are examples of a further extension of pre-crime, for they represent punitive measures being applied to individuals even before terrorist offences have been committed. As such, they exist almost entirely outside traditional due process and provide an example of individuals being punished without having even been charged with a crime. As such, pre-crime links coercive state action to suspicion without the need for charge, prosecution and conviction (McCulloch and Pickering 2009). As McCulloch and Pickering further argue due process protections that underpin the presumption of innocence, including the right to silence and the right to free trial, 'have been significantly undermined and even eclipsed within the pre-crime model of counter-terrorism' (McCulloch and Pickering 2009, 636). When we recall the partial application of these powers we can appreciate how control orders and now TPIMs significantly reduce the presumption of innocence when it comes to the Muslim community, reproducing the narrative of terrorism and having an effect on the relationship between the state and the Muslim citizen.

Viewed this way, bringing *Prevent* into a statutory level represents an extension of the pre-crime framework. Additionally, once identity is entangled with



security, as it is through the British narrative of terrorism, pre-crime will provide the rationale behind profiling techniques and as such is prejudiced around identity (McCulloch and Pickering 2009). Through the boundary-security nexus, pre-crime functions as a way of socially controlling potential deviance by earmarking certain communities as suspect. It is an indispensable tool in the construction of the Other. *Prevent* and TPIMs all partake in pre-crime and thus work together with the narrative of terrorism to reproduce the narrative of terrorism which securitizes Islam and the Muslim community, therefore shifting the position of British Muslims towards the condition of the Other.

This has an effect on the British concept of citizenship. Social complexities, such as nation states, require an increased degree of conformity in order to function (Jackson-Preece 2006). Citizenship is one of the ways that complex systems such as states organise themselves. As the ultimate redistributor, the state must know who to distribute goods to and who to avoid (Shafir 2004). Through official conceptions of citizenship, the state controls membership, which is an act of nationalist social control. Citizenship thus is national identity constructions given solid form. As such, how the government views citizenship will reveal different structures of exclusion. As Brubaker argues,

Every modern state formally defines its citizens, publicly identifying a set of persons as its members and residually designating all others and non-citizens or aliens.

(Brubaker 1992, 21)

Whilst citizens are supposedly regarded as equal, what Marshall (1950) called the basic human equality of membership, those excluded from citizenship are

essentially regarded as different. Those who are different are placed in a different category than citizens, with certain privileges reserved for the privileged nationals (Brubaker 1992).

Since 9/11, the government has relied on using non-trial based executive measures, in other words, pre-crime measures, such as the ones detailed above in the fight against terrorism. These executive measures curtail civil liberties and are primarily used when neither prosecution nor deportation are available (Fenwick 2015). Moreover, from 2012, they have been used almost exclusively against British citizens (Fenwick 2015). Two specific terrorism powers, Temporary Exclusion Orders and Deprivation of Citizenship, work together with the narrative of terrorism and the pre-crime logic of executive measures to directly affect the concept of British citizenship. This concerning considering that the narrative of terrorism, developed in the official government papers, securitizes Islam and Muslims.

#### *Temporary Exclusion Orders*

Chapter 2 of the CTSA 2015 created Temporary Exclusion Orders (TEOs), which are imposed when the Home Secretary reasonably suspects an individual outside the UK is or has been involved in activity related to terrorism. TEOs can be imposed on anybody with right of abode in the UK, including citizens and they prevent people from returning to the UK unless they are deported by the state in which they currently are or they obtain a permit to return. Removal of passports restricts travel, but does not render people stateless. However, TEOs invalidate British passports for a period of up to two years, rendering them stateless in all but name for that time period. TEOs are in essence a form of exile, breaching the duty of care the state has towards its citizens. This is a significant

form of nationalist social control. As Gray (2011) argues, state expulsion of citizens can be seen as a vital means of defining boundaries and constructing and reinforcing abstract standards of citizenship and belonging. TEOs only take effect once individuals are out of the country, nonetheless they still act as a form of expulsion for they forbid them from returning.

TEOs significantly shift the position of those considered to be terrorist inside the boundary of citizenship. This is exacerbated by the pre-crime element of TEOs, as they are applied without the need for an individual to have been charged with a crime. Those vulnerable to TEOs exist in a category apart from ‘normal’ citizens. As such, they create a situation where certain British citizens are effectively exiled even before criminal proceedings have been initiated against them. As Dominic Grieve, the former Attorney General argued:

it is a fundamental principle of the common law in this country that an individual, unconvicted – the presumption of innocence applies – should be free to reside in his own land. The principle of exile, as a judicial or even administrative tool, has not been tolerated in this country since the late 17<sup>th</sup> century...what is proposed, even if exclusion is on a temporary basis, is a draconian and unusual power being taken by the State. The point has been made that the proposal could be in breach of our international legal obligations by rendering a person stateless.

(Liberty 2014)

Those citizens vulnerable to TEOs, are seen as less worthy of protection of the rule of law by the state. Their position inside the institutional boundary of citizenship is weakened. TEOs represent the power to prevent return, and as

such, it achieves a form of exile and indirect deportation. If deportation is a practical reminder of the worth of citizenship, as citizens are free from the civic death of deportation (Anderson, Gibney, and Paoletti 2011), then TEOs are vivid reminders to those citizens vulnerable to it, that they do not fully belong inside the boundary; that what they possess is a lesser category of citizenship. This effectively mirrors the construction of boundaries and the nationalist tone in the narrative of terrorism. TEOs are applicable to all British citizens who choose to fight abroad. However, they were brought in as a response to the perceived threat of British citizens joining ISIS (Channel 4 2014). Ultimately, whether or not TEOs are deployed in a discriminatory fashion, it is a great concern to have such a wide power available on a discretionary basis, especially in a context where the official narrative of terrorism directly securitizes the Muslim community.

### *Deprivation of Citizenship*

The ability to deprive someone of their citizenship is directly related to questions of identity and security. Those who lose their citizenship are considered to have switched their allegiance, and so no longer belong in that particular individual community. As (Gibney 2012, 638) argues,

the loss of citizenship transforms the citizen into an alien in the eyes of the state, stripping them of all rights held qua citizen and making them vulnerable to deportation power.

The UK has had the power to denationalise citizens since the British Nationality and Status of Aliens Act 1914. Under s.40 (2) of the British Nationality Act 1981, amended by s.56 (1) of the Immigration, Asylum and Nationality Act 2006, the Home Secretary could deprive someone of their British citizenship if

they were satisfied that deprivation was conducive to the public good. Such orders could not have been made if the individual in question would be rendered stateless, in other words, they could only in practice be applied to dual nationals. This created divisions inside the institutional boundary of citizenship, with many commentators arguing that it amounted to a creation of a different class of citizenship (Gibney 2013b, 2012, Zedner 2010b).

The Immigration Act 2014 has weakened the protection against statelessness preserved in the 2006 amendments. It contains a provision, s.66, which amends the British Nationality Act, allowing for the removal of citizenship when the subject's conduct is seriously prejudicial to the vital interests of the UK, if the citizenship status results from naturalisation and if the Secretary of State has reasonable grounds to believe that the person is able to become a national of another country. S. 66 was a response to the *Secretary of State for the Home Department v Al-Jedda* [2013] 3 WLR 1006. In December 2007, the Secretary of State made an order depriving Mr. Al-Jedda of his British nationality. At the time, Al-Jedda only had British nationality, so this order rendered him stateless. However, the Secretary of State argued that it was Al-Jedda's failure to apply for Iraqi citizenship which rendered him stateless, not the deprivation order. The Supreme Court ruled against the government but a year later, the Immigration Act 2014 amended the previous legislation to allow for deprivation of citizenship when the Secretary of State has grounds to believe that the individual can achieve another nationality. The Immigration Act 2014 narrows the boundaries of fully-fledged citizenship to exclude those who might have been born in the UK, but have familial connections abroad which may lead to a second nationality. There has always been a distinction in British citizenship between

naturalized and native citizens, but the Immigration Act 2014 extends it even further. It weakens the position of those that previously would have been fully-fledged citizens as they are now one step closer to having their citizenship removed purely by reason of their recent immigration background. The broadening of the British power to strip British citizens of their nationality is directly related to terrorism, and is an example of the ways political anxieties about terrorism redefine the idea of citizenship and who is worthy of protection (Gibney 2013a).

As such, this directly echoes the narrative of terrorism which frames terrorism as a foreign problem. The deprivation powers reinforce the narrative of terrorism being a problem that comes from abroad; from the Other, which can be resolved by removal. Their vulnerability to banishment and the loss of citizenship places those vulnerable to those powers closer to foreigners, who can be deported, than from citizens, who cannot be deported (Gibney 2013b).

Since 2010, 37 people have lost their British citizenship. Deprivation of citizenship can be made with no judicial approval in advance; it takes immediate effect and the only way to argue against it is through legal appeal to the Special Immigration Appeals Commission, a separate court. In all but two of the known cases, the orders were issued when individuals were abroad. In at least five of the known cases, the individuals were born in the UK. In 2012 Mahdi Hashi, lost his British citizenship while he was in his native Somalia (Parsons 2015). He was then secretly detained in Djibouti, east Africa before the US carried out an extraordinary rendition on him, whisking him to a New York jail. When he first went missing his family wrote to the Foreign Office asking for help in finding him. They were told Hashi is 'no longer a British national, and as such has no

right to Consular assistance' (Parsons 2015). Bilal al Berjawi and Mohamed Sakr were deprived of their British nationality whilst abroad and were killed by US drone strikes in Somalia not much later (Woods 2013).

These individuals had two things in common. Firstly, they were either born abroad or had parents who had been born abroad, in other words, they had a recent history of immigration. By definition, the powers to deprive someone of their British citizenship can only be used against those that have a recent history of immigration, that is, those naturalised or with parents or grandparents who immigrated to Britain, or those who have the ability to obtain foreign citizenship by other means such as marriage. This is because these are the citizens who can (at least theoretically) claim citizenship somewhere else. Those British citizens who have no history of immigration, and can only claim British citizenship, are effectively immune from this power. As such, the power to deprive someone of their British citizenship clearly differentiates between citizens with an immigrant background, and those without, with native citizens enjoying a higher level of protection than those citizens with a recent history of immigration.

Secondly, all these individuals were also Muslim. More data is needed in order to show conclusively whether or not the powers to deprive citizenship are discriminatory towards Muslims. Nonetheless, the power to deprive someone of their citizenship does operate alongside both a narrative of terrorism which directly securitizes the Muslim community and the selective deployment of this label by government officials. This is by itself a cause of concern. Further, these powers do indeed reflect the narrative of terrorism as a foreign problem. As such, these powers mirror how the boundary-security nexus seeks to control what it marks as a foreign deviance. As Zedner (2010b, 382) argues, citizenship has

become ‘a potent tool by which those at the margins of the political community are policed by the state’. The power to use the label of terrorism and activate terrorism powers thus has a strong consequence for British society. It is a disciplinary instrument used in identifying and controlling those considered to be aliens (Bigo 2008), with the label of terrorism in the UK being used in a way that regulates belonging and controls membership in the national community. Consequently, its selective deployment at the political level is a form of contesting membership and ultimately preventing belonging in the United Kingdom.



## **Conclusion**

This thesis began with a puzzle regarding the selective use of the terrorism label in the UK at the political level. Essentially, it began by showing how the British government responded differently to events which fall under the legal definition of terrorism established in the Terrorism Act 2000, choosing to label as terrorism only the actions committed by members of the Muslim community. This thesis has shown that the selective use of the terrorist label is being informed by a nationalist narrative of terrorism, which securitizes the Muslim community and has a direct effect on membership and belonging in the United Kingdom. At the heart of the thesis, is the deconstruction of the narrative of terrorism. By applying Critical Policy Narrative Analysis (CPNA) to the *Contest* and *Prevent* strategy papers, this thesis reveals a narrative of terrorism which consistently and repeatedly securitizes terrorism, Islam, and Muslims. Looking at both *Contest* and *Prevent* reveals the importance of looking at how the government understands both the label and the process of terrorism. After all, it was through exploring both how the government constructs knowledge regarding what terrorism is and why people turn to it that the full causal story became apparent. And it is a causal story that attributes blame to both ideology and identity in the official account of the terrorism threat.

The label of terrorism is thus used selectively by the government because the connection between terrorism and Islam is constructed as one of simple common sense. As such, it is inevitable that Muslims will be disproportionately assigned the terrorism label. Even in the policy text, they are framed as passively complicit with terrorism and extremism, requiring high levels of intervention in

order to challenge it. Acts which fall under the legal definition of terrorism, but are committed by far-right individuals, are not assigned the label of terrorism because far-right extremism is not part of the narrative which forms the common sense regarding this topic. In other words, incidents of far-right violence are not deemed to be on the same level as those involving Muslims, because only one of those is considered to be a terrorist threat. Consequently, terrorism is framed as being a deviance associated with attitudes and behaviour of the Muslim community.

If terrorism should be approached as an analytical category, which is produced in discourse and narratives, then the label will not be applied to those the narrative does not consider to be terrorists. Terrorism is a label used to make sense of and act during unfolding events (Stump and Dixit 2012, 207), so once the narrative frames terrorism as being related to a particular community, the label will be attached to them as a way of explaining unfolding events.

Moreover, this selective use of the terrorist label also plays a role in the construction and reinforcement of national identity. This is a result of the deep nationalist character of the narrative. The narrative thus contains bright boundaries of belonging, which are reproduced in an institutional way in terrorism legislation, thus legitimizing terrorism powers. The deploying of the label can be seen as part of a normative process of deciding what – and who – does and does not belong in the political community. This directly echoes the imperative present in *Prevent 2009*:

We want to make it harder for violent extremists to operate in our country and win support for their activities and ideologies. *But we also need to be*

*clear about the kind of country which we want for ourselves.*

(HM Government 2009, emphasis added 87)

This dynamic is then explained by the theoretical framework of the boundary-security nexus. The nexus brings together securitization, boundary and nationalism theory to expose how the construction of national security and the construction of national identity are intertwined. As such, it makes explicit the concern with identity present in securitization. Moreover, boundary theory helps to detail the process and mechanisms of boundary creation present in discursive and social constructions of security and identity. Significantly, the boundary-security nexus shows how the constructions of security and identity work together to act as a way of socially controlling membership in the national community. This is vividly illustrated by the way terrorism powers interact with the concept of British citizenship. Consequently, the selective use of the terrorism label can also be seen as playing a role in the regulating of national identity and belonging in the United Kingdom.

### **Limitations and Surprises**

When discussing the research quality aspect of CPNA the thesis remarked on the importance of the confidence and relevance marker of reflexivity and surprise. Three things in particular came as a surprise when working on this project. The first one was how weak the alternative narrative was in *Contest and Prevent 2011*. The change in government could and should have resulted in a change in the narrative as the review of the strategy was announced as being radically different than its predecessors. Moreover, as stated early on in the policy document, *Contest and Prevent 2011* were produced as a way of responding to

criticism of the 2009 policy, namely the sole focus on Muslim communities. And whilst this was evident in the attempts to discuss far-right extremism, Northern Ireland and to remove community cohesion from the narrative, they were mostly unsuccessful. The narrative which associated Islam and terrorism proved to be resilient. Not only that, but it was only in *Prevent 2011* that the connection between identity and terrorism was made explicit. This ensured that the narrative thrived. And this was the second surprise, how little the narrative changed across three different administrations.

The fact that the narrative remained very similar between the 2006 and 2009 policies could be explained by the fact that both administrations were of the same political party, Labour, and shared key policy actors, such as Gordon Brown. But the resilience of the narrative, surviving the changes of the Coalition government of the Conservatives and the Liberal Democrats, was surprising, especially when it came to the securitization of identity. The narrative developed in 2006 and 2009 placed Muslims on a binary against shared values. This securitized Muslim communities so the securitization of their identity could be seen as the logical next step. The fact that the coalition government took the causal story of terrorism to its logical next step, especially when key players had strong criticism against *Contest 2009*, was very surprising. This suggests that the narrative of terrorism is more entrenched than previously expected; that the association between Muslims, Islam and security threat goes further than the narrative developed through the three policy papers analysed.

This leads to the central limitations of the thesis, namely the focus on the policy papers and the institutional level. Political narratives are constructed through several layers, be it policy papers, speeches and parliamentary discussions. The

focus on the policy text limited the possibility of investigating to what extent this narrative is reproduced or contested at different political levels. Nonetheless, focusing on the policy narrative element allowed for an analysis of the policy papers, which remain the most comprehensive and explicit rationale for the official British understanding of terrorism. Further, focusing on policy narratives means focusing only on the institutional level of the boundary cycle. The boundary-security nexus recognises that there are symbolic, social and institutional boundaries. These do not exist in a hierarchy, and their patterns of interaction are complex. Questions regarding which boundaries precede the other are very much of the chicken-or-the egg variety. Nevertheless, the existence of these different types of boundaries points towards a multi-dimensional understanding of the construction of security and identity which was beyond the scope of this thesis.

Nonetheless, work done by other scholars points to the persistent connection between terrorism and Islam in the public imagination, in the UK and elsewhere (McGhee 2005, Kassimeris and Jackson 2012, Lynch 2013, Zolberg and Woon 1999, Brinson and Stohl 2009, Papacharissi and de Fatima Oliveira 2008, Esposito 1999, Halliday 2002, 2001, Jackson 2005, Cesari 2010, 2004, Cesari, McLoughlin, and Network of Comparative Research on Islam and Muslims in Europe. 2005). This points to an equivalency between the social and institutional boundaries of terrorism.

After all, the Muslim aspect of the terrorist deviance finds profound echoes in the social space. For example, a month after 9/11, BBC's *Panorama* produced a program called 'Koran and Country' arguing that British Muslim loyalties lie with their religion, not their country (BBC 2001). In 2009, *Panorama* aired

‘Muslim First, British Second’ which claimed that MI5 could not keep track of all Muslim extremists and further questioning British Muslims’ loyalty (BBC 2009). In 2010, the BBC further produced the 3-part documentary *Generation Jihad*, which also framed British Muslims as possible threats (BBC 2010). Channel 4’s *Dispatches* has also produced similar documentaries on British Muslims. In 2007 and 2008 it showed programs called ‘Undercover Mosque’ and ‘Undercover Mosque: The Return’, where it warned against mosques in the UK preaching hatred and violence (Channel 4 2008, 2007).

Further, this connection between Islam and deviance predates the current preoccupation with Islamic-inspired terrorism. In her examination of British newspaper coverage of Muslims in the period ranging from January 1994 and December 2000, Poole (2002) found that stories featuring British Muslims highlighting their difference and negative behaviour. Moreover, Poole noted that

the associated negative behaviour is seen to evolve  
out of something inherent in the religion,  
rendering any Muslim a potential terrorist

(Poole 2002, 4)

The negative portrayal was independent of terrorism connections. For example, as early as 1997 the Runnymede Trust Commission on British Muslims and Islamophobia published a report entitled *Islamophobia: A challenge to us all* (Runnymede 1997). The report stated that dread and dislike of Muslims has existed in Western states for centuries, but that it had increased in recent years and become

an ingredient of all sections of our media, and is prevalent  
in all sections of our society. Within Britain, it means *that*

*Muslims are frequently excluded from the economic, social and public life of the nation... and are frequently victim of discrimination and harassment.*

(Runnymede 1997, 1)

More than ten years later, these observations remain true. This reflects a wider European trend where Muslims are often amongst the poorest, with highest levels of unemployment, social deprivation and political disenfranchisement (Cesari, McLoughlin, and Network of Comparative Research on Islam and Muslims in Europe. 2005) A 2014 report on anti-Muslim hate-crime found that whilst there has been a general fall in the number of racially or religiously aggravated offences in England and Wales, most victims of religiously-motivated hate-crime were Muslims (Copsey et al. 2014). And in September 2015 Scotland Yard stated that anti-Muslim crimes are on the rise (Churchil 2015).

Anti-Muslim sentiment in the social sphere seems to suggest constructions of the Other as a profound source of insecurity. This is echoed in the narrative of terrorism that frames terrorism as problem rooted in Islam and in the identity of the Other. This further suggests that the symbolic boundary is based on the simple premise of us vs. them, where Muslims have been framed as ‘them’. This may harken back to Medieval Christian constructions of Muslims as Arabs, Turks, Moors, Saracens, Ishmaelites or Hagarenes responsible for a host of societal ills (Tolan 2002). More research is evidently needed on the relationship between social, symbolic and institutional boundaries, especially when it comes to the terrorism label and the persistent association between Islam and security threats. These examples are given to reinforce the point just made that boundaries do not occur in a vacuum and that social, institutional and symbolic

boundaries tend to reinforce one another. They may also contradict. Security in the boundary-security nexus thus is very much in line with the concept of the thick signifier, developed by Huysman, where constructions of (in)security are not solely dependent on elite constructions and happen at multiple levels of society (Huysmans 1998).

The focus on the institutional level of the boundary is valuable, and it is through it that this thesis makes what it is submitted as several contributions to knowledge. The institutional level of the boundary cycle is in itself a novel contribution to boundary theory. Moreover, it is through the institutional boundary that the boundary-security nexus is able to explain how constructions of identity and security interact as a form of regulating membership in a particular national community. The nexus also provides an original contribution to both security and nationalism studies, showing how international relations and political science topics interact for a fuller understanding of social problems. Finally, it shows how a neutral definition on a legal document can be the site for a complex narrative regulating membership and belonging in the United Kingdom.

Rather than looking at the narrative of terrorism at different levels, this thesis chose to focus on investigating what it means when the government has a selective interpretation of what terrorism is. As we have seen, the label of terrorism is being deployed selectively because the official narrative associates terrorism with Islam. This is significant because the label of terrorism is deeply nationalistic, thus being a tool for the construction, reinforcement, and reproduction of national identity. Consequently, when actions committed by Muslims are considered to be acts of terrorism, whilst similar actions committed



by non-Muslims – often *against* Muslims – are not, what is happening is more than the persistent association between Islam and terrorism. As a result of the selective use of the terrorist label, British Muslims are being marked as Others by the government; as being outside the British boundary of belonging. This is not just because Muslims are labelled as terrorists with more regularity than non-Muslims, but because, as Chapter 7 showed, being considered to be a terrorist has serious consequences as a host of powers and measures may be triggered which fundamentally alter the position of certain British citizens inside the boundary of British citizenship.

### **Future Research**

The work presented in this thesis opens up many avenues for future research. The CPNA method can be used for a variety of analyses focusing on policy documents. Similarly, the boundary-security nexus can be used to investigate how different groups are constructed as deviant Others in a variety of contexts. Moreover, a possible next-step would be the investigation of the narrative of terrorism in other countries, such as in the United States of America, Australia and the Netherlands. The United States, in particular, appears to have similar problems when it comes to the selective deployment of the terrorist label. This can be seen in cases such as those of Elliot Rodgers, who in 2014 killed six people in California, apparently driven by a misogynistic ideology, and of the 2015 Charleston Church shootings, committed by a white supremacist, neither of which were considered terrorist attacks (Woolf 2014, Gladstone 2015).

### *The Legal Narrative*

A clear next step is an analysis of the narrative of terrorism at the legal level. Interdiscursivity is an aspect of a discourse which relates to other discourses,

what Fairclough calls orders of discourse (Fairclough 2005). In policy narrative analysis, this is known as inter-narrativity, or in other words, how narratives interact with each other at different levels (Roe 1994). The thesis looked at how the policy narrative is being reproduced in and legitimizing counter-terrorism legislation. This indicates an urgent need to analyse how the narrative of terrorism is being produced at the legal level, by looking at how the legislation is being implemented and interpreted by those in charge of using it.

For example, there is some indication that terrorism legislation in practice targets a particular community in a disproportionate way. For example, between September 2001 and August 2012, there were 1,066 Muslims arrested in connection with terrorism offences, compared to 149 non-Muslim (Home Office 2013). Information on religion was missing in 47% of the arrests, so there is a possibility the discrepancy is higher or lower, which warrants investigation. Further, there is a significant overlap between terrorism legislation and hate-crime legislation. The Law Commission considers a crime to be hate-crime if

the victim or anyone else believes it was motivated by hostility based on a personal characteristic of the victim.

(Law Commission 2013)

Further, a crime is considered to be racially or religiously aggravated if, as stated in section 28 of the Racially or Religiously Aggravated Crime and Disorder Act 1998, added to by the Anti-Terrorism Crime and Security Act 2001

(a) at the time of committing the offence, or immediately before or after doing so, the offender demonstrates towards the victim of the offence hostility based on the victim's membership (or

presumed membership) of a racial or religious group; or

(b) the offence is motivated (wholly or partly) by hostility towards members of a racial or religious group based on their membership of those groups.

(2) In subsection (1)(a) above-

"membership", in relation to a racial or religious group, includes association with members of those groups; "presumed" means presumed by the offender.

(3) It is immaterial for the purposes of paragraph (a) or (b) of subsection (1) above whether or not the offender's hostility is also based, to any extent, on any other factor not mentioned in that paragraph.

(4) In this section "racial group" means a group of persons defined by reference to race, colour, nationality (including citizenship) or ethnic or national origins.

(5) In this section "religious group" means a group of persons defined by reference to religious belief or lack of religious belief."

There are significant overlaps between the two pieces of legislation. For example, under the Terrorism Act 2000, the use of serious violence to intimidate a section of the public in order to promote a racial cause would definitely trigger the administrative powers and crimes associated with terrorism. Under the Racially or Religiously Aggravated Crime and Disorder Act 1998, a crime is racially aggravated if the offence is motivated, wholly or partly, by hostility towards members of a racial group. Under terrorism legislation, the hostility requirement is indirect as if the motive is to intimidate a section of the public

with the purpose of advancing a racial cause, that can (and probably will) include hostility towards that section of the public.

Likewise, in hate crime, the motivation to intimidate the section of the public, based on membership in a racial group, should also be present. One key difference, one might say, is politics. But whilst racially and religiously aggravated offences are not necessarily political, neither is terrorism. As seen above, political motivation is not a necessary condition for terrorism. The motivation may be racial religious or ideological. In fact, no motivation of this kind is even necessary if a firearm or explosive is involved.

In fact, David Anderson also highlights his concern for the overlapping between terrorism legislation and hate-crime:

The law makes a terrorist of the boy who threatens to shoot his teacher on a fascist website, and of the racist who throws a pipe bomb at his neighbour's wall. The criminality of such people is obvious, and serious: but if they intend harm only to their immediate victims, no purpose is served by characterising them as terrorists.

(Anderson 2014a, 90)

However, in practice, those convicted of hate-crimes are hardly ever framed as terrorists and prosecuted under terrorism powers.

This is not to say that anti-Muslim crime is never considered to be terrorism. Pavlo Lapshyn was labelled a far-right terrorist and given a life sentence for his mosque bombing campaign and the murder of Mohammed Saleem (BBC 2013b). In 2014, Ian Forman was also labelled a terrorist and sentence to 10 years in prison after plotting to bomb a mosque in Liverpool (Siddle 2014). But this

overlap between hate-crime and terrorism legislation suggests that the selective use of the terrorism label may also be used selective, but in a legal way.

This would entail an in-depth analysis of the legal definition of terrorism itself and how it is being applied. After all, the use of terrorism powers hinge on the Terrorism Act 2000 definition. For example, take the power to impose Temporary Restrictions on Travel found in Schedule 1 of the CTSA 2015. Schedule 1 makes provisions for the seizure and temporary retention of travel documents where a person is suspected of the intention to leave the UK in connection with terrorist-related activities. As such, a police officer at a port in Great Britain has the power to require a person to hand over travel documents (passports, id cards, tickets etc) if the officer has reasonable grounds to suspect that the person is there with the intention of leaving Great Britain for the purpose of involvement in terrorist-related activity outside the UK, or has arrived in Great Britain with the purpose of leaving it for that purpose.

The police officer then either returns the travel documents or asks for authorisation to retain it. If authorisation is given, the police officer is able to retain the documents for 14 days. It is also a criminal offence not to hand over travel documents or obstruct a search for the same. There is also no age restriction to the powers detailed in Schedule 1.

These powers are essentially stop and search powers, which directly play on the boundary-security nexus as present in the narrative. For example, stop and search powers have historically been applied in a discriminatory manner, invariably associating certain ethnicities with threats. They have long been indicative of unlawful racial discrimination, producing enormous community impact (Bowling

and Phillips 2007) Powers such as these disproportionately target minorities (Bowling and Phillips 2007). As they are legitimized through a narrative that securitizes Muslims and their identity, assuming deviance and Otherness, it is highly likely that they will primarily affect those assumed to be Muslim travellers. This is especially so since research has shown that after 9/11, the use of these powers increased greatly and had a direct impact on Asian ethnic minorities (Choudhury and Fenwick 2011). Asian does not automatically mean Muslim, of course. However, it is arguable that the fact that the powers were used disproportionately against them is a direct result of a narrative of terrorism that securitizes the Muslim community and gives it the condition of the Other. This is further suggested by fieldwork done by Choudhury and Fenwick (2011) with those affected by s44 powers, where people believed they were stopped because they looked Muslim.

Broader Stop and Search powers were introduced in s44 of the Terrorism Act 2000 (now repealed – see below), and are a very good if disturbing example of the narrative of terrorism at work. The powers were said to be required to thwart terrorist planning attacks and followed IRA bomb attacks in London in the 90s (Walker 2009). Section 45 makes clear that this was a blanket power, which could have been exercised at random:

the power conferred by an authorisation under section 44(1) or (2)—

- (a) may be exercised only for the purpose of searching for articles of a kind which could be used in connection with terrorism, and
- (b) may be exercised whether or not the constable has grounds for suspecting the presence of articles of that kind.

The breadth of the above section 45(1)(b) should be noted in contrast to ordinary Stop and Search Powers under the Police and Criminal Evidence Act 1984 (PACE) which requires the police constable to have reasonable grounds for suspecting that he or she will find stolen or prohibited articles (PACE s1(3)). Section 44 powers were found by the European Court of Human Rights (ECtHR) in 2011, to be in breach of Article 8 of the European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR), the right to respect for privacy. Subsequently, parliament repealed the s44 powers within the Protection of Freedoms Act 2012. The ability to seize travel documents operates at a higher standard of suspicion than stop and search powers, as officers are required to have a reasonable suspicion that an individual is travelling for the purposes of terrorist-related activity.

As previously noted, the power to seize travel documents is directly linked to the definition of terrorism present in the Terrorism Act 2000, a definition that, as we have seen, is used in a selective way at the political level. Here we have police officers and immigration officers using their discretion to decide whether or not the Terrorism Act definition of terrorism is applicable to the situation. This opens up the research agenda to investigate what narrative of terrorism is active, constructed or reinforced at this stage. As Anderson argues, the Terrorism Act 2000 grants unusually wide discretions to the police. Moreover,

these discretions become wider still when conduct ancillary in only the broadest sense to terrorism is criminalized.

(Anderson 2013, 93)

This feature of the terrorism definition was picked up as being of concern by the Supreme Court judges in *R v Gul (Mohammed)* ([2013] 3 WLR 1207), in

particular Part 8, section 117 of the Terrorism Act 2000, which prevents any prosecution under the terrorism acts without the consent of either the Director of Public Prosecution (DPP) or if abroad, the Attorney General. In their judgement, Lord Neuberger and Lord Judge, with whom all sitting judges unanimously agreed, stated that:

this has in effect delegated to an appointee of the executive, albeit a respected and independent lawyer, the decision whether an activity should be treated as criminal for the purposes of prosecution... Such device *leaves citizens unclear as to whether or not their actions or projected actions are liable to be treated by the prosecution authorities as effectively innocent or criminal* – in this case seriously criminal.

(R v Gul (Mohammed) [2013] 3 WLR 1207, paragraph 36. Emphasis added)

This means that for all practical purposes an action is not considered to be a terrorist action under the criminal law until the Director of Public Prosecution decides it is so. The designation of conduct as criminal terrorism, even when part of permanent statute books, depends on a judgment call. Additionally, the importance of discretion is even stronger where terrorism powers are applied before charge and prosecution, which can of course occur without any charge ever being preferred. We have already seen this with regard to s44, and it can also be illustrated by the powers granted to police under Schedule 7 of the Terrorism Act 2000. Under Schedule 7, UK police can stop, examine and search passengers at ports, airports and international rail terminals without the requirement for reasonable suspicion that someone is involved with terrorism. The DPP is not involved in Schedule 7, and the discretion lies entirely with the police. Charges may or may not follow.



The width of Schedule 7 powers was demonstrated when David Miranda was detained by police at Heathrow Airport for nine hours in August 2013. Miranda is the partner of journalist Glenn Greenwald, who had written several articles about the extent of governance surveillance using information from Edward Snowden. Miranda was questioned under Schedule 7, his electronic equipment was confiscated and he was only freed when officers reached the legal time limit for either charging or releasing him and opted for the latter.

Miranda brought a case of judicial review of the security services and in February 2014, The Court found that the purpose of the stop, to determine what information Miranda was carrying and ascertain whether its release or dissemination would be severely damaging to UK national security interests, did fall properly within Schedule 7 of the 2000 Act (*R (on the application of Miranda) v Secretary of State for the Home Department* [2014] 1 WLR 3140). As such, Miranda's case confirms Anderson's concern that the wideness of discretion will be used to criminalize behavior that is very far removed from an actual act of terrorism. The discretion used in Schedule 7 powers is the same regarding the power to seize travel documents introduced under the CTSA 2015. It is important to investigate if this discretion is being guided by a narrative of terrorism that securitizes Muslims.

### *The Terrorism-Immigration Nexus*

Another research project stemming directly from the thesis involves further research on the connection between counter-terrorism and immigration policy. The thesis only briefly looked at immigration policy when discussing the deportation power in the Immigration Act 2014, but it would be interesting to further analyse how terrorism powers work through the immigration system. This

would be another research project looking at the interdiscursivity and internarrativity of the terrorism narrative. The framing of terrorism as a problem of the Other, connects directly to state insecurity towards immigration. Borders, the territorial markers of national identity, are malleable. As Sassen (1996) argues, sovereignty and territory have been reconstituted and partly displaced into other international arenas outside of state and outside the framework of national territory. States then also feel existential anxiety and try to regain ontological security by reaffirming national identity (Kinnvall 2004). The boundary language in the terrorism narrative is responding to this pre-existing interest. The securitizing of outside groups such as immigrants is a result of the fears states have of losing their symbolic control over territorial boundaries (Bigo 2002).

As a result, immigration must be controlled, reduced, and those with irregular immigration statuses should be detained and removed. This is what Bosworth and Guild (2008, 709) have called governing through immigration control, where the boundaries between different type of immigrants become blurred in a quest to 'protect an inexplicably vulnerable sense of British national identity'. In this case, citizenship symbolises the normal; the belonging in the bounded community. Immigrants are thus Others, outside the bounded national community.

The boundaries constructed through the narrative of terrorism explored in the previous chapters further reflect and reinforce this distinction between immigrants and citizens. This suggests the existence of an immigration-terrorism nexus which warrants further investigation. Research into the immigration-terrorism nexus could also employ the insights of the boundary-security nexus,

examining how constructions of identity and security are interlinked. This would suggest a hierarchy of belonging, where an individual's place in the hierarchy dictates the allocation of privileges. As such, research into the immigration-terrorism nexus would allow for greater examination into the development of different tiers of citizenship in the UK, delving deeper into different mechanisms of national social control developed through constructions of (in) security.

It would be interesting to see whether measures such as, for example TEOs, privilege those citizens without a recent history of immigration, since the definition of terrorism considers any action against state targets abroad to be an act of terrorism. The case of *R v Gul* (2013 UKSC 64) makes clear that British citizens who decided to fight abroad – against oppressive regimes, for example – were also at risk of being considered to be terrorists. Mohammed Gul, who was at the time a law student at Queen Mary University, was convicted under section 2 of the Terrorism Act 2006 for disseminating terrorism publications. These included videos uploaded on Youtube showing attacks on coalition forces in Afghanistan and Iraq as well as attacks against military targets in Chechnya. The videos were accompanied by commentary praising the attacks and encouraging others to follow suit. He appealed against his conviction on several grounds. But the key one was regarding the fact that the actions shown in the video were not acts of terrorism. This caused the Court of Appeal to certify the following question as a point of general public importance:

Does the definition of terrorism in section 1 of the Terrorism Act 2000 operate so as to include within its scope any or all military attacks by a non-state armed group against any or all state or intergovernmental organisation armed forces in the context of a non-international armed conflict?

Both the Court of Appeal and the Supreme Court answered yes; attacks by non-state actors in the context of non-international armed conflict are acts of terrorism. As such, the UK legislation understands terrorism to be any attack by non-state actors on state actors, international or otherwise, anywhere in the world. As the Supreme Court judges conclude:

As a matter of ordinary language, the definition would seem to cover any violence or damage to property if it is carried out with a view to influencing a government or IGO in order to advance a very wide range of causes. Thus, it would appear to extend to military or quasi-military activity aimed at bringing down a foreign government, even where that activity is approved (officially or unofficially) by the UK government.

British citizens with connections abroad, be it through family or heritage, could be more likely to leave the UK to fight abroad than white citizens removed from the experience of immigration. So British Muslims who decide to go to Syria to fight against the Assad regime will be vulnerable to being considered to be terrorists, whether they are fighting for ISIS or other resistance groups. TEOs are utilised by the government to exclude and effectively exile British citizens, and it would be interesting to see if in practice it interacts with the narrative of terrorism which, as we have seen, has securitized the identity of Muslims, making it a 'foreign' problem.

Further, the Immigration Act 2014 also requires private landlords to check the immigration status of their tenants. Known as Right to Rent checks, these measures came into force on 1 December 2014 in the West Midlands before being rolled out nationally. In its independent evaluation of this scheme in the West Midlands, the Joint Council for the Welfare of Immigrants (JCWI) found that 42% of landlords are unlikely to rent to those without British passports (JCIW 2015). Over 25% would be less likely to rent to someone with a foreign name or foreign accent. JCWI further found that landlords appear to be only checking the credentials of those individuals who appear 'foreign' (JCIW 2015).

Likewise, the Immigration Act 2014 further requires immigrants to show proof of their status before they are allowed to open a bank account or get a driver's license. Significantly, this also has the potential to affect British citizens from immigrant backgrounds, creating a climate of ethnic profiling (Travis 2013). Those with foreign names, accents and such will be likely to be required to prove their immigration status too, which is essentially proof of membership –of British identity, before they are able to rent a house, open a bank account and get a driver's licence. The need to control the Other, as exemplified in the narrative of terrorism uncovered in the thesis, blurs the line between foreigners and British nationals with immigrant background. A future research project would investigate if a terrorism-immigration nexus exists and if it results in a hierarchy of belonging. After all, those with traditional British names, accents and appearance will not be very likely to have a landlord question their legal status in their country of birth.

These aspects of the Immigration Act 2014 are not directly concerned with terrorism, but they further weaken the position of citizens with recent

immigration history, potentially giving them the condition of the Other. A future research project would investigate if a terrorism-immigration nexus exists and if it results in a hierarchy of citizenship. After all, those with traditional British names, accents and appearance will not be very likely to have a landlord question their legal status in their country of birth.

### **New Powers, Old Narratives**

Recent developments have illustrated that there is also scope for further analysis of the specific terrorism policy narrative explored in this thesis. *Contest 2011* and *Prevent 2011* provide the latest developments of the causal story and the narrative of terrorism in the UK, but as stated previously, there is a strong likelihood that both *Contest* and *Prevent* will be reviewed and a new strategy will be published. Nonetheless, it seems that the causal story, and consequently the narrative, will not change. As discussed previously, during a July 2015 speech on Extremism, Prime Minister David Cameron (2015a) mirrored the narrative constructed over the 2006, 2009 and 2011 policy:

Some argue it's because of historic injustices and recent wars, or because of poverty and hardship. This argument, what I call the grievance justification, must be challenged.

So when people say "it's because of the involvement in the Iraq War that people are attacking the West", we should remind them: 9/11 – the biggest loss of life of British citizens in a terrorist attack – happened before the Iraq War.

When they say that these are wronged Muslims getting revenge on their Western wrongdoers, let's remind them: from Kosovo to Somalia, countries like Britain have stepped in to save Muslim people from massacres – it's groups

like ISIL, Al Qaeda [sic] and Boko Haram that are the ones murdering Muslims.

Now others might say: it's because terrorists are driven to their actions by poverty. But that ignores the fact that many of these terrorists have had the full advantages of prosperous families or a Western university education.

Now let me be clear, I am not saying these issues aren't important. But let's not delude ourselves. We could deal with all these issues – and some people in our country and elsewhere would still be drawn to Islamist extremism.

No – we must be clear. The root cause of the threat we face is the extremist ideology itself.

This is essentially the exact same narrative, down to the undermining of structural factors and grievances, and the unmistakable placing of ideology as the key driver of terrorism.

Shortly after the Conservative victory in the 2015 elections, Mr Cameron announced a new Extremism Bill (Wintour 2015). One of the new powers expected to be proposed by the bill is the creation of extremism disruption orders, which would give the police powers to apply to the high court for an order to limit the “harmful activities” of an extremist individual, where harm includes risk of public disorder, harassment, alarm, distress or creating “a threat to the functioning of democracy”. As of submission, the UK does not have an official definition of extremism, so the new powers are particularly concerning due to their vagueness. After all, what exactly constitutes a threat to the functioning of democracy? Not voting, or encouraging people not to vote, as comedian Russell Brand did for a while in the run up to the 2015 election before changing his mind, undermines the democratic process – is that enough for

Brand to be considered an extremist? As the proposed legislation is firmly anchored in the narrative of terrorism, this is unlikely.

After all, the idea behind the Extremism Bill is to “stop extremists promoting views and behaviour that undermine British values”, which is the exact same language of the narrative of terrorism. This is also reflected in Cameron’s Extremism speech, as he continued to place identity in the causal story of terrorism:

For all our successes as a multi-racial, multi-faith democracy, we have to confront a tragic truth that there are people born and raised in this country who don’t really identify with Britain – and who feel little or no attachment to other people here. Indeed, there is a danger in some of our communities that you can go your whole life and have little to do with people from other faiths and backgrounds. (Cameron 2015a)

Consequently, these measures, which would include a ban on broadcasting and a requirement to submit to the police in advance any proposed publication on the web and social media or in print, will almost certainly continue to disproportionately affect the Muslim community. The official narrative shows no signs of being changed by the new powers and there is a strong possibility that it will be further entrenched.

Perhaps the solution lies with the wholesale dismantling of the narrative of terrorism, a dismantling that can only be achieved with the repeal of counter-terrorism legislation. This is an argument put forward primarily by (Gearty 2007). He argues that there is a wide range of ordinary law such as crimes like murder and criminal damage plus inchoate offences such as incitement, attempt and conspiracy which, with minor modification, already cover the breadth of



offences which currently fall under the terrorism label. I would go further and suggest that terrorist offences should be brought under the umbrella of hate-crime legislation. The inclusion of 'politically aggravated crime' to the already existing categories of hate-crime could go a long way towards demystifying and dismantling the label of terrorism. It would essentially bring it to the same level given to racially and religiously aggravated offences.

Terrorism 'is an ineluctably normative concept, subject to value judgements' (Horgan and Boyle 2008, 56). Of course, hate-crimes are also normative concepts, but they are less charged than the terrorism label and significantly, they encompass a large range of crimes committed by and affecting different communities. This would contribute to ending the association between Islam and terrorism, and the use of the terrorist label to give Muslims the condition of the Other. Terrorism would then not belong in a special category of law. Rather, as part of hate-crime, it would be part of general criminal law.

This would stop with the selective use of the terrorism label by the government. Dismantling the apparatus of terrorism, as well as changing the narrative, would mean that the killing of Lee Rigby in 2013 *and* the retaliatory attacks of Muslims would be considered to be the same offence – that of hate-crime. As such, it would be expected that the government would react similarly to them. If terrorism was considered to be a hate-crime, and the narrative surrounding the label of terrorism was dismantled, then the fight against terrorism would stop being perceived as one of the greatest challenges facing the UK. Rather, the greatest challenge facing the UK would be an epidemic of hate-crimes, coming from and affecting all communities. But as it stands the label of terrorism will continue to be used selectively by the government. And until the narrative of

terrorism and the structures keeping it in place are dismantled, its deployment in unlocking terrorism powers will continue to be a problem with serious consequences for British citizens.

On 07 September 2015, just days before this thesis was originally submitted, David Cameron announced that two British citizens had been killed in Syria (Cameron 2015b). Reyaad Khan and Ruhul Amin were the first British citizens to be killed by a British-led drone strike. They were both members of the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) and the drone strikes against them were justified on the grounds of national security. Cameron said their killing was ‘necessary and proportionate for the individual self-defence of the UK’ (Cameron 2015b). Khan and Amin were never charged with any crime or tried in a court of law. They were killed because the terrorist label was attached to them by the executive. The selective of the terrorism label at the political level thus has deadly consequences, and it has become more important than ever that its construction be investigated further so that its implications can be better understood.



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Racially or Religiously Aggravated Crime and Disorder Act 1998

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Prevention of Terrorism Act 2005

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