EXTREMISM, RADICALIZATION AND SECURITY

An Identity Theory Approach

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For Lynne

PREFACE

The year in which this book was written was a truly extraordinary one in politics and society. In Britain, a long and bitter campaign leading up to the referendum on whether to leave or remain in the European Union (EU) – a campaign which seemed to be based as much on myth as on any solid fact on both sides of the debate – culminated in a seismic shock to the political and economic establishment with a decision by a majority of the voting public to remove the country from the Union. The campaign managed to turn politics on its head and deliver complex alliances that rode roughshod over traditional party boundaries. As far as Britain was concerned, if there was any doubt that postmodern and postmaterialist politics had resolutely arrived, it was dispelled during 2016.

On a much darker note, the referendum campaign had also seen the murder of the Labour MP, Jo Cox, by a man supporting Far Right ideology; the first time a sitting MP had been killed in Britain for more than twenty-five years. The period before and after the June 2016 referendum was also marked by an upsurge in abuse and intimidation directed at immigrant communities and ethnic minorities, some of it at a very serious level. It seemed as if the overthrow of traditional politics was revealing a dark underbelly of us/them intersubjective politics, with all its attendant security concerns.

Such a populist political wave and its accompanying acrimonious rhetoric have been repeated across many parts of the world, as evidenced by the election of Donald Trump; a fitting finale to a most surprising year in world politics.

While all this was happening, many parts of Europe continued to experience a number of serious terrorist attacks, many of which seem to masquerade under the banner of a zero-sum sectarian ideology. Many of these incidents are bound-up in the ongoing maelstrom of politics in the Middle East, and in the intractable conflict in Iraq and Syria, but there is also an apparent ideological underpinning in the shape of rejectionist us/them discourse. This seems to strike at the very heart of European and Western identity.

All these security concerns and developments come together in the question of why selected individuals in our society choose to turn to extreme violence against their neighbours as a way forward.

This book attempts to address this question by adopting a theoretical approach rooted in matters of identity.

Clearly for some, identity theory is an unhelpful deflection from the deeper structural questions of socio-economic and political inequity in society. Some will even suggest that to consider individual motivations in violent attacks somehow opens the door to a moral justification for terrorism. Instead, argue such critics, we should be focusing squarely on the top-down effects of radical and extreme ideology.

The argument presented in this book, however, is that an identity-based approach that begins with a bottom-up analysis of why individuals may be motivated to turn to violence is not only of critical utility for observers and policy-makers alike, but seems to be becoming ever more prescient in an environment of heightened identity politics in contemporary society.

Within such a thesis, this book takes the view that identities are social and political constructions based as much on myth as on any reality. This allows for a detailed and critical look at discourses across different realms of identity politics and commentary, and a deeper understanding of the way in which identity is manipulated and shaped to pursue political agendas.

The case study of Britain is the centre of focus in this book, but this absolutely does not exclude the significance of other environments and societies when considering questions of identity and security. Frequent reference is made in this book to parallel and contrasting factors in other contexts outside of Britain, with the overall aim of encouraging further research and assisting our collective understanding. Indeed, promoting such a comparative analysis is one of the central aims of this book.

A further key factor is the question of policy decisions and approaches which flow from the academic debates and critiques. I often say to my own students that they must always consider the "so what?" question in their analysis. What I mean by this is that, while it is interesting to debate particular moral, ethical or political questions, what should the people paid to translate these into sensible policy do with our money? This book asks such questions in the context of the British policy experience, not least since British counter-terrorism and counter-extremism policy have been uniquely bound-up in questions of "suspect communities" and "threats within". Such controversies and debates are explored in this analysis, again with the aim of stimulating similar discussions across a variety of environments.

Some of the critical strands of research in this area have suggested that much academic debate and indeed government policy have been based on limited empirical data. This book somewhat rejects such a charge in its entirety, but does acknowledge that we are a long way from having conducted anything like enough empirical research on how an individual's identity is shaped and formed; and what the link is between identity and security in our societies. The answers to such questions remain of the highest significance in social studies and policy development, and it is hoped that this book generates at least some further steps towards an understanding.

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Contents

ABBREVIATIONS

ACT	Affect Control Theory
AfD	*Alternatif für Deutschland* (Alternative for Germany)
BBC	British Broadcasting Corporation
BFP	British Freedom Party
BNP	British National Party
CAIN	Conflict Archive on the Internet
CESB	Counter Extremism and Safeguarding Bill
CIRA	Continuity Irish Republican Army
CNN	Central News Network
CONTEST	Counter Terrorism Strategy
CTSA	Counter Terrorism and Security Act
DG	Director-General
DPP	Danish People's Party
EDL	English Defence League
ETA	*Euskadi Ta Askatasuna* (Basque Country and Freedom)
EU	European Union
FGM	Female Genital Mutilation
FPÖ	*Freiheitliche Partei Österreichs* (Freedom Party of Austria)
FOIR	Freedom of Information Request
GWOT	Global War on Terror
HUT	*Hizb-ut Tahrir* (Party of Liberation)
ICSR	International Centre for the Study of Radicalization and Political Violence
ICT	Identity Control Theory
IRA	Irish Republican Army
IS	Islamic State
ISIS	Islamic State of Iraq and *al-Shaam* (Syria)
JIC	Joint Intelligence Committee

LeT	*Lashkar-e Toiba* (Army of the Pure)
M5S	*Movimento 5 Stelle* (Five Star Movement)
MAPPA	Multi-Agency Police Protection Arrangements
MASH	Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub
MI5	Security Service (Britain)
MQM	*Mohajir Qaumi Mahaz* (Mohajir National Movement)
MP	Member of Parliament
NF	National Front
NI35	National Indicator 35
NPCC	National Police Chiefs' Council
NUS	National Union of Students
NYPD	New York Police Department
PEO	Prevent Engagement Officer
PSNI	Police Service of Northern Ireland
PTA	Prevention of Terrorism Act
PVE	Preventing Violent Extremism
PVV	*Partij voor de Vrijheid* (Party for Freedom)
RAF	*Rote Armee Fraktion* (Red Army Faction)
RIRA	Real Irish Republican Army
RUC	Royal Ulster Constabulary
SNP	Scottish National Party
SVP	*Schweizerische Volkspartei* (Swiss People's Party)
TACT	Terrorism Act
TPIM	Terrorism Prevention and Investigation Measure
UAF	United Against Fascism
UK	United Kingdom
UKIP	United Kingdom Independence Party
US	United States
WMD	Weapons of Mass Destruction

Introduction

1.1   INTRODUCTION

It seems clear in the twenty-first century that, when considering security, the question of identity has become an inescapable component of the picture. In attempting to simplify increasingly complex narratives in a globalizing world, politicians, journalists and citizens in general will often try to explain the troubling scene before them by "othering" a particular group, and drawing a distinction between that group and themselves.

Trying to understand complex problems is, of course, an entirely natural pursuit. Human beings, as the psychologist Daniel Kahneman (2012) observed, have a natural and powerful desire to make sense of the world before them by developing a story that links pieces of information together into causal inferences. That is how conspiracy theories develop and become so popular in some parts of society, and, perhaps more controversially, how religions have developed to help people make sense of events that might otherwise seem inexplicable.

Alongside attempts to explain the human condition, however, society has also seen far too many episodes in which a perceived security threat or problem in society has been met with an industrial-scale othering of a whole community. From the Jews in 1930s Germany to the Tutsis in 1990s Rwanda, not to mention countless other episodes of sectarianism and ethnic oppression, we can see that identity politics sometimes become inextricably linked with conceptualizations of security threats and how to respond to them.

In more recent times, the problems of globalization, which Aldrich (2009:889) describes as the "underside of a globalising world", have led to similarly simplistic, if not quite so apocalyptic otherings of communities perceived to be at the heart of problems. In late twentieth and early twenty-first century Europe, for example, security debates have become intertwined with debates about migration, societal change, and terrorism driven by ideology. In general terms, Western European society has become immeasurably safer than it ever was, not least when compared to the situation a hundred years ago, when the continent found itself in the early stages of two world wars to rival all previous conflicts. This might be one of the reasons why sudden violent events as the gunning-down of citizens by terrorists in European cities, are met with such consternation by a public no longer attuned to death and destruction. It might also explain the rise of populist, xenophobic politics by Western political actors who perceive that globalization is causing an irreversible change to the very nature of European society. For them, such changes are doubly frightening when conceptualized in terms of an "us" and "them", or good versus evil struggle.

Politics and political discourses are not, of course, black and white processes that deliver the "truth" about human society. Perhaps even more than in previous times, the process of globalization has meant a growing and complex intertwining of political, social, cultural and economic spheres of society across national boundaries. There has been much talk about postmodernity, and questions have been raised as to whether the traditional Westphalian state may be facing its demise. The Arab Spring showed that entrenched authoritarian regimes, which had been a staple feature of the Middle East for most of the second half of the twentieth century, could be swept aside (at least in places) by popular revolutions. The results may not have been uniform, or indeed indicative of progress as the bitter and miserable Syrian civil war demonstrates, but the point was made that political history could be changed. Europe and other parts of the world were not immune to the new atmosphere in the air. In Spain, for example, the very name of the *Podemos* movement, which holds the balance of power in parliament at the time of writing, echoes the point made earlier by President Obama in the US that the people *can* make changes. Thus is ushered in a postmodern politics in which traditional left and right cleavages are realigning themselves. (In Britain, the political aftermath of the EU referendum vote in 2016 has caused turmoil within both mainstream political parties of the right and left.)

1.2   IDENTITY AND THE BRITISH CASE STUDY

Explaining such political complexity is a difficult business, and the best that democratic leaders can do is to offer ideas and narratives around which particular constituencies can cohere. In early 2006, the British Prime Minister of the time, Gordon Brown, addressed the Fabian Society in London. Brown was speaking just six months after the first major terrorist attack on British soil of the twenty-first century, in which 56 people had died and hundreds more had been injured in a coordinated set of suicide bombing attacks on the transport network of the British capital. Because the attacks, as it later transpired, had been conducted by British citizens, much of the debate about what had happened and how, focused on questions of national identity. Brown noted that:

> When we take time to stand back and reflect, it becomes clear that to address almost every one of the major challenges facing our country . . . you must have a clear view of what being British means, what you value about being British and what gives us purpose as a nation . . . . I would argue that if we are clear about what underlies our Britishness and if we are clear that shared values – not colour, nor unchanging and unchangeable institutions – defines what it means to be British in the modern world, we can be far more ambitious in defining for our time the responsibilities of citizenship; far more ambitious in forging a new and contemporary settlement of the relationship between state, community and individual; and it is also easier too to address difficult issues that sometimes come under the heading 'multiculturalism' - essentially how diverse cultures, which inevitably contain differences, can find the essential common purpose without which no society can flourish (Brown 2006).

The terrorist attacks of 7 July 2005, to which Brown explicitly referred in a list of challenges including "how we equip ourselves for globalization"; relationships with the US and Europe; and issues to do with citizenship and governance, were seen as an episode that had the potential to divide communities beneath the level of national identity. The argument was that a set of "values" could unite the nation across ethnic or sub-national identities, and that multiculturalism was the key: indeed, multiculturalism itself represented one of the supposed core values of the national identity.

This book examines the salience of identity to contemporary security debates in the West, focusing as a case study on Britain in terms of identity formations, threats, and security policy. Questions of how complex and

contested notions of "radicalization" and "extremism" are discussed and debated in the contemporary context are viewed through the lens of identity theory. The key area of analysis concerns the interplay between micro- and macro-levels of identity construction. Applying these to security allows us to ask such questions as whether individuals become violently extreme through processes specific to themselves as individuals (an essentially "bottom-up" perspective) or whether grander societal processes of radicalization and recruitment by leaders and organizations are paramount (a "top-down" perspective). In addressing this question, this analysis will follow the core tenets of Stryker's (2008) structural symbolic interactionism, which stresses the symbiotic relationship between individual and society. However, while it is accepted that no individual can operate completely in a vacuum and is the product of his of her environment and history, it is also postulated here that every individual's journey into violent extremism is specific and context-bound. This inevitably reduces the significance – while not ignoring the effect completely – of top-down actors in the process.

The second key thesis in this book is the Foucauldian notion of identity as mythical, in the sense that it is constructed (and indeed performed) as a liminal phenomenon and is not a display of essentialist categorizations of human society (Foucault 1972). Such a notion also allows for consideration of identity politics and narratives as fine examples of political myth.

Like many states, Britain forms a particularly interesting example of Benedict Anderson's (1991) "imagined community". Unlike most of its European neighbours with whom it shares a close and in some cases intertwined history, the state of Britain is composed of a form of federal union of devolved states, with varying degrees of autonomy away from the central parliament in London. Indeed, the second most populous element of this union – Scotland – narrowly voted not to break away and become an independent state in a referendum in 2015. Renewed calls for such a move have followed the 2016 EU membership referendum. Many have observed how a notion of Britain was "imagined" after the formal signing of the union in 1707 between Scotland, and England and Wales, creating a larger state unit which is still often confused as being synonymous with England and Englishness (most usually by the English themselves; Croft 2012:57). As the 2016 referendum showed, such a union could yet unravel again to create newly imagined communities.

The question of Britain and what it does or does not comprise at the macro level is the first element of Britishness and its complexity. The

second element concerns how British society has and still is transforming through the period of globalization and the heightened mobility of populations this entails. For Britain, some of the picture here relates to the history of colonialism and post-colonial connections, including some significant periods in the post-war period in which citizens of certain Commonwealth communities were encouraged to migrate to the country to alleviate labour shortages in specific sectors of the economy. Many of these migrant communities have settled permanently in Britain and had families, leading to a range of complicated "hyphenated identities" that display an amalgam of Britishness and identity relating to a former post-colonial setting. Overlaid on this picture is a more recent experience of migration to Britain from a range of places, including from former Communist Bloc countries in Eastern Europe who have joined the European Union (EU) and taken advantage of freedom of movement. Such migrants have been joined by refugees leaving fragile and fractured states such as Iraq and Syria. The resulting picture of British society is a very multicultural one, which, in its sheer diversity, rivals many other places in the world and certainly other parts of Europe.

Gordon Brown's address in 2006 suggested that an effective multiculturalist policy could hold together an otherwise frail society that might easily be pulled apart by forces on the darker side of globalization. By focusing on generic and agnostic values as a unifying force, differences in identity below the level of the state would become less important. Indeed, such differences could be a force for good and make Britain *better* equipped for globalization than many of its peers. This positive vision of a form of separation of church and state to resolve problems and move forwards had lost some of its lustre a few years later. In 2011, a subsequent British Prime Minister, David Cameron, was casting doubt on the merits of a "state multiculturalism" that had led to a dangerous situation in which communities could increasingly grow apart from one another within the national space (Number10.gov 2011). Cameron called for a new doctrine of "muscular liberalism" that would strengthen and reassert the notion of Britishness and the values supposedly underpinning it. The catalyst for this thinking was security: the Prime Minister was speaking at the Munich Security Conference, and was suggesting a link between fissiparous communities and security threats such as terrorism.

Part of the issue is again to do with globalization, but, in this case, a perhaps surprising tendency noted by many for the media to actually fragment its messages and constituencies (Gamson et al. 1992:386). Most of the

hypothecation about the effects of globalization assumes it to have the homogenizing effect of cultural imperialism, whereby local and regional cultural expressions gradually succumb to an agnostic and all-encompassing global culture. But in actual fact, there are two processes that seem to be doing the opposite in many cases. Globalization has allowed a flowering of media outlets away from the original hegemonic powers in the field, such as CNN and its Western counterparts. (On its launch, the slogan of Russia's RT News was "Question more", implying that we should not just blindly follow what the Westerners were telling us.) At the same time, the development of social media has meant a shift towards the consumer in news consumption: citizens can now choose the news outlets to which they would like to subscribe rather than be dependent on news pushed towards them. In effect, citizens can choose the narratives they wish to consume.

In a community context, this means that sub-national identity groups could now more easily live within a chosen identity-oriented narrative and culture than they could before, while simultaneously living within a metropolitan and multicultural environment such as Britain. In Brown's pro-multiculturalism thinking, this might not matter as long a set of central values are understood and followed: indeed, it could even make British society richer. More recent views expressed by Cameron, however, start to argue the opposite, and to suggest that a widening gap between sub-national identities in their cultural expression and narrative could actually be a problem for the state, in that disenfranchised and embittered ghettoes could develop into a "threat within".

This more negative and pessimistic reading of the situation is also pertinent when considering the rise of the Far Right in recent European politics: a process that some have described as "cumulative extremism" (Mughal 2014). A couple of years after Gordon Brown's rousing address to the Fabian Society, the otherwise unremarkable British town of Luton revealed itself to be a fascinating microcosm of the risk of cumulative extremism. In the Summer of 2009, a radical Islamist pressure-group called *Al Muhajiroun*, which was subsequently proscribed by the UK government, mounted a small but noisy demonstration at the event of a parade of British soldiers returning from deployment in Iraq. The provocation of the demonstration, which lambasted the soldiers for being "butchers of Baghdad" among other things, caused an angry reaction in the town. Later in the same year, two new groups emerged which demonstrated an overlap between them in terms of membership. The first was led by a renowned football hooligan called Jeff Marsh, who announced the

formation of a new pan-UK football supporters' group called Casuals United. This group, perhaps confusingly, proclaimed itself to be against "Muslim fundamentalists". At around the same time the English Defence League (EDL) also emerged in Luton with the same professed agenda. In August 2009, the EDL mounted its first major street rally protesting against the spread of "militant Islam" in Birmingham, initiating a series of demonstrations across the country, some of which attracted upwards of 2000 supporters (Richards 2013:181).

There was much consternation at the time of the EDL's formation, as it seemed to be a revival of the dark days of the 1970s and 80s, when the Far Right and neo-nazi National Front had mounted a number of angry demonstrations in British cities, many of which had descended into street violence. (The target of such groups, as will be discussed later, was not so much Muslims but any non-white communities.) Despite the EDL claiming to be open to a rainbow coalition of supporters – including Muslims – who were opposed to the rise of "militant Islam" in Britain, the group has clearly been a focal point for neo-nazi and xenophobic sentiments within white British society. Indeed, the leader of the EDL, Tommy Robinson, formally announced his resignation from the group in 2013, claiming it had been hijacked by Far Right extremists (although his motivations for subsequently joining the anti-extremist think tank, the Quilliam Foundation, have since been questioned (BBC 2013)).

There were also fears that the EDL were symptomatic of a wider wave of rising Far Right extremism across Europe, which was manifesting itself both as the rise towards unprecedented levels of power for political parties such as the *Front National* in France, *Jobbik* in Hungary and various "people's parties"; and the rise of street-level pressure groups such as Pegida (*Patriotische Europäer gegen die Islamierung des Abendlandes*) in Germany. In Britain, where Far Right parties have never won a single parliamentary seat (with the exception of the populist UK Independence Party (UKIP), which won one seat in the 2015 parliamentary elections), the EDL has proved itself to be something of a false dawn for its supporters, with gradually waning attendance and interest in its rallies. At the same time, the pattern of low-level racism and sectarian animosity in Britain, including anti-semitism, should not be underestimated. A study by Teeside University in 2014 of incidents of "cumulative extremism" found that, while the police in England and Wales were recording a gradual overall decline in hate crimes including religious-motivated attacks, the proportion of such incidents directed at Muslims was rising.

There was also a clear link between specific incidents of terrorism, such as the murder of the British soldier Lee Rigby in London in 2013, and a spike in anti-Muslim attacks, some of them involving serious violence (Feldman et al. 2014). Furthermore, the 2016 referendum vote to leave the EU also appears to have encouraged a spike in racist attacks on minority communities (BBC 2016).

1.3   GLOBALIZATION AND EXTREMISM

The picture here is linked to globalization, in the sense that the economic downturn of 2008 onwards has placed stresses on European labour markets, and made them more susceptible to the effects of inward migration, especially at the socio-economically lower and unskilled end of the market. This has allowed populist political leaders to articulate the problems being faced as being caused by an "out-group" of immigrants, with clearly defined identity labels. The very name of the English Defence League (which demonstrates the ongoing confusion between Englishness and Britishness) shows that it is all about identity politics, and the linkage of that with security. Many observers, including President Obama, have suggested that the surprising vote by the British public to leave the EU in the 2016 referendum was a worrying manifestation of the anti-globalization, populist political movement's ability to overturn traditional politics (Reilly 2016). His concerns have subsequently been deepened by events closer to home in the shape of Donald Trump's victory in the US presidential elections. The pessimist's argument is that there is a deep iceberg of risk here in Western society which relates, in David Cameron's words, to "failed multiculturalism".

The terrorist attacks in 2005 by a group of British citizens had catalysed this debate. More recently, the phenomenon of Western European citizens travelling to Iraq and Syria to join the fight for Islamic State (IS) has also raised the temperature in the debate about identity and security. Many of the more robust commentators in politics and academia have suggested that a choice to become a jihadist means that citizenship must be renounced: in effect, that pursuit of violent jihadism is incompatible with the right to have a European national identity (Elgot 2014). Of course, state citizenship is not necessarily the same as ethnic or religious identity, and the two levels of identity can and do overlap in extremely complicated ways.

The global terror threat at the beginning of the twenty-first century has been described as something "new" by many commentators. First appearing in discourses on terrorism in the late 1990s (Laqueur 1999:58), the

notion of "new terrorism" rapidly gained momentum after the 9/11 attacks in the US in 2001. The British Prime Minister at the time of those attacks, Tony Blair, spoke of the "calculus of risk" having changed after the attacks, whereby terrorism could, for the first time, reasonably be linked with the threat from nuclear, chemical or biological weapons, since the terrorists no longer appeared to set any boundaries on the number of casualties they wished to cause (BBC 2004).

Writing about the same time and using a historical notion of distinctive "waves" of terrorism, David Rapoport described the latest period of terrorism as "religious", which allows for a notion of "fanaticism" and unbounded "extremism" (Rapoport 2002). The salience of these words and concepts, which some critics reject as being too relative to be of utility, is at the centre of analysis in this book.

For a country such as Britain, a key question is whether and how the terrorist threat has changed. Firstly, older threats such as that from Irish Republicanism and Loyalist sectarianism in Northern Ireland could be considered to be more bounded in both the specific nationalist objectives being contested, and the degree to which death and destruction would be undertaken by the groups involved. At the same time, analysis shows that many more people died during the "Troubles" in Northern Ireland during the latter part of the twentieth century than have succumbed to "Islamist" threats more recently in Britain. More importantly, despite the differences between the two periods, some have suggested a similarity in the way in which a particular group of citizens have been identified by the state as a "suspect community" at the core of the problem (Pantazis and Pemberton 2009).

With the advent of Al Qaeda and terrorist attacks attributed to it, however, macro identity factors have become arguably more important in security discourse. The experience of the "Prevent" strand of the British counter-terrorism strategy (called CONTEST) is highly indicative in this regard. Designed to be part of a multi-agency and holistic response to counter-terrorism constituted by four 'P's (Pursue, Protect, Prepare and Prevent), the Prevent policy was the part of the strategy that dealt with the longer-term societal elements of the threat, encompassing such contested and complicated notions as "radicalization" and its effects on individuals moving towards expressions of violent extremism.

Prevent now encourages strong reactions from many in counter-terrorism policy fields. The initial phase of Prevent, under the Labour administration of Tony Blair and Gordon Brown, followed the traumatic episode of the

2005 terrorist attacks in London. The policy saw these attacks as the result of something broken within British society, whereby certain sections of the community were turning violently against those amongst whom they had been born and raised. The policy was aimed at undertaking a set of interventions and indeed community investment which would identify potential problems of violent extremism emerging within Muslim communities. The way in which the funds were prioritized and allocated regionally to these projects and interventions was based on a formula connected with the size of the Muslim community in each area, with a higher than 5 percent Muslim population allowing the local authority in question to qualify for Prevent funding (Richards 2012:147-8). This led to the perhaps inescapable criticism that Prevent was all about the state turning the spotlight squarely on the Muslim community and making them the out-group. In a book subtitled "How Not to Prevent Violent Extremism", Arun Kundnani (2009:6) claims that the manner in which Prevent was designed had the effect of "constructing the Muslim population as a 'suspect community'". Many critics of the policy have subsequently felt that it is fundamentally flawed as a result, and a "toxic brand", to such an extent that a later revision and relaunch of the policy by the Cameron government has done little if anything to allay fears about the approach.

There is no doubt that lessons have been identified – if not yet entirely learnt – about how this particular strand of counter-terrorism policy could and should look in the future. Some of the criticisms about how the early stages of Prevent made the policy avowedly about a particular religious and community identity, and how this process caused alienation and a lack of trust in some cases, are not without validity. At the same time, the argument in this book is that the nature of the contemporary terrorist threat; its relationship to societal developments in a globalizing metropolitan context; and our understanding of the best policy approaches to tackle it, are all phenomena which we are at a very early stage of understanding. It is argued that preventive and multi-agency policies such as Prevent need to remain a staple part of security policy, even if they end up looking very different from how they look now.

1.4   THREAT AND MYTH

One of the planks of the critical approach to terrorism is that the threat from groups such as Al Qaeda is essentially a myth, deliberately shaped by securitizing actors for their own political objectives. In late 2004, the BBC

released a series of three programmes by the documentary-maker, Adam Curtis, called "The Power of Nightmares" (Curtis 2004). The programmes charted the course of two separate political movements on different sides of the world, which, argued Curtis, came together in a curious form of synergy. The first was the neo-conservative movement in the US, whose roots lay in the "Team B" episode during the Cold War. Here, a lobby of assertive politicians and military officers, which included then Secretary of Defense, Donald Rumsfeld, successfully persuaded successive American presidents that the Soviet Union was the epitome of expansionist evil, and had weapons that were so sophisticated, they could completely out-fox detection equipment. In essence, these weapons could not be seen because they were invisible (and not, as it would later transpire, fictitious). This idea directly challenged Kissinger's conciliatory approach and set the US on a course of military expansion and expenditure.

The second movement was Al Qaeda, whose roots lay in the revolutionary Islamist ideology of Sayyid Qutb, who was jailed, tortured and eventually executed by the Nasser regime in Egypt in 1966. Qutb's ideas, published in the book *Ma'alim fi al-Tariq* (Milestones Along the Way), led to the development of the underground Islamist movement in Egypt, including both an expansion in support for the Muslim Brotherhood and the emergence of Egyptian Islamic Jihad (EIJ). One of the leading figures in EIJ was Ayman al-Zawahiri, who would later team up with Osama Bin Laden in founding Al Qaeda.

Curtis's argument is that the objectives of these two movements display a curious nexus. Qutb's ultra-conservatism, which felt that American society was becoming inescapably corrupt and morally bankrupt (and infecting society in other parts of the world, such as Egypt), chimes with the sentiments of the neo-conservative movement in the US, albeit in slightly different ways. At the end of the Cold War, the idea of using the *Mujahideen* in Afghanistan to defeat the great Evil Empire of Moscow, fed into the notion, in a curious twist of fate, that the subsequent Al Qaeda movement that grew from the remnants of the *Mujahideen* represented a renewed threat of evil to the American project. This allowed a reversal of the peace dividend following the end of the Cold War, and a replacement of the communist threat with that of Islamist terrorism. Al Qaeda were, in the view of Curtis, a mythical echo of the invisible weapons supposedly held by the Soviet Union in the 1970s, allowing the neo-conservative lobby to seize the political

initiative in Washington and launch the War on Terror. In this way, Curtis argued, the global and millennial threat of Al Qaeda was securitized and constructed upon mythical foundations.

In academia, terrorism studies were increasingly characterized after the 9/11 attacks and subsequent launch of the so-called War on Terror with a strong critical strand of analysis, of which securitization theory was an important part. This strand of analysis generally targeted itself at the Western state and its motivations in prosecuting the struggle against terrorism. A Curtisian logic is followed that the threat from Al Qaeda is not necessarily entirely mythical, but is exaggerated by the state and its protagonists and used to justify the continued expansion of the military-industrial complex, which had suffered a severe blow at the end of the Cold War and its supposed peace dividend. Furthermore, the violence and extent of the War on Terror, including the problematic justification for the attack on Iraq; episodes of abuses of human rights such as the Abu Ghraib torture debacle, water-boarding and extraordinary renditions of suspects; and sovereignty-busting drone attacks launched from safe American territory, all add-up, in the critical thesis, to a suggestion that the West is itself entirely to blame for the terrorist problem.

Indeed, even senior Western security officials have been critical of the way the last decade has unfolded. Eliza Manningham-Buller, for example, who was Director-General of Britain's MI5 intelligence agency at the time of the 2005 London attacks, has repeatedly stated her belief that the attack on Iraq from 2003 onwards provided a ready-made justification for terrorist attacks on the West and was wholly ill-advised (Norton-Taylor 2010). Similarly, a British Joint Intelligence Committee (JIC) secret assessment written in 2005 and released subsequently to the Iraq Inquiry, showed that the British intelligence community was of the firm belief at the time that the attack on Iraq had worsened the international terrorism threat (JIC 2005).

Bill Durodié, who worked with Curtis on *The Power of Nightmares*, does not necessarily suggest that Al Qaeda is a complete myth per se, but that the notion of it being a well-organized, top-down structure that directs multiple attacks across the world with efficiency may well be a fantasy. He suggests that the 9/11 attacks were essentially a "one-off", and that there is no real evidence that Islamist terror cells and groups are connected in any real way (Beckett 2004). This links with Marc Sageman's "leaderless jihad" idea, which suggests that Al Qaeda-related terrorism is loosely inspired and "self-starting" rather than directed by a top-down

organization, as was generally the case with groups earlier in history (Sageman 2008). For Durodié, the implications of this for Western counter-terrorism policy are clear, and critical. A "politics of fear" leads to a self-fulfilling prophecy of a social constructivist dilemma for the state, in that people's perception of fear becomes as important as the actual threat level, and has to be addressed accordingly with stringent counter-terrorism measures (Durodié 2007:441, 443).

However, there are also important messages about how and why individuals become drawn into committing violent terrorist acts. Again, Durodié raises the element of identity, and specifically a troubled search for identity by certain individuals within a metropolitan, postmodern environment. Thus, the July 2005 bombers in London were "fantasists – want-to-be terrorists – driven by a search for identity and meaning to their lives" (Durodié 2007:429). In this sense, identity is again presented as a moving phenomenon rather than a static noun, describing both a state of being and a developmental process. More importantly, this notion of the possible motivations of terrorists is that it is connected to a complex form of identity formation by second- and third-generation migrant communities within a Western metropolitan environment. These questions of identity formation are critical, and could, if valid, suggest that the threat is less about a coordinated ideology and more about a deeper process of social and societal development in the globalizing world.

Writing around the time of the 9/11 attacks, Ulrich Beck developed a notion of the rise of the "risk society", which, he claimed, was linked to a structural anxiety about globalization (Beck 2002). In the risk society, prediction and risk become interlinked in that fear of apparently rising threat vectors such as transnational organized crime and terrorism, lead to a growing attempt to predict and pre-empt such risks before they manifest themselves (Kerr and Earle 2013:68). In Europe, a long period of relative security coupled with the rise of sophisticated surveillance technologies can lead to a perhaps misguided belief that the risks thrown up by globalization can be mitigated and reduced to virtually nothing.

The critical theorist, Stuart Croft, raised the example of the new "smart bin" deployed to London's streets in 2007, which costs £18,000 per bin, but can withstand the blast of a bomb placed within it (Daily Mail 2007). Interestingly, because the bin's creators and subsequent media reporting referred to "7/7" (shorthand for the July 2005 terrorist attacks in London), Croft claimed that discussion of the bin "was part of the normalization of the everyday reality of a capital city facing terrorist threats from Muslims" (Croft

2012:215). This arguably forgets that the reason there are generally no litter bins in central London is because the IRA had a history of placing bombs within them during the 1970s and 80s.

With this challenge aside, however, Croft identifies another important strand of the critical thesis, which is that of the apparent rise of Islamophobia (a term that reputedly originated around the end of the Ottoman Empire (Alghamdi 2011:19)). The argument is that Western European risk society, if such exists, articulates the terrorist threat repeatedly around identity factors, and specifically around an apparent "threat within" from the Muslim community. One of the arguments is that threats from non-Islamist sources, such as from maverick Far Right actors, or the continued threat from Irish Republican terrorism, are generally downplayed in British political discourse when compared to "threats from Muslims", as Croft described it above. It is true that one of the single most murderous terrorist attacks in a Western city in the post-war period was committed by the Far Right activist, Anders Breivik, in Oslo in 2011. Attacks have also happened in London, such as the murder of three people in a bomb attack in 1999 by the neo-nazi sympathizer, David Copeland. Should we therefore be worrying just as much about "lone wolf" Far Right activists as we do about Islamist terrorists?

Arun Kundnani explores the issue of Islamophobia and misguided conceptions of "extremism" extensively and arrestingly in his 2014 book, "The Muslims are Coming!" He describes another area of myth: that of "radicalization", which, he argues, morphed after 9/11 into a more general description of "a psychological or theological process by which Muslims move towards extremist views" (Kundnani 2015:119). In this way, identity is not just a static factor, but something with movement and transformation, although whether and how that happens are very much open to debate. This is a dimension to the discussion explored in chapter three.

Much of the myth debate about the threat from terrorism in Western societies comes together in what we might call the "bee-sting" or "furniture" arguments. In a much-quoted Washington Post article in 2015 shortly after the Bataclan terror attacks in Paris, Shaver pointed out that, despite the acres of news coverage about terrorism and discussion of the threat that followed the attacks, it remained the case that more Americans were crushed to death by toppling furniture each year than were killed by Islamist terrorists (Shaver 2015). Similarly, in 2012, the UK's independent reviewer of terrorism legislation, David Anderson QC, noted in his

annual report that the threat to Britons from terror attacks had been declining sharply since the few years around 2005. The risk of death from terrorism in the UK was no more in the twenty-first century than that from bee-stings, with the average being five deaths per year for each when averaged out over the period (Beckford 2012).

David Anderson noted that "whatever its cause, the reduction in risk related to al-Qaida terrorism in the United Kingdom is real and has been sustained for several years now" (cited in Beckford 2012). The point he was making was a policy one, in that he was praising the new Coalition government's efforts to roll back some anti-terror measures, such as stop-and-search measures, and the reduction of pre-trial detention periods to 14 days. His use of the term "real" is interesting in the context of myth, which, we can assume means that any statements suggesting that the terrorist threat remains as grave as before are not "true" as such. (With that said, we should be mindful of Barthes's suggestion that myth is not a lie as such, but a distorting mechanism that serves a particular purpose (Kelsey 2014:309): a point to which I will return). A challenge to Anderson's statement may be that, while there may have been a decline in the number of successful terrorist attacks, this does not necessarily indicate a decline in the number of planned attacks, but the point is made that democratic society should be very careful not to over-blow such threats and should roll back repressive measures whenever it can.

There are, of course, important counter-arguments to the critical thesis. In a rebuttal of the "power of nightmares" idea, Glees (2009) suggests that, not only should we take seriously the suggestions from senior security officials that there are a considerable number of young men (primarily) with an avowed desire to commit terrorist acts in Britain, but that there is a clear process of ideological radicalization about which we should be most worried. This is essentially the "top-down" model, favoured by Bruce Hoffman (2006) among others, which counters the "leaderless jihad" idea promulgated by Sageman.

In 2007 it was reported that the number of potential terrorist targets under surveillance by the Security Service (MI5) in the UK had risen by a quarter over the previous six months, to 2000 individuals "actively involved in supporting Al Qaeda" (Gardner 2007). In 2015, the DG of MI5, Andrew Parker, claimed that six terror plots in Britain had been foiled by the security services in the preceding year: a figure that was the highest rate of activity he could recall in his 32-year career (Burman 2015). Parker went on to say that the number of

individuals being monitored had risen further to 3000, largely because of the rise of Islamic State and its inspirational pull to aspiring young jihadists. Of course, one could ask questions as to the instrumentality of such statements and their timing, in the "speech act" sense of the putative relationship between senior power-actors in the state and their pronouncements. (In this case, a critical thesis might suggest that there was a link between a supposed dramatic rise in the number of potential terrorist suspects and a desire to deepen and extend the state's expenditure on surveillance and law enforcement activities.)

The "reality" of the size of the threat in contemporary Europe is, of course, virtually impossible to establish, and even those privy to secret information would admit that they only know what they can see. For all the cases under surveillance – some of which will turn out to be red herrings – there probably will be others with malicious intent who have not yet been discovered. The July 2005 London bombings were themselves a case in point, in that two of the protagonists had been seen by MI5 on the fringes of another counter-terrorism operation in 2004, but were assessed at the time to be peripheral and generally insignificant. That a faulty judgement was made on the potential significance of these two individuals only serves to echo numerous subsequent incidences in which terrorists had either not been picked up by the security services, or at least had not met the threshold of deeper investigation.

The question is not so much whether there is indeed a security risk from such individuals. Critical theorists will sometimes admit as much, even if they question the size and nature of the threat. "Securitizations, of course," observes Croft, "do not occur from nothing" (Croft 2012:249). The 9/11 attacks in the US are not in themselves a myth, and nor are the numerous subsequent attacks in Europe and elsewhere. Rather, the key questions explored in this book are: who "they" are, that are perpetrating these attacks; why they are choosing to do so; and how that process works from start to finish. These are questions of identity and identification, and are moving processes as well as single states of being. These are also matters on which there are widely differing opinions and much ongoing debate.

1.5   Questions of Defining "Radical" and "Extreme"

Clearly, definitions in this area are very important when we come to consider the connection between identity and security. Some of the concepts we need to define are processes (such as radicalization), while some are identity labels (such as "jihadist" or indeed Muslim). On the matter of

radicalization, the key questions here are: what is signified by the process; and what the process does to the identity of the individual concerned. On the first, many analysts such as Anthony Richards have pointed out that any process has an implied relativity about it, and, if we cannot clearly identify the start and finish points in that process, then the concept risks sowing confusion in its application (Richards 2015). In this case there is a double confusion with concepts such as "extremism" and "extremist", and how these are to be defined. An extremist, by definition, holds beliefs on the outer fringes of the "mainstream", but a proper definition of both of these terms needs consensus on the nature of the spectrum against which we are measuring: namely, where the "centre" is, in which the majority of the relevant community should be found; and where the outer limits are, which we can suppose to be occupied by a minority of individuals with essentially fringe views.

Returning to the question at hand of British identity, concepts such as "moderate" and "extreme" have bedevilled discussions about identity and security and led many of the officials attempting to frame security policy into very difficult areas of debate, particularly with elements of the Muslim community. There is also the key question of how different positions on the spectrum can and should be accommodated within a multicultural community, and this is where the question of the connection with violence and insecurity becomes key. Someone with supposedly extreme views, for example, is not necessarily a security risk to the wider public unless they choose to put some of those views into violent action (or, perhaps, where they unduly influence other vulnerable individuals to decide on a path of violence). This is where the concept of "violent extremism", around which much British counterterrorism policy has coalesced in recent years, comes into play as a differentiation from wider notions of extremism. The idea here is that people with supposedly extreme views can exist within British society and be tolerated, as long as they do not follow a path of violence or display a malicious intent to influence others to do so.

However, if we take the normative view of radicalization as a process, whereby it defines a sort of pathway between an increasingly extreme and radical ideology into the final destination of violence, then pre-violent extremism *does* become a problem for the national community. In this sense, disrupting the radicalization pathways becomes a sensible option for security policy, and it inevitably means trying to work upstream into areas of ideology and opinion rather than just "fire-fighting" at the point at which a violent act is actually committed.

The downside of such an approach is that it greatly complicates notions of identity and community, and their connections with security. If we accept the notion of radicalization pathways and consider them to be at the core of contemporary insecurity, then two things have to happen. First, the reference points on the spectrum have to be clearly defined, so that we know when someone has demonstrably moved from the mainstream centre to the dangerous outer limits of the spectrum. In areas of religion and religious ideology, these discussions are very difficult to have. The mainstream values of a secular Western society, for example, may well be very different in important respects from those of a religious ideology that originated in the Middle East. At the same time, the requirements of religious tolerance and multiculturalism mean that differences – to a certain extent – have to be tolerated and accommodated as far as possible, insofar as they can coexist with secular values and the rule of law.

Even within religious communities, furthermore, there may be sharp differences between what would be defined as either moderate or extreme between different sects of the religion. Within Islam, *Salafis*, for example, consider some *Sufistic* practices such as the veneration of saints and the use of music in religious settings to be entirely inappropriate, and, in essence, "extreme". Many *Sufis*, on the other hand, would consider the uncompromising *takfiri* rejection of such practices by the *Salafis* as the extremism in this context. The question is whether and how both sets of ideas can and should coexist within a multicultural society. Another example is that of the Far Right, which, in its very description means something far away from something else, namely mainstream centrist conservatism. Those advocating the enforced repatriation of "immigrants" from the UK would be considered by most to be Far Right extremists, yet, many people holding those views would consider themselves to be the sensible ones and the liberal state to be the problem. In a sense, it is all relative.

The second thing that has to happen if we accept the normative notion of radicalization pathways is that we have to define the points at which those passing a particular line on the pathway become othered and excluded from the mainstream identity. We have already seen how discourse around "jihadist travellers" from European settings can often suggest that undertaking violent jihadist actions in Iraq, Syria, or elsewhere, is incompatible with a Western national identity and should indeed disqualify such individuals from subscribing to such an identity. Similarly, when, in the wake of the acrimonious decision by British voters to split

from the EU, a racist diatribe was witnessed by onlookers on a Manchester tram, some of the passengers were noted saying to the miscreants that they were "a disgrace to England" (Pidd 2016). Here we see a notion that mainstream national identity (in this case English identity) is incompatible with the expression of such xenophobic ideas: in a sense, that Far Right ideas are not compatible with Britishness.

This potentially feeds into security policy in such areas as citizenship, and proscription of certain ideas and organizations, but a further factor is highly significant. This is the question of whether the radicalization of an individual from a moderate or secular starting point through to a position of contemplating a violent act is an identifiable and uniform process. Perhaps more important is the question of whether such a process is driven by certain actors, such as populist or religious leaders or spokespeople, or by the actions of certain individuals or organizations, such as the spreading of extremist propaganda through social media, for example. If this is taken to be the case, then the problem starts to look more like one of ideological subversion rather than just one of the perpetrating of violent criminal acts by selected individuals. In large part, this is again the top-down versus bottom-up debate: specifically, is radicalization a top-down process whereby vulnerable individuals are drawn along a particular ideological pathway into contemplation of violent acts, or do individuals decide they want to become violent and then seek out an ideological hook on which to hang their actions? If the latter is more often the case, then this is a largely social and individual problem. If we take a top-down approach, however, then the range and nature of actors involved in the process and the nature of appropriate security policy to combat them will be very different.

Muhammed Sidique Khan was the leader of the group of four individuals that detonated bombs in London in early July 2005. His story, in many ways, typifies the range of issues and questions explored in this book. Born in Leeds in 1974 to a family that had migrated from Pakistan, Khan grew up as a seemingly ordinary young British man, successfully pursuing a degree in Business Studies and a subsequent career as a youth worker. Somewhere along the way, his life took a perplexing turn that ended with his detonating a bomb on an underground train that killed himself and six others, and wounded dozens of fellow passengers. Two months after the attacks, a pre-recorded video appeared on the internet in which Khan delivered a chilling prophecy about the act he was to undertake and its supposed justification. In a strong Yorkshire accent, he said:

I'm going to keep this short and to the point because it's all been said before by far more eloquent people than me. And our words have no impact upon you, therefore I'm going to talk to you in a language that you understand. Our words are dead until we give them life with our blood.

I'm sure by now the media's painted a suitable picture of me, this predictable propaganda machine will naturally try to put a spin on things to suit the government and to scare the masses into conforming to their power and wealth-obsessed agendas. I and thousands like me are forsaking everything for what we believe. Our driving motivation doesn't come from tangible commodities that this world has to offer. Our religion is Islam - obedience to the one true God, Allah, and following the footsteps of the final prophet and messenger Muhammad . . . This is how our ethical stances are dictated.

Your democratically elected governments continuously perpetuate atrocities against my people all over the world. And your support of them makes you directly responsible, just as I am directly responsible for protecting and avenging my Muslim brothers and sisters. Until we feel security, you will be our targets. And until you stop the bombing, gassing, imprisonment and torture of my people we will not stop this fight. We are at war and I am a soldier. Now you too will taste the reality of this situation (BBC 2005).

There are a number of questions here. Firstly, the language is clear in its identification of "us" and "them", with the former defined as the Muslim *ummah* and the latter identified as members of democratically elected British society (remembering that *Salafi* thinking rejects the supposedly corrupting impetuses of Western democracy). In Khan's context, this is confusing and perplexing since he had himself been born and raised within British society, and, indeed, worked with fellow Britons in a caring capacity as a youth worker. That aside, there is a sense here that a form of global Islamic identity differentiates from and violently cuts across British national identity. Khan directs himself squarely at the British or indeed wider Western public as "you", assuming it is they who would be watching the video afterwards and considering his words.

As seems to be always the case in such situations, family members and friends around Khan expressed complete surprise and shock that he had gone down the pathway of violent extremism and moved so far away from being a law-abiding British citizen. If taken at face-value, this means his transformation from one identity to another (that is, his pathway of radicalization) must have been obscure and covert, hidden from the attentions of most of those around him. Much speculation was subsequently voiced about how this

process had worked. Trips to Pakistan, for example, in which Khan and one of his accomplices, Shehzad Tanweer, had disappeared from view for several weeks, were assumed to be the mechanism by which the two men secretly visited terrorist training camps and made contact with members of Al Qaeda. Indeed, the author has argued elsewhere that such a causal link between these visits to Pakistan and the likelihood of formal, organized and directed episodes of terrorist training makes complete logical sense (Richards 2007).

And yet, there are many unanswered questions more than ten years on from the attacks, the answers to many of which probably died with the bombers. The top-down versus bottom-up question in the radicalization debate still exists, despite the very extensive information that was unearthed about Khan and his associates after the attacks. On the direction issue, for example, while we know that there are certainly militant Islamist training camps in the remote mountains between Pakistan and Afghanistan, many of them operated by Kashmiri militant groups such as *Lashkar-e Toiba* (LeT), we still do not know with absolute certainty whether Khan and Tanweer visited such camps, and if so, what they did there. It is still possible that there was little or no actual substantive contact between the bombers and organizations in the region.

For Shiv Malik, who spent some time in Khan's home town conducting research for a BBC documentary entitled "My Brother the Bomber", the answers seemed clear. Khan's actions were a Durkheimian "egotistical suicide", which is "caused by a person feeling disconnected from society" (Malik 2007). Questions of identity were central to the story, at both macro and micro levels. In particular, "frustration" was born not only from a sense of disconnection from wider British society, but perhaps more importantly in this case from a disconnect between a modern, metropolitan and place-less expression of Islamic identity and the very traditional and place-specific cultural worldview of older generations within the community. "Whose culture and values do you affiliate with", asked Malik: "Those of your parents or of your friends? Those of your community or of your country?" (Malik 2007)

In this sense, the micro-level factor of personal identity formation may be just as important, if not more so, than macro-level processes of ideology and grand politics. Where these two dimensions intersect is of critical importance to security policy.

The purpose of this book is to thoroughly explore this territory and to argue that questions of identity are the most central and significant frame for considering the contemporary security picture. An empirical approach

is taken, with Britain as the core case study. On the issue of whether top-down or bottom-up drivers are the most important, this book will fall on the side of the line that emphasizes micro-level, personal identity factors over models based primarily on organizational theory and its central significance. In this way, a sociological approach examining complex identity transformation in metropolitan Western societies such as Britain is likely to provide better answers for security policy-makers and other interested observers, it is argued, when considering the nature of the contemporary terrorist threat and how best to tackle it. As is observed in the concluding comments to this analysis, ideologies are important, but *it is individuals who become violently extreme.*

At the same time, the second key argument in this book is that policy does not and cannot happen in a vacuum from the rest of society, and that many of the debates and misunderstandings about identity and its relationship to security that are rehearsed in academia are echoed in the world of policy. The problem is that, in the latter, decisions have to be made and policy has to be put in place, as is rightfully demanded by tax-payers in a democratic society. A critical approach that considers relative power-balances within society and promotes structuralist critiques of an individual identity-based approach, is not without its merits and will be examined in this book. A bottom-up approach can sometimes take us away from grand ideologies and organizations. But the key point is that it is essential to continue to develop our understanding of what causes a person to undertake a murderous act against fellow citizens, and to consider where such actions originate. This is in no way to justify violence, nor indeed to dismiss the significance of structural factors such as socio-economic inequity, but merely to seek answers.

This book is divided into two sections. The first considers questions of identity, extremism, radicalization and terrorism from the point of view of theories and debates in the contemporary era. A discussion of identity theory begins the analysis, followed by an examination of how such theory connects to security discourse and debate, including an examination of the key role played by reactive and "cumulative extremism" in contemporary Western society. The second section of the book applies this theoretical architecture to a discourse analysis of security policy-makers and spokes-people in contemporary Britain. In so doing, the discussion thoroughly explores two key areas of myth and myth-making: first, in the imagination element of identity formation and mobilization, in which, it is argued, identity is not solid but essentially liminal; and second, in the question of political myth and how this is a factor in the way that security discourse has

unfolded in recent times. Specific examples are taken from the British context in this analysis, which should provide fertile ground for further examination and policy formation. The British case study also allows for fruitful comparative work looking at different national models and approaches, as it is clear that no state has a monopoly of wisdom on how best to confront the challenges.

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Identity, Extremism, Radicalization, Terrorism

Intersections Between Identity and Security

2.1   INTRODUCTION

In this book I argue that identity theory provides an entirely suitable and appropriate discursive framework with which to tackle contemporary questions of security, and especially the question of security in metropolitan societies such as Britain. Indeed, I will demonstrate that identity theory and its associated language are most commonly used in analyses of security issues, whether wittingly or otherwise, since they provide a highly effective semantic framework for the task at hand. It also promotes the idea that bottom-up, person-oriented approaches to security policy may be more fruitful than top-down approaches in the contemporary security threat environment. I might hesitate to go quite as far as key identity theorists such as Burke and Stets in suggesting that identity theory could and should become the single most appropriate mechanism for studying all human behaviour (Burke and Stets 2009:203), not least since there are important critiques of the field which will be explored in this chapter. However, I would agree that an understanding of identity theory provides a key epistemological framework for discussions of contemporary security challenges.

For the framing of this discussion, I would propose that there are three key dimensions in which an analysis of identity is central to security analysis. These relate to macro- and micro-level perspectives, and the connection between the two. At the macro-level, much work has been undertaken on the relationship between identity and conflict, much of it in

areas of the developing world where supposed "ethnic conflict" seems to be most prevalent in the modern age. To some degree, it could be argued that the term "ethnic" or indeed "tribal", when applied to outbreaks of civil conflict in certain parts of the world, have become a normative and potentially lazy response to situations of conflict. This is especially so in the sub-Saharan context, where instances of civil conflict seem to be most prevalent and persistent despite global trends of reducing conflict, at least at the inter-state level.

At one level, such conceptions of non-Western society could be characterized as nefarious expressions of europocentrism, or orientalism. It could be hypothesized, for example, that colonialism brought a European notion of the Westphalian and Weberian state to a pre-existing social order, and imposed it in the form of a series of clumsy and manufactured state units. Many of these, particularly in Africa, have only been independent entities since the early 1960s and have scarcely had time to find a working accommodation between traditional Westphalian order and pre-colonial tribal axes of power and influence. In this way, it may be the case that such older forms of identity remain stronger than they are in a post-republican Europe, and that individuals will tend to revert to them in times of strife when their weak national state is poorly equipped to deliver equitable security or political goods (as Ukiwo (2003) suggests in the example of Nigeria).

At the same time, care needs to be taken over the supposed strength of "tribal" identity and the oft-repeated argument that ethnic diversity will inevitably lead to insecure societies. Many, such as Collier and Hoeffler (1998), have suggested a weak relationship between the existence of multiple ethnic identities within a state and civil conflict. It may be more the case that economic and political power, and access to it by different groups within the national community, is much more important to collective security than different identities. It is just that interest groups will tend to articulate their grievances under the banner of rights for particular identities. At the very least at the macro level, this may necessitate a rethinking of approaches to stabilization, governance, aid and development, in terms of how development is channelled through appropriate forms and levels of community governance in the postcolonial setting. It might also necessitate a rethink of the "ethnic conflict" thesis.

Related to this dimension on a broader level is the debate around the "Clash of Civilizations" thesis, a term given new life by Samuel Huntington in the early 1990s (Huntington 1993), and which received a boost in attention following the 9/11 attacks in the US in 2001 and the

so-called "War on Terror" unleashed subsequently. In this thesis, broader pan-national and essentially cultural identities are presented as being critical in the development of future conflict, supplanting the former dichotomous Cold War clash of political ideologies. The supposed "clash" between Western Judeo-Christian identity and that of the Islamic world was the one given most attention following the terrorist attacks of September 2001, but other identity groupings such as the Russo-Asiatic identity and the Sinic identity of China were potentially no less significant in the future global battle-lines, it was suggested. Huntington's thesis has come in for widespread criticism subsequently for its essential reductionism, but it certainly generated some debate about the relationship between identity and security at the macro-level in the post-Cold War world.

The micro-level of analysis, which concerns itself with individual human beings from psychological, social and anthropological perspectives, is where core identity theory is mostly to be found. This allows a multi-disciplinary turn for security studies into the realms of psychology and sociology, especially in such contexts as questions of terrorist motivations and "radicalization" processes. As will be discussed, the processes of identity formation and adjustment at the individual level over time could be said to be absolutely central to individual and collective behaviour, including situations where violent courses of action are chosen. This is where much analysis directs itself in the immediate aftermath of violent and terrorist attacks, in terms of identifying the individuals responsible and dissecting their personal life-stories.

Linking the macro- and micro-levels of analysis within a security context takes us into two key areas. First are questions of the intersection between an individual's personal situation and that person's decision to become part of a radical or violent cause, eventually leading to the commission of a violent act against fellow citizens. There is an important shift here in the contemporary era. Traditionally, such analysis concerned itself primarily with the methods by which violent organizations were able to draw people into their ranks and convince them to carry out violent acts, since this was the traditional model of terrorism through most of the twentieth century. Analysis of movements and organizations such as Palestinian terror groups or radical Marxist groups in Europe such as the *Rote Armee Fraktion* (RAF, or "Baader Meinhof gang") looked at questions of how and why individuals became active members of such organizations (see for example McCauley and Segal 1989). Much of this analysis

was framed in terms of the interplay between "push and pull" factors, whereby personal grievances or problems, or indeed ideological drivers at the individual level (push factors) could be married-up with recruitment practices by radical organizations to "pull" such potentially vulnerable people into a violent movement.

In the post-Cold War era, of course, the emergence of de-centred, global terror movements such as Al Qaeda have cast doubt over the centrality of solidly structured organizations in the sense of a Hamas or IRA, and led to theories about people being drawn more by an ideology than an organization as such. Debates around the emergence of "lone wolf actors" have led to the "leaderless jihad" thesis of Sageman and others, discussed in the previous chapter, which have a critical bearing on the formation of contemporary security policy in Europe and elsewhere. I would argue, however, that this shift in terrorist strategy does not necessarily have a major bearing on our understanding of terrorism, if we take a bottom-up approach led by identity theory. Whether an individual decides to undertake a violent act by formally joining a structured organization, or whether they do so in the name of such an organization (as often seems to be the case currently in the context of ISIS in Syria, for example) does not necessarily matter to the process that leads that individual to decide to undertake a violent action in the first place. It is merely that the channels of mobilization are different. In a sense, this may be just the terrorism of the information age.

The second key area of debate stimulated by the intersection between micro- and macro-level analyses of identity and security is that of multiculturalism and the state. At the time of writing, there is fairly intense interest in the question of multiculturalist policies and their ability to tackle or shape security within the modern state. Much of this debate centres around a comparative analysis of different models of community engagement and mobility across states, and particularly whether an avowedly secular state such as France has ended up creating bigger problems of terrorist threat for itself than a supposedly multiculturalist country such as Britain. The question is whether this difference in the condition of national security across different states is to do with issues of identity and "community" within each state, and how these develop and evolve in response to state policies, or whether such factors are largely irrelevant to understanding whether terrorism will become worse. Of course, to approach any possible answers to such questions necessitates understanding what an identity or community is, and how a state articulates such notions in its public discourse. We saw in the previous chapter how there

has been much difference of opinion amongst political leaders about the potential merits of multiculturalism, with the recent British Prime Minister David Cameron seeming to row back from previously traditional notions that such a policy had made Britain stronger. Questions of policy in this area will be critical ones in the modern era of European politics, where there is some evidence of a reactive spasm against the homogenizing forces of globalization, which could in turn trigger security problems of its own.

2.2   IDENTITY THEORY

The origins of identity theory go back a long way, at least to the work of the American philosopher and psychologist William James (1890) in the late nineteenth century, who postulated that people have "multiple selves" or roles, between which they freely switch depending on the circumstances. This led to a strong tradition of relativist theorizing in which an individual's identity was seen as an entirely mutable and flexible phenomenon, interacting symbiotically with society in a process of "symbolic interactionism". One of the key determinants of how people developed and switched between their selves was seen to be the response to the reactions and behaviours of others around the individual, as suggested around the same time by Charles Cooley and his work on "human nature" (Cooley 1902).

The perceived analytical problem with this strand of thinking, which became known subsequently as traditional symbolic interactionism, was its central relativism, which downplayed the significance of structural factors such as society and politics in the development of an individual's identity or set of selves. From the 1960s onwards, analysts such as Kuhn (1964) suggested that solid identity theory could only be developed by considering that there were some constants in self and society which were heavily deterministic in the formation and expression of identity. This led to the development of structural symbolic interactionism, of which the likes of Sheldon Stryker have become the standard-bearers. As Stryker suggests, the starting point for identity theory is that "society impacts self impacts social behavior" (Stryker 2008:20). It could be argued that all of us live within particular inescapable societal contexts which have a major bearing on our sense of ourselves and our interactions with others around us.

At the macro-level, this allows for the notion that identity and politics could come together, whereby the former could be used as a mobilizing narrative by political leaders to "explain" societal problems. Within this debate is the question of whether ethnic or national identities can be viewed in primordialist,

or circumstantialist terms. In a study of identity politics in Pakistan's largest city, Karachi, the author followed Benedict Anderson's characterization of the nation as "imagined community" (Anderson 1991) by noting that the *Mohajirs*, who started arguing for official recognition as a "nationality" within Pakistan's constitution, were members of an entirely manufactured identity created as an intellectual exercise among the Urdu-speaking student fraternity in the 1970s (Richards 1993). The political party, the *Mohajir Qaumi Mahaz* (Mohajir National Movement) has since grown to become the single most dominant political party in the metropolis of Karachi, with the power to make or break local and indeed national governments.

This particularly stark example of the use of identity to establish political power adds weight to the notion that identities with which individuals cloak themselves cannot be seen in hard-wired, essentialist terms. Rather, at one level, identities are merely vehicles for political mobilization. The frailty of primordialist notions of identity is demonstrated in such examples as the tortured projection of the concept of indigeneity in Britain by the likes of the Far-Right British National Party (and its attempts to use this as a discriminating dimension in access to rights and resources (BNP (undated)). Given that the British Isles have experienced waves of immigration throughout their history, the question of how far back in history you have to go to qualify as "indigenous" surely becomes moot. Similarly complex is the question of a "community" in terms of what is constituted by it, and how uniform and homogenous each community is. This is critical to state multiculturalist policies in a country such as Britain (where there is a government Department for Communities and Local Government) in terms of how such groupings are conceptualized and articulated at the official level and what this may mean for life and security in the state. This is a point to which we will return.

Within the later evolution of structural symbolic interactionism, a key development in identity theory concerns identity control theory (ICT), which is closely related to affect control theory (ACT) and identity accumulation theory. Stryker describes the essence of this set of theories as follows:

> Both ACT and ICT are concerned with the internal dynamic of selves viewed as cybernetic systems seeking to restore equilibriums when identities are threatened by external events (Stryker 2008:21).

The notion in these theories is that individuals are constituted by a complex system of identity drivers and values, arranged in a hierarchy of

salience to the individual, like a finely-balanced vessel. The individual's behaviour will be determined by a constant rebalancing and adjustment in response to external events and stimuli, depending on how far a particular element of identity may be challenged and how salient that particular identity factor is to the overall identity of the individual.

Numerous laboratory experiments over the years have added weight to the theory. Burke and Stets, both strong proponents of identity control theory, describe a set of experiments on individuals within a work environment, looking particularly at emotions triggered by a process of "identity verification" (Burke and Stets 2009:166-7). Thus, if someone believes that they are a strong leader in the workplace, for example, and that this factor is high up in that individual's hierarchy of identity salience (in this case, as it relates to the work role), then said individual may react sharply to some feedback which suggests they are a little passive and not a great leader. Importantly, the experiments suggest there is then likely to be a behavioural response in that individual, in that he or she will attempt to reassert him/herself as a strong leader in the workplace in order to try to correct the perceived imbalance in the way that their workplace identity is seen by others. Similarly, if feedback affects an identity factor which is not particularly high in the salience hierarchy, then the perceived effect on the overall identity of the individual may be low, and this may lead to no specific behavioural response.

It is not clear whether Stryker's reference above to selves viewed "as cybernetic systems" is a little tongue-in-cheek, but there could be a critique levelled at these theories, that they tend to treat individuals as deterministic automated systems rather than complex and sometimes highly ambiguous and unpredictable beings. We can recall the famous thought-experiment conducted by Alan Turing in the 1950s, known as the "imitation game", where Turing pondered whether a computer could ever be built that could mimic human ambiguities and nuances of decision and language to such an extent that it could fool another human being into thinking that it was actually human (Turing 1950). Turing's conclusion was that this was an impossible task given the complexity of the human being, although he was writing at the very beginning of the computer age and could barely have foreseen the advances made subsequently in such areas as artificial intelligence.

In terms of security, identity control theory has salience in the work of various scholars looking at how and why individuals choose to undertake a violent act, using linear "decision-tree" approaches (see for example Dornschneider (2016)). There has also been much crossover with the

realm of cognitive psychology, notably in the area of terrorism studies. Maikovich, for example, presents an interesting "cognitive dissonance" model for understanding terrorists, in which the radicalization process (although not described as such) works by reducing the inevitable cognitive dissonance between having a strong view about something and believing that extreme violence against other human beings is an appropriate course of action (Maikovich 2005). Terrorist groups and leaders will use "dissonance-reducing mechanisms" to enable individuals to make the journey into violence, such as social support (making people feel part of a wider collective); suppressing unhelpful information; and developing a "just world bias" in the worldview of the individual.

A very recent example of how this might work can be found in the case of the murder of a Catholic priest in France during July 2016. The two protagonists in the murder took a number of hostages in the church before executing the priest. One of those hostages, a nun, subsequently reported a conversation she had had with one of the terrorists inside the church. Sister Hélène reported that the attackers had told her that "peace" was what they wanted, and that "as long as there are bombs on Syria, we will continue our attacks. And they will happen every day. When you stop, we will stop" (Sky News 2016). Such a statement is classic terrorist narrative in which the action is portrayed as a just and effectively defensive measure. Blame for the attacks is laid at the feet of the victims, in that their own actions are seen as triggering the retaliatory attacks. In this way, the narrative is a dissonance-reducing mechanism that allows the attackers to feel that their violence is in some way appropriate and justified. (Conversely, as will be discussed later in the context of policy approaches, a critical view might suggest that such people are plain criminals and should not be dignified with any other description or status.)

Maikovich does not explicitly mention identity control theory, but her cognitive dissonance framework carries with it many of the same features and drivers. Dissonance-reducing mechanisms could be seen to be equivalent to "identity verification" emotions and actions within identity control theory. As Maikovich outlines, original theories that terrorists must be psychopaths have been largely discounted by a number of studies over the years, which have found that the people undertaking terrorist acts show less psychopathy as a community than the population at large (Maikovich 2005:374). In this way, if the theory is correct, the French terrorists described above must have developed a sense of themselves as entirely justified "soldiers" fighting a cause in appropriate ways, even if most of those around them did not see things that way.

At this stage it is worth returning to the question of the interface between micro- and macro-level perspectives, and dwelling briefly on the question of how group dynamics work in identity theory. First, however, it is worth mentioning the question of "meaning" and "commitment", both of which are important parts of the analyses undertaken concerning identity theory, and which relate to the question of the relative salience of different elements of the identity hierarchy. By "meaning", we do not at this stage mean the understandings or interpretations derived from language, although this element of the story will return as a very important part of this study. At this stage we are considering the question of how people find meaning in their lives, which, we can postulate, is manifested at least in part by the identities they shape for themselves over time.

As the identity control theorist, Jan Stets noted:

> At the core of an identity is the categorization of the self as an occupant of a role: a person incorporates into the self all the meanings and expectations associated with the role and its performance (Stets 2005:40).

We will return to the question of "performance" shortly, but at this stage, we can see here the relationship between role and identity (for example, the role of "soldier" or "militant", but similarly the role of mother, father, teacher, carer or driving instructor), and the importance of "meanings and expectations" which form the core understanding of that role and identity in the individual. The relative value of these meanings will determine the degree of salience they have to the individual's identity structure. A similar concept within identity control theory is that of "commitment" to a particular identity factor, which Stryker characterized as the "immediate source of salience attached to identities" (Stryker 2008:20). For individuals moving into more violent courses of action, the question of commitment is key. Indeed, we could hypothesize that a suicide bomber, or a militant prepared to undertake a "martyrdom operation", has reached a situation in their identity construction whereby commitment to the cause is considered more important than anything, including the preservation of the individual's own life.

In other cases, commitment may be less strong, which can lead to alternative courses of action. A good example is that of Ed Husain, whose purportedly autobiographical book, "The Islamist", caused a great deal of debate when it was published in 2007 (Husain 2007). In the book, Husain describes a situation whereby he was being drawn along an ever more radical

political pathway, in large part under the influence of the *Hizb-ut Tahrir* (HUT) movement, but suddenly had an epiphany which meant he did not have full commitment to becoming a violent militant. He reappraised his situation and turned the other way, becoming a founder member of the anti-radicalization think-tank, the Quilliam Foundation. Husain's story and background are the subject of much controversy, with some accusing him and his foundation of being government stooges (Husain and Nawaz 2009). Those challenges aside, his story could be seen in terms of varying and changing levels of identity salience and commitment under a framework of identity control theory. We can also arguably see a re-balancing change in behaviour, whereby his new role as a source of inspiration and guidance for those turning away from violent extremism engendered changes in his approach to life and his activities.

Clearly, there are implications here for counter-radicalization policy in terms of developing counter-narratives and attempting to alter the balance of identity commitments and saliences in specific individuals: a point to which we will return in later chapters.

Husain's supposed flirtation with HUT brings us back to the question of the connection between individuals, and wider social groups or organizations. Schwartz, Dunkel and Waterman provided a useful construct in which they suggested that identity theory analysis in the context of terrorism should be undertaken using three levels of analysis: personal, cultural and social identity (Schwartz et al. 2009:540). This introduces a further highly significant theoretical strand in the shape of social identity theory, as espoused by the likes of Tajfel and Turner, among others (Tajfel and Turner 1979). In a sense, social identity theory is similar to structural symbolic interactionism, in that it looks at the role and development of the self within the structural constraints and influences of society. In this case, however, the theory is particularly concerned with collective identities to which individuals may subscribe, whether these are nationalities, organizations or sports teams, and to how those group identities interact with others around them (Hogg et al. 1995:259-60).

In considering "self-verification" of one's identity, Swann suggested that individuals have an innate need to "construct self-confirmatory social environments", and that they may "enlist accomplices" in creating "self-verifying worlds" (Swann 2005:70,76). Thus, we feel more sure of ourselves if we are amongst people with whom we tend to share similar views, partly, perhaps, for reasons of "belonging" to a particular social community, but also because it makes us feel better about ourselves. Similarly, the social and

political leaders amongst us may feel a natural urge to attract supporters to their message, such that they can very publicly affirm their image of self.

In social identity theory, confirmatory views about oneself and one's values are reinforced continually through interaction with others within one's social group. This happens at multiple levels and is continuous from the moment each of us is born. In the family, at school, and even at the national cultural level, a particular set of narratives and ideas are inculcated which help to shape both our identity and our worldview. At lower levels, organizations such as state militaries or militant groups will develop mechanisms whereby individuals become socialized into the collective culture and objectives, sometimes using performative processes such as the wearing of homogenous uniforms and recitation of daily mantras and rituals. This not only allows the group to merge individual identities into those of the collective, but also allows dissonance-reducing measures to take effect: a soldier's job, which includes sometimes having to shoot someone with a gun or to drop a bomb on a building, is otherwise essentially dissonant with the normal lives of most in mainstream society.

At the macro-level, social identity theory is also very prescient in the context of nationalism. The story of Napoleonic France is a particularly instructive one, whereby a process of "cumulative bureaucratization" (Malešević 2010:5) allowed a political leader to build the first modern republic, and to gather together a disparate set of cultures and dialects into a very centralized modern state. More importantly, it also allowed Napolean to conscript, through his *levée en masse*, the largest and most professional state army hitherto seen in history. Such men were subsequently prepared to lay down their lives in the pursuit of consolidating and expanding the new French Republic.

In the context of contemporary terrorism, there is an interesting question about what "group" means and how far it is becoming synonymous with an over-arching ideology in an increasingly de-centred and globalized world. As discussed earlier, many recent terrorist attacks most probably have entailed little if any contact between the protagonists and any particular formal organization as such, even if the attacks could be carried out in the name of particular organizations and could be claimed by such organizations afterwards. This does not, however, mean that the individuals in question do not feel some sort of identity affiliation with a wider community, even if it is as amorphous as the *ummah* to which Muhammed Sidique Khan claimed affiliation when he carried out his attack against his fellow citizens in London in 2005.

In this sense, how an individual feels about his or her identity and values may be much more important than any physical or actual factors. This brings us to one of the most important elements of contemporary identity theory, which has become a normative epistemological construct across many strands of social science in recent times, namely that of performativity.

A Nietzschian philosophical approach would remind us that "there is no 'being' behind the doing . . . doing is everything" (Nietzsche 1956:178-9). Thus, we are defined not by what we are, but by how we act. This is the essence of performativity. Within identity theory, the origins of the performative turn came actually not from analyses of national or ethnic identities, but rather from gender studies. Margaret Mead's seminal 1935 study of Papua New Guinea tribes, published as "Sex and Temperament" (Mead 1963/1935), made the ground-breaking suggestion that gender roles within society are entirely manufactured and not essentialist. Mead's argument came from the observation that, in certain tribes, male and female roles were very variable and did not necessarily conform at all to what we traditionally experience in Western society. This could only mean that there should be no hard-and-fast rules about gender roles.

Writing in the 1990s, Judith Butler took this idea comprehensively forward. In her 1993 book, "Bodies that Matter", she asserts how the statement by the nurse in the delivery suite that "it's a girl" is a key "speech act" which immediately prescribes a set of norms and behaviours for that person within the social context. This essentially sets the course of that new person's life forever thereafter (Butler 1993:232).

Whatever the merits of this idea in the gender context (and there are many who strongly oppose Butler's thesis for its reductionism[1]), the point is made that role-identities are heavily related to societal norms, and that conforming with those norms can be a very powerful influence on a person's life.

Many scholars in identity theory have taken forward Butler's central notion of the relativism of role to develop performativity theory in identity, namely that all identities are not fixed things, but are "performed" by individuals on a daily basis. This develops an earlier strand of work on identity theory, which Brubaker describes as a "a shift toward a more dynamic and processual understanding of ethnicity, race and nation" (Brubaker 2009:29). Writing in the 1960s, Barth, for example, developed a "transactional" model of identity, concerned with the display of a set of behaviours and symbols which affirm or disconfirm an individual's membership of a particular group (Barth 1969:11). Similarly, those who have studied

how and why individuals join radical and violent groups, such as Kathleen Blee, have suggested that there is a complex variety of ideological and personal reasons for joining an organization. In the context of Far Right neo-nazi organizations, for example, motivations can include those who wish to validate their masculinity in a performative violent context rather than any strategic wish to protect their ethnicity (Blee 2007:122-3).

2.3   PRIMORDIALISM VERSUS CIRCUMSTANTIALISM

One of the many interesting studies in this area is K.M Aly's 2015 book, "Becoming Arab in London", which explored the essentially performative nature of "Arabness" within London and how individuals express and interact with this component of their identity on a daily basis (Aly 2015). Aly picks up on the work of Judith Butler to develop a critical thesis, which suggests that traditional identity theory "means too much or too little" (Aly 2015:6). His is a strongly relativist position which suggests that all identities can only really be understood in terms of how people perform them within a societal context, since all identities are essentially flexible and mutable things. His thesis moves beyond "foundationalist and epistemological accounts of identity", which suggest they are somehow fixed and primordial things (Aly 2015:11). At the beginning of the book, Aly describes the particular complexity of attempting to conceptualize fixed identities within the minority-culture setting:

> Being born and growing up in London somehow seemed circumstantial, an accident of fate, as if being brought into this world in Hammersmith Hospital was some kind of cosmological mistake which I would spend my life correcting by following my roots deep into the ground to emerge in a redemptive space somewhere hot and dusty like Cairo (Aly 2015:3).

There is a sense here of the cognitive dissonance between fixed and sedentarist notions of identity labelling, and the very real experience of life in a globalized world where people move between and exist in a variety of societal settings. There is also a sense of search here for the "answer", for a probably mythical "redemptive space" where everything would fall back into place.

The first point to note here is that already discussed briefly about the primordialist-versus-circumstantialist debate on ethnicity and nationality. In academic discourse, primordialist notions of ethnicity (described by Ernest Gellner (1990) as "Dark Gods theory") were increasingly supplanted

through the 1960s and 70s by more structuralist and Marxist views of society, which look at social and political communities horizontally in terms of access to economic and political power. Thus, the work of Barth in the late 1960s can be critiqued as suggesting that, while sowing the seeds of performativity theory with his transactional model, the notion of defining characteristics of ethnicity handed-down over centuries (as Barth suggested was the situation with his case study of the Pakhtun tribes of north-west Pakistan) embeds notions of primordialist and essentialist groupism within societies (Barth 1969).

As Avineri writes, Marx's views on nationalism are complicated, but the general view is that he saw it as a bourgeoisie project to divide the proletariat: one of his most famous dictums was that "workingmen have no country" (Avineri 1991:639). Similarly, those writing from a structuralist position about multiculturalism, and particularly the tendency to see identity and "community" in essentialist, "billiard-ball" form, will often suggest that state policies in this area are smoke-screens to divert attention from the real questions of structural economic inequality (Rattansi 2011:29). Wallerstein goes so far as to suggest that ethnic identities are a form of "false consciousness" (Wallerstein 1979:181): a sort of opium of the masses. Thus, for example, a small number of Muslims in Britain or any number of other Western countries may not be driven to violence by identity factors per se, but more by their difficulties with access to economic and political resources, given that Muslims in Britain display disproportionately high indicators of socio-economic deprivation compared to the population at large.

It could be the case that there is something of a metropolitan, Western bias in such thinking, as the experience of nationalism in Europe has largely expunged earlier dimensions of localized ethnic solidarity and family lineages, supplanting them with broader notions of national identity Gellner 1987:22). As discussed, such experience is different in places such as Africa or the Far East, for example, where questions of family lineage remain very significant to identity. However, such thinking has generally added to a more circumstantialist turn in analyses of ethnicity, nationalism and identity, suggesting that they are mutable and essentially political vehicles for mobilizing communities in specific circumstances. As Anthony Smith described:

> Belonging to an ethnic group is a matter of attitudes, perceptions and sentiments that are necessarily fleeting and mutable, varying with the particular situation of the subject . . . . This makes it possible for ethnicity to be

used "instrumentally"' to further individual or collective interests, particularly of competing elites who need to mobilize large followings to support their goals in the struggle for power (Smith 1991:20).

2.4   HISTORY, MYTH AND POLITICS

Benedict Anderson brought-in the notion of myth-making in the construction of national identity, famously describing nation-states as "imagined communities" (Anderson 1991). For many states, a sense of ancient dynasty, selectively portrayed in official accounts of history, can act as an "ancient finery" to "be wrapped around revolutionary shoulders" (Anderson 1991:160). Thus, supposedly great military victories and leaders can be selectively invoked to create the myth of national heroism. The case of Britain is no less indicative than many. Here, historical personalities and events such as King Arthur, participation in the Crusades (significantly characterized as Christendom against the Islamic world), Agincourt and Waterloo (both of which conveniently situate the French as the "other") can be imagined as components of English and British national identity. This is despite the fact that precise historical knowledge about such events is often sketchy at best, and that the reality is often somewhat more nuanced and less heroic than the modern-day narratives will allow. As Linda Colley describes, Britain was essentially "imagined" after the Act of Union in 1707, largely as a Protestant bulwark to Catholic France and Spain (Colley 2008:26). More recently, victories in two world wars when all had sometimes seemed desperate, have been combined into a "Blitz spirit" narrative that suggests that British identity is bound-up with resolve and determination in the face of adversity (Brown and Hoskins 2010).

In similar ways to Marxism, albeit for different reasons, it is worth noting that Islam has a paradoxical relationship with nationalism and national identity. Before the Partition in India, one of the difficulties the Muslim League faced in its push for self-determination was an opposition by many in the *ulema* who pointed out that the Westphalian nation-state was a Western, colonial idea that had been forced upon South Asian society (Abbott 1968:181). Indeed, the founder of the *Jamaat-I Islami* in India, Maulana Maudoodi, initially opposed Muhammad Ali Jinnah's Pakistan movement for the same reasons. Once the state of Pakistan became a reality, Maudoodi's *Jamaat* attempted pragmatically to work

as a national party that could unite disparate regional and ethnic identities and political groupings. (It should be said that it has largely failed to do so.)

Similarly, the emergence of the so-called Islamic State in Iraq and Syria has highlighted a *Salafi* view of nationalism, which sees it as a Western, colonial imposition on the Islamic world. Rather like Marxism, *Salafi* Islam sees nationalism as a counter-unitary and divisive phenomenon. This is partly to do with an extreme *takfiri* rejectionism of any ideology outside that of *Salafism's* worldview, but is also a reaction to colonialism and perceived neo-imperialism. In a remarkable documentary by the independent film-makers, Vice News, Islamic State militants can be seen literally bulldozing the earthworks defining one part of the border between Iraq and Syria and saying that they are destroying "Sykes-Picot": an almost bizarre reference to the historical agreement between French and British civil servants in 1916 that mapped out the post-Ottoman Middle East between French and British colonial spheres of influence (Vice News 2014). That such low-level militants should make reference to this arcane piece of colonial history, of which most people on the street in Europe would have absolutely no recollection, shows how important colonialism and nationalism is to the likes of the so-called Islamic State. It also speaks to the identity articulations of the likes of Muhammed Sidique Khan, discussed in the previous chapter, who claimed to see himself more a part of a global *ummah* than a British citizen.

In other situations, Islamic identity can be seen as a unifying or overarching form of identity. This was the objective of Maudoodi's *Jamaat-I Islami* in Pakistan, whereby it was hoped a politics-emphasizing Muslimness would override otherwise fissiparous regional identities. In the former Soviet Union, and especially in some of the southern republics, Muslim-ness retained its identity with remarkable resilience. Writing in the Soviet leaflet *Samizdat* in 1988, an unidentified citizen of the Uzbekistan Soviet Socialist Republic mused:

> Soviet identity is too large: it is like saying one is an Asian. It is at the same time too narrow because it is limited to a specific type of socio-political organisation.... Personally I have no objection to being described as a Soviet Muslim or a Muslim citizen of the USSR. The "Soviet" bit remains valid as long as I am associated with the Soviet state. What if I left the citizenship of the USSR? Would I suddenly evaporate? What if Uzbekistan left the USSR and chose another political system as it has the constitutional

right, in theory at least? Would I cease to exist?.. Only the term "'Muslim" is large enough, accurate enough, and, paradoxically, neutral enough to describe what we are in this corner of the world (Taheri 1989:84).

Of course, not long after this time, the Soviet Union did dissolve, and a variety of "new" or nascent identity issues emerged across the former communist world. Nowhere was this more complicated and vexing than in the former Yugoslavia, which not only collapsed into civil war but caused many in the security world to fear that "ethnic conflict" would become the new normal for the period. As Ramet observed before the collapse, the census of Yugoslavia used to list a bewildering array of community identities, with "Muslims" sitting alongside Serbs, Croats, Albanians, "Others" and Yugoslavs, for those who would rather subscribe to the over-arching state identity than a regional one (Ramet 1984:20). Such a complicated array of ethnic, religious and federal identities set the scene for the conflicts that followed in the 1990s, in which many lost their lives merely on the basis of the identity grouping to which they supposedly subscribed. (At the same time, as will be discussed later, questions have to be asked as to how deeply such identities were felt by communities at the time, and how far they were merely convenient labels for those interested in mobilizing a violent and sectarian identity politics. In this way, identity becomes a circumstantialist vehicle for contesting power rather than a primordial given.)

2.5   PERFORMING IDENTITY: *HIJABS* AND BEARDS

Analysis suggests that Muslim minority communities in the UK have undergone some important changes to identity formation in the post-war period. The history of the UK is, of course, one of a postcolonial power, which, in order to assist its rebuilding after the shattering years of the Second World War, experienced a couple of significant periods of loosely managed immigration from former colonial territories. From the 1950s to 1974, when visa immigration controls were tightened, relatively large communities from the Caribbean, Africa and South Asia entered the UK to take up positions in various industries. Many of the latter moved into the textile industry in major northern cities such as Leeds and Bradford, and many came from a small and very specific set of districts, building on early family connections. Of those who migrated from

Pakistan, for example, many originated from Mirpur district in Kashmir, and from nearby parts of southern Punjab province.

There is evidence to suggest that these first generation Muslim migrants to contemporary Britain accumulated primarily around ethnic and nationalist identities relating to their places of origin. As these groups settled in the UK and raised families, the sense is that second and third generation migrants who have been born and raised in the UK, have expressed a subtle shift in their identity formation away from ethnic and nationalist identities related to the "homeland" of their parents and grand-parents (with which they are increasingly unfamiliar), and towards a con-struction of a metropolitan, pan-Islamic identity more suited to their Western context.

Modood (2005) suggests his own experience of growing up in Britain has seen an identity shift from Pakistani, to "Asian", to Muslim in public discourse. There has been much work recently on the sartorial implications of such a shift, and particularly a suggestion that veiling by young Muslim women, notably in the shape of the face-covering *niqab* veil or all-envelop-ing *burqa*, has become more common among the younger generation in Britain. Meer, Dwyer and Modood (2010) assert that such a shift is cer-tainly happening, and that it represents a conscious expression of an Islamic, rather than ethnic or national identity. (This is despite the fact that the *burqa* and *niqab* are probably relics of pre-Islamic tribal Arabian society.) Thus, the loose South Asian *dupatta* has increasingly made way for Middle Eastern *hijabs* and *niqabs* among the younger generations, it is suggested.

In performative strands of identity theory, visual cues such as how an individual dresses are important factors. Swann developed the idea of "opportunity structures", on which individuals will work in the identity-verification process (Swann 1983:36). He noted that displaying signs and symbols which signal to others elements of our identity can be an impor-tant way of trying to influence how others see us and how we see ourselves. These can include the car we drive or house we live in, but also factors such as make-up, hairstyles, clothes, tattoos and so on.

The question of veiling is important and complex within contemporary European society. Arguably, it has not yet become as big an issue in Britain as it has in other parts of Europe, such as France and Denmark to name but two. In France, republican principles of *laïcité* frequently run into conflict with members of the Muslim minority. In 1989, three schoolgirls were expelled from their school in the village of Creil, just outside Paris, for refusing to remove their headscarves (commonly referred to as *foulards*

in French). This episode caused a long-running controversy, but proved to be just the first of many *affaires du foulard* in which French society convulsed over what to do with such expressions of religious identity in the public space. In 2008, Denmark banned the wearing of religious forms of clothing, including headscarves, by judges in the court-room. In 2010, France imposed a full public ban on the wearing of the full veil (*burqa*, or *niqab*). Belgium followed suit in 2011, and several districts in Italy, Spain and Switzerland have also subsequently banned headscarves in public. In Britain, despite some calling for a debate on such issues, a full ban on the wearing of such clothing in public still seems highly unlikely.

As Rattansi observed, debates about veil-wearing are not just about the question of secular-versus-religious expressions of identity, but are also bound-up in conceptions (and perhaps misconceptions) about gender equality across Western and Islamic societies (Rattansi 2011:60). In an interesting study of a controversy about veil-wearing that arose in 2006, when the former British Home and Foreign Secretary, Jack Straw, revealed that he has often had occasion to ask constituents to remove their *niqabs* when meeting with him in his Blackburn constituency office, Meer, Dwyer and Modood noted that veils remain very much a "contested signifier" in British public discourse (Meer et al. 2010). A study of media reporting about the controversy revealed various opinions about veil-wearing, including that it signifies the repression of women in Islam; that it is deliberate and defiant expression of difference by British Muslim women from their non-Muslim compatriots; and that it is anathema to "Britishness", which supposedly includes fundamental gender equality at its core.

There is no doubt that veiling has become a totemic symbol of animosity and controversy in European public discourse in recent years, attracting variously expressions of ire, panic and accusations of "Islamophobia" across the political spectrum. In some cases the animosity comes from the neo-conservative right, reflecting a borderline racist panic about changes in British society and its supposed core "Christian" values, while in other cases, those on the political left who share French notions of secularity and *laïcité* also find Muslim veils to be sources of fear and moral panic. Take for example the following statement by Joan Smith, a journalist and human rights activist on the political left, cited by Williamson and Khiabany (2010:88–9):

If women have to cover their faces with a mask (which is what niqab means in Arabic) whenever they leave the house, they are signalling their acceptance of

conditional access to public space – and a Taliban theory of gender relations in which women are responsible for avoiding men's accidental arousal. Neither of these propositions is compatible with a notion of universal human rights, and Labour ministers shouldn't be afraid of saying so.

It seems, therefore, that veiling achieves the unusual task of offending many people across the political spectrum for differing reasons, whether they are related to xenophobia or a perceived challenge to fundamental human rights of gender equality. I would argue, however, that the key questions to be asked are: why young women are choosing to don the *burqa* and *niqab* (notwithstanding whether and how they are choosing); and whether this could or should have any bearing on the fundamental values and practices of Britishness. At a simple level, in a free and multiculturalist society, people should surely be allowed to wear whatever they like within the bounds of common decency.

Williamson and Khiabany (2010) outline some of the important and growing research being conducted into *hijab-* (headscarf) wearing in Western metropolitan contexts, which, as Afshar reminds us, should be seen differently from those societies such as Saudi Arabia and numerous other Muslim countries where the wearing of the *hijab* is not a choice (Afshar 2008:412). With the slight health warning that much of the research data is anecdotal and often based on relatively small samples of women, there is evidence that the donning of a *hijab* in its various forms by young women, including *burqas* and *niqabs*, is a specific choice with a conscious agency, whether that is a desire to distance oneself from the perceived obscurantism of elder relatives' culture and religion, or to rebel against traditional views amongst some elders that the garment is either lower-class or even un-islamic. Whether this is true of the majority of hijab-wearing women in Britain would obviously need to be the subject of further research, but it seems clear that stereotypical views held by some that the *hijab* is a symbol of repression and subordination, are simplistic and flawed at best.

Either way, Tarlo uses the language of identity theory in her analysis of middle class *hijab*-wearers, exploring "the transformative potential of hijab, demonstrating how its adoption not only acts as a moment of metamorphosis in the lives of wearers, but also has significant effects on the perceptions and actions of others" (Tarlo 2007:131). In this way, the women in question are supposedly donning the veil as a self-verifying symbol of their Muslim identity, and seeking recognition of that identity in the reactions of

others with whom they interact, whether those are elder relatives, or other non-Muslims outside of the family.

On the other side of the gender divide, the case of the British sportsman, Moeen Ali, is similarly intriguing. Moeen is a cricketer for the English national team at the time of writing. Cricket is particularly interesting in the context of British identity, since it is both quintessentially English in its origins, and also virtually a religion in regions such as South Asia, where it arrived with colonialism. It is also indicative that the Conservative minister, Norman Tebbitt, devised something called the "cricket test" in 1990, which concerned one's loyalty to Britishness. If, he argued, one did not support England in a cricket match against one's former colonial country, then this demonstrated a lack of commitment to British citizenship and identity. (In the 1970s and 80s, the once dominant position of England in the cricket world was increasingly being overturned by teams from the West Indies, India and Pakistan, causing much delight to communities in Britain with roots in those regions.) As Croft has pointed out, many rejected Tebbitt's test as being forcefully assimilationist and zero-sum in essence, in that one could not be both British and sympathetic to non-British values and customs. It is also the case that, as anyone who knows sport will attest, many in Scotland and Wales would also support just about any team that played England over their British compatriots! (Croft 2012:163–4.)

Moeen Ali has attracted some degree of controversy by playing for England while sporting the long, flowing beard that symbolizes his Muslim identity. As Edmunds has pointed out, the beard has often been seen the same way as the *hijab* in contemporary European society, as an antagonistic expression of otherness and dissimilation (Edmunds 2012:74). In a provocative article for the Telegraph newspaper, Michael Henderson challenged the manner in which Moeen, on the eve of his first ever appearance for England in 2014, had spoken of "representing the Muslim faith". He had also spoken of his beard as a "label" and a "uniform". Henderson wrote:

> But there is one thing all players must acknowledge: if you are chosen to represent your country, that is who you represent. You may be a Hindu, a Sikh, a Muslim, a Buddhist, a Jain or (chance'd be a fine thing) a Christian but that is not why you have been chosen. If Moeen Ali does not understand this matter, then perhaps Peter Moores, the England coach, can have a quiet word in his shell-like [sic]. And if Moores does not understand, he should not be the coach (Henderson 2014).

In subsequent interviews, Moeen has spoken about his beard as "an identity thing" and that if he can "change the mind of one person about being a Muslim player and having a beard, then I'll feel as if I've done my job" (Hasan 2014). In these two positions we can see two very different perspectives on British identity. Henderson adopts the assimilationist position of Tebbitt, whereby symbols of identity that relate to an Islamic "otherness" are not compatible with Britishness: it has to be an "either/or" position. There is also a sense that symbolic expressions of otherness are antagonistic, and speak of difference and separation rather than assimilation: this, it is implied, is fundamentally "un-British". We can also see a sense of moral panic in Henderson's words, in stating that "chance'd be a fine thing" for a Christian to play for the team, when the reality is that the national team is generally more than 90 percent white British in composition.

For Moeen Ali himself, however, such visual cues are indeed symbolic projections of identity, and are those with implied agency: he speaks in his interview of "changing the mind" of people in terms of their understanding of what it is to be British. There is certainly no questioning his commitment to the national team, for which he has subsequently played with honour and distinction, including, at the time of writing, against a visiting Pakistan team that represents his familial and cultural heritage. For Moeen, therefore, there is no problem with being both British (or English) and Muslim, and both things can be of equal importance to one's identity.

2.6   Conclusions

Identity theory has changed and developed over the last hundred years or so in important ways. The key questions have revolved around the nature and degree of causality in the relationship between the individual and the society in which they live; and the degree of essentialism that should appropriately be applied to identity categories. It is important to note that there are significant detractors to the theory. For those supportive of performativity theories, such as Aly in his exploration of "Arabness" in London, traditional identity theory has virtually run its course and should be wholly supplanted by performativity theory (Aly 2015:6). For slightly different reasons, structuralists are also suspicious of identity theory, since it risks distraction from the central struggle around class imbalance and socio-economic deprivation.

The problem for such theorists is that any discussion of identity inevitably slips into the trap suffered by Barth, that implies a certain set of hard boundaries around identity labels, and a degree of primordialism

for long-running and established identities, such as certain tribal, ethnic or national identities (Brubaker 2009:29). This causes identity to become agential in the hands of certain political leaders, who use identity categorizations to establish narratives of difference and othering in the competition for power.

Performativity theorists prefer to follow a social constructivist course, whereby the *perceptions* of identity and their symbolic value are much more important than any solid boundaries or definitions. This allows for a number of useful developments. It challenges essentialist and zero-sum views of identity which can encourage sectarianism and conflict, whether those are the political mobilizations of "ethnic" factional leaders, or those subscribing to an apocalyptic "clash of civilizations" thesis when faced with terrorism by Islamist-inspired individuals. It also opens the door to conceptions of myth and narrative construction in public debates around identity and its securitizations, to which we will return in section two.

I would argue that identity theory can not only coexist very effectively with performativity theory, but can do so in ways that do not necessarily mean an essentialist approach to identity categories. In many ways, identity theory has provided an epistemological framework and language that are both pertinent and useful in trying to understand contemporary security issues. Indeed, many citizens and commentators will find themselves speaking unwittingly in the language of identity theory in describing their lives, difficulties and transformations.

Such mechanisms are essential in considering how a notion of "Britishness" could and should change and develop in a rapidly changing and globalizing world. In particular, the question of multiple entities and the possibility of their coexistence are of central significance to our understanding of identity and security in a modern country such as Britain.

NOTE

1. See for example Boucher (2006:112), who criticizes Butler's "persistent kernel of methodological individualism".

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Radicalization, Extremism, Terrorism

3.1 Introduction

As discussed in the first chapter, the notion of radicalization is not without some complications or definitional challenges. We saw how radicalization is a noun, but importantly, is one describing a "process" of transformation, whereby, in identity terms, an individual moves from one set of identity indicators to an entirely different one over a period of time.

It is certainly the case that the word radicalization has become firmly established as a given in counter-terrorism discourses in the contemporary age. In the latest version of the UK government's Prevent Strategy document, for example, the word is mentioned 185 times. The strategy notes that:

> All the terrorist groups who pose a threat to us seek to radicalise and recruit people to their cause. But the percentage of people who are prepared to support violent extremism in this country is very small. It is significantly greater amongst young people. We now have more information about the factors which encourage people to support terrorism and then to engage in terrorist-related activity. It is important to understand these factors if we are to prevent radicalisation and minimise the risks it poses to our national security. 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. 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. Terrorist groups can take up and exploit ideas which have been developed and sometimes popularised by extremist organisations which operate legally in this country. This has significant implications for the scope of our Prevent strategy. Evidence also suggests that some (but by no means all) of those who have been radicalised in the UK had previously participated in extremist organisations (HM Government 2011:13).

There are a number of interesting factors in this description. Firstly, radicalization is taken as a given concept without much need for explanation, and linked in the early part of the statement to a notion of "violent extremism". There is an interesting description of the interplay between macro- and micro-level factors: certain "terrorist groups" and "extremist organizations" are highlighted as having important agency in the supposed process, but "personal vulnerabilities and specific local factors" are also highlighted as being significant. There is an assertion that, while the great majority of the population would not fall prey to this process, there is an age factor in that young people are "significantly" more likely to proceed down the radicalization pathway. Finally, there is a suggestion that, if being "radical" is an essentially relative position defining itself against a norm, then the anchor and starting point for non-radical people is a democratic society that promotes a "cohesive, integrated and multi-faith society". Similarly, tackling radicalization will best be achieved by reference to "our core values": a notion of Britishness is not specified here, but is implicit.

Such statements do two things: first, they establish concepts such as radical and radicalization as solid, normative phenomena in the official discourse. Second, it could be argued, the description is about individuals and the way in which they develop their identities in relation to Britishness, even if this is not spelt out explicitly, although there is reference to a norm society defined by fairly classic multiculturalist terms. Ideology is mentioned explicitly, in terms of the ideas that might be held by people and how these ideas are promulgated by groups or organizations. The mention of vulnerability is significant in this context, as is the mention of age and how younger people (who could be presumed to be at a more formative stage of their identity construction) decide who they are and which groups and ideologies they will follow.

For Hoskins and O'Loughlin, there are risks here. In the supposedly "mediatised ecology" in which we conduct our public discourse,

radicalization has "become part of the rhetorical structure of the waging of the 'War on Terror'" (Hoskins and O'Loughlin 2009:82). In the words of Schudson, it becomes "remembered and drawn upon as part of what 'everyone knows'" (Schudson 1990:118). This, of course, is not necessarily a bad thing in every circumstance, but what it does mean is that certain concepts can become deeply embedded as unshakeable notions about which there is no need for any debate; a process of layering that may become even more effective and potentially insidious in a world in which the volumes of information we all consume have gone up exponentially (even if much of that information is actually recycled and repeated from a small number of sources). For certain communities such as Muslims in Britain, furthermore, it may be the case that such oft-repeated concepts in public discourse contribute to a fundamentally negative epistemology about Muslims and Muslim-ness. This, in turn, could pose difficult questions of identity verification for Muslims living within British society.

Such critiques will be examined, but at this stage, a suitable starting-point for understanding radicalism and radicalization could perhaps be an entirely neutral concept of a degree of difference in views and agendas from the societal mainstream, however that may be defined. There is also a notion of activism and energy within that difference, perhaps relating to a willingness to depart from the mainstream in ways that might shock, excite or trouble other people. Of course, this is not necessarily a negative phenomenon. As Githens-Mazer points out, there have been good and bad radical movements in human history, and one of the questions we have to ask is how a state defines which are good and which are bad (Githens-Mazer 2012:557).

3.2 CONCEPTUAL CRITIQUES

As described, the first difficulty with a concept such as radical or indeed extreme, is that it is an inherently relative concept. Unless the societal norms are established, understood and accepted by all, there are likely to be difficulties in defining what is radical or extreme within that society. In a country such as Britain for whom "Britishness" may not be clearly defined, this might be problematic. In Germany, by contrast, there is a written constitution which clearly defines public law and society. The internal security agency in Germany is called the *Bundesverfassungsschutz*, or Agency for the Protection of the Federal Constitution. This point about how Western

European societies may differ structurally from one another is important and one to which we will return.

It may further be the case that in a multiculturalist policy towards society, in which a thousand flowers may be allowed to bloom and a range of community norms and values to exist alongside each other, definitions of radical and extreme may become doubly difficult. At certain levels where everyone's values broadly intersect, this may not be a problem, but what about such issues as whether it is appropriate to wear a *burqa*, or to have religious family courts within certain communities? Such things may be seen as extreme and radical by some, but not by others. For critics such as Sedgwick, this all adds up to a recipe for confusion in public discourse when the words radical and radicalization are used as "absolute concepts". The solution, he suggests, is to cease doing so and to continually emphasize the relativity of these concepts (Sedgwick 2010:479).

One of the solutions to this particular conundrum may be to draw a distinction between radical or extreme thought, and radical action. This is where the notion of "violent extremism" comes in, which increasingly came into official discourse about counter-terrorism in Britain after the "7/7" terrorist attacks in London in 2005. Interestingly, the change of government in Britain in 2010 was followed by a review of the Prevent strategy, published a year later and still applicable at the time of writing. The revised strategy included a decision to explicitly move away from the term "violent extremism" and to talk more specifically about "terrorism" and those who clearly supported it. The problem, it was suggested, was that any mention of "extremism" brought-in ideological factors to the debate, and thus ran the risk of suggesting that the counter-terrorism policy could be perceived to be much wider than intended, when in actual fact it was primarily a policy to tackle a specific form of violent crime (HM Government 2011:25).

In this way, we can see that the government actually recognized some of the difficulties of using a relativist concept to establish firm policy. But there was also a very specific point beneath the change, which involves the question of whether the state is tackling violent crime, or something much wider at the core of its evolving society. As Bartlett and Miller noted:

> Research on radicalization . . . has however often focused solely on the small number of known terrorists from which most conclusions about the conditions likely to conduce their actions are drawn, omitting a comparison group of non-terrorist radicals. Conclusions are, then, based on looking at the

outliers without comparing them to the hundreds of thousands of people who experienced the same permissive factors, came into contact with the same people, read the same books, and had the same background, but were radicalized (or not) in a very different way (Bartlett and Miller 2012:1).

The questions here concern the connection, if any exists, between those who might be sympathetic towards radical causes and those who decide to undertake a violent course of action. More importantly, there are questions for the state in how it manages to encompass all of those people as "members" of the national community, and which security actions it takes in response to the dilemma.

The latest iteration of the Prevent Strategy draws reference to the Citizenship Survey commissioned by the Department of Communities and Local Government (DCLG) in 2010, which asked, among many other things, about citizens' thoughts on the likelihood of extremism and violent extremism to change society. The strategy took succour from the results of the poll, noting that not only do a very small percentage of the population see violence as a suitable way of "dealing with injustice" or doing so "in the name of religion", but there is also no evidence that this small base is rising. In some ways therefore, this could be interpreted (as the government was keen to do) as Al Qaeda having failed in its objectives of lighting a bonfire under Western European community relations (HM Government 2011:16).

In other ways, the results of the poll could be seen as more problematic. It was noted that three percent of those polled who self-identified themselves as Muslims thought "it was 'always' or 'often right' to use violent extremism in Britain to protest against things they judged to be very unfair or unjust" (HM Government 2011:16). While a very small figure, this compares with just one percent of other religious communities polled. Of those asked if violent extremism was "sometimes right", the figure for Muslims polled was 12 percent, which was double the figure for Christians, of 6 percent. (It should be noted that the figure for Hindus was even higher, at 14 percent.)

Leaving aside methodological questions concerning the size of the sample polled and the manner in which individuals identified themselves as belonging to any particular religious community, if these figures were read a different way, we can see a reasonably high proportion of some communities within the population who claim to have some sympathy with the underlying motivations of violent extremists,

even if those respondents themselves would not necessarily undertake violent actions. For counter-terrorism policy, therefore, there are questions about how many of these people count as "radicalized" in their views; and whether anything should be done about those who may be supportive of violence in principle but have not yet made any moves towards becoming a terrorist. These are questions about the spectrum that radicalization occupies, and about what happens at points along that spectrum. From an identity point of view, there are also questions about whether someone can simultaneously qualify as being British, while holding sympathies with views that feel violently disposed towards elements of British policy and society. As we have seen, for many, those two positions are mutually exclusive.

3.3   STATE APPROACHES

Peter Neumann outlines some of the difficulties in his appropriately-named paper, "The trouble with radicalization" (Neumann 2013). He outlines two important positions taken on the concept of radicalization, which he characterizes as the Anglo-Saxon, and European approaches (by the latter meaning continental Europe). The Anglo-Saxon approach is fairly reductionist, in that it focuses almost entirely on the rule of law and not generally on the wider hinterland of radical views or beliefs. This fits with a fierce reference to freedom of speech and life, and a small-state approach whereby the state is reluctant to interfere in what it sees as cultural and religious factors. The red lines are defined by law: if an individual commits a terrorist act (as specified in the UK's case by the Terrorism Act (TACT), which, in recent years, has been widened in its definition) they will come under the scrutiny of the security agencies, but generally not otherwise. In this way, there is also a sense of seeing terrorism as little different from violent crime, to be treated accordingly. In history, some British political leaders were very keen to define terrorists as "murderers" rather than "terrorists": indeed, it was the move by the Wilson government in 1976 to redefine IRA prisoners in the Maze Prison as criminals rather than political prisoners that triggered a series of bitter hunger strikes by the aggrieved IRA men protesting at their perceived loss of political status, which came to an ugly head during the subsequent Thatcher government between 1980 and 1981.

By contrast, Neumann's continental European model is defined by a clear connectivity between terrorist operations and the ideological

activities of those who might be on the track of violent extremism, or who might be facilitating others on that pathway. In this way, holding views defined as radical can be a cause of state attention. It is thus no surprise that countries such as France have had internal struggles over such issues as Islamic dress in public spaces. Frank Foley has noted that France (and indeed other European countries such as Italy) have a so-called "association of wrong-doers" (*association de malfaiteurs*) law, which "allows it to cast the net wide and imprison a broad range of suspects" (ICSR 2013). Indeed, France's counter-terrorism laws are wider in scope and application in many important ways than is the case in Britain.

The key difference is that France has clearly defined national principles of secularity and democracy enshrined in the Republic which define what it is to be French, and indeed what it is not. As we have discussed other countries, such as Germany, also have very clearly delineated written constitutions, in which principles of secularity and freedom of speech can be used legally to restrict and prosecute those considered to be transgressing (that is, those considered to be dangerously extreme or radical). In the US and Britain, on the other hand, notions of a "melting-pot" or multiculturalist society with small-state interference in people's liberties and personal lives lead to a very different approach to multiple identities and communities within the state.

The reasons for this difference, explains Neumann (2013:886–7), is that continental European countries have not had the long history of stable parliamentary democracy enjoyed by countries such as Britain. In the relatively recent past, many European countries have either been occupied by a foreign power, or have been taken over by radical fascist or communist regimes. Many, such as Germany, France, Italy and Greece, have had periods of serious violence from radical revolutionary groups such as the Red Brigades or RAF. For Germany in the 1930s, an initially small base of citizens expressing support for radical fascist ideology (at rates not greatly dissimilar from those discussed in the British Citizenship Survey above who expressed some sympathy with violent courses of action) grew to install a regime that unleashed the catastrophe of the Third Reich and the Holocaust. For these countries, therefore, complacency about individuals expressing sympathy with violent movements committed to overthrowing the democratic state does not feel as acceptable as might be the case in Britain or other Anglo-Saxon countries. This might also explain the greater degree of zero-sum and exclusionist sentiments towards identities which are dissonant with the perceived national mainstream in many European countries.

There are those within Anglo-Saxon countries who may prefer a more interventionist and assimilationist approach. As mentioned earlier, Anthony Glees has suggested that the number of individuals purportedly under the security services' scrutiny for posing a serious national security threat in Britain should be read to mean that there is a deeper hinterland of radicalization feeding into terrorism about which we need to be seriously concerned and engaged (Glees 2009). The journalist Melanie Phillips based her book "Londonistan" on the premise that a supposed "covenant of security" in the 1990s, whereby dissident Islamists and oppositionists from Middle Eastern countries were generally allowed to settle in London with the informal expectation that they would not cause trouble in Britain, was seen to have backfired as an exercise in terrible complacency by the turn of the twenty-first century (Phillips 2012). The term "Londonistan" had been reputedly coined by France and some of its European neighbours during the mid-1990s, where frustration had mounted over Britain's foot-dragging over extradition requests for London-based Islamist terror suspects (Foley 2013:248).

Interestingly, twenty years later when France is suffering a wave of terror attacks, there are those who suggest that Britain is not only better than its continental neighbours at counter-terror policing, but that its community relations and particularly the degree of integration of its Muslim communities place it in a much stronger and safer position than its neighbours across the Channel (Righter 2015). In this way, it could be that a more uncompromisingly integrationist and secular approach towards religious identities could lead to more problems of societal fracturing and insecurity than a looser, multiculturalist model. From a policy point of view, it might also mean that a more "muscular" approach to conformity with a closely-defined Britishness might not yield better security in the longer term. (Conversely, a country such as Britain should not be too complacent, as numerous inter-community problems persist and could become worse in the future.)

3.4   ISLAMISM AND ISLAMOPHOBIA

As with identity, other critics of a notion of radicalization come from structuralist, and – for want of a better word – "Islamist" positions. The problem for structuralist critics is based on similar elements to their criticism of identity theory, namely that it focuses far too much on the micro-level of individual personalities rather than on the broader

struggle against structural economic and political inequity. This is problematic in that it allows states and governing elites to deflect attention away from such deeper issues and to suggest that the problem of terrorism and violent extremism is one that should be seen in an isolated, local and context-specific approach, whereby each individual is a separate case. One of the bases for this criticism, which is shared by some critics within Muslim communities, is that opinion polls frequently appear to show that the reason many in the Muslim community feel disgruntled about their position within Western societies, to the extent that a reasonably significant number may even suggest a tacit sympathy and support for violent responses, is the question of foreign policy.

At the extreme end of violent ideology, this was the cornerstone of Osama Bin Laden's thoughts and the rationale for the Al Qaeda movement. The West, and – importantly – its subordinate dictators in Muslim countries (respectively the "far" and "near enemies") were seen to be violently oppressing Muslims across the world in a historically continuous narrative stretching back at least as far as the Crusades in the Middle Ages. This structural process was so embedded and unshakeable in the global order, it was suggested, that only violent revolutionary action to restore a supposedly *Salafi* society of pure Sunni Islam would change the world for the better. As we saw in the first chapter, this was a sort of neo-conservative reactionary ideology, pioneered by the likes of Sayyid Qutb in Egypt, which somewhat paradoxically shared many basic sentiments with the neo-conservative movement in the US, even if there were significant differences at the level of foreign policy.

If we look at some of the words of the former leader of Al Qaeda, for example, we can see a narrative that echoes a fundamentally structuralist and Marxist narrative about bourgeois oppressors in the West. Take, for example, the following extract from one of Bin Laden's speeches supposedly made in 2007 and aired on Al Jazeera television to mark the anniversary of the 9/11 attacks:

> . . . the leaders of the West – especially Bush, Blair, Sarkozy and Brown- still talk about freedom and human rights with a flagrant disregard for the intellects of human beings. So is there a form of terrorism stronger, clearer and more dangerous than this? This is why I tell you: as you liberated yourselves before from the slavery of monks, kings, and feudalism, you should liberate yourselves from the deception, shackles and attrition of the

capitalist system . . . . If you were to ponder it well, you would find that in the end, it is a system harsher and fiercer than your systems in the Middle Ages. The capitalist system seeks to turn the entire world into a fiefdom of the major corporations under the label of "globalization" in order to protect democracy (BBC 2007).

We can see in this statement language reminiscent of communist revolutionaries such as Lenin, Trotsky or Marx, such as the reference to the ills of democracy, and the need to "liberate" oneself from the "deception" and "shackles" of the "capitalist system". In the same speech, the orator (the identity of whom was the subject of much debate at the time in the intelligence services) also talks about the way in which global warming and global financial crashes are the work of the capitalist West, wreaking havoc on an unsuspecting citizenry. In this way, there is a large overlap between some of Al Qaeda's rhetoric and a broader, anti-West and anti-capitalist movement. (See Hansen and Kainz (2007) for such a thesis.)

While it is clearly the case that the majority of the population would profess absolutely no affiliation with Bin Laden and his ideology, the problem is that there are touch-points between the radical narrative and a disaffection with Western foreign policy towards the Muslim world. In a qualitative study capturing the thoughts of 30 young Muslim men and women in the city of Birmingham between 2005 and 2007, Abbas and Siddique identified that many respondents felt a focus by Western media on religious elements of radicalization and radical ideologies was essentially a smoke-screen that obscured the "real" problems of foreign policy. As one young man of Gujerati extraction noted:

Look at the conflict that has been going on in Palestine for years . . . thousands of Muslims are getting killed there unjustly, but everyone is just sitting back letting it happen . . . . no wonder the guys on July 7 [the London "7/7" bombers] did what they did. There is no way that July 7 would have happened if there were no injustices happening in the Muslim world . . . . Israel gets away with it because of the support of the West (cited in Abbas and Siddique 2012:126–7).

While this is clearly just the view of one particular individual and there might be methodological questions to be asked about a study of this type in which certain individuals may "play to the gallery", we can postulate with reasonable certainty that such a narrative, in which the West is seen to

have patchy double-standards about its treatment of crises and oppression in Muslim countries, is shared by many young people in Western, Muslim communities. Frequent but selective military ventures in Muslim countries in the post-Cold War era, and particularly the long and traumatic conflict in Iraq, may only serve to complicate the picture and add fuel to the fire for many. Even the British intelligence agencies, as we now know from classified documents released as part of the Iraq Inquiry, concluded in a 2005 assessment that:

> The conflict in Iraq has exacerbated the threat from international terrorism and will continue to have an impact in the long term. It has confirmed the belief of extremists that Islam is under attack and needs to be defended using force. It has reinforced the determination of terrorists who were already committed to attacking the West and motivated others who were not (JIC 2005).

Indeed, just three months after this assessment, the 7/7 terrorist attacks were committed in London. In his "suicide video", the leader of the group, Muhammed Sidique Khan, did not make explicit reference to Iraq, although he did praise the leader of Al Qaeda in Iraq at the time, Musab al-Zarqawi, as a fellow "brother ... fighting in the cause" (BBC 2005).

From the points of view of identity and radicalization, the question is whether the holding of a view about the dangerous ills of British foreign policy, such as that professed by the young interviewee in Birmingham above, is compatible with British identity. In Neumann's European model of radicalization, this could be problematic, and in a country such as France it could even raise the spectre of prosecution under the *association de malfaiteurs* law. In this context, expressing sympathy with violent terrorists such as the 7/7 bombers could be seen as an indicator of radicalization away from the norms of democratic and law-abiding society, and worthy of investigation by the state whose job it is to uphold the democratic order. In the Anglo-Saxon model, however, this might be viewed merely as an exercising of freedom of speech and *not* incompatible with British national identity, not least since freedom of speech is supposedly central to that identity. Such an individual, furthermore, would not come under the scrutiny of the security services unless he established some sort of tangible and identifiable link with other known terrorist suspects.

In this way, critics of the normative conceptualization of radicalization would say that, given the inherent relativism of the term, it does not serve any useful purpose. Young members of Muslim communities, should not,

it is argued, come under scrutiny for expressing sympathy with those who violently attack the British state, unless and until those individuals decide to actively undertake a terrorist act or associate themselves with those planning to do so. In this argument, being young and Muslim in Britain might entail a suspicion of British foreign policy in these areas almost by default, but that does not mean that the holding of such views disqualifies such individuals from a form of hyphenated and "hybridised" British identity. Such, supposedly, is the nature and the strength of multiculturalism in a democratic context. But it also could explain some of the stresses and strains of a "bi-cultural" identity in a country such as Britain, where some degree of cognitive dissonance may be experienced between identity verification as a member of the global *ummah* and that of British citizen, whose government prosecutes military interventions in certain Muslim countries from time to time.

This is where the structuralist critiques of radicalization merge with the criticisms from some members of the Muslim community, such as Arun Kundnani (2015:115) who lambast the "myth of radicalization". In structuralist, conspiracy-theory terms, Kundnani suggests that the "new" narrative of radicalization that emerged in Western discourse after the 9/11 attacks, "was, from the beginning, circumscribed to the demands of counterterrorism policy makers rather than an attempt to objectively study how terrorism comes into being" (Kundnani 2015:117). Citing the political philosopher Kant, Kundnani delivers the structuralist critique that the "public use of reason" aimed at enlightenment across society is subverted by the radicalization discourse into a "private" dialogue that serves the needs of specific security institutions. Thus, he argues, a "myth" of radicalization is not only nefariously developed to deflect attention away from the real socio-political and economic factors supposedly underlying terrorism and violent extremism, but to allow the security agencies to target Muslims as a "suspect community".

The agency employed in this way, argues such critics, is a process which has itself taken on a normative life in public discourse, namely "Islamophobia". This process is characterized as a deep-seated suspicion and mistrust of Muslims by majority-culture European society, which manifests itself variously as discrimination, negativity, ridicule and abuse directed at Muslims in daily life. Whether it is a large disparity between the numbers of media articles that say anything positive about Muslims in society, and those that deal with terrorism, violence, or subjugation of minorities or women; the marginalized socio-economic position of

Muslims in most Western societies; or actual instances of intimidation or harassment that many Muslims experience in their daily lives, a notion of deep-seated Islamophobia is firmly taking root in discussion of contemporary Western society.[1] In August 2016, for example, the Equality and Human Rights Commission in the UK issued a report which, the commission's chairman noted, revealed a picture of a "very worrying combination of a post-Brexit rise in hate crime and long-term systemic unfairness and race inequality" (BBC 2016). On the same day, the London-based think tank, Demos, published the results of a survey of online activity, which identified remarkable spikes in offensive and "Islamophobic" tweets sent in English in Western countries such as Britain, Germany France and the Netherlands, coinciding with terrorist attacks such as those in France during July 2016 (Nye 2016).

In his study of the radical group, *Al Muhajiroun* (The Emigrants), which has since been proscribed by the British government, Wiktorowicz (2005:91) observed how perceived discrimination was a powerful recruiting sergeant for the movement. The head of the movement at the time, Omar Bakri Mohammed (who has since been denied re-entry to the UK after moving to Lebanon), observed that racism and discrimination created an "identity crisis" for Muslims living in the West, which could create what Choudhury described as a "cognitive opening" for young Muslims looking for some way to address the frustration they were feeling (Choudhury 2007:21). For those with bi-cultural identities, a sense that an individual did not "belong" to mainstream British society could lead some to seek alternative groups and communities to whom they might find a stronger sense of attachment. Returning to the study of young Muslims in Birmingham, Abbas and Siddique noticed a trend among respondents to mention a sense that "they do not fully belong to Britain because of their commitments to Islam" (Abbas and Siddique 2012:127). Frequently negative media discourse about Islam and Muslims merely added to this sense of alienation.

Taken together, therefore, these criticisms of the normative notion of radicalization suggest that, while the word may have a clear dictionary definition, the essentially relative nature of the term not only risks confusion when it is applied to a complex multicultural society where different communities have to try and live alongside one another; but that it might even have a negative agency when applied by a state wishing to divert attention away from deeper and more uncomfortable structural factors of

inequality and discrimination. I would argue that a number of practical, institutional factors throw cold water on these ideas. First, however, it is helpful to explore models of radicalization as they have been developed in the academic discourse.

3.5   RADICALIZATION MODELS

One of the central debates that swirls around the concept of radicalization is whether it can be reliably defined as a repeatable "process", or whether it is an entirely context-specific and personal set of factors that cannot be documented very clearly. Similar arguments have been had about the pitfalls of "templating" in crime policy; that is, the notion that a certain set of characteristics and indicators make an individual more likely to be a terrorist or criminal than not. In institutional contexts, such as the application of border controls or "stop and search" powers, for example, a policy of templating can lead to unfortunate situations where members of specific communities find themselves repeatedly pulled over and viewed with suspicion entirely on the basis of their outward appearance or supposed identity. This, in turn, can lead to serious problems with inter-community relations.

The problem, as will be discussed below, is that there is a tension for the state in physically delivering security at scale (a duty it is paid large sums of public money to discharge) and an ethical, equitable and inclusive approach to community cohesion and harmony in public life. The development and mutation of the terrorist threat through the transition into the twenty first century has made these challenges extraordinarily complex, and it is not beyond the bounds of possibility that the state might have no better a notion of how to square the circles in these areas than anyone else in society. As will be discussed later, this supports the argument that policies such as Prevent in the UK, while no doubt being rightfully subjected to criticism from time to time, cannot be forgotten and discarded altogether. As will be argued, the challenge may perhaps be to develop them in a way that makes them right, rather than consign them to the history books.

All of those factors aside, developments in contemporary terrorism since the end of the Cold War have led to an enormous upsurge in debates and discussions about radicalization, especially since the advent of a number of terrorist attacks in Europe in the early years of the twenty first century which were committed not by individuals who had come in from

outside of the state, but by born-and-bred citizens of the state itself. During this period, the notion of "home-grown terrorism" took shape and became a very frequent basis for discussion, as did a heightened interest in bi-cultural identities in metropolitan Western environments.

In order to try to make sense of these developments in security threat at the societal level, a number of models of radicalization have emerged. McGilloway, Ghosh and Bhui undertook an extensive survey of academic outputs on the radicalization of Muslims in the West up to 2012 (McGilloway et al. 2015). While it was noted that empirical research on such issues remains deficient, partly for practical reasons of the difficulty of accessing terrorists, the project identified 17 major studies based on original primary research. Despite Githens-Mazer's assertion that "the use of empirical research and primary data...is not, apparently, considered requisite practice to publish on radicalization" (Githens-Mazer 2012:558), it does appear to be the case that, amongst the welter of publications on terrorism and radicalization, there are significant bodies of work based on solid empirical data. (There are also, admittedly, many that are not.) Empirical studies include selected cases of extensive interviewing and focus-group discussions with a variety of Muslim individuals living in a range of environments, from Britain to Denmark, Canada, and indeed those living in Muslim countries.

The conclusions of McGilloway et al's study were that there was:

> ...no single cause or route responsible for engaging in violent extremism. Radicalization was seen as a process of change, but that some may be more predisposed to being vulnerable if catalytic events/precipitating factors are present (McGilloway et al. 2015:49).

There was general consensus across the studies that there is a significant connection between personal "vulnerabilities" and the risk of exposure to "violent radicalization". All of the studies involving young Muslims seemed to suggest that the difficulties in "finding a sense of identity and belonging" were highly significant sources of vulnerability for many, with a number of studies identifying this factor among young British Muslims in particular (McGilloway et al. 2015:49). (This does not necessarily mean that this is more of a factor in Britain than, say, Denmark, but merely that more studies into this issue have been carried out in British cities.)

King and Taylor focused on five major models of radicalization, which have been much debated and quoted, in both the academic and policy

worlds (King and Taylor 2011). The models are: Borum's 2003 four-stage progressive model of psychological development towards extremism; Wiktorowicz's aforementioned 2004 four-stage model of joining extremist organizations, with *Al-Muhajiroun* as the case study; Moghaddam's 2005/6 six-stage "staircase" model of radicalization into terrorism; Silber and Bhatt's 2007 four-stage radicalization model, developed in conjunction with the New York Police Department (NYPD); and Marc Sageman's 2008 "four-prong" heuristic. In all cases apart from Sageman, these are linear models, whereby the target individual moves progressively along a "pathway" towards problematic extremism. In Sageman's model, the four prongs are not linear, in that they can be present and affect an individual in simultaneous ways and in different combinations (King and Taylor 2011).

There are a number of interesting factors in these models. First, all of them attempt to characterize radicalization as a process with identifiable stages or elements, and in all but one, they do so in a linear fashion. The implications of this for policy-makers are clear: these models could be used institutionally to train analysts and security practitioners to "watch for the signs" of radicalization. It is interesting to note that much of Randy Borum's work has been conducted in conjunction with the FBI, and Silber and Bhatt's model was produced in conjunction with the NYPD. Other key names in this field, notably Elaine Pressman, have also developed multiple indicator models for conceptualizing and delineating radicalization (Pressman 2006). Pressman's ten-indicator model, for example, identifies a set of personal indicators, weighted according to their importance to an eventual pathway to radicalization, in a manner that is reminiscent of the hierarchy of salience in identity theory. Other important studies, which tend to be descriptive of indicators of radicalization in similar ways without necessarily describing a transformative process as such, include Taylor and Horgan's 2006 conceptual framework (Taylor and Horgan 2006); and Kruglanski and Fishman's 2009 study of psychological factors in terrorism (Kruglanski and Fishman 2009), to name but two.

In the five major models studied, King and Taylor note a convergence around "the assumption that radicalization is a transformation based on social-psychological processes." Here we can see the micro-level focus on analysis of the individual, and factors that may draw them in particular directions, which structuralist critics suggest is a dangerous deflection away from macro-societal problems and processes. The consensus across the five models seems to be, however, that the key issues for the individual are those of relative deprivation (King and Taylor 2011:609).

"Relative" is an important word here in a social constructivist sense. On the question of deprivation, the suggestion is that individuals may perceive they are relatively deprived in relation to other groups, even if the reality may belie this perception on an individual level. This is important in two ways, respectively for minority and majority communities. In the case of minority communities such as Muslims living in Western states, it is clearly the case that most individuals will be living in relatively much better socio-economic positions than many of their co-religionists in Muslim states. The problem, however, is one of a perceived "moral outrage" when comparing the group to which one subscribes to fellow citizens in the same country. In this way, while many individuals who have carried out terrorist attacks have been found to be educated, middle-class individuals rather than the socio-economically oppressed, it may be the case that anger over the wider group's perceived disadvantage compared to other groups or to the majority community may be much more important than personal, individual deprivation (King and Taylor 2011:609-10). Thus, in this context, group identification might be more important than individual identification.

For members of the majority community, as will be explored in more detail later, a perceived injustice when compared to other minority groups (and especially groups identified as "immigrants") has been identified in many studies as an important element of the Far Right narrative. The perception is often that the state is "selling out" and "bending over backwards" to please certain minority communities at the expense of the majority, many of whom feel a sense of entitlement by simple virtue of being the majority community. In the British town of Luton, for example, where the Far Right English Defence League (EDL) was founded, much of the early rhetoric of the EDL focused on a perceived imbalance in the allocation of civic resources to working-class white areas of the town as opposed to districts populated mostly by Muslims. City councillors have repeatedly pointed out that the facts do not support this theory, but in this case, perceptions have proved more important than the facts in mobilizing people to the anti-immigrant message (Richards 2013:187).

3.6   POLICY, INSTITUTIONAL AND BUREAUCRATIC FACTORS

Much of the work on modelling radicalization has been conducted in close consultation with security agencies, and has been used as the basis for training programmes and policy models. This is not to decry the value of

such work, but there are very significant institutional factors that need to be considered in this context.

The work of securitization theorists such as the Copenhagen School have identified that state-level conceptualizations of security mutated and broadened after the end of the Cold War away from primarily inter-state military vectors of insecurity and into a realm of broader human security factors. These include security relating to climate change, the environment and processes of globalization including international terrorism and organized crime (Richards 2012:11). While it is probably the case that the end of the Cold War did materially affect global trade and movements and allowed an acceleration of the processes of globalization already underway (Richards 2012:13), the Copenhagen School's thesis is partly a critical one, in that it is suggested states have re-securitized certain threats for realist reasons of embedding and developing power and supremacy. This is not dissimilar from Curtis's "power of nightmares" theory discussed in chapter one, as typified as a contemporary version of the "Team B" episode in the Cold War warning against fictitious advanced weapons.

Whatever the truth in this theory, it is the case that the advent of Al Qaeda, and particularly the step-change in Western security policy initiated by the 9/11 attacks in the US in 2001, led to a reversal of post-Cold War declines in US military expenditure and an increase in personnel numbers in security agencies. This was mirrored in Europe following major terrorist attacks, such as the 2004 Madrid and 2005 London bombings (although it should be noted that in most NATO countries, defence expenditure has continued to decline steadily throughout the post-Cold War period).

The institutional reality of this period was that relatively large numbers of new security personnel were taking up their posts and being assigned to counterterrorism tasks across Western intelligence agencies and militaries. There was an urgency to induct and train these new personnel as quickly and efficiently as possible, so that they could become operationally effective without delay. (For all its faults, the Cold War was far slower-moving and more predictable than the post-Cold War security environment.) Such officers did not need to become doctoral-level experts in terrorism and radicalization, but needed to know enough about the concepts to do their jobs. The numbers, meanwhile, were not insignificant. Staffing numbers at Britain's domestic MI5 agency, for example, are thought to have doubled in the decade after 2005, from 2000 to 4000 personnel (Guardian 2015).

The practical realities of this period of expansion were that training and induction programmes about terrorism and about the personal "profiles"

of those who should come under the scrutiny of the security agencies were in high demand. Furthermore, because of the bureaucratic instincts of large-scale institutions needing to quickly train-up considerable numbers of new personnel, the need for easily understandable models that could be bottled-up and replicated in production-line training schedules was strong. Much excellent work was conducted in this period in conjunction with academics, particularly in the areas of behavioural psychology. But it may be that there were risks in generating an almost irresistible allure for easily-understood and conveyed process models of radicalization. There may have been the sort of risks of layering of knowledge through constant repetition and standardization of concepts, to generate a pre-mediated, bureaucratic version of Schudson's "what everyone knows" (Schudson 1990:118). This is essentially the same problem as "group-think", or "prevailing wisdom", which Lord Butler identified as one of the main problems in the British intelligence community in the run-up to the invasion of Iraq in 2003 (HM Government 2004:16). In this particular case, the problems were perhaps more conspiratorial and political ones of warping intelligence to fit desired policy outcomes (although Lord Butler's inquiry effectively side-stepped the charge of politicization of intelligence), but in other cases, it may be simply that the production-line manner in which large government bureaucracies operate can militate against effective critical thinking and flexibility. Such institutional factors are critical for policy-making in these areas, and are factors to which we will return in chapter seven.

3.7　CONCLUSIONS

There is no question that a notion of radicalization has become firmly embedded as a normative concept in post-Cold War security discourse, in both academic and policy realms, to describe a process whereby an individual may turn to violence. It is implicitly recognized that it is a relative term relating to a deviation from societal norms, but is one about which there is perceived to be sufficient certainty to not need constant redefinition. In terms of how this process works, studies and theories are many and varied, but there seems to be some consensus around the importance of identity factors, in terms of individuals grappling with a cognitive dissonance between different elements of their own individual and wider community identity. In a British context, the societal norms from which

radicals are perceived to be deviating are those pertaining loosely to a multiculturalist, secular and democratic society.

There are important critics of this state of affairs, however, who need to be heeded. Firstly, any term or concept which becomes so firmly embedded that it materially influences policy in a significant way across the world, as is the case with radicalization, needs to be constantly reviewed and tested rather than accepted as an institutionalized ghost in the machine. In another study reviewing empirical work on radicalization, Hafez and Mullins note that, while there is an emerging consensus on the variables that may be present in processes of radicalization, "we are no closer to an agreement on the models that chart out the transformative process by which ordinary individuals become extremists" (Hafez and Mullins 2015:959). An increasing ethnic diversity of individuals carrying out attacks across Western Europe is adding to the confusion, as is the supposedly growing role of women in the radicalization process. This latter factor suggests that gender-based models and analyses may have been neglected hitherto in this supposedly "male-dominated phenomenon" (Hafez and Mullins 2015:959). The conclusion, argue Hafez and Mullins, is that the "process metaphor" should be abandoned, since the empirical work conducted across various communities suggests that the manner in which individuals become violent extremists is too diverse and context-specific to be easily converted into a reliable policy model (Hafez and Mullins 2015:960).

One of the architects of such modelling, Randy Borum, typifies the conundrum by acknowledging that "no single pathway or explanatory theory exists that would apply to all types of groups or to all individuals" (Borum 2011:15). He then goes on to suggest, however, that theoretical work in the social sciences such as social movement theory and ideas distilled from sociology and psychology should be drawn upon to at least "curtail the reinvention of a problem and provide a platform for moving forward" (Borum 2011:31). Despite the malleability of the problem, therefore, there remains an urge to try to explain and model it.

As discussed, critical security theorists and commentators suggest that our free-and-easy use of the term radicalization is not only misguided, but nefarious. Use of the term in the policy world implies an embedded groupthink about the manner in which a certain community of individuals will turn to violent crime, and risks the sort of policy templating pitfalls that end up casting suspicion on people merely on the basis of their identity or appearance. For many in the Muslim community, this is doubly

problematic as an institutional connection is perceived to be made between a respected religion and embedded criminality. For these critics, there is a sort of wilderness of mirrors here, since much of the empirical work amongst Muslim communities suggests that a cognitive dissonance over living in the West but feeling very aggrieved about Western foreign policy, coupled with an experience of general Islamophobia, frequently emerge as the very indicators that cause some young people to feel more radical about their relationship with secular, Western democratic society. And yet, such factors do not seem to be addressed in the policy recommendations. In this way, normative discourse about radicalization, which seems to focus on the micro, context-specific and individual level, deflects attention dangerously away from the underlying structural social, economic and political problems in Western society. Until these factors are recognized, understood and addressed, argue such critics, it will be hardly surprising that a number of people will turn to more radical courses of action to address their grievances.

Of course, there may be a risk of confusing the "how" and "why" issues here, which are subtly different. Despite some of the criticisms about academic work in this field, it appears to be the case that there have been some solid and noteworthy empirical studies that have spoken to significant numbers of people about how they feel about issues of security and community in contemporary Western contexts, with much of this work having been conducted in Britain. This identifies some structural issues which need to be thought about, such as the question of the various effects of Islamophobia; genuine concern over Britain's stance on certain foreign policy issues such as the Arab-Israeli conflict and wars in Iraq, Afghanistan and Syria; and structural inequalities across communities.

At one level, these are things that affect any individual and any community in democratic society. The "Brexit" vote in July 2016 demonstrated that political certainties can be turned on their heads in twenty first-century Western Europe, and can do so in an extraordinarily cross-cutting way that divides individuals across boundaries of class, race and political affiliation. Some of the xenophobic rhetoric that has subsequently poured forth on social media, not to mention spikes in actual attacks against ethnic minorities, including Muslims (who can hardly be blamed for any of the debates concerning membership of the European Union) demonstrate that there will always be a swathe of the community who will be prepared, in the right set of circumstances, to take action that resolutely militates against the core principles of a

democratic, law abiding and multiculturalist society. In this way, becoming problematically "radical" is not the preserve of any one particular community.

For Muslims living in Britain, however, there seems to be strong evidence that factors relating to the stresses of living a "bi-cultural" identity within a Western context may be particularly significant drivers of personal anxiety. Clearly it is the case that this is no sort of "answer" to what Hafez and Mullins describe as the "radicalization puzzle" (Hafez and Mullins 2015). One of the easiest criticisms of structural theories of terrorism, such as it being driven by economic deprivation, for example, is that there are a great many poor people in the world but only a tiny minority of those turn to terrorism. Thus terrorism cannot be just a symptom of economic deprivation. Similarly, there are very significant numbers of individuals in Britain and other countries who subscribe to bi- or indeed multiple core identities. Only a tiny proportion of those have turned to terrorism as an expression of rage against the difficulties they are feeling.

There is some evidence that growing outward expressions of Muslim identity, such as the wearing of the *burqa* or *niqab,* for example (with some trepidation over exactly how far such practices are indeed growing in Western society) are not necessarily signs of the religious subjugation of women or indeed of a growing security problem, are signs of one way of dealing with a bi-cultural identity. Indeed, for a multiculturalist country such as Britain, freedom of expression suggests that individuals should be allowed to wear exactly what they want, as long as they are not transgressing any norms of decency or law. There is also a question of gender identity in this debate, as an intriguing debate over the growth of "modestwear" including the "*burqini*" (which has been controversially banned on public beaches in France) is highlighting at the time of writing. As Ramona Aly observed, to have a debate about what women should or should not wear risks "women's bodies being wrongly thought of as under public ownership" (Aly 2016).

All of this suggests that Neumann's Anglo-Saxon approach to radicalization has a great number of merits. The terms 'radical', 'radicalization', and indeed 'extreme' are clearly relative concepts. It is also the case that for a country such as Britain, the societal norms of "Britishness" are not clearly defined in the way that national identity might be in certain other European countries. But there is enough certainty about what constitutes violent crime to be able to establish where someone has crossed a line between being a law-abiding member of society – even if such a person

may hold and express views that may be troubling for others in society – and a criminal expression of violence. This is where a notion of radicalization is not only pertinent, but useful.

There is then the question of how that radicalization can be defined. It also seems clear that a certain set of indicators may be present, and that the language of identity can be an extremely effective tool for conceptualizing and analyzing those indicators. But the extreme context-specific variation on when and how an individual becomes drawn into a pathway of violent extremism means that any systematic modelling is inherently problematic and must be couched in a number of health warnings. Indeed, the "European" approach to radicalization that tries to legislate and mitigate wider societal processes of expression amongst communities and to link them to the security problem of violent extremism not only sucks in a huge amount of security resources in the areas of monitoring and intervening, but might even ultimately make the security problems worse.

Where attempts at modelling can be useful from a policy perspective is in allowing observers to understand the complex and multiple identity processes underway and to think about how these might apply to each individual case. This may run the risk of ignoring wider structural challenges of social, economic or political issues within the state, but it need not necessarily do so. Such factors are related to, rather than mutually exclusive from, those of individual identity, and come together in the nexus between the individual's identity and their conception of where they fit within society.

Note

1. For an empirical study of the media and portrayals of Islam and Muslims in the UK, see Moore et al. (2008).

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Reactive Identity Movements

4.1 INTRODUCTION

One of the debates within identity theory has been a creative tension between what some have described as an American approach, characterized by ideas such as schema theory; and the more European notion of social representation theory (Monroe et al. 2000:424). In schema theory, it is postulated that individuals will develop schemata of connected ideas and identity-factors which operate together to deliver the overall nature of their identity expression (see for example Markus and Nurius 1987). This fits with the idea of a complex hierarchy of saliences in an individual's identity, but has been criticized for considering that schemata are somewhat static and essentialist. Social representation theory, on the other hand, suggests a more dynamic and fluid concept of identity evolution and development whereby intersubjective interactions between individuals and groups continually shape an individual's sense of identity and the actions they may take in response to external factors (Moscovici 1988). Cognitive dissonance theory, as described in chapter two, is an example of an approach in this area, as is social attribution theory, of which Tetlock was a key protagonist (Tetlock 1985:227), and to which we will return later in the concept of narratives and myths.

Much of the discussion so far regarding identity and security in the British context has been made with reference to the Muslim community, and to factors such as the supposedly troublesome experience of evolving hyphenated and bi-cultural identities within the modern Western context.

Social representation theories of identity, however, stress the importance of intergroup factors in identity formation as being as significant as micro-level factors within a particular community or individual. In the context of contemporary security, this usefully brings into the debate the question of xenophobic and Far Right identity politics within Western majority communities, and the way in which they might interact with and be influenced by identity factors within minority Muslim communities. It also allows for an examination of "cumulative" or "tit-for-tat" extremism, in which the increasingly radical expressions of one group may influence the position of another. In the contemporary Western context, for example, the rise of Far Right groups in recent years may be attributable in part both to changes in extremist rhetoric and action among radical Al-Qaeda-related ideologies, and to the pressures and strains of a globalizing world.

As Monroe et al. observed, there have been many thousands of psychological experiments to test the principles of social identity theory, and these have overwhelmingly shown a tendency amongst individuals to identify with their in-group in ways that support the group's norms, and denigrate members of identified out-groups along stereotypical lines (Monroe et al. 2000:435). Many of these experiments built on the "minimal group paradigm" put forward by Tajfel in 1970, which confirmed in-group and out-group dynamics, even when the groups were artificially designed in a laboratory setting and there were no real-world consequences for affiliation with any particular group (Tajfel 1970).

This model of social identity theory brings the question of individual identity-formation together with the dynamics of a wider group affiliation within society, and establishes a notion of "identity politics". In studies of Far Right political movements in contemporary Western Europe, on which this chapter focuses, it is notable that most of the studies hitherto (unlike those on Muslim identity formation within the West) have tended to focus not on the micro-level of individual psychological processes, but on the macro-level of developments within society and politics. Such debates and ideas will be examined in this chapter, with particular reference to a movement in the British context, introduced in the first chapter, called the English Defence League (EDL). The history, composition and rhetoric of the EDL arguably provide a fascinating and highly indicative example of reactionary identity politics, and a further confirmation, I would argue, of Tajfel's minimal group paradigm.

4.2   IDENTITY POLITICS

A notion of identity politics is something that emerged towards the end of the twentieth century in academic and political discourse, and was spearheaded by an examination of the physically and mentally disabled community by Anspach in the late 1970s (Anspach 1979). Anspach observed a process in which a group had elevated an awareness of factors uniting a particular community in their experience of discrimination and disadvantage, for the strategic political purposes of trying to gain more favourable access to recognition and resource. This became symptomatic of a number of "civil rights" movements and narratives emerging around this time, accumulating around a very diverse and complex range of identity vectors, whether relating to disability, sexuality, gender, ethnicity or religion.

As we have already seen in the context of identity theories, structuralist critics have often dismissed identity politics of this nature as a dangerous distraction from and splintering of the core socio-economic struggle in global society. For many, identity rights movements are more appropriately symbolic and cultural than mainstream political. Some of the structural problems with identity politics are that, by their very nature, they tend to break constituencies down into smaller sub-units within society that have to compete with others for resources. Many attempts at uniting civil rights movements into umbrella expressions of emancipatory politics have been attempted, especially on the political left, such as the "black" politics of the UK, but these attempts have often collapsed under their internal inconsistencies and incoherence.

In scholarly analysis, a focus on gender and sexuality-based identity formulations has seen an attempt to corral ideas under an umbrella of a broad-based rights movement loosely called "queer politics", which builds on Mead and Butler's notions of the essentially constructed and circumstantialist nature of gender identity and the manner in which this construction can be used to oppress certain sections of society. But as Gamson (1995) describes, the "queer dilemma" is an in-built tendency to deconstruct oneself and to proclaim what one is *not*, (the homo/hetero binary, for example) and this can militate against an expansionist and inclusionary politics in its very essence. Kitschelt notes that parties and alliances which coordinate around "single, isolated issues" are generally "doomed to failure", since they cannot mobilize the population beyond this one issue and offer a holistic political alternative (Kitschelt 2004:20). Similarly, in terms of the rhetoric and ideas that define such movements, Solomos noted "a strange convergence in the language of

the racist right and of the black or ethnic nationalists" (Solomos 1998:52), since both use exclusivist intersubjective identity relations as their defining mantra. This is important in the context of cumulative extremism, whereby antagonistic intersubjective movements feed off each other in a symbiotic relationship.

Many of these newer political movements have been examined within the context of postmaterialist theory, which attempts to understand political developments in the post-industrial, globalizing context. The changes, which have accelerated in the post-war period in Western Europe, are characterized by "an ethic of stressing individual self-realization and active political participation" (Veugelers 2000:20). The resultant politics could be said to be essentially positive in outlook in some cases, such as in the case of Green parties, for example, or more antagonistic in other cases, such as Far Right parties. But all are characterized by a focusing-down on smaller constituencies or political issues than on the wider structural questions.

4.3   REACTIVE AND IDENTITY POLITICS IN THE POSTMATERIALIST ERA

In many parts of the world, there has also been a political willingness to challenge established core parties with long histories who have increasingly been seen as the gate-keepers of a corrupt and failed establishment. The Arab Spring is perhaps the most striking example of an attempt to throw-off established regimes, albeit with a degree of complexity of its own and a general failure thus far in most cases to deliver clear and viable new alternatives. In parts of the developing world, attempts have been made to challenge both entrenched elites and regional, identity-based movements, such as the *Aam Admi* Party (Common Man Party) in India or Imran Khan's *Pakistan Tehrik-I Insaaf* (Pakistan Movement for Justice) in neighbouring Pakistan. It could be said that both movements have so far failed to overturn either the stranglehold on politics of established elites, or the regional centrifugalism of South Asian politics (both parties have found most support within particular regional communities). Both have also failed to deliver a clear and coherent politics, but it may be that the struggle to change the political status quo will be a very long road (Richards and Miraj 2015).

In Europe, the changes have seen established political parties increasingly challenged by a range of alternatives. In some cases, these are issue-specific

parties such as the Greens, or regional autonomy movements such as the Scottish National Party (SNP) in the UK. In southern Europe in particular, which has been hardest-hit by the economic crisis of 2008 and subsequent problems in the Eurozone economy, a number of broad-based *indignados* movements have delivered new political parties of a size sufficient to challenge the political status quo, such as *Podemos* and *Ciudadanos* in Spain; *Movimento Cinque Stelle* (M5S) in Italy; and *Syriza* in Greece. In general terms, despite the political upheaval that such parties have been causing in their respective countries, they are comparable to one another only in a general opposition to economic austerity measures and to corruption in the established political order, coupled with a degree of political incoherence on other matters.

At the same time in Europe, however, a number of "freedom parties" and movements have emerged in recent years which have firmly based themselves on a xenophobic and identity-based politics, protesting against a perceived attack on the supremacy of the majority community. Again, many of these have risen to complicate the political status quo in countries such as Sweden, Denmark, France, the Netherlands and Switzerland. In the UK, the UK Independence Party (UKIP) is the closest example, which has stressed the importance of British identity and values, albeit primarily focused on supposedly winning back "sovereignty" from the EU.

Many of these political parties have managed to win-over swathes of the electorate through a fairly mildly right-of-centre rhetoric that plays on fears of immigration and cultural change for the majority culture. By coupling such factors with the supposed mismanagement of the EU, UKIP managed to play a pivotal role in spearheading the "leave" vote in the UK's referendum on EU membership in June 2016, to a degree which belied its previous showing in major political polls. (UKIP won just one parliamentary seat in the 2015 general elections.)

In other cases, parties and movements have expressed a more avowedly out-group oriented xenophobic message against "immigrants" and minority identities, such as the growing *Alternatif für Deutschland* (AfD) party in Germany, or the EDL in Britain. (It is important to note that some of these, such as the AfD, are organized political parties, while others, such as the EDL, are community-based pressure groups hoping to have an influence on the policies of other parties.)

There seems little doubt that the political fortunes of such groups and movements have risen in the post-Cold War period in Europe, suggesting

a link with postmaterialist theories of politics. Interestingly, this appears to be a development that spans the disappearing divide between West and former Communist Bloc countries to the East, whereby the electoral successes of movements such as *Jobbik* in Hungary have echoed the progress of the *Front National* in France or the Party of Freedom (PVV) in the Netherlands. Within this process, the canvas of movements and organizations is a multi-faceted and complex one. Groups on the Far Right range from small, pressure-group organizations or "groupuscules", to fully fledged and organized political parties. Some of the smaller groups are interested in putting forward a political ideology, albeit usually around a fairly focused and niche set of issues, while others are only loosely interested in ideological issues beyond simplistic headline messages, and accrete around certain activities and pursuits, such as white-power music, football, motor-biking and other "gangs".

One of the most normative theories for the rise of such movements in the postmaterialist era is a socio-economic one, whereby the fortunes of these movements are linked to deep structural changes in the economy and society. Kitschelt suggested that economic and structural evolution in post-industrial democracies such as those in Europe have delivered fundamental transformations in the political landscape (Kitschelt 2004). Most notable, he suggests, is a postmodern development away from traditional left and right, into a more complex arena of issues, perhaps better typified as being either libertarian or authoritarian, or sometimes a confusing mixture of the two. In this way, the term "Far Right" is not necessarily the descriptor to use as it suggests a historical continuity with fascist movements of the past. Other suggested terminology includes "Radical Right", as Swank and Betz suggest (Swank and Betz 2003:216), or simply "populist" (Zaslove 2008:319), since the latter captures the complicated notion that some of the political issues of contention – such as opposition to globalization for example – are contested both on the political right and on the left, to varying degrees.

The Freedom Party in Austria (*Freiheitliche Partei Oesterreichs*: FPÖ) was one of the first in Europe in the post-Cold War era to signal the changes, when it won 27 percent of the vote in the Austrian parliamentary elections in 1999 and became a governing coalition partner with the People's Party. Slightly later in France, the leader of the *Front National*, Jean-Marie Le Pen, achieved a place in the second round of the 2002 French presidential elections. In the Netherlands, the Party for Freedom (*Partij voor de Vrijheid*: PVV), headed by Geert Wilders, rose to a position

where it was able to win just over 15 percent of the vote in the 2010 parliamentary elections, again forming part of a new coalition government as the third largest party. The PVV is particularly interesting in the context of the EDL, to whom we will turn below, as it has made Islam a particular target of its policies.

In Hungary, "*Jobbik*" (*Jobbik Magyarországért Mozgalom:* Movement for a Better Hungary) achieved nearly 17 percent of the vote in the 2010 parliamentary elections, gaining 47 seats, just short of the 59 won by the ruling Socialists. In the 2014 parliamentary elections, it improved on this position becoming the third largest party in the national assembly. The populist Sweden Democrats achieved 6 percent of the vote in the Swedish parliamentary elections of 2010, winning a place in negotiations around the formation of a coalition government. By the 2014 national elections, its success had grown to an extent that it took 49 seats in the national *Riksdag.* In Switzerland, the increasingly conservative Swiss People's Party (SVP), which was pivotal in the decision to ban the building of new minarets in Switzerland in 2009, won nearly a third of the vote and 65 parliamentary seats in the 2015 federal elections. Similarly, in Denmark, the populist Danish People's Party (DPP) won 21 percent of the vote in the 2014 general elections, becoming the second largest party in parliament for the first time.

How do these developments compare with politics in Britain? Firstly, in terms of electoral politics, the UK has not yet seen the sorts of successes scored by radical right and populist parties in other parts of Europe, as described above. If UKIP can be compared to other "freedom parties" in continental Europe (and it is arguable that it can in respect of some policy-areas), despite a considerably increased share of the vote in the 2015 general parliamentary elections to just over 12 percent, this only translated into one parliamentary seat and is still some way off the levels of 20 percent and above achieved by freedom parties in Sweden, Denmark, the Netherlands, Switzerland and Hungary in recent years, to name but a few. Of course, this may be as much to do with the electoral system in the UK as with any other factors.

Since the days of Sir Oswald Mosley's black-shirted British Union of Fascists in the 1930s (which modelled itself on Benito Mussolini's movement in Italy and claimed to have 50,000 members at its height (Olechnowicz 2004:640)), Far Right politics remained firmly in the background in post-war Britain until the emergence of the National Front (NF) in 1967. The NF was a white supremacist party, uniting

various extreme patriotic and racist elements on the political right. The party grew in popularity during the 1970s among white working class voters on the heels of enhanced post-war immigration from parts of the former British colonial empire, to a point where the party was able to post significant shares of the vote in elections in some urban districts in London and the West Midlands, although it never quite managed to win a parliamentary or council seat. At the same time, the party's main activity was to stage "demonstrations" in various British towns, many of which descended into running street battles with supporters of the Anti Nazi League. In this way, the NF combined electoral aspirations with street violence and demonstration, while the contemporary EDL has mostly focused on the latter so far.

The late 1970s saw the NF sink into obscurity, probably because the mainstream Conservative party managed to annex concern about immigration into mainstream political dialogue. The British National Party (BNP) emerged from the remnants of the NF in 1982, and in 1993, it won its first seat in a council by-election in East London. (It subsequently lost it a year later). In 1999, Nick Griffin emerged as the new leader, and set about manoeuvring the BNP into a position where it could be taken seriously by larger parts of the electorate. By the early part of the twenty first century, the BNP was starting to make electoral breakthroughs, mainly in local council elections. In 2006 it reached a peak of 33 council seats. Further electoral success came in 2008 and 2009, when the party won a seat in the London Assembly and two in the European Parliament respectively.

The 2010 parliamentary elections were a big test for the party, to see if it could continue its rise and capitalize on a deep sense of public disillusionment with mainstream parties following expenses scandals in parliament and a general fatigue with mainstream politics. In the event, the result was a mixed picture. The BNP continued to increase its share of the vote nationally, rising to a record 1.9 percent (up from 0.7 percent in the 2005 elections), but still failing to win its first parliamentary seat. 2010 has since transpired to be the electoral zenith of the party, however, as, by the time of the next general election in 2015, it fielded only eight candidates nationally and has subsequently sunk largely into obscurity. The reasons for this are probably a combination of internal scandals and controversies in the party, and the rise of alternative movements, notably the UK Independence Party (UKIP).

Prior to this time, in the year 2000, the British Freedom Party (BFP) broke away from the BNP on the grounds of wanting to move more

towards a political mainstream that de-emphasized the race issue. The anti-establishment rhetoric of the BFP is very similar to other Far Right movements, claiming that the problems of "political correctness, multi-culturalism and mass immigration" have been "either encouraged by mainstream politicians, or completely ignored by them" (BFP 2011). The party models itself on other freedom parties across Europe, and notably that of Geert Wilders's PVV in The Netherlands. Unlike the PVV, however, the BFP has not yet gained any political traction and failed to contest any seats at the last three parliamentary elections. It is unclear whether it currently operates much more than a website. That aside, the BFP's attempts to move away from the more traditional racist roots of the BNP into a general protest party echoed the sentiments of the EDL, although the latter has adopted a policy of mass action on the streets rather than formal political participation.

4.4 STRUCTURAL FACTORS

As Blumer noted in his work on prejudice (Blumer 1958), a sense of racially-articulated grievance between communities is not just about perceived differences between them, but about a more complex notion of the relative positions and statuses of different groups in the community. The normative thinking is that, in the context of immigration, "indigenous" groups in a locality may feel their position threatened as others move in and impact on contested resources such as employment and housing. With globalization, the situation is arguably aggravated by a greater mobility of labour across borders, and a perceived decline in the ability of the state to control such flows of people. Betz notes the importance of a perceived link in much of the academic literature concerning the rise of the Far Right with "global and structural change" (Betz 1999:301). He further postulates that developments such as the information and communications revolution "tend to leave a significant number of people behind", creating a "new unskilled and under-educated underclass". These socio-economically marginalized sections of the population feel anxiety over their lack of relevant skills for the new information age, which "makes them particularly vulnerable to the discourse of resentment characteristic of the radical right" (Betz 1999:302). Empirical research suggests that the majority of attendees at EDL rallies are either unemployed, or engaged in low-skill manual occupations, which are the very target groups likely to feel the

greatest anxiety over the mismatch of their skills and prospects with the demands of the new information economy (Richards 2013).

It is clear that the post-industrial and post-Soviet societies of modern Europe, where traditional manufacturing industries have increasingly been supplanted by services and the information economy, have seen huge structural transformations in their socio-economic profiles and processes. Many have typified the result of this globalizing process as one that delivers winners and losers (Kriesi and Lachat 2004). Mény and Surel (2001) argue that globalization and declining levels of trust in the authorities are linked, and that this erosion of trust is manifested in the perceived inability of the government to be able to deal effectively with the challenges of globalization, such as a loss of economic sovereignty and the increase in both legitimate and illegal immigration. Zaslove further notes that populist Far Right parties will tend to claim to represent the honest, hard-working citizen, who have become "victims of political elites and special interest groups" (Zaslove 2008:326). In Britain, the BNP developed a narrative of "conspiracy" by the Labour administration in the late 1990s to conceal the rapidly rising levels of immigration to the country, and this narrative has persisted in populist statements subsequently.

In a structuralist reading of the situation, this would all seem to make sense. Economic marginalization of particular sections of the working class community caused by the harsh winds of structural economic transformation away from the manufacturing industries, compounded by a perceived failure of the national government to control the borders of the Westphalian state through capitalist globalization, may cause some to feel particularly aggrieved and to fall prey to those who aim to mobilize an identity politics. In terms of social movement and social identity theories, the allure of Far Right movements has often been linked in scholarly analysis to social dominance theory and particularly to authoritarian psychodynamic models (see for example Altmeyer 1981). A general sense that all societies are essentially hierarchical (as social dominance theory suggests) coupled with a notion that, particularly in northern and eastern parts of Europe, an essentially Protestant ethic of individualism, meritocracy (Monroe et al. 2000:432), and authoritarianism, could combine to deliver a picture of sometimes bitter intergroup contestation for economic resources and political power.

Realistic group conflict theory accords with such a view of society, whereby identity politics could be seen as the vehicle by which local and regional contestations for power and resource are played out: importantly,

in this reading, the identity labels attached to the various groups may not be primordial or essentialist, but merely pragmatic and manufactured to fit the circumstances. Thus, in Pakistan in the 1970s, a new wave of national politics under the presidency of Zulfikar Ali Bhutto, which emphasized the strength and importance of regional identities within the Pakistani national family, led a significant constituency of individuals in the urban areas of Sindh province who did not subscribe to a regional identity by virtue of having migrated to Pakistan from outside of its borders after the Partition, to consider a newly manufactured identity mobilization characterized as the *Mohajirs* (Muslim migrants). In this way, a constituency that had previously largely voted for a pan-community Islamic party, the *Jamaat-I Islami*, turned its support to the new "ethnic" party of the MQM in order to better contest for local power and resource within an ethnicized national politics. In terms of power, the results have been startling in that the MQM quickly rose to become the dominant force in Karachi's local politics and civic administrations, and has also evolved into a sort of mafia organization in some districts, operating locally as a secondary, criminal state (Richards 2007).

This rather specific example is a strong one of how identity politics were very consciously mobilized and used to better compete for local power and resource. There are two key points here. Firstly, the aspect of the social representation of an identity narrative is arguably far more important than the objective phenomena on the ground (Moscovici 1988:214). The *Mohajirs* in Pakistan did not suddenly appear in 1970s Pakistan through a sort of biological transformation, but were merely a group of people who decided to vote for a new political party to better serve their interests, even if the MQM attempted to wrap around the community a cloak of identity expression such as shared language, cultural practices and so on. Similarly, in post-communist Yugoslavia in the 1990s, the identities of Serb, Croat and Bosnian Muslim were "intersubjectively constructed" as opposing forces in a regional struggle for new allocations of political and economic power following the collapse of the Yugoslavian state (Monroe et al. 2000:439). In other cases, religious transformations in politics, such as the rise of the Taliban in Afghanistan or ISIS in Iraq and Syria, for example, could also be explained as rational-choice political decisions by citizens (or at least some of them) to better safeguard their interests within an otherwise problematic and highly conflictual environment (Kreide 1999). This generally accords with a more relativist conception of identity, which, as we saw in chapter two, was described by Brubaker as a "dynamic

and processual" reading of ethnic and other identities (Brubaker 2009:29). It also strongly supports theories of performativity, which suggest that identity is little more than a performative act for symbolic purposes related to a specific set of circumstances in a specific place and time. Again, this casts further doubt over conceptions of "ethnic conflict" in society, at least in terms of understanding the underlying motivations of such conflict.

The second key point is that such a descent of politics into a more antagonistic intersubjective condition may be exacerbated by periods of economic and social strife. This accords with a structural symbolic inter-actionalist reading of identity, in which structural societal factors exert a key influence in the development and articulation of identity. It also helps to explain how genocides and episodes of severe sectarian violence may happen, when – as countless psychological experiments over the years have suggested – individual human beings are not generally murderous in nature. As Monroe et al. (2000:438) observed:

> ..in times of uncertainty (common to the documented cases of racism and genocide such as the Holocaust), social representations of self and other are intersubjectively constructed in order to produce shared understanding.

Thus, it is the case that Hitler did not invent from thin air in the 1930s a notion that Jews were responsible for the structural ills being suffered by the German economy, but was able to play on a widespread narrative already present in inter-war European society that Jews were generally wealthy and in some way linked to an international conspiracy of accumu-lating financial power and resource. Hitler's political mobilization of Aryan identity allowed Jewish people to be scapegoated and stereotypically denigrated as the other in German society, and this laid the groundwork for widespread participation in the genocidal activities that followed.

In a more contemporary context, it is worth noting that there are some critiques of the Kitscheltian, essentially structuralist reading of the rise of Far Right sentiment in Europe, in which a primal relationship is implied with the effects of post-industrial capitalism; postmaterialist politics in which the moderate right and left appear to converge; and patronage-based political economies. In a wide-ranging qualitative empirical analysis of electoral data from ten European countries, Veugelers and Magnan found mixed degrees of relationship between these factors and the rise of support for Far Right or Radical Right parties, with particularly anomalous

indicators in Austria, Belgium and France, where such parties had performed much better than might be expected (Veugelers and Magnan 2005). Not surprisingly, this clearly implies that particular local conditions, including local histories and political experiences, should not be overlooked in favour of wide-ranging structural explanations for the rise and eventual fortune of Far Right identity politics.

4.5   MICRO-LEVEL AND PSYCHOLOGICAL PERSPECTIVES

As discussed, most of the work on the rise of Far Right identity politics in the contemporary era has tended to be from a top-down, macro-societal perspective rather than that focusing on the particular psychological factors present in individual subscribers to a Far Right group, movement or ideology. This is partly because – as is the case with research in terrorism studies to a certain extent – direct empirical work with members of sometimes violent and usually closed and suspicious movements on the Far Right is not easy to conduct. One of the potential risks with the top-down and structuralist perspectives is that, as Veugelers and Magnan (2005) discovered, establishing generalities about developments in identity politics across contexts can sometimes prove difficult and imprecise. From a policy perspective, as discussed earlier, it can also mean that bureaucratic impulses towards standardized profiles, templates and processes that help to deliver security policy can be problematic if not actually counter-productive in some cases.

Kathleen Blee presents empirical, qualitative work on the personal identity processes at play in Far Right environments. Her methodological approaches include the collection of narratives or "stories" from self-proclaimed members of Far Right movements, which help to provide for the narrators a "retrospective construction of self" and "accord intent, calculation, and meaning to radical changes in identity" (Blee 2002:45). Similarly, a story-telling approach adopted by Donnan and Simpson in analysing recollections of sectarian violence by South Armagh Protestants in Northern Ireland suggested a sense-making and almost redemptive effect in the recounting, in that "telling the truth" (as it was perceived to be) both helped to make sense of historical events on a personal level and to affirm a collective identity in which truth-telling and shared victimhood were considered to be critical factors for the community (Donnan and Simpson 2007).

Blee's findings, which focused on women who had joined Far Right movements in the US, found a perhaps perplexing degree of variation and happenstance in the stories of how individuals became drawn into such movements (Blee 2002). Stated reasons for joining in the selected narratives collected seemed to have little to do with a commitment to a particular racist ideology, and more to do with "social location", in that individuals almost drifted into the movements depending on the social circles in which they found themselves. Blee did suggest that there was a gender difference, in that men in Far Right movements spoke more about ideology than the women (Blee 2002:52), but in general terms, there seemed to be no single narrative or template for how and why any particular individual joined. There was often a sense in many of the accounts of joining an organization providing a sense of belonging and identity, that had previously been missing or problematic (Blee 2002:34). Narratives were important in a number of ways, including an apparent tendency for individuals to construct a retrospective narrative around their lives in which the joining of an extreme movement "made sense" of events much earlier in life (Blee 2002:45). This is where individual and organizational narratives come together: the organization will provide a story to explain troublesome phenomena in society, such as socio-economic deprivation, for example; and the individual may choose to interpret otherwise chaotic or inexplicable turns of events in their own lives in the context of the offered narrative. Suddenly, everything makes sense.

This links with various important psychodynamics aspects of identity theory. One is the theory that emerged in the 1970s of attribution theory, or, more pertinently, the "fundamental attribution error" (Tetlock 1985:227). This links to Tversky and Kahneman's work on the "anchoring" heuristic or effect (Kahneman 2011:119). The theory is that most individuals are "cognitive misers" in that they will tend to stick to theories about the world around them and how people might act in relation to acquired narratives, even when information comes in that suggests otherwise. This is partly related to a notion in cognitive neuroscience about "system one/system two" thinking, in which the former relates to quick, instinctive reactions and judgements based largely on prior experience and acquired knowledge, rather than system two's slower, more deliberative and objective thinking. Most humans deploy system one thinking whenever they can for reasons of speed and efficiency. This is not necessarily a problem and is indeed a virtue in some fast-moving situations, but it can mean that an individual's understanding of the world around them can be

manipulated by exploiting cognitive flaws such as anchoring biases and the effect of "priming" information. It also seems to indicate that once narratives about society are formed, they become laid down as system-one schemata in people's minds and are surprisingly resilient and resistant to change, even when good evidence appears to challenge the theory.

In societal terms, this means that simplistic narratives and explanations about the world can be readily consumed by many and translated into conspiracy theories, or negative intersubjective scapegoating of out-group communities to explain perceived societal problems. In 1930s Germany, Hitler managed to build on a cognitive schemata in which Jews were seen as the primary cause of the country's ills, to such a degree that they became a dehumanized other; a "life unworthy of life" (Glass 1999). Similarly extreme cases of the bestial denigration and rejection of out-group others were seen in Rwanda, or Gaddafi's Libya, in which out-groups and political opponents were described as "cockroaches", from whom the country had to be "cleansed" (Higiro 2007:85; BBC 2011).

Another important factor is the apparent nature in which human memory and cognitive development appear to include a powerful urge to make sense of the world and attribute causality to events. Kahneman recalls the controversial suggestion by the psychologist Paul Bloom in 2005 that we have an innate ability (or tendency) to see the "world of objects as essentially separate from the world of minds", and this could explain the "near universality of religious beliefs" (Kahneman 2011:77). This is not necessarily the place to delve too deeply into Cartesian philosophy, but it does indicate that a natural desire to find meaning and explanation in difficult lives could lead those interested in promoting an identity politics an opportunity to mobilize individuals around strong in-group and out-group narratives that appear to provide some sort of explanation for otherwise unfathomable situations.

In discussions of analysis and analytical performance, scholars have highlighted a cognitive risk in over-attributing causality and significance to otherwise potentially random sequences of events. This is where attribution biases and fallacies come together with a natural tendency to find narrative meaning, and the results can be problematic. In the realm of intelligence analysis, for example, Hendrickson noted a natural inclination to over-attribute determinacy to an individual's actions, and relevance of information being received to a particular analytical judgement, when the reality is that human beings and indeed natural processes are often fundamentally indeterministic (Hendrickson 2008:681-2). Thus, for example,

the actions of a person under surveillance for suspected involvement in terrorism could be wrongly interpreted as being part of a terrorist plot, when the reality could be much simpler and more mundane. In situations where a group-think narrative may be a risk (such as security agencies who have been taught to think about concepts such as radicalization in a particular way, as discussed earlier) there could be policy pitfalls that affect communities at large. Conversely, in members of a community who are consuming messages of identity politics, there might often be a risk of over-attributing conscious agency and determinacy to the actions of a denigrated and othered out-group, when the reality might be more random. As Blee noted in the narratives of women who had joined Far Right movements, racist narratives had often been taken as a mechanism for providing meaning to what had previously been considered to be chaotic and disconnected events (Blee 2002:45).

4.6   CASE STUDY: THE ENGLISH DEFENCE LEAGUE (EDL)

Blee noted in the subjects of her study a lack of consistency in why individuals had chosen to go down a path of Far Right and racist identity expression. For some, ideology was a factor, but for many, socialization was a key driver in the sense of being brought into such movements by establishing links and friendships with specific individuals, often in an entirely circumstantial way. In an empirical study of the EDL in Britain during 2010, Richards and Edwards also noted a variation in how and why individuals had found their way into attendance at EDL rallies (Richards 2013). A model was developed whereby attendees seemed to fall into one of three categories. First were socio-economically marginalized individuals, mostly although not exclusively young men, who felt aggrieved about their status and prospects. Second were football supporters who felt attracted to the prospect of physical violence at the events; and third were ideologues, who had thought about and shared the EDL's rhetoric concerning "radical Islam", or were traditional Far Right extremists and activists. (Of course, there may be overlaps in the motivations of particular individuals.)

The first of these categories represents mostly young people who profess to feel a genuine anxiety about societal changes perceived to be detrimental to their position in the local community, and particularly about such issues as employment, access to social housing and the impact of immigration. This particular study found that the majority of attendees

sampled were either unemployed, or engaged in low-skill manual occupations: perhaps the very target groups likely to feel the greatest anxiety over the mismatch of their skills and prospects with the demands of the new globalized information economy.

The second group is the "Casuals" element, which is represented by groups of football supporters and hooligan groups, whether or not explicitly following a loose pan-UK supporters' group called Casuals United. (The Casuals can be identified by their wearing of casual clothes, with the Burberry label traditionally being preferred, as a sort of informal uniform that supplants the wearing of replica football shirts and thus makes the wearer less easy to spot and identify by the police as a football supporter.) This is a critical element of EDL demonstrations both in nature and in size, often relating to the geographical location of each event and its proximity to major football clubs. The presence of this component at the demonstrations is clear in the banners, slogans, chants and songs, some of which refer specifically to certain football clubs, or to the England national football team. In terms of motivations for attendees from this section of EDL clientele, some will feel a genuine rapport with the central grievance of demonstrating against "radical Islam", while some are clearly mostly interested in expressing machismo physicality and becoming involved in violence.

The third group overlaps the other two, in that it relates to the people who have thought about and who identify with the central message of the EDL about the perceived encroachment of radical Islam into British life, and the deleterious effects it supposedly will have. When asked why she was present at a demonstration in Dudley, one young woman said "it's because I don't want my daughters to grow up having to wear the burqa".[1] In this statement we can see that the motivation for attending for this particular individual appears to relate to a considered view of the way in which Islam may change British society in the future. We can also see a certain mythology building around specific emblematic issues, such as burqa-wearing, which are perceived to be both repressive and generally deleterious, and growing substantially to become the norm over a generation. As discussed earlier, the degree to which the wearing of burqas and niqabs is actually growing among the Muslim population in Britain is open to debate, but at any rate, understandings of what such sartorial emblems mean for identity and citizenship are clearly complicated on all sides.

Alongside the ideologues expressing a concern about Islam and its place in British life, EDL demonstrations also attract orthodox Far Right

extremists and racists, judging by the occasional incidence of racist abuse being hurled at police or other bystanders, racist songs and slogans, and the occasional Nazi hand salute. In observation of the Dudley demonstration in July 2010, a rampaging EDL mob attacked a local Hindu temple, among other targets (Stourbridge News 2010). This clearly reflects a more generally racist strand among the demonstration attendees, although it could be the case that the attackers had a weak understanding of the differences between religious minorities and their places of worship.

There are a number of interesting points to note in these observations. Firstly, Blee's assertion that subscribers to Far Right identity politics find their way into this expression of identity for many and varied reasons, seems to be borne out. The picture appears too complicated to allow for simplistic and unitary models of Far Right extremism. Secondly, for some of the supporters of the movement, a performative factor of masculinity and violence seems to be as important as any deep ideology. The perhaps rather curious manner in which the movement emerged from a football supporters' group in 2009 reflects, in part, some very specific developments in civil order in Britain in the modern era. In the 1970s and 1980s, violence at football matches between supporters of opposing teams became a considerable problem, and was judged to have been exacerbated by terraced stadia in which there were no rows of seats or barriers to easily separate rival factions. (Such building design was also found to be a fundamental health and safety issue, underlined in shocking terms by the Hillsborough stadium disaster of April 1989 in which 96 people were crushed to death.) Subsequent inquiries determined that all major stadia should become all-seating. This, coupled with improved policing of civil disorder, has materially reduced the opportunities for major violence in and around football matches in the UK.

It may be, therefore, that the emergence of a group which masses together angry young men on the street could have offered new opportunities for expressing violent masculinity in intersubjective terms, whereby the out-group of a rival football team's supporters as a subject of hatred could be replaced with religious or ethnic minorities, or rival anti-fascist demonstrators. In their study of EDL supporters, Treadwell and Garland noted the scholarly strand of work on "masculinity-accomplishing aspects of targeted abuse" in the hate-crime literature, arguing for a greater "psychosocial" approach. This combines normative concentration on a structural explanation for such violence (focusing on issues such as socio-economic marginalization) with micro-level, psychological considerations, which might help

to explain why some people use violence as a response to socio-economic grievances while many others do not (Treadwell and Garland 2011:623-3). At the same time, specific local histories and circumstances cannot be ignored in the context of individual case studies of identity movements. The notion that some young men find pleasure in having a fight with someone else may seem mundane as an explanation for involvement in a Far Right movement, but it cannot be discounted as an important factor in many cases. This, in a sense, is perhaps performativity in its rawest sense, and might also be an antidote to over-attributing deep ideological agency to every EDL supporter.

In a model that partially mirrors the three categories of EDL supporters identified above by Richards (2013), Linden and Klandermans developed a similar typology of Far Right supporters in the Netherlands in the late 1990s (Linden and Klandermans 2007). In their analysis, the subjects were categorized as "revolutionaries, wanderers, converts and compliants", in terms of their relationship with the core ideals of the movements to which they subscribed. This typology picked up on earlier work by Klandermans which identified three fundamental motives for participating in social movements more generally, namely instrumentality (a desire to change something in society or politics); identity (a desire to engage with others of a similar view or belong to a community); and ideology (a desire to express support for a particular political, cultural or religious point of view; Klandermans 2004). The degree of consistency across these studies adds weight to the notion that there is no simple uniform model for how individuals may become drawn into violent Far Right expressions of identity, although we may be able to describe the range of factors.

4.7 THE EDL: ORGANIZATION AND RHETORIC

Having discussed a little about the potential psychosocial motivations for those who join EDL events and activities, it is worth taking a slightly deeper look at the organization itself and its professed rhetoric and ideology by way of a case study. In many ways, the EDL seeks to be a postmodern, cross-cutting movement that distances itself from traditional notions of left and right in favour of focus on more specific thematic issues; but which, on examination, largely fails to do so and falls into the in-built antagonisms and limitations of Far Right politics. In some ways, this may explain why it has remained a relatively small movement in terms of absolute membership and following. In a rally in

2010 in Bolton, approximately a year after its launch, the EDL attracted an estimated 2000 followers. In 2016, however, a rally in the Midlands town of Coventry attracted just 200 followers, although the policing of it and an angry counter-demonstration still purportedly "brought the city centre to a standstill" (Gilbert 2016). It is also the case that the EDL has not yet moved into electoral politics, remaining as a pressure-group, although there have been occasional moves towards linking up with the hitherto largely defunct British Freedom Party (Townsend 2012).

In 2009, Jeff Marsh, a former member of the football supporters' group following Cardiff City in South Wales, proclaimed the formation of Casuals United. The spark, reputedly, was reaction to a demonstration in Luton by a group of young Muslims claiming affiliation with *Al Muhajiroun* (the group examined by Wiktoriwicz, discussed in chapter three, which formed the basis of his four-stage model of radicalization). The demonstration disrupted a homecoming parade of British soldiers returning from Iraq, lambasting them for being, among other things. "butchers of Baghdad". In an interview with *Wales on Sunday*, Marsh explained that the coalition of football hooligan groups represented by Casuals United was to capitalize on "a ready-made army..against Muslim fundamentalists". He went on to explain:

> We are protesting against the preachers of hate who are actively encouraging young Muslims in this country to take part in a jihad against Britain (Lewis 2009).

This is the point at which the EDL also emerged on the scene, initially in response to the same event in Luton. The connection between the EDL and Casuals is not clear, and the latter is sometimes careful to point out that the two are separate organizations, but it is clear that many people are affiliated with both and that there is generally a close relationship between them. It is also extremely interesting that Marsh saw a strand of xenophobic ideology within the constituency of young men who like to have a fight at football matches: a "ready-made army".

In August 2009, the EDL held its first major demonstration in the Midlands city of Birmingham. Over the ensuing year, 13 further demonstrations were held in a range of cities and towns across England, from Newcastle-upon-Tyne in the north to Aylesbury in the south. Attendance at such events in the first years varied from a few hundred to upwards of

2000 in Bolton, Dudley and Newcastle.[2] As discussed, there is some evidence that attendance at rallies has declined again in subsequent years.

The ideology of the EDL is somewhat paradoxical. Fundamentally, it is at pains to point out in its official statements that its out-group adversary is very specifically "militant Islam", and not Muslims or Islam at large. In unwitting postmaterialist terms, it will stress that it is not a standard Far Right racist group directing itself at foreigners and immigrants generally, and thus seeks to put some distance between itself and earlier British Far Right groups and parties such as the BNP and NF, which demonstrably failed to moderate their message sufficiently to capture significant interest from the electorate. Mechanisms for making this distinction include highlighting the fact that the EDL claims to welcome supporters from all races and colours, as long as they share in the message of opposing militant Islam. (At its inception, the EDL's own website announced, in large letters: "Black and white unite: all races and religions are welcome in the EDL" (EDL 2010).) In the manner of a supposedly structured organization, there are various "divisions" in the EDL, including a "Jewish division", launched in 2010 to confront the stereotypical anti-semitic accusation levelled at many European Far-Right groups. The EDL also claims to have a lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender division, which quite deliberately plays into a purported "otherness" of Islamic radicals, who are portrayed as being generally homophobic (Taylor 2010). The emblem of the EDL, usually rendered as a Crusader-style Cross of St George on a shield, is often displayed against a two-tone white and black background to stress the importance of "black and white in harmony". As the EDL website in its first year explained:

> Some organizations and media reports have branded the EDL as "racist," "fascist," "far-right," or even "Zionist." All of these accusations are flat out untrue. We take an actively anti-racist and anti-fascist stance. In addition, the EDL is non-political, taking no position on right-wing vs left-wing. We welcome members from all over the political spectrum, and with varying views on foreign policy, united against Islamic extremism and its influence on British life. Everyone from those whose ancestral roots are in pre-Roman Britain to immigrants just arrived yesterday will be welcomed into the EDL with open arms as long as they are willing to stand up with us for English values and against Islamist hate. Too many English are afraid to stand up and say "Enough!" because of the fear of being branded "racist." We hope to change this (EDL 2010).

An observation of the flags flown at EDL demonstrations reveals that the forest of British Union Jacks is occasionally punctuated by those of the USA, several European countries including the Netherlands and Poland, and the Israeli flag (Richards 2013:186). The Star of David may have a particular appeal, both in visibly countering the supposedly anti-semitic challenge made against many European Far Right groups; and countering the generally pro-Palestinian stance of the mainstream political Left in the UK.

One of the organization's key leaders in its early years was a British-born Sikh, Guramit Singh, who became the movement's "head of community relations" (a paradoxical notion in itself). Singh has been implicated both in anti-Muslim and anti-Pakistani racism after appearing to be caught on film delivering broad-ranging racist diatribes at EDL rallies (Copsey 2010:22). Such incidents are interesting in that they show that intersubjective othering of identities can sometimes cut across other vectors of identity in complex ways: aspects of Singh's Sikh identity clearly suggest that an aggressive othering of both Muslims and Pakistanis is sufficiently salient in his identity to allow him to justify having a leading role in a group largely peopled by anti-immigrant racists. It also demonstrates the complexity of postmaterialist politics, to a certain degree, whereby identity factors can run in discordant tangents to traditional notions of left and right.

In other ways, however, the EDL very much echoes more traditional British movements of the Far Right. Much of its rhetoric is focused on the Unite Against Fascism (UAF) coalition that confronts the EDL both intellectually and physically on the streets where it can. This echoes the way in which the National Front used to expend much of its energy battling the Anti-Nazi League in the 1970s and 1980s, and with whom it undertook a major street battle in London in 1977 which became known as the "Battle of Lewisham" (echoing the "Battle of Cable Street" which had been pivotal in the public consciousness of Sir Oswald Mosley's British Union of Fascists in the 1930s). Such historic "battles" (which in reality are little more than quite serious incidents of civil disorder) have symbolic performative value in feeding into a "war" and "defence" narrative.

Just as importantly, the EDL also demonstrates similarities with many Far Right groups by frequently identifying the political establishment and the "authorities" as a key target for its concerns. In his analysis of the Far Right in Germany, Virchow (2007:157) noted a frequent focus in Far

Right narratives of a "distrust of the police and state authorities", who are perceived to be in the pockets of a Jewish conspiracy. Mény and Surel argue that globalization and declining levels of trust in the authorities are linked, and that this erosion of trust is manifested in the perceived inability of the government to be able to deal effectively with the challenges of globalization, such as a loss of economic sovereignty and the increase in both legitimate and illegal immigration (Mény and Surel 2001). Zaslove further notes that populist Far Right parties will tend to claim to represent the honest, hard-working citizen, who have become "victims of political elites and special interest groups" (Zaslove 2008:326).

In 2016, this general mistrust of political elites has fed into the debate about leaving the EU (the "Brexit" debate). The referendum vote on 23 June 2016 was close and came out somewhat surprisingly in favour of leaving the EU, following a successful mobilization of nationalist, libertarian economic, and anti-elite sentiment across the country. Subsequent prevarication and debate in political circles about how to reverse the decision has been seen by many, including the EDL, as yet another example of the corruption and duplicity of the political elite. In a statement accompanying the announcement of a rally in Nottingham on 6 August 2016, the EDL's website announced (EDL 2016a):

> **The people speak!** – The referendum was a once-in-a-generation opportunity for the British people to have their say anonymously and without fear of abuse or criticism in Britain's timid "thought police culture".
>
> The referendum vote was a vote for sovereignty, for democracy, for accountability, for British values and for a better, *British* future.
>
> **Let the people's vote be translated into action!** – The EDL supports democracy and so we urge our elected representatives to get their act together and follow through with the implementation of Brexit with the optimism, energy, patriotism and sense of purpose displayed in the "Leave" referendum campaign before the vote. [Emphasis in original.]

The warning to the ruling Conservative government, whose leader and Prime Minister, Theresa May, has included many pro-Brexit campaigners in her cabinet, is something of a challenge to the ruling elite not sell out and to allow themselves to be hijacked by the losers in the vote. As we saw in chapter one, some political leaders have interpreted the vote itself as an example of postmodern populism reacting against globalization and traditional politics (Reilly 2016).

In some ways, the message is apolitical, in that the EDL sees the centre-right Conservative party as no better than any other party populated by the traditional political elite, which echoes the sentiments of new southern European political movements such as the Five Star Movement (M5S) in Italy and *Podemos* in Spain. The traditional political establishment is seen as not to be trusted to be competent. Referring back to the supposed threat of radical Islam, the EDL explained on its launch that:

> If it were not for the inaction of the government in dealing properly with this form of Islamic fascism, there would be no need for groups such as The English Defence League, Welsh Defence League, Scottish Defence League and Ulster Defence League to counter this threat on the streets and on-line . . . . Our movement is purely set up to pressure whatever government we have in power to deal with this menace and undo all the damage caused by apathy and appeasement (EDL 2010).

On many issues, the organization promises to tap into sentiments and anxieties at the local level about allocation of resources and the impact on them of immigration, and about the effects that immigration and social change are having on local communities. On occasion, emotive symbols of traditional British (and Christian) culture are evoked in expressing anxiety about such social change. In February 2010, the EDL website claimed that "we will protest against any council or other local government organization that seeks to tamper with traditional English celebrations, from Christmas to St George's Day.." (EDL 2010). Again, stories of such incidents are enthusiastically picked up by the popular press on occasion (see for example Daily Mail 2008), stoking public anxiety that a traditional British (and Christian) way of life is being eroded and suppressed, and that the government is standing by and letting it happen. Thus, a key element of the EDL's rhetorical construction is the notion of "defence" of the core community and its culture, as enshrined in the very name of the EDL. Blumer, again, emphasized the significance of a notion of "defence" in race prejudice, observing that:

> Race prejudice is a defensive reaction to . . . challenging of the sense of group position. It consists of the disturbed feelings, usually of marked hostility, that are thereby aroused. As such, race prejudice is a protective device (Blumer 1958:326).

Meanwhile, as Monroe at al. noted, the principles of social identity theory include the notion that groups will approach competition for scarce resources by defining group norms; stereotyping other groups; and conducting "social comparison" between the in-group and out-group, by emphasizing the in-group's similarities and highlighting and denigrating differences in the out-group's norms (Monroe et al. 2000:433–4; Hogg and Abrams 1988). With not only radical Islam identified as the out-group, but Islamic culture more widely, the EDL makes extensive use of comparative symbolism in its rhetoric. The most obvious way in which this appears is how individual regional sections often describe themselves as "infidels", a terminology frequently seen on red-and-white St George Cross flags (both at EDL rallies and at football matches).

The other highly symbolic comparative vector is that of gender. As noted in research around the time of the EDL's inception (Richards 2013), the movement's approach to gender can be characterized under a typology of two roles for women in society, both of which seek to emphasize the supposed difference between women in majority British culture and those in Muslim communities. The first role is that of a sort of brutalized gender equality, in which women are free to behave as "one of the lads", equal to the male supporters in their capacity to drink substantial amounts of alcohol, shout aggressive and offensive slogans, and become involved in street violence. In so doing, some women will revel in conforming to the sorts of stereotypes of non-Muslim British women promoted by Muslim groups such as *Hizb-ut Tahrir*, who frequently lament the scourge of "binge-drinking women" in non-Muslim British culture (HUT 2010). (Interestingly, here again, we can see a sort of nexus between neo-conservative Western society and *Salafi* Islam.)

The second female role symbolically promoted by the EDL is that typified by the "EDL Angels" (essentially the women's division of the EDL). At one level, the Angels are a mechanism to reinforce the otherness of western women when placed against stereotypical views of *burqa*-clad Muslims. As a YouTube video about the EDL Angels proclaims, "EDL Angel's [sic] stand beside their men, not behind them" (EDL 2011). Such a reference to perceived female subservience in Islamic culture is a clear intersubjective promotion of stereotypical conceptions of identity. The video goes on to depict a range of images of EDL Angels, mostly comprising thinly-clad women with angel wings, which fluctuate between fine art and soft pornography. The overt sexuality of many of the images is in direct and deliberate contrast to the all-enveloping *burqa* and general

notion of *hijab* (meaning "covering"). English women, it is suggested, are entitled to wear as much or as little as they wish, unlike their subjugated counterparts in the Muslim community.

4.8   CONCLUSIONS

Although the EDL attempts to explain that it is not a traditional racist party and is only interested in one very specific issue – the supposed encroachment of radical Islam on British life – its rhetoric and the nature of most of its supporters suggest that it has acted as the vanguard of a generalized Islamophobic movement in which Muslims in general are othered as a dangerous outgroup to the white British majority. The "About us" link on the EDL's website at the time of writing notes that:

> Time has shown that the views of that minority on that day [the *Al Muhajiroun* demonstration against returning British soldiers in Luton in 2009] are increasingly widely shared by other Muslims. What's more, time has also shown that the antipathy displayed by those Luton extremists is reflected in other expressions of Islam-inspired intolerance up and down and across Britain.
>
> Examples include: denigration and oppression of women, organized sexual abuse of children, female genital mutilation, so-called honour killings, homophobia, racism, anti-Semitism, demanding separate schools, the preference for sharia law over English law, intolerance of non-Muslims, increasing demands that English society change to accommodate Muslim practices and preferences, and continued support for terrorist ideology and even terrorist atrocities (EDL 2016b).

The language here quickly slips from discussion of a specific and small constituency of extremists, to consideration of the wider community of Muslims who are stereotypically denigrated for their practice of a number of examples of "Islam-inspired intolerance". In this way, as we saw in earlier discussion about radicalization, the model chosen here is not the detached Anglo-Saxon one of only considering terrorist crimes as defined by law, but a more European one (ironically) of considering a deeper hinterland of radicalization and exclusivist positions on certain issues that supposedly disqualify the holder from full British (or English) identity. There is also a stereotypical denigration of the whole religion of Islam, which is portrayed as the purveyor of a number of distasteful cultural and even criminal practices.

Interestingly, one of the neo-Marxist criticisms of identity politics is that it concerns itself with symbolic and cultural matters that are not properly the stuff of high politics. It is true that the EDL's "about us" page from which the above is an extract mentions the word "culture" 18 times, mostly in relation to English, Western or "our" culture, but also out-group expressions like "migrant culture" (EDL 2016b). The group says it is primarily a "human rights organization" focusing on spreading awareness of issues, but in other places, does talk about influencing the political process and pushing for anti-"Islamification" policies in security, societal and cultural spheres (EDL 2016a). In these ways, the group has remained so far in the pressure-group category, even though there is much synergy with the policies of freedom parties in parts of continental Europe, such as the PVV in the Netherlands and the Danish People's Party. It remains to be seen whether the EDL will ever move into electoral politics, possibly under the guise of some form of British freedom party.

In terms of identity theory, much of the EDL's rhetoric about English (and British) identity and "culture" shows clear indicators of antagonistic intersubjective processes that accord with social identity theorizing and Tajfel's minimal group paradigm (Tajfel 1970). The references to symbolic cultural factors such as gender roles are particularly interesting and show clear examples both of in-group normative behaviour and out-group stereotyping. The symbiotic relationship here between perceived practices and identity indicators in Muslim communities, and those of the majority white culture, raise questions of whether this is a fine example of cumulative extremism. Thus, it may be the case that changes in identity expression in Muslim communities, whereby a growing number of women may wear *burqas* and *niqabs* as conscious outward expressions of their identity, for example, may lead to reactions in other communities and the generation of negative narratives and myths about such developments, in order to promote an identity politics. At the same time, the decision by the EDL to undertake a demonstration in a particular town may actually crystallize a Muslim identity for some and cause them to be more willing to assertively express that identity to those around them.

Eatwell noted that the roots of the Islamophobic turn in British Far Right activism lay slightly further back than the EDL's emergence in 2009. It seems clear that Far Right activists were instrumental in the exacerbation of community tensions that led to the Bradford race riots of 2001 (as were left-wing anti-fascist activists on the other side; Eatwell 2006:213). Around the same time, the BNP was starting to talk about

Muslims and Islam as the primary public enemy. In the August 2001 edition of the BNP's magazine, intriguingly called "Identity", the radical Finsbury Park mosque preacher Abu Hamza was reported to have been overheard saying that he had an aspiration for Muslim militants to take over British towns like Burnley by force (Eatwell 2006:213). Such inflammatory notions have clear security implications, and, as the citizens of Bradford experienced, can cause serious violence to be mobilized on the streets on the apparent basis of identity factors. Fortunately, such levels of race-based civil disorder have not been repeated in Britain since that time to the same degree, but hate acts such as Islamophobic abuse on social media appear to be becoming part of the landscape. As structural symbolic interactionists would argue, to understand such processes requires identity not to be seen in essentialist "billiard ball" terms, but as a series of dynamic and fluid interactions between different identities within a multicultural society.

NOTES

1. Interview with EDL rally attendee, Dudley, 17 July 2010.
2. Figures derived from local media reports: see Richards (2013)

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State, Society, Narrative, Political Myth

Political Myth and Discourse Analysis in Security

5.1   INTRODUCTION

In section one of this book, a number of important elements of ground-work were laid. Using a lens of identity theory and its various iterations, questions of how identities are formed; how they play into identity politics; and the relevance they have to contemporary security, were introduced. A consciously-expressed social constructivist notion of identity was put forward, which sees identity labels not as essentialist or primordial, but as constructed and circumstantialist. In this construction of identity, factors relating to history, geography, socio-economic and political experience are key.

A notion of different levels of – and perspectives on – identity was also introduced as a significant element of the analysis. At the micro-level, specific individuals may respond to their experiences and circumstances in a variety of ways which shape their own notions of identity across many spectrums. Some of these responses may effectively create conditions of vulnerability, which could evolve into questions of security for wider society.

At the macro-level, organizations and political leaders may present radical narratives of identity which draw individuals in and help them to "make sense of their lives" in particular ways. Importantly, these often accord with Tajfel's minimal group paradigm, whereby individuals will accrete around deepening and strengthening in-group and out-group characterizations and narratives. Links with others sharing the in-group identity will be continually emphasized, while factors identifying out-group members as others will be

stereotyped and denigrated. The importance of particular radical ideologies in this process returns to the scene, and makes the link between the personal and the macro-political (or, more precisely, the societal, as reflected in the shift in identity theory towards structural symbolic interactionism).

Notions of performativity, which have gained considerable ground in contemporary social science, are, it was suggested, critical to identity formations and evolutions. Individuals will express their identity or combinations of identity factors through "performative acts", which can include cultural or religious identification mechanisms such as donning particular types of dress. For leaders of identity-politics organizations, strengthening in-group cohesiveness can be promoted through performative rituals in which members of the group can participate on a regular basis.

A performative approach to identity further underlines the essential mutability and flexibility of identity, and the manner in which it can be used as a basis for political acts and ideologies. For traditional structuralists, this degrades the central usefulness of identity politics, since it is seen to merely act to divide rather than unite oppressed classes and turn them against each other, on the basis of flimsy narratives that crumble when subjected to any hard scrutiny.

This, in turn, implies a potentially nefarious agency for identity politics, in that it could be used and manipulated by those with an interest in dividing communities for political purposes. Such a notion introduces the idea of speech act theory in identity discourse, developed originally by John Austin (1962), which suggests that language has important agential properties, sometimes by directly initiating actions in the physical world (such as a declaration of war for example). From this idea flowed critical discourse analysis, including Fairclough's analysis of the relationship between language and relative positions of power (Fairclough 2001). In security studies, the Copenhagen School of scholars, led by Buzan, Waever and de Wilde, included speech act theory as a component in their critical thesis of "securitization", which suggested that certain factors could be converted into existential security concerns in the public consciousness by political leaders, through their narratives and utterances (Buzan et al. 1998).

Taking these ideas as theoretical constructs with value, it could therefore be postulated that narratives and speech acts are very significant for processes of identity construction, and its relationship to security. In this chapter, the foundations of discourse analysis and political myth-making are explored in detail, before subjecting such ideas to identity narratives within contemporary British security discourse.

5.2   POLITICAL MYTH

The two French political philosophers, Georges Sorel and Roland Barthes, loom large in the history of political myth. Both promoted the concept of political myth in an anti-bourgeois project, but for slightly different reasons. For Sorel, political myth was something that had a purpose in making individuals commit extreme acts, such as fighting and dying for the nation or an ideology, when to do so otherwise made no sense (Tager 1986:626). While a bleak notion, this was not necessarily a negative thing, since the "myth of the general strike" that could smash the bourgeois-dominated democracy was deeply attractive to Sorel as an anarcho-socialist ideology (Tager 1986:630).

For Barthes, however, political myth was not constructive but nihilistic. In the modern Western society of the early twentieth century, Barthes saw in political myth a way in which the bourgeoisie crushed debate about the essential righteousness of Western democratic society: in this way, bourgeois norms "are experienced as the evident laws of a natural order" (Barthes 1972:140). In the modern age, Fukuyama's notion of the "end of history" (Fukuyama 1992) with the fall of the Berlin Wall and the collapse of communism, could, to some extent, be subjected to the same critique.

While Sorel and Barthes disagreed about the potential agency of political myth, they both agreed that language and discourse were central to its propagation. Sorel proclaimed that you did not have to be a great philosopher to see that language "deceives us constantly as to the true nature of the relationship between things" (Sorel 1961:251). Barthes, similarly, spoke of the destructive power of "depoliticized speech" which "abolishes the complexity of human acts" (Barthes 1972:143).

In these thoughts, a number of factors are pertinent to a discussion of identity theory and politics at the micro and macro-levels. Regarding the former, we can see here a notion that nationalism is both a mythical construct, and one that divides the proletariat and causes them to fight amongst one another rather than concentrate on the central structural struggle against the bourgeoisie. A similar sentiment can be found in structuralist critiques of identity theory and identity politics, as discussed. It might be a natural instinct at this stage to turn to Marx and his criticism of nationalism as a modern European bourgeois project, but it is noteworthy that European Fascist ideology (which was very prescient for early twentieth-century political philosophers such as Sorel and

Barthes) also had interesting things to say about nationalism and myth. As Mussolini said in a speech in 1922 about the relatively new state of Italy:

> We have created our myth. The myth is a faith, it is passion. It is not necessary that it shall be a reality. It is a reality by the fact that it is a good, a hope, a faith, that it is courage. Our myth is the Nation, our myth is the greatness of the Nation! And to this myth, to this grandeur, that we wish to translate into a complete reality, we subordinate all the rest (cited in Finer 1935:218).

Mussolini clearly accorded with the circumstantialist notion that national identity is an essentially constructed thing, around which people can be politically mobilized. In Germany, the fascist mythical nation was described in identity terms, in the shape of the myth of Aryan purity, which has persisted as a central component of Far Right identity politics in Germany, the US and selected places elsewhere (although interestingly not in the same way in Britain).

There is powerful political agency here, suggesting that myth is essentially as important as any reality for those who rally under its flag. As Sorel said, "myth cannot be refuted, since it is, at bottom, identical with the conviction of a group, being the expression of these convictions in the language of the movement" (Sorel 1961:49–50). In our reflections on intergroup interactions, we can recall here the manner in which individuals will sometimes accord with a group's narratives, even if some of the explanations offered (such as the reasons why Muslim women might wear the *hijab*, for example, or why particular individuals may become "radicalized") are not properly known or are falsely described. In a sense, such individuals will not necessarily be concerned with the *reality* behind the narrative: it will be enough, in Mussolini's words, that they have hope, faith and courage in the myth.

There is also a sense in political myth-making that it can be a mechanism not only for quashing discussion and debate, as Barthes suggested, but also – in a reverse direction - for rejecting elites and their narratives as not worthy of attention. The point here concerns extremism and extremist narratives. In the traditional politics of right and left, there are many touch-points between the narratives at the more extreme ends of the spectrum, which suggest a sort of elliptical shape of ideas. We saw in the previous chapter Solomos's observation of convergence between the rhetoric of the Far Right and that of ethnic nationalists (Solomos

1998:52): the latter are supposedly conducting a rights-based fight for the redistribution of power, but they promote an inherently essentialist and excluding conception of identity by their very definition. In this way, the language of the two movements shows some similarities.

There are inevitably many paradoxes in such ideas and movements, and it could be argued that the failure of the Far Right to become a movement strong enough across the electorate to actually gain power (with the striking exception of the National Socialists in Germany in the 1930s) is down to the inherent division and separation of communities at the heart of the ideology. This creates an almost in-built brake on achieving success beyond a certain constituency, and could explain why even the most successful European populist and "freedom" parties have not managed to go much beyond 20 percent in the polling in major elections. (This is enough to shake the political establishment, but not enough to become the largest single party and seize power.) Thus, identity politics may have the seeds of its own destruction built into itself.

In many ways, both Sorel and Barthes typified the personal paradox of using notions of political myth to call for revolution against the bourgeoisie, when they were themselves clearly products of the bourgeois intelligentsia. For Sorel, this led to experimentation in later writing with extreme ideologies on both the political left and right (Tager 1986:637), again reflecting the elliptical coming-together of ideas on the extremes. In the contemporary context, this harks back to the logic of neoconservatism in America displaying strange and remarkable similarities with some of the ideas of extreme *Salafi* Islamism; a point to which we will return.

It is also the case, however, that a group's acceptance of a political myth as a form of Barthian depoliticizing of discourse can run the risk of hardening and embedding in-group and out-group narratives. In the EU referendum in Britain in the summer of 2016, both the "leave" and "remain" camps traded a welter of accusations, theories and counter-theories, a great many of which could be aptly described as political myth-making writ large, not least since the implications of leaving the EU for British society and economy could not possibly be known with any certainty. It was interesting, however, that many on the "leave" side were able to dismiss the pessimistic forecasts and theories put forward by leading economic and political commentators, such as the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the Bank of England, as the nefarious myth-making of "elites".

In many ways this reflected a deep-seated disillusion with the traditional political class that has characterized postmaterialist politics in many countries, and which has allowed traditionally smaller identity-politics based movements to present themselves as a viable alternative. Much of the language in Britain's "leave" campaign was essentially nationalistic, revolving around the need to re-establish British sovereignty in all matters and wrest control back from elitist and faceless foreign bureaucrats in Brussels (Buck 2016). Without wishing to suggest for a moment that most of those who voted to leave were sympathists of the Far Right, there were ideological touch-points in much of the Leave Campaign's anti-elitist rhetoric and that of Far Right and populist parties across Europe, which might explain why the EDL has not only strongly endorsed the success of the "leave" vote but also issued a thinly-veiled warning to the political elite to "listen to the people" and not renège on the deal. It might also explain why an admittedly very small minority of individuals in Britain have taken the vote as some sort of justification for a number of violent attacks on non-British communities, and particularly those from parts of Eastern Europe. In this, we can see an uncomfortable nexus between the fortunes of identity politics and serious security concerns.

Another interesting example of political myth in contemporary identity politics is that of the case of *taqiyya*: a notion mentioned in the Qu'ran which can be loosely translated as precautionary dissimulation in a religious sense (that is, deceiving others as to one's religious identity). This hotly-contested and debated notion, which has usually related in history to situations in which particular Islamic sects have found themselves in dangerous minority situations (notably *Shias* in many examples), has been used by some to lambast Muslim "extremists" and even to suggest that Islam has an in-built propensity to use lying as an entirely acceptable mechanism to achieve nefarious aims.

Hussein picks up on the debate in identity terms. She notes the manner in which notions of *taqiyya* started as an anti-Muslim online discourse, but began to gain traction in "mainstream media", culminating in the hypothesis about President Obama of the US being a "secret Muslim" (Hussein 2015). There are questions here about the manner in which certain concepts become "mediatized" and established as Barthian "anonymous universal representations" (Tager 1986:632), or group-think paradigms, and these can be picked up as denigrating out-group othering mechanisms. More directly, as Hussein argues, such concepts can effectively "racialize" Muslims as an identity, converting broad and diverse religious

identification into something more akin to an ethnic or national identity. "Islamophobia" then effectively becomes akin to traditional racism (Hussein 2015).

It is notable that similar myths were peddled about European Jewry during the rise of Nazism in early twentieth-century Europe, whereby Jews were seen to be both ubiquitous and sitting just below the surface of society, ready to deliver the fatal *Dolchstoß* (stab in the back) when the time was right. A similar notion of dissimulation was engineered, which was suggested as the mechanism through which Jews could hide from sight in the meantime (Bartov 1998:779).

For the consumers of such myths, the mechanism may provide a sense-making function, whereby meaning, order and explanation can be applied to an otherwise confusing or seemingly indifferent world (Bottici 2009:11). We saw in the previous chapter the process, described by some individuals who had joined Far Right movements, whereby racist identity narratives had provided a new framework of meaning to life-events that had previously been seen as randomly ordered. We also saw how observation of the attribution fallacy by psychologists, whereby many individuals appear to have an innate desire to over-attribute causality and precise explanation to life events, can play into the hands of leaders in identity politics movements, who can reconstruct identities as political explanations, both in terms of in-group identity and the othering of out-group identities.

5.3   IDENTITY AND THE WEST

There has been much debate about identity issues in Europe, and whether there is any validity in the notion that Europe has developed a fundamentally antagonistic and excluding approach towards Islam and Muslims. (If so, this could make the position of Muslims living within Europe doubly complicated.) In her examination of the "myths of Europe", Bottici suggests three foundations for pan-European identity, which may have framed conceptualization at the macro-level, recognizing that Europe is a broad term and can mean both a continent and a political association. The three suggested foundations are described as a classical heritage (based on Greek and Roman civilizations); the notion of Christendom, recognizing that the Christian Roman Empire could perhaps be identified as the first serious attempt at unification across the continent; and the notion of an Enlightened Europe from the sixteenth century onwards, whereby

political philosophers and scientists developed essentially humanist ideas that increasingly recognized the separation between church and state (Bottici 2009).

If we take Young's view that all history is essentially myth (Young 1990:7), then a number of mythical elements surround these foundational factors for Europe. These include a notion that democracy is central to Europe, for example, since the ancient Greeks supposedly "invented" it. Similarly, these narratives allow for a process of counterposition when considering the Islamic world: it is "different" in many ways to the core elements of these European foundational myths, especially when considering Islamist models of government in which *Shariah* law negates the need for, and is in direct opposition to, democracy. Similarly, the Islamic world can be and often is criticized by some for not experiencing an Age of Enlightenment and thus being "left behind".

Certain political leaders have, from time to time, used such imagery in their speeches. In announcing his plan to run again for the French presidency, former president Nicolas Sarkozy drew a distinction between the long and difficult process of reform that had been undertaken by the Catholic church, and the religion of Islam, for whom work was "still to be done" (Chassany 2016). Islam could not "exonerate itself from the rules that other religions respect perfectly", he pointed out (Chassany 2016).

As discussed, French republican identity, which is firmly based on secular principles, may have a more complex relationship with multiculturalism than might a country such as Britain. On the question of Turkey joining the EU, for example, the aforementioned Sarkozy has recently said that it would be "unthinkable" (Osborne 2016), having previously suggested in an interview with French television that Turkey could not be considered part of Europe "culturally, historically and economically" (iTélé 2016). The official British position, on the other hand, has always been to support Turkey's accession in the long run (Richards 2012:161), despite the issue being one of the subjects of scare-mongering raised during the EU referendum campaign in 2016.

One of the most well-known critical theses about political myth in the West is probably Edward Said's notion of "orientalism", which suggests a historical continuity between the colonial era and the West's dismissive and misplaced approach towards societies outside of Europe and North America, where things are done differently (Said 2003). Said was

particularly critical of Huntington's "clash of civilizations" thesis (Huntington 1993), which, as discussed, received a boost in interest after the 9/11 attacks in 2001. Said described the zero-sum approach to the West's relationship with other major "civilizations" and the propensity for conflict that supposedly arose in the post-Cold War era as a dangerous "clash of ignorance", undermined not least by a recognition that communities could not be placed into neat and essentialist boxes (Said 2001). In a diatribe about Huntington's thesis, and that of Bernard Lewis, Said notes that:

> In this belligerent kind of thought, he [Huntington] relies heavily on a 1990 article by the veteran Orientalist Bernard Lewis, whose ideological colors are manifest in its title, "The Roots of Muslim Rage." In both articles, the personification of enormous entities called "the West" and "Islam" is recklessly affirmed, as if hugely complicated matters like identity and culture existed in a cartoonlike world where Popeye and Bluto bash each other mercilessly, with one always more virtuous pugilist getting the upper hand over his adversary. Certainly neither Huntington nor Lewis has much time to spare for the internal dynamics and plurality of every civilization, or for the fact that the major contest in most modern cultures concerns the definition or interpretation of each culture, or for the unattractive possibility that a great deal of demagogy and downright ignorance is involved in presuming to speak for a whole religion or civilization. No, the West is the West, and Islam Islam (Said 2001:12).

In this critical thesis, Said sees the clash of civilizations as a dangerous over-simplification at best, and naked and "reckless" political myth at worst. Certainly, the zero-sum nature inherent in Huntington's thesis has also been picked up rising powers in the multilateral world, and particularly by Russia and China, as elements of a "Cold War mentality" that divides nations and communities at the macro-level and can become a self-fulfilling prophecy of conflict.

China has invoked this notion at the highest level of diplomacy, notably when reacting to US ire over supposed cyber attacks emanating from China. At the 18th Communist Party Congress in Beijing in 2012, for example, the Commerce Minister, Chen Diming, accused the US of a Cold War mentality in its accusations of state-sponsored seeding of US and other networks through companies such as Huawei (Telegraph 2012). From a historical perspective, Hirshberg considered the way in which US attitudes to China, both public and official, changed through the period of the Cold War and through its end (Hirshberg 1993).

Through the bulk of the period, he argued, an "American patriotic schema" formed the basis of US attitudes towards other countries such as China, in which the state "self" was equated with high-level values such as democracy, freedom and righteousness. Communist countries were generally seen to be inverse images of American society, in which there was oppression and a lack of freedom, and this made them fundamentally "bad". In this respect, China was linked with attitudes towards the Soviet Union more generally and seen as a communist puppet of Moscow (Hirshberg 1993:250–1). Intriguingly, attitudes towards China seemed to improve through the 1980s as the country opened-up and there was an increasing amount of diplomatic contact between it and the West (triggered by Nixon's landmark visit to China in 1972), until the Tiananmen massacre happened in 1989, reaffirming a belief in the West that China was essentially an oppressive country (Hirshberg 1993:249).

The suggestion is that attitudes are formed on the basis of grand ideological conceptions. The Cold War was conceptualized by many as a fundamental confrontation of ideas and belief-systems: a free, open, prosperous and tolerant capitalist West against a centralized, oppressive, miserable and intolerant Communism. The two could not come together as they were fundamentally opposed to one another; hence the frozen stand-off. When the actual Cold War with the Soviet Union ended with the latter's collapse in 1991, some scholars noted that ideological differences were mutating into subtly different factors, but that fundamental differences between identities and belief-systems were seen to remain. Huntington suggested in his "Clash of Civilizations" that "underlying differences between China and the United States have reasserted themselves in areas such as human rights, trade and weapons proliferation" (Huntington 1993:34).

A counter-argument is presented by Song, who suggests that the West's inherent suspicion of China has deep roots, and is essentially born of a discomfort with the fundamental difference of Chinese culture and mindset. (Although Song did not explicitly use the word "orientalism", the sentiment was essentially the same; Song 2015:146.) In presenting a poststructuralist account of the confrontation between the West and China, Song adopts a Foucauldian notion that the world "does not present itself to us in the form of ready-made categories, theories or statements". More specifically, identity thus becomes dissociated from physical reality, and the narrative becomes "the means by which the status of reality is conferred on events" (Song 2015:149). This accords with a Sorelian

notion that the narrative (myth) is, in many ways, much more important than any reality to which it may relate.

In terms of the detail of the discourse, devices can be used to generate ideas and construct the myth, whereby a "logic" is presented that is "psychologically intuitive rather than logically deductive or inductive" (Song 2015:160). Song uses the example of the great International Relations theorist, Mearsheimer, and his account of the rising threat of China. Using the theoretical construct of offensive realism, which Mearsheimer developed himself in earlier writing, he is able to present an account of the threat of China which appears scientifically sound and logically congruent to the reader. But this is only because Mearsheimer has effectively set the rules of the game himself by framing the theoretical context through which the analysis is presented (Song 2015:155). A critical reading in its more extreme form might suggest that we, as Westerners, cannot really understand China as such, as we inevitably think about it within a Western rather than Eastern ontological framework. (Of course, a counter-argument could be that Song is committing a sort of orientalism-in-reverse by suggesting there is a single and unchanging Western epistemology!)

5.4   POLITICAL MYTH AND ISLAM

In terms of Europe's own foundational myths, Bottici suggested that the classical Greek component of its foundations could be partly constructed as the manner in which ancient Europe started to develop notions of humanist philosophy, when the Islamic world was still locked in a "mystical" frame of mind (Bottici 2009:41; in essence, an early example of orientalism). In more physical terms, there is no doubt that geopolitical expansion and conflict have been key elements of the historical confrontation between the West and Islam. In the early years of the eighth century, the Moorish invaders of Iberia made rapid and extensive gains in South-West Europe, before they were eventually defeated at the Battle of Poitiers (or Tours) in northern France in 732. The long period of history that followed, encompassing the Crusades of the Middle Ages; the final defeat of the Moorish kingdom of Granada in 1492; the Battle of Vienna in 1683; and the final dissolution of the Ottoman Empire and the abolition of the Caliph in 1924, could theoretically be melded together in a form of continuous narrative of confrontation between Christendom and Islam.

There is no doubt that an identification with Christian identity and a concomitant defining of the Islamic "other" was a major factor in European statecraft and diplomacy, right up until the Treaty of Utrecht in 1714, which ended the Spanish wars of succession, and which still referred to a *Republica Christiana*. (By coincidence, the same treaty also gave Gibraltar, from where the Moors had launched their invasion of Europe some thousand years earlier, to Britain.) This came on the back of a long suspicion of the Ottomans and their presence on Europe's South-Eastern flank, and it may be the case that a conflation of Europe with Christendom and subsequent othering of the supposedly nefarious Turk (especially by the Hapsburgs, whose lands bordered those of the Ottomans) may have been as much about power and geopolitical realism as about grand identities. Indeed, following the seizure of Constantinople by the Ottomans in 1453, it was Pope Pius II who reputedly first spoke of the need to defend "our Christian Europe" from the onslaught (den Boer 2005). Thus ensued a renewed period of mostly ill-fated Crusades, and a long period of conflict between the Hapsburg Empire and the Ottomans, the ultimate conclusion of which was the final defeat and break-up of the Ottoman Empire in the First World War.

There are those who take a more cautious reading of history in these matters. Rich, for example, suggests that a notion of a continuous Islamic threat, as articulated by Pope Pius II, is not actually clearly prevalent in much European discourse over the centuries, and does not really generate any head of steam, arguably until the Islamic Revolution in Iran in 1979. At the same time, Islam has been an important cultural counterpoint for European civilization and identity, in that the latter can continually attempt to define itself against the former in such areas as human rights, democracy, gender, science and reason (Rich 1999:449,451). As discussed, in the contemporary era, such factors rear their heads in the debates about whether Turkey should join the EU, on which matter British politicians such as the current Foreign Secretary, Boris Johnson, have delivered somewhat contradictory messages of late (Wintour 2016).

Looking at the situation from a different perspective, a poster announcing an event in London in 2010, organized by the group Islam4UK (which had connections with the previous *Al Muhajiroun* group), and entitled "The Awakening of the Giant", described matters as follows[1]:

Ever since the destruction of the Islamic State 85 years ago on the 3rd of March 1924, the Ummah has witnessed continuous misery through the

implementation of western colonialist systems. The implementation of the western colonialist system has led the Ummah to suffer from: **division, occupation, economic poverty, social breakdown, corrupt leaders, corrupt culture etc.**

Now we are witnessing the Muslim Ummah breaking away from this pathetic situation by rejecting the corrupt western solutions and calling for Islam and the implementation of Shariah.

We are witnessing the Re-Awakening of the sleeping Giant. The Giant that once held great influence across the globe and is about to takes its rightful place on the international arena once again. This Giant is the Muslim Ummah unified under one ruler implementing Islam in the Khilafah state [sic].

In this account we can see a number of elements of political myth-making. Firstly, a monolithic identity group is established as the Muslim *ummah*, or community of believers. This community spans borders, and is equated with a putative unified state, the *Khilafah* (Caliphate). A heavy dose of historical myth is invoked in two ways. First, the date on which the last Caliph was exiled from Constantinople and the post of Caliph of the Muslim world was abolished by the new secular state of Turkey in 1924, is taken as the precise moment at which the *Khilafah* ceased to be and the Western colonialists imposed their repressive regime. (The end of the First World War marked not only the end of the last Muslim empire, the Ottomans; but also saw the division of the Levant region into British and French spheres of influence under the Sykes-Picot model, conceived in 1916.) Secondly, a myth of once great global power and dominance supposedly enjoyed by the former *Khilafah* is invoked, and the call is a revolutionary one: the Islamic State was once great until it was repressed by the West, but it could be great again if the *ummah* organized themselves and took control by imposing a *Shariah*-based system (the Sleeping Giant re-awoken).

Various other linguistic expressions are interesting. The mention more than once of corruption within the Western system reflects an oblique reference to democracy and the inherent weakness it is felt to contain by *Salafi* ideologues. Under this narrative, only a rule by God's law (*Shariah*) would negate the need for corrupt mortals to exercise power over their citizens. "Division" is also an interesting word, since it suggests that a Western system of organization based on Westphalian states and borders, and spread across the world through colonialism and the establishment of

postcolonial states, has served only to divide populations and set them against one another. (As discussed, this Islamist criticism of nationalism is not dissimilar to that of Marx.)

There is no doubt that the sweeping generalization and simplification implied in this poster about the former *Khilafah* or Islamic State; its unitary nature; and the power that it once wielded across the world, are all components of political myth-making. Many of these factors are the subject of competing historical narratives and none are certain. (Equally uncertain is whether Europeans thought of themselves as such in history and whether they routinely defined themselves against the Islamic other.) At the same time, this scarcely matters if the main purpose of the message is to call together a group of individuals and mobilize them around a simple set of identity-based parameters. How far people heed the call is, in many ways, more important than the veracity of the historical narrative.

There is an inherent link between historical myth and narrative, and radicalism. As Sánchez notes in her study of emancipatory nationalist movements, identification processes which marginalize and oppress certain groups can often be turned on their heads and used as the rallying-call for revolutionary movements, as has been the case with the *indio* movement in Peru for example (Sánchez 2006:41). This accords with the earlier-cited example of the *Mohajirs* (Muslim migrants) in Pakistan, who turned their rejection by indigenous citizens in Sindh Province for being "out-of-towners" to their political advantage, by engineering a notion of collective *Mohajir* identity and launching the *Mohajir* National Movement (MQM). Klandermans (citing Van Stekelenburg) goes further in suggesting that identity processes play "a crucial role" in every stage of the "dynamics of protest" (Klandermans 2014:1). Protest is, after all, generally articulated as the angry opposition of one group to the actions and policies of another, usually defined in terms of relative group positions of power.

Whatever the realities of the way in which Islam has affected and shaped European identities over the centuries, one of the more significant developments shaping contemporary issues of identity and security globally is that of the rise of the radical *Salafi* movement from the end of the Cold War and into the twenty-first century. This has become a defining driver not only of physical security (to a certain extent) and antagonistic inter-group interactions, but has done so as much within and between Muslim communities as between Muslims and non-Muslims. Whatever the

security implications for the West, the transformations and developments at play have arguably been far more significant to the convulsions currently being experienced in the Muslim world itself, as characterized in the starkest example by the intractable conflict in Syria.

As described in the first chapter, the revolutionary call of Sayyid Qutb in Egypt against the decadent and destructive cultural imperialism of the West played a very significant role in the founding of contemporary radical and revolutionary *Salafism*, as espoused by Al Qaeda and related groups such as *Da'esh* or ISIS, to name but two. There was also a curious echo of the neoconservative movement in the US, which similarly called for a much more assertive and forward-leaning set of policies to stem the tide of moral and political degeneration and collapse, albeit in a very different context from that of Qutb and his followers.

Political myth and narrative were central to Qutb's ideas. The narrative of a Rome-style collapse of Western civilization under the weight of its own decadence and moral bankruptcy was described in Qutb's seminal *Ma'alim fi al-Tariq*, and used as a rallying-call for the *ummah* of believers, who were urged to save themselves from being sucked into the vortex by remembering their roots and re-establishing the rule of God over every area of life (Calvert 2004:520). Similarly, the notion of the past "golden age" of Islam and its once great power and influence, as described equally by Qutb and the poster for the Islam4UK event in London above, has utility in building the ideological base for a restorative revolutionary movement: if something has been violently and unfairly taken away, then it seems only right to violently restore it.

For Qutb and his religiously-inspired followers, furthermore, the Barthian depoliticizing power of the historical and political myth was further entrenched by the notion of the complete supremacy of faith in God over debate and interpretation. For Qutb, "belief preceded under-standing and was the primary mode for self-alteration" (Calvert 2004:520). In this way, there could be no wavering for adherents to the ideology of striving for the re-establishment of a global *Khilifah* and the imposition of *Shariah* law in preference to the democratic rule of mortals; nor could there be any debate about it. Theological debate is an oxymoron for such ideologues. Remembering Sánchez's example of the Peruvian *indios* and the way in which they turned a pejorative identity labelling into a revolutionary zeal (Sánchez 2006:45), the execution of Qutb in a Cairo jail in 1966 served only to entrench the idea of violent oppression under a decadent secular puppet regime and to harden the determination

of those seeking a *Salafi* revolution in society. Such calls were heeded by the likes of Egyptian Islamic Jihad (EIJ), whose leader, Ayman al-Zawahiri, later became the co-founder of Al Qaeda and proponent of its call for global Islamic revolution.

In essence, as with all religious "fundamentalist" movements (and arguably more generally with all religions) the basis for *Salafism*, which means returning to the roots, origins or fundamentals, is founded on highly debatable historical factors. The notion that the first years immediately after the Prophet Muhammad's revelations in 632 AD until the violent death of Ali (which initiated the schism between Sunni and Shia Islam) were the golden age of piety, faith, and peace, is equally difficult to verify and to debate given the passage of time and lack of contemporaneous record-keeping. This is problematic both for the implications of the fiercely rejectionist and depoliticized *takfirism* which is practised by radical *Salafis*; but also on more specific areas of debate such as whether and how people should be punished for misdemeanours, women should be veiled, the economy should be run, and so on. Despite the trinity of *Qu'ran*, *Hadith* and *Sunna* that emerged from the period, attempting to interpret twenty-first century society using a framework of seventh-century Arabia is almost bound to involve heavy elements of historical and political myth-making.

It is also clearly the case that more recent Islamist movements based on such ideology need to engineer narratives to allow for operating in societies in which technology, democratic political processes and secularism are rife. Al Qaeda has always had an antagonistic relationship with Palestinian movements such as Hamas and Hezbollah, for example – despite seeing Palestine as the archetypal clash between East and West – because the latter attempt to combine Islamist ideology with participation in existing democratic and parliamentary politics. For radical *Salafis*, such selling-out to Western political systems which were brought to the region with colonialism, is anathema. For some ideologues, however, such as Maulana Ma'ududi in India (and later Pakistan), and Qutb, a clever engineering of the political myth of *hakimiyya* (God's sovereignty) allows for essentially Hobbesian and Westphalian ideas, normally so despised by *Salafis*, to be used to justify political participation by Islamist movements and parties. In this case, God is the rightful sovereign of the Leviathan by virtue of the system of *Shariah*, and *Salafi* Imams would be the gate-keepers. In identity terms, such a narrative also allows for a basic in-group and out-group essentialism, whereby those adhering to *Salafi* Islam are the

in-group and all others, including minority Muslim communities, can be denigrated and oppressed as the out-group.

The security implications of such political myths and their mobilization by ideologues on contemporary Western streets are not insignificant. Aside from terrorist attacks committed in the name of radical *Salafi* groups such as Al Qaeda or *Da'esh*, the example of the murder of Asad Shah in Glasgow is indicative. In August 2016, Tanveer Ahmed was sentenced to 27 years in prison for the murder earlier in the year of the Glasgow shopkeeper, Shah; a murder which appeared to be motivated by Ahmed's violent *Salafist* rejection of Shah's open adherence to the minority *Ahmediyya* sect of Islam. The *Ahmedis*, who follow a latter-day self-proclaimed prophet of Islam from North-West India in the nineteenth century, are reviled as heretics by many in the Muslim faith and especially by those of a more radical, *takfiri* (rejectionist) persuasion. On sentencing, Ahmed showed no remorse, and instead proclaimed that "this all happened for one reason and no other issues and no other intentions. Asad Shah disrespected the messenger of Islam the prophet Muhammad, peace be upon him [sic]" (Carrell 2016). The use of such narratives to denigrate out-groups and consider the violent murder of their adherents as entirely justified, echoes attacks on European media organizations who have been considered to have insulted the Prophet Muhammad, notably in France and Denmark. Identity theory and political myth are both crucially important frameworks through which to consider and analyse such attacks, and the particular case of Asad Shah's murder is one to which we will return.

5.5 POLITICAL MYTH AND THE "WAR ON TERROR"

The 9/11 attacks in the US in 2001 and the political firestorm they prompted in the shape of the so-called War on Terror, have been subjected to much scrutiny subsequently. There is debate about how much the attacks did actually change the security picture, given that they were a culmination of developments that had been initiated some years before, but there is little doubt that the events in question did deliver significant developments in political myth-making and discourse on all sides of the equation.

As discussed earlier, the sudden and somewhat surprising end of the Cold War with the dissolution of the Soviet Union in 1991 led many political philosophers and commentators to carefully consider the new

security environment in which the world found itself. For Francis Fukuyama and his "End of History" thesis (Fukuyama 1992), the mood was somewhat triumphalist, in that Western liberal capitalism appeared to have won the day and shown the rest of the world the ideal final destination for political development. Also as discussed above, Huntington's "Clash of Civilizations" thesis (Huntington 1993) attempted to predict the new global security environment by drawing new "battle lines" between civilizational groupings. The explosion of ethnic and nationalist violence in the former Yugoslavia in the years immediately following the end of the Cold War seemed to hint at a new and avowedly identity-based environment of conflict and security.

The 9/11 attacks were the largest single terrorist act witnessed in living memory, and seemed to call for a similarly epic response. In the UK, the Prime Minister of the time, Tony Blair, spoke about the "calculus of risk" having changed, whereby a threat that was potentially containable took on a new level of risk in a world where terrorists appeared to be hell-bent on causing as many casualties as possible and were supposedly not averse to using WMD capability in so doing (Peter 2010). A short while later as the US and its Western allies considered what to do about Saddam Hussein's Iraq, Blair used a similar rhetoric about the "balance of risk" in global and national security which meant that simply containing Iraq and its obfuscation over its WMD intentions was no longer good enough in a post-9/11 world (BBC 2004).

For constructivist and critical security scholars such as Barry Buzan, the 9/11 attacks allowed the US and its allies such as Britain to elevate their response in the shape of the Global War on Terror (GWOT) to the existential level of the Cold War, both of which "have been staged as a defense of the West, or western civilization, against those who would seek to destroy it" (Buzan 2006:1101). In critical terms, this allowed for a "macro-securitization" of terrorism that opened the door to increases in defence spending and far-reaching interventionist political policies, such as the invasion of Iraq in 2003. It also reflects a substantial framing of the situation in existential and civilizational terms which play on zero-sum conceptions of identity in terms of "the West" and the "rest".

We also saw earlier Hirshberg's analysis of Cold War ideology in which an American "patriotic schema", which framed the world in terms of good-versus-evil, allowed both for a categorization of non-Western others as being on the wrong side of history, and for a continuation of America's

historical "duty" to be the vanguard of freedom and democracy (Hirshberg 1993). President Bush noted in the aftermath of the 9/11 attacks:

> At the beginning of this new century, the United States is again called by history to use our overwhelming power in defense of freedom. We have accepted that duty, because we know the cause is just... we understand that the hopes of millions depend on us... and we are certain of the victory to come (cited in Buzan 2006:1103).

Much critical analysis has been undertaken of the high-level political discourse following the 9/11 attacks, using speech act theory and critical discourse analysis. Jackson, in his extensive critique of the discourse surrounding the GWOT, notes a similarity with the dichotomous principles of the Cold War (Jackson 2005). Then, the oppression and lack of democracy in communist states were counter-posed against the West's freedom and respect for human rights, in defining who was right and who was wrong. Similarly, "terrorists" in the contemporary era are characterized as espousing inverse mirror-image values to those of the West, whereby they are barbaric and inhuman. Jackson notes:

> The clear implication of this language is that identity rather than deliberation is the basis of human action: terrorists behave as they do not because they are rationally calculating political actors but simply because it is in their nature to be evil (Jackson 2005:59).

In this way, Jackson suggests, American political leaders have essentially dehumanized the terrorist out-group by equating their actions with essentialist and primordial behaviours inherent in those who commit terrorist acts. In times of conflict, a sociology of violence suggests that dehumanization of the out-group is an important device in allowing for violent and murderous acts to be carried out by otherwise ordinary people (Malešević 2010:142–3). Using the rhetoric of "war", furthermore, moves the conflict into a different realm from that of ordinary civil life, where different rules apply and a more existential conception of the threat and appropriate response can be applied. The infamous vilification and humiliation of prisoners in Abu Ghraib prison during the Iraq War reflected a process whereby otherwise ordinary US military personnel had reached a stage of completely dehumanizing the people under their supervision.

In similarly critical terms, Esch discussed the emerging "civilization-versus-barbarism" thesis inherent in discourse surrounding the GWOT, reminiscent of earlier Cold War good-versus-evil ontology, coupled with the "myth of American exceptionalism", which "favors cultural or civilizational explanations for conflict over political or economic ones" (Esch 2010:370). In classic in-group and out-group intersubjective terms, President Bush made heavy use of "us" and "them" rhetoric in the period following the 9/11 attacks, defining the inverse mirror-image values of each identity grouping. In a speech delivered just over six months after the attacks, Bush said: "They hate us, because we're free . . . . .We believe in the dignity of every person. They can't stand that" (Bush 2002).

Such critiques reflect the structuralist problem with identity politics, in that it is perceived to shift attention away from the central political and economic struggles in favour of essentially cultural considerations.

Of course, some counter-criticisms can be raised in response to these analyses. It should be made clear that, in political terms, none of those taking a critical terrorism studies approach necessarily reject or trivialize the seriousness of the 9/11 attacks or of the general level of terrorist threat that has been seen in the contemporary era, even if many follow the "power of nightmares" logic that the threat may have been overblown.

In his critique of the GWOT discourse, Jackson attempts to suggest that, while the attacks clearly merited some sort of major policy response, the US government could have played the attacks down as "atypical events" and could move forwards to "present a range of perspectives and information which would allow a less hysterical assessment of the situation" (Jackson 2005:120). While undoubtedly an entirely sensible and moderate policy recommendation, which, with the benefit of hindsight, could have led to fewer problems, this could be said to fly in the face of political realities in the US at the time and to be a triumph of classically British understatement. It may be the case that a proper reading of political realities in the US at the time would have meant that the incumbent President had very little room for policy manoeuvre other than towards an extremely robust and offensively-realist response to the situation. In this way, the importance of political context geographically and in terms of time, is strongly underlined.

Meanwhile, Esch's analysis of the GWOT discourse consciously skims over the nature and effect of counter-narratives on the formation of Western rhetoric. In a brief statement at the end of her analysis, she notes that "the rhetoric of terrorist leaders similarly relies upon mythical

representations of the world that portray the actions of the addressee as heavily influencing a cosmic battle between good and evil" (Esch 2010:387). One could argue in a fiercely detached way that it would make sense not to play into the hands of the terrorists by mirror-imaging their own historical myths and narratives of a millennial clash between the West and Islam; a trap into which the GWOT quite clearly risks falling. But in the meantime, Esch's critique of Western discourse in this area may somewhat neglect the symbiotic relationship between narratives and counter-narratives and their effect on the development of one another, by focusing only on one side of the equation.

5.6   CONCLUSIONS

Part of the problem with critiquing Western policy responses to terrorism and the political myth with which such responses are imbued, is the risk of being accused of seeing the West as the primary protagonist of the struggle and the terrorists as being justified in their actions. Esch suggests that, while there is a normative notion in contemporary debates about terrorism that "everything changed after 9/11", it was not the attacks themselves that changed the world, but rather the response of the Americans. This might seem a peculiarly one-sided analysis of the situation for many, and could be accused of seeing the postmodern world in billiard-ball essentialist terms rather than as an extremely complex web of cross-cutting interactions and ideologies.

In a thought-provoking essay on "unforgivability", Gibson reflected on the bombings of the London transport network of July 2005 in the following terms:

> There can be no case for forgiving the bombers. It is unthinkable that one should recommend it to the surviving victims or the relatives of the dead. They could hardly begin to imagine it. Nor could I, had my son been killed. So much is morally obvious, and needs no emphasis. Nonetheless, the question everywhere at stake . . . is whether the (undoubted) unforgivability of the terrorist is as much a matter of the sense of the self-evidence of a principle of justice as we are told we should think. Amidst all the familiar expressions of outrage in the days after the bombings, one voice alone stood out: that of the ex-CIA agent (of all people) who suggested that the situation that had produced the bombings would hardly change until the West understood that it must change its language (Gibson 2010:81).

Two things are critical here. Firstly, to try to analyse terrorism and extremism is not to condone, but merely to try to understand. Furthermore, to suggest that factors of identity are central to the process of terrorism and extremism is not to underplay the importance of socio-political or economic structural factors, or indeed to write them out of the picture. Perhaps more importantly, the political agency of radical ideologues and the role they have to play in any supposed process of radicalization is not necessarily at question by suggesting that identity factors are highly significant. Instead, the question is more how radical ideologies are received and processed by individuals.

Secondly, language is clearly critical in a number of ways. For Sorel, language was the mechanism by which political myths were established, and the potential agency of those myths was powerful. Political myth could mobilize constituencies in an emancipatory way, and the perception and understanding of the myth by the radical group was more important than any reality underneath. Marx's "catastrophic revolution" (Sorel 1961:42) never came to pass, but it remained an aspiration for Sorel, and could be picked up by the proletariat if the right political myth could be articulated and mobilized.

Similarly, Sayyid Qutb did not see his cleansing *Salafist* revolution come to pass during his relatively short lifetime, and would still be disappointed were he alive today, although Egypt and surrounding countries are arguably in the grip of an abortive emancipatory revolution of almost catastrophic consequences that began with the Arab Spring in 2011. The political myths underpinning contemporary jihadist revolution echo the depoliticizing theory of Barthes. In this respect, political myth does not carry the active and positive conception promoted by Sorel, but rather the nihilistic nature of an expunging of debate; in effect, a denial of language through the casual acceptance of groupthink narratives. Perhaps controversially, this may be the nature of a revolutionary ideology based on religion, and particularly on an uncompromising "fundamentalist" reading of religion as espoused by today's *takfiri* extremists. As Tanveer Ahmed claimed on his conviction for murder in August 2016 of someone he perceived to be a heretic, there was "one reason and no other issues and no other intentions" to explain the murder of the *Ahmedi*, Asad Shah, in the Glasgow shop that he owned.

In identity terms, the respective religious categorizations of Ahmed and Shah were reason enough for Ahmed to take it upon himself to dehumanize and ultimately destroy his out-group adversary. There were no grounds for debate; language was depoliticized and removed, as the groupthink narrative

had already been established and absorbed. In this clear example of sectarianism at its worst, Ahmed's actions accorded with Tajfel's minimal group paradigm, and with the many psychological experiments over the years that have demonstrated how otherwise seemingly rational people can fall into stereotypical characterizations of in-group and out-group identities, to the point where they will apparently almost unthinkingly commit the most appalling violence on their perceived enemies (Monroe et al. 2000:435).

We have also seen how political myths and narratives cannot necessarily be seen in isolated ways, but feed off each other in symbiotic ways. In the previous chapter, we saw how the English Defence League's (EDL) symbolism and rhetoric plays with notions such as "infidel", "crusades" and gender emancipation. Such language is deliberately chosen as a mirror-image of the perceived values and discourses of the out-group adversary - in this case, the community of "radical Islamists" – in an almost ironic way. Perhaps this is another example of turning the language of stereotypical othering from oppression to advantage, as the *indios* in Peru have done. In this way, again, language is not just important in the way it shapes narratives and myths, but the way in which those narratives shape the perceptions and narratives of others. The practice to accompany the theory of how the intersection between perceptions, beliefs, perceptions and misperceptions between identity groups affect their narrative development, is the question to which we now turn.

NOTE

1. Poster for Islam4UK event, Ar Rahman Masjid, Crowndale Road, London, 14 March 2010.

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Identity and Security Narratives in Contemporary Britain

6.1 Introduction

In the next two chapters, the focus will shift more explicitly towards the detail of recent government policy in Britain towards counter-terrorism and counter-extremism, with two objectives. First, a critical discourse analysis will be undertaken of policies in these areas to consider the relationship between language and notions of identity. Second, the question of "myth-versus-reality" will be explored, by comparing official inside perspectives on the workings of the "Prevent" policy in the UK with the critical narratives levelled against it.

A number of things should quickly be said. Firstly, it is recognized that the example of Britain and its policies in these areas are not necessarily indicative of policies everywhere, nor are there any value-judgements made in terms of whether British policy is better or worse than that in any other country. It is recognized, for example, that French counter-terrorism policy differs in important ways from that in Britain, and this is as much to do with different models of state, society and government in the two countries as anything else. The example of Britain is chosen merely to find some substance that can be applied to the theory in terms of how the factors we have discussed play out in the physical world.

Secondly, the examination of myth-versus-reality does not hold out any hope of firmly establishing any "truth" in this area. Of course, one could take a positivist line towards certain aspects of official policy. The provisions of any government policy in any given area are as they are documented, and

specific concrete actions by various different actors and agencies will be undertaken in the real world in response. Certain facts and figures are, in Rumsfeldian terms, "known knowns", such as the number of people arrested on terrorism offences, for example, or the number of people who have been referred to counter-radicalization programmes, and so forth.

What cannot be established with any certainty, however, are the longer-term effects of such measures and their causal relationships with developments in security threat. Also uncertain are the understandings of members of the public about such issues, and the psychological processes that affect the ways in which messages are promulgated, received and processed. I have promoted Michel Foucault's notion that identities are not essentialist, but rather somewhat protean, and that discourses and narratives are not timeless but merely a "fragment of history" (Foucault 1972:117).

In post-war Germany in 1950, Hannah Arendt's incisive but controversial assessment of the state of the post-nazi nation was that totalitarianism had killed off the ability to have accurate and informed political debate. The German people appeared to have been "reborn in senility", through an experience of several years in which "all facts can be changed and all lies can be made true" (Arendt 1950:353,344). The destruction that had been wrought on debate and discussion through the myth-making of the totalitarian regime had coupled with the fact that many German citizens did not have an accurate and informed view of the extent of the horrors that had been happening around them. This led Arendt to observe a "habit of treating facts as though they were mere opinions" (Arendt 1950:344). In this way, the specific history of the nation appeared to be have delivered a nihilistic effect on debate, and a weary familiarity with political myth as a way of life. In many ways, it appeared that nothing seemed certain anymore. In this way, the narrative of the holocaust did seem like a Foucauldian fragment of history rather than an established fact for many Germans, at least in the early years.

In other ways, the difficulties of establishing deterministic and causal links between policies and social processes mean that narratives are no less likely to be the truth than the truth itself. In an institutional context, the author experienced this factor when working on a local authority project in southern Britain on the effect of disbursements of government money to local community projects in meeting the objectives of the "Prevent" counter-terrorism policy. The project aimed to look at how far the disbursement of approximately £170,000 over three years in the 2008–2011 period to four separate community projects in

the town of Aylesbury had gone towards visibly meeting the objectives of the Prevent strategy locally (Richards 2010). (Similar assessments were being made across the country at this time, attempting to measure the effectiveness of the £63 million annual budget of the national programme.) As some of the Prevent objectives were extremely subjective (objective four, for example, was specified as "Increase the resilience of communities to violent extremism"), it proved to be very difficult to establish a causal link between funded community projects and desired outcomes, even if the general level of activity appeared to improve the sense of engagement between some Muslim communities and local government (Richards 2010:3). Some observers have even suggested that the programme was ultimately counter-productive, in that it fostered resentment between the groups that were successful in their bids for funding and those that were not; and that it raised the suggestion that the very radical groups that should have been curbed were at the forefront of receiving money, usually in the field of the development of "better" Islamic education for individuals who may have fallen prey to a perverted narrative.[1] There is much debate about these accusations and counter-accusations, which I will explore in more detail in the following chapter.

6.2   GOVERNMENT STRATEGY AND DISCOURSE ANALYSIS

With strategy and its outcomes on identity and security a somewhat moveable feast, therefore, it is useful to turn to a narrative analysis of theories and discourse put forward by different actors in the situation. It should be noted that, as Alex Schmid famously observed as early as the 1980s, scholars have spilt more ink about the phenomenon of terrorism than the terrorists have spilt blood (Schmid 1988). After the 9/11 attacks in 2001, the amount of speculation and commentary on how people might become radicalized and turn to terrorist pathways has increased exponentially, much of it shedding a great deal more heat than light. A large part of this is down to the peculiar difficulties of conducting empirical research into the thoughts and ideas of terrorists, but it is probably fair to say that there is also a great deal of myth-making and polemic at play, much of it falling into the Huntingtonian trap of generalizing about, and stereotyping broad communities and identities.

In the particular context of British counter-terrorism strategy, one of the more indicative examples that concern such processes is the question

of the manner in which the Prevent strategy has been dubbed by certain commentators as a "toxic brand". This imagery was generated and repeated right from the start of the policy, accelerating after the 2007 period, by some sections of the Muslim community, who had an interest in developing a narrative of the policy being a thinly-veiled mechanism of surveillance and repression of the wider British Muslim community by the state. In more recent years, and particularly since the change of government in 2010 whereby the Labour administration (which had presided over the launch of Prevent and the wider Counter Terrorism Strategy (CONTEST) within which it sits) handed over the reins of power to a Conservative/Liberal Democrat coalition headed by David Cameron.

Cameron and the Conservatives had made a particular point of challenging Labour over a range of security issues, and had developed the view mentioned above that Prevent was both a waste of public funds, and could even be counter-productive in the nature of the recipients receiving community grants. The view was not that Prevent should be scrapped – some sort of counter-extremism policy in this area was still seen as essential – but that it should be de-coupled from the community cohesion aspects that had characterized its early iteration. This was largely an ideological element of "small-state" conservatism, in that the state was seen as not being responsible for re-engineering whole communities, but merely focusing on delivering law and order. There was also a general suspicion of multiculturalism among the Conservative party members, as Cameron outlined in a landmark speech at the Munich Security Conference in February 2011, in which he referred to the benefits of a new "muscular liberalism". In this speech, Cameron spoke of the problems of what he described as "state multiculturalism", which had led to a "hands-off" situation in which communities could grow apart and become alienated from one another (Number10.gov 2011). Some accused Cameron of pandering to xenophobic groups such as the EDL (Helm et al. 2011), who, in a curious twist of fate, happened to be holding a large rally in Luton on the same day as David Cameron's Munich speech.

A re-launch of the Prevent strategy in 2011 in which a number of important changes were made did not appear to mollify its critics, and, indeed, the "toxic brand" imagery continued to be promoted by some. During 2015, this narrative gained support from some high-level figures, comprising a former Metropolitan Police commander, Dal Bhabu; the chair of the Home Affairs Select Committee, Keith Vaz; and the retired senior judge, Baroness Butler-Sloss. All of these figures repeated the words

"toxic brand" in their criticism of Prevent and the damage it might be doing to community relations (Hirsch 2015).

Taji Mustafa, a media representative of Hizb-ut Tahrir (HUT) noted that:

> "Prevent" has rightly become a toxic brand – not because it has been wrongly executed or misunderstood, but because it is a fundamentally flawed and "toxic" agenda . . .
>
> It has worked on a presumption that those with Islamic values or political views that dissent from the state's standpoint are to be considered suspect, so needing state-organised reprogramming through the Channel programme (HUT 2015a).[2]
>
> It has quite deliberately deflected attention away from foreign policy, even though that link to acts of violence within the UK is well established . . .
>
> It is a policy that uses a security narrative to counter political and religious beliefs. This was made clearer when, in December 2014, police chief Sir Peter Fahy said that the police risk being turned into a "thought police".
>
> It is a policy that is more commonly seen in totalitarian states.

A content analysis of this statement flags up a number of interesting observations to do with narrative and myth development. Firstly, the word "toxic" is clearly a word with wholly negative connotations, which develops an imagery of a process that spreads and affects others in entirely deleterious ways. There then follows a series of images that liken contemporary Britain to a repressive and Orwellian totalitarian state. The word "re-programming" under a government policy invokes images of correction camps and individuals being "re-educated" ideologically, as has happened in various totalitarian states. The use of the term "thought police", a term used by George Orwell in his dystopian novel *1984* further embeds the idea, and "totalitarian states" are explicitly mentioned at the end of the passage in case there is any doubt.

The intended agency of these rhetorical devices is to suggest that a state that would like to think of itself as liberal and democratic is actually no better than the totalitarian states it criticizes and reviles.

A further device used in this passage is the stating of a causal link between two factors (in this case a link between disquiet over British foreign policy and "acts of violence") as being "well established". This is a method of asserting a deterministic process as an accepted fact that needs

no further debate: an assertion of "what everyone knows". While many Muslims consulted in the UK in recent years have expressed a concern about British foreign policy in Muslim lands, and many have suggested that they feel disenfranchised in the sense that they do not feel they have the power to change these foreign policies through their minority position, to suggest that there is a simple causal link between discomfort at foreign policy and the sponsoring of violent acts is an untested assertion at best, and a dangerous one at worst, since it implicitly justifies acts of violence within the democratic state and suggests widespread support for them.

It could be argued that this narrative reflects a form of speech act, and a sort of inverted securitization, whereby the continual repetition of the "toxic" descriptor of the Prevent programme has gradually made its way into wider public discourse and been picked up by supposedly high-ranking officials at the centre of government. In this case, it is not the state that is securitizing an issue for policy benefit, but critics of the state in a minority community.

I would also go further and suggest that there is a peculiarly British aspect to this particular example, which relates to a cognitive bias called the appeal to authority fallacy, or *argumentum ad verecundium*. The great Enlightenment political philosopher, John Locke, observed this bias in his 1690 essay about "human understanding". Here, Locke suggested that, once people were "established in any kind of Dignity" (that is, a position of respect or authority), "'tis thought a breach of Modesty for others to derogate away from it" (Nidditch 1975:686). Thus, figures of authority become generally accepted by many observers as being naturally right, through a combination of respect for their having reached their position of authority, and a sort of innate politeness that suggests it is inappropriate to disagree. In this case under examination, the "toxic" nomenclature has the potential to gain greater traction once it is picked up by supposedly powerful and eminent figures. In the peculiarly hierarchical and honour-bound nature of British society, furthermore, the use of the nomenclature by no less than a Baroness adds an extra degree of *argumentum ad verecundium*. We should remember that, as Kahneman noted in response to a number of psychological experiments, "experts" are often more wrong about probabilities and assessments than inexperienced people, often because they take on an aura of over-confidence in their expertise and in the tendency of others to take their word as read (Kahneman 2011:219).

The implication here is not that the narrative suggesting that the Prevent policy is deeply problematic is necessarily wrong, but merely that narratives and the rhetorical ways in which they are constructed are powerful mechanisms in developing our understanding and our notions of relative identities. These may or may not have much bearing on "reality".

6.3   CASE STUDIES

In this chapter, these techniques of narrative and content analysis are applied to three separate perspectives on the relationship between security policy in contemporary Britain and identity. The aim is to identify and explore the key rhetorical devices prevalent in public discourses about these issues in the contemporary era, and to begin to consider whether and how social constructions of understanding about identity and the factors shaping it measure-up to possible realities on the ground.

The three positions examined are: the official state narrative, as outlined in a July 2015 speech by the then Prime Minister David Cameron on the subject of "extremism"; an "Islamist" narrative, as described in a *Hizb-ut Tahrir* (HUT) press release on the government's proposed counter-extremism measures a few weeks after the Prime Minister's statement; and the Far Right narrative, as outlined in an EDL press release in the Summer of 2016.

It should quickly be said, of course, that such narratives are essentially snapshots in time, or fragments of history. It is recognized that discourse and narratives will be constantly changing in response to events and opinions: David Cameron is no longer the Prime Minister at the time of writing, for example, and the government's policies in these areas may change. Similarly, the two non-official narratives are both somewhat "extreme" in that they are marginal voices that do not necessarily reflect opinions in the mainstream of society. The author was informed by some members of the local Muslim community that HUT's lengthy and sometimes arcane analyses of current events are not widely read by the community, and are generally considered somewhat over-intellectual and obscure by many.[3] Similarly, the EDL has remained a small and thinly-supported organization on the fringes of British society. Analysis suggests that, following the departure of its leader, Tommy Robinson, in 2013, the EDL has splintered into a range of fractious and very small local "groupuscules", and the core movement itself has only been able to muster attendance at its rallies in the low hundreds (Pai 2015). There are some

signs that the slide is being reversed more recently, but it is fair to say that this is not an extensively supported mass movement within British society.

At the same time, the question here is more about the nature of discourse and rhetorical device which shapes wider conceptions and understandings. As John and Margetts noted with regard to the Far Right in Britain, it could be argued that some of the basic sentiments of more extreme movements find sympathy across wider sections of the electorate than would necessarily vote for a party considered extreme, or participate in any of its activities. This is the notion of "latent" support for more extreme movements (John and Margetts 2009:502). We also saw in chapter three the intriguing case of the Citizenship Survey of 2010, in which the percentage of people polled who thought violent extremism was "sometimes right" could be seen either as encouragingly small (as the government chose to interpret the results) or worryingly high and indicative of a wider problem of ideological radicalization within society, depending on one's point of view. Again, the key question is how matters of identity and ideology are socially constructed within society rather than necessarily the ground-truths of relative sizes of communities and their views of one another. As Pai noted in the context of a recent EDL demonstration in the West Midlands town of Dudley, for example, the alarmist rhetoric about the creeping "Islamification" of the town supposedly symbolized by the proposed building of a new mosque seems discordant with the fact that only 4.1 percent of the town's population are Muslim, when 63.5 percent identify themselves as Christian (Pai 2015). Narratives put forward by the EDL, therefore, are not necessarily very indicative of realities, but the perception is more important for those that receive the message.

6.3.1   Case Study 1: Prime Minister's Speech on "Extremism"

On 20 July 2015, David Cameron visited Ninestiles School in the city of Birmingham, and delivered a set-piece speech on multiculturalism and the problem of "extremism" (Cameron 2015). This became the subject of a new Counter Extremism and Safeguarding Bill (initially just called the Counter Extremism Bill), which is making its way through parliament at the time of writing. Cameron was speaking shortly after a surprising Conservative victory in the general election of 2015 – a surprise that underlined Kahneman's point about the sometimes dubious nature of expertise and our faith in it, since most of the pundits and opinion polls

had predicted a hung parliament. Following the victory, "one nation Toryism" was the government's key mantra.

Cameron began by saying that:

> I said on the steps of Downing Street that this would be a "one nation" government, bringing our country together. Today, I want to talk about a vital element of that. How together we defeat extremism and at the same time build a stronger, more cohesive society.

The symbolism of addressing the nation from the front steps of the Prime Minister's residence in Downing Street following a strong victory in the elections gave the address a very official and directive stamp, and the initial language was positive, using words like "stronger"; "cohesive"; and "bringing our country together". The word "cohesive" was used five times in the speech, once in the context of a proposed new "Cohesive Communities Programme", and elsewhere either as a descriptor for "society" or "country".

The essence of the speech was that "British values" (a notion to which we will return) were described as being under threat from a very specific problem in the contemporary era: a problem explicitly identified as an "ideology" of "Islamist extremism". This was further described as an "extreme doctrine" or "radical ideology", and something that is "subversive" in nature.

The suggested policy for tackling this problem was identified as a "counter-ideology", in which "our strongest weapon" would be used in the shape of "our own liberal values". These values would be deployed in the proposed new Counter Extremism Bill. The strategy outlined was not unlike former President Bush's zero-sum Cold War-style rhetoric described earlier that accompanied the launch of the so-called War on Terror, in which positive liberal values were counter-posed against "barbaric" Islamist values to firmly establish a good-versus-evil narrative. Cameron (2015) noted that:

> We should contrast their bigotry, aggression and theocracy with our values. We have, in our country, a very clear creed and we need to promote it much more confidently. Wherever we are from, whatever our background, whatever our religion, there are things we share together.
>
> We are all British. We respect democracy and the rule of law. We believe in freedom of speech, freedom of the press, freedom of worship, equal rights regardless of race, sex, sexuality or faith.

> We believe in respecting different faiths but also expecting those faiths to support the British way of life. These are British values. And are underpinned by distinct British institutions. Our freedom comes from our Parliamentary democracy. The rule of law exists because of our independent judiciary. This is the home that we are building together.

Here, "bigotry, aggression and theocracy" are directly contrasted with "democracy", "rule of law" and various "freedoms", including freedom of speech and worship among various others. In this way, a clear essentialist categorization is undertaken of good and evil values. In terms of community, Cameron addressed the very multicultural staff and student cohort seated before him by stressing that the good, liberal values were "ours", thus presenting a very multiculturalist notion of Britishness. "We are all British", and "our freedom comes from *our* Parliamentary democracy" [emphasis added by the author].

Conversely, the out-group "they" are identified as "extremists". The word "they" was used twelve times in the speech to identify this particular out-group and to ascribe negative values and actions to them: "they will use you"; "they will brainwash you"; "they will enslave and abuse you"; "they aim to destroy Islam", for example. There were also other groups identified as "they" rather than "us" in the speech to whom more positive attributes were attached, namely "families and communities"; national communities such as Kurds and other Iraqis and Syrians who can challenge the rhetoric of ISIS; and "young Muslim girls" who deserve "our protection" from the recruiting strategies of the extremists and the indignity and oppression of female genital mutilation (FGM): a practice on which the former Prime Minister dwelt for a period in the middle of his speech. "They" was also used to described the internet provider companies, who, it was claimed, should be important partners to the government in helping to monitor extremist activities in cyberspace.

The speech presented a clear official understanding of the process of "radicalization", which was mentioned six times in the speech, once in the context of "de-radicalization programmes". Despite being a complex and contested notion, as discussed earlier, this process was not analysed or described in the speech, but taken as an accepted given, which generally reflects the official narrative on this factor. With this said, the former Prime Minister did outline four "reasons" why young people might be drawn into the extremist Islamist ideology. These were identified as: the "energising" power of extremist rhetoric; the process of "radicalisation"

whereby people are drawn into extremism along a pathway by "non-violent extremists"; a process in the community whereby extremists are "overpowering other voices within Muslim debate"; and last but not least, the "question of identity".

"Identity" is mentioned six times in the speech. On one occasion, this is in the context of the Far Right, but in other occasions it is used in conjunction with problems of "isolation", "cohesion" and an "identity crisis" for later-generation migrants with hyphenated identities who suffer from "neither feeling a part of the British mainstream nor a part of the culture of your parent's background". (Here, Cameron was directly addressing some of the ethnic minority students in his audience.)

While the speech opens with identifying extremist "Islamist" ideology as the key security problem, the factor of Far Right extremism is sometimes mentioned in conjunction as a similarly troublesome extremist ideology. The "far right" is mentioned four times in the speech and always in a wholly negative way (twice with the descriptor "despicable" and twice with "poisonous"). Use of such florid adjectives is a well-known device in discourse and rhetoric to influence the conceptions of the reader or listener. There is also a possible political factor here, in that the Cameron government was keen to adapt to some of the previous criticisms of the Labour government's Prevent policy in its supposed stigmatization of the Muslim community, by being careful to occasionally mention Far Right extremism as being just as dangerous as that of the Islamists. Critics such as Kundnani have suggested that this is mere official window-dressing, and that the policy still focuses almost exclusively on Muslims in practice (Kundnani 2009:24). Contestations about this point are explored in the next chapter on the workings of the Prevent policy and considerations of how far narratives match the reality.

Many scholars and commentators have noted the manner in which Britishness is frustratingly vague and amorphous in its construction. Croft argues that the experience of the Second World War and British resistance to a Nazi invasion constituted the "foundational moment" of contemporary British identity (Croft 2012:15). In Cameron's speech, the British ability to "face down Hitler" is indeed mentioned. "Time and again", he noted, "we have stood up to aggression and tyranny". The word "aggression" is one of the features attributed earlier in the speech to the "extremist" out-group, and the subsequent rhetorical device is to establish a continuous historical narrative of British resilience in the face of adversity, starting with the Second World War, and moving through

Communism, IRA terrorism and into the contemporary threat of ideological extremism.

If this resilience is one component of British identity, therefore, then others identified in the speech are a fairly loose collection of liberal democratic values, comprising democracy, freedom, rule of law and a multiculturalist secularism in which all faiths and cultures are equal before the law and enjoy fair and protected rights within the state. In his speech, Cameron said that Britain has been constructed as a "successful multi-faith, multi-racial democracy", and that these values are "as British as queuing and talking about the weather". Such an avowedly cultural definition of national identity would be too frustratingly vague and subjective for many, and, as discussed, differentiates Britain from many of its continental European neighbours, where national foundations and constitutions in many cases much more clearly define the nation and its values. At one level, there seems no reason why an Anglo-Saxon notion of state in which democratically-developed law (rather than ideology), which clearly delineates a range of rights and freedoms, cannot be the basis for security and cohesion within a multicultural state. Conversely, once such a state starts to attempt to intervene in ideology and expression, as the Counter Extremism Bill proposes to do, an inherent paradox is introduced into the equation. This may prove to be the downfall of the Bill, in that, ironically, it is essentially "not British" to regulate what people can and cannot say.

This complexity aside, however, if we take Cameron's speech as a form of speech act (and it was chosen as a deliberate and specific platform for announcing the principles of the proposed Counter Extremism Bill), a number of interesting official narrative constructions are identified. Firstly, contemporary security problems are identified not as a problem of disquiet over British foreign policy, which has been identified as a major difficulty for many in Muslim communities but is not mentioned once in the speech, but as a problem of the influence of external extremist ideologues, who come into British communities from the outside. This is a clear deflective securitization by the former Prime Minister. Processes of radicalization are taken as a given, without need for elucidation. The Far Right is clearly identified as a nefarious security threat and an ideology very removed from mainstream ideas, although it is introduced rather sporadically into a discussion dominated by the threat from Islamist extremists, which could lend weight to critics who see it as a somewhat tokenist element of official discourse.

Britishness is defined – I would argue - reasonably clearly as an all-embracing, multiculturalist and secular vision, in which democracy, freedom under various rights and the rule of secular law are the touchstones. With this said, the question of who is defined by "us" and "them" in the speech is somewhat ambiguous in places. Initially, the feeling is that "extremists" are the out-group and mainstream moderates of all hues are the "we". But in places, sections of the Muslim community are referred to as "you" or "they". This applies, for example, to moderate voices who may be being swamped by extremist voices within the Muslim community, and to mosques who may be subjected to attacks by xenophobic groups. (In one passage, "Muslim families" are identified as having a stake in confronting Far Right extremists who are "planning to attack your mosque".)

It may be the case that not too much should be read into such semantics. At one level, Cameron was addressing a local community in his visit to Birmingham, so his government were the "we" and the members of the community sat before him, many of whom happened to be Muslim, were the "you". (At the same time, a very small number of officials at the top of government are Muslim.) But in other ways, such ambiguity over who is inside and who is outside the tent of British identity and nationality may be a dangerous thing and a flaw in the official rhetoric on identity.

Meanwhile, the theory that second- and third-generation minority communities with complex hyphenated identities may be more at risk of a damaging "identity crisis" than those with more monolithic identities, is also taken as an accepted given. Some are critical of the manner in which such a theory has become established fact (Aly 2015:5–6). The structuralist critic, Rattansi, suggests that in countries with colonial pasts such as Britain, the "identity vacuum" thesis may even be becoming outdated, in that there is evidence from polling of young ethnic minority citizens that they are in the process of constructing new, hybridized and hyphenated British identities that share many values with their majority-community compatriots (Rattansi 2011:134). Conversely, other studies have identified that tensions experienced by people with "dual identities" in Western contexts can be extremely problematic (Simon et al. 2013). However, despite the complexity of the debate and the differing theses being offered, the official discourse will tend to take certain theories as established facts and use them to construct a simplified and seemingly deterministic narrative.

6.3.2   Case Study 2: Hizb-ut Tahrir Press Release on David Cameron's Counter-Extremism Strategy

In October 2015, *Hizb-ut Tahrir* (HUT) issued a critique of the government's Counter Extremism Bill proposals (HUT 2015b), which had taken more shape in the preceding weeks and had been outlined in essence in David Cameron's speech at Ninestiles School. As the government had suggested, the general policy-shift marked "an increasing focus on non-violent extremism" (HM Government 2016). In this way, policy has been edging rather uncharacteristically (from an Anglo-Saxon point of view) out from the front-end question of actual terrorist attacks and into the deeper hinterland of ideologies and processes that could be labelled more accurately as the territory of political and ideological "subversion". This reflected what David Cameron had called "muscular liberalism", whereby secular, democratic and multiculturalist policies would increasingly be emphasized over softer, community-friendly policies supposedly adopted in the past (Number10.gov 2011). The policy was also shifting upstream from the "bleeding edge" of actual terrorist attacks. In essence, in societal terms, the move was towards more melting-pot than salad-bowl policy. From a political point of view, this could appease some of the anxieties in the majority community towards immigration and its supposed security implications, and possibly bring voters who might be drifting towards newer "freedom" parties such as UKIP back towards the centre-right Conservative party.

HUT's October 2016 critique of these policies was robust. It opened with the following words:

> UK Prime Minister David Cameron has announced a series of measures to silence dissenting views – and to ban lawful religious practice – saying they fall outside his definition of "British values".
>
> These proposals – like almost all counter-extremism policy in this country – are not about "terrorism" or violence – but are about enforcing a secular identity, suppressing political views and reforming the religious values of Muslims. They are a deflection from government policies – foreign and domestic – that are recognized drivers of legitimate grievances.

The article subsequently has three themes that frame its critical narrative, some of which echo the article examined earlier in this chapter about the "toxicity" of Prevent. First, a number of rhetorical devices are used to equate the Cameron government with "totalitarian" regimes, thus discrediting its professed democratic and liberal values. Second, concepts which

are taken in the official discourse and elsewhere as established givens, such as the process of radicalization for example, are questioned, while at the same time some alternative assertions are made. Finally, the suggestion is strongly made that Islamophobia is behind much of the official discourse, and that Muslims are wrongly stigmatized and equated generally with terrorist activities in the public consciousness. More specifically, there is a suggestion that British government intolerance of *Salafi* ideals, with which HUT has much sympathy, are being suppressed in favour of a process of entrenched secularization.

The point is also made early in the statement that the government's official securitizing of extremism reflects a deliberate "deflection from government policies" in such areas as foreign policy, towards more cultural and secular agendas. This connects with the critique of David Cameron's speech above, where foreign policy was not mentioned at all in favour of a concentration on issues connected with "extremist" ideology.

On the question of totalitarianism, the HUT statement identifies specific regimes that have become the "friends" of the British government, including the "old friends in the Saudi royal family" and "new friends in the Chinese politburo". The former are a particular target for *Salafi* thinking, since they are considered an "apostate" regime that illegitimately rules the land in which the holy sites of Mecca and Medina are located. As we know, despite their *Wahhabist* ideals, the Saudi monarchy are key partners of Britain and the West more generally in repressing revolutionary "jihadist" *Salafism* in the region, since they see it as a direct threat to their power. They are also enthusiastic customers of Britain's defence industry.

There then follows more direct imagery of totalitarianism, in a quote from the media representative of HUT, Taji Mustafa:

Cameron seems proud to propose more "police state" policies.... Including arbitrary blacklisting of "radicals", subjecting them to a variety of measures including house arrest and internal exile, threatening a dissolution of mosques and imposing new censorship rules on broadcasters.

..What does it say of his confidence – or lack of it – in the judicial system of this country that he plans to take a flamethrower to Magna Carta, bypassing due process and giving the executive more power to criminalise peoples'

views and lifestyles, rather than use existing laws which outlaw incitement to violence?

Is every critic of liberal values or the democratic system to be labelled an "extremist", in this so-called "free society"? (HUT 2015b).

Further imagery of totalitarianism is invoked in reference to Cameron's "'stasi' state", recalling the archetypal East German police state of the communist era. Orwellian rhetoric, as discussed in the earlier example, including "thought-policing" and "precrime" are also attributed to the government. There is further reference to "a new 'McCarthy era'" in which "teachers, doctors, nurses, job centre employees and nursery-workers are now expected to be a security arm of the state". This refers to the wider local authority responsibilities under the government's Prevent strategy in which all state employees are expected to be aware of, and to flag up any concerns they have about the potential radicalization of individuals under their care. (Indeed, such responsibilities were made a statutory duty for public-sector workers under the Counter Terrorism and Security Act of 2015.) Cases of particular concern can be referred to the authorities for consideration of feeding into the "Channel" process, which is examined in more detail in the next chapter. In HUT's critique, these responsibilities are likened to the sinister experiences of the Cultural Revolution in China or the Stalinist "Great Terror" years, in which citizens were encouraged to report on any colleagues or family members who were suspected of counter-revolutionary ideas, with terrible consequences for those accused.

Reference is then made to a series of repressive rulers in history who had attempted to repress Islam, namely "Stalin, Putin, Islam Karimov [the former post-Soviet authoritarian leader of Uzbekistan who proscribed HUT as a terrorist organization] and the leaders of the Quraysh [the Arabian tribe that initially attempted to quash Mohammad and his new religion of Islam]". Here we can see an interesting historical narrative that selectively links repressive rulers and groups across history in a continuous story of the repression of Islam. Foucauldian fragments of history can then feed into the critical narrative.

The second key theme concerns the certainty of certain theories and topics. On the question of the suggested deflection by the government away from issues of foreign and indeed domestic policy as drivers for insecurity, HUT's statement says that these factors are "recognized drivers of legitimate grievances". Both of the adjectives used here ("recognized"

and "legitimate") strongly imply that there is wide consensus on these issues and that there is little cause for debate (which could be said to be a considerable simplification of the issues at best). Similarly, Cameron is accused of perpetuating the "discredited links between beliefs and violence", although the statement does not expand on who has discredited them, how or why. Later on, the "conveyor belt" theory in which individuals might move down a pathway from mainstream Islamic ideas to those supporting violent extremism is dismissed somewhat easily as a "discredited narrative".

Conversely, the theory of "radicalization", accepted as a given in the Prime Minister's statement above, is subjected to detailed scrutiny. The HUT statement claims that "there is much evidence that 'radicalisation' was caused by political grievances and not 'ideology'". Various arguments are offered in support of this thesis. Firstly, reference is made to the well-documented empirical evidence that most of the individuals who have committed terrorist attacks in the contemporary era are not particularly religious people, but have often led rather secular and irreligious lives prior to their interest in violent extremism. The "prominent terrorism expert John Horgan" (another use of Lockean *argumentum ad verecundium*), who has conducted much work on putative radicalization processes, is quoted as saying that "The idea that radicalization causes terrorism is perhaps the greatest myth alive today in terrorism research" (cited in Knefel 2013). The reason for this statement is the truism that "people who engage in terrorism don't necessarily hold radical beliefs" (Knefel 2013).

This argument allows for two further theories. Firstly, if "radicalization" is a myth, then "deradicalization" is a sinister smokescreen for policies of "making Muslims less Islamic, more "westernised" or secular, and more submissive to political norms". Again, the symbolism here is of authoritarian regimes in which any professed thoughts that run counter to the state's wishes or to the revolutionary agenda can be criminalized and repressed. HUT mention certain historical regimes where this has been the case, but they could also have mentioned any number of other countries including post-revolution Iran, or indeed Egypt, where the *Salafi* revolutionary Sayyid Qutb was imprisoned and executed for his radical Islamic beliefs. In this narrative, contemporary Britain is equated with such repressive regimes in the past and present, turning on its head the notion that Britain is a paragon of liberal democratic values.

Secondly, the whole notion that contemporary terrorism is in any way "Islamic" or even religious can be reversed if the protagonists are not particularly religious people but, rather, politically motivated. On this factor, HUT gains support from the somewhat unlikely source of Europol, whose 2014 Terrorism Situation and Trend Report controversially suggested that only 2 percent of all terrorist attacks in the European Union during 2013 were religiously-inspired, of which Islamist-related attacks were a subset. The vast majority of attacks were "separatist", and a considerable number of these related either to Corsican separatists in France or the ETA movement in Spain (Europol 2014).

Interestingly, the subsequent period was one in which a number of fairly large-scale Islamist-related terrorist attacks were committed in Europe, and especially in France and neighbouring countries such as Belgium. This was also the period in which considerable numbers of "jihadist" travellers were motivated to travel from European countries to the conflict in Iraq and Syria. In its 2016 report, however, Europol explains that it has changed its definition of "religiously-inspired terrorism" to that of "jihadist terrorism", since "the crimes committed by a relatively small group of fanatics could be confused with Islam and wrongly associate the religion of millions with the atrocities performed by only a handful" (Europol 2016). In this way, the Islamic connection with such attacks is scrupulously avoided. We might say that the semantics here are clearly very important in the cognitive constructions they allow.

The final theme in HUT's statement is the implication of underlying Islamophobia in British government policies and statement. Here, there is a specifically *Salafi* dimension to the narrative, favoured ideologically by HUT, in which "democracy" and liberalism are counter-posed against more *Salafi* Islamic identity symbols and preferences such as particular styles of dress or appearance; a desire for different genders not to "mix freely" at universities; a desire by parents for their children not to participate in Christian nativity plays at school; the holding of "alternative political views", or of being distrustful of the media. Indeed, these practices are seen by HUT as grounds for surveillance and repression by the state.

In many ways, this separationist agenda was the target for the government's "muscular liberalism" message, in which a salad-bowl multiculturalism that allowed communities to live in cultural and political isolation from one another has been portrayed as potentially damaging to security

and community cohesion in the longer term. In many ways, this is the central weakness and paradox of multiculturalism. The essence of such a policy is to allow communities to express themselves however they wish, and to separate cultural lives from the concerns of the state, with the only red lines being the rule of law. This is a very different model from French-style assimilationism, for example, where cultural expressions by communities in the public space are far more regulated and prescribed. The liberal, multiculturalist approach might be assumed to be more resilient in its flexibility, but the question is where the state draws the red lines. On some issues, such as incitement to violence, the values may seem simple and agreed. But in areas such as gender equality, tolerance of sexual diversity, removal of children from certain religious assemblies and practices in school, and even very specific practices such as *halal* butchery, visible differences can easily start to develop between communities and be exploited by those practising identity politics as dangerous symbols of separation and isolation, if not indeed questions of *patriotism*. For some Muslims at any rate, to *not* be allowed to exercise such expressions of identity feels tantamount to religious discrimination, when this is supposedly one of the cornerstones of liberal democracy. For many in the majority community, however, the visible symbolism of changes in the way that one community interacts with and apparently withdraws from the wider community could be interpreted as a sense that British identity is changing fundamentally at its roots.

6.3.3   Case Study 3: English Defence League (EDL) Media Announcement, August 2016

To understand how such factors may become mobilized in identity politics, it is useful to counter-pose the above narratives with those of the Far Right, in this case the EDL. As discussed above, it should be noted that the EDL is very much an extreme voice within British society, and is not widely supported, as evidenced by the dwindling number of attendees at its rallies and events, especially after the movement's leader left in 2013 and evidence of splits emerged. At the same time, we should be cognizant of López's thesis on "dog whistle politics", and the power of "coded racial messages" in mainstream politics (López 2015). While most in the majority community would not wish to openly associate themselves with the EDL in any shape or form, some of its messages will clearly resonate with a much wider constituency than it represents. The political fortunes of

traditional mainstream political parties in the postmaterialist and postmodern era may depend in part on how skilfully they can incorporate some of these messages while remaining true to their supposed liberal ideals. If they do not, the spectre of the "freedom" parties will loom ever larger.

The EDL narrative under analysis here is a media announcement that accompanied a call for supporters for a rally in Nottingham, in August 2016 (EDL 2016). As discussed above, after a few years of disintegration into a number of very small and more traditional xenophobic movements, the EDL showed some signs of its resurrection during 2016 with a rally in Dudley that took them back to their pre-2013 attendance numbers. One of the reasons for this may have been events in British politics in the preceding months, and especially the referendum in June 2016 on whether to leave the EU, which the EDL has managed to weave into its narrative about the ills of the political elite.

Another key development has been the revelation of a handful of major organized sexual grooming cases across England, spearheaded by a case in the northern town of Rotherham, which began being investigated in the late 1990s and led to the conviction of five men of British-Pakistani identity in 2010 on charges of a series of sexual offences against minors. A subsequent investigation found that this was not the only case in the town by any means. The Rotherham case and others like it have allowed the EDL to develop a narrative that incorporates two factors: first, a generalized anti-Muslim narrative is based on the fact that all of the Rotherham accused were later-generation British Muslims, and this allows a supposedly causal link to be established between the Muslim community and serious crime. Second, the fact that the police and town council authorities in Rotherham were later found to have been negligent in investigating the case and appearing not to understand its extent and seriousness (or, indeed, to have suppressed these factors for reasons of risk aversion), has allowed the EDL to develop the generalized anti-elite narrative which says that the British establishment is pathetically hidebound by "political correctness" and cannot be trusted to protect the majority community's security and wellbeing.

On the latter aspect, the EU referendum has also allowed for a narrative of the working class scoring an unusual success against the political elite in calling for "Brexit" when most of the establishment were in favour of remaining in the union, and to continually re-emphasize the argument subsequently that the political establishment cannot be trusted when they appear to be vacillating about and over-complicating the process of

initiating the departure. Take, for example, the headline of the right-wing populist newspaper *The Daily Mail* on 3 November 2016, which chose – highly controversially - to brand as "enemies of the people" the High Court judges who had ruled against the government in determining that the process to initiate Brexit had to be submitted to a parliamentary vote (Daily Mail 2016). This was not the EDL speaking, but the newspaper with the highest daily circulation in Britain. Even from this brief headline we can see echoes of standard Far Right themes of "patriotism", and suggestions of an elitist conspiracy against the common people.

In the August 2016 statement under review, there are three rhetorical themes which can be identified. First is a generalized linking of the wider Muslim community with serious crime. Second is the factor of suspicion over the supposedly nefarious and conspiratorial intentions of the ruling political establishment; and third is a sense of panic over the rising "Islamification" of Britain and a professed need to stem the tide.

The media announcement begins by addressing the people of Nottingham directly, and explaining that the EDL were coming to their city to highlight a number of issues, the first of which was "the steady stream of Nottinghamshire residents involved in Islamic terror-related activities". This is immediately interesting in that it states as an unexplained and uncontested fact that, firstly, there is such a thing as "Islamic terror" (which, as we saw earlier, is dismissed as a myth by HUT); and second, that there has been a considerable number of Nottinghamshire residents involved in this criminal activity. On the latter point, it is highly unlikely that the EDL has access to any figures which break down the regional domicile of individuals arrested on terror offences, and is probably basing the above assertion on a handful of published cases which are assumed to be indicative of a much wider problem. Again, however, the important point is how such a message is socially constructed and accepted by the receiver, and not whether it has any substance.

The statement then highlights a number of criminal activities and directly links them – sporadically - to Muslim identity. Sexual grooming is described in one case as "Muslim grooming", and reference is made to "Muslim grooming, abuse and trafficking gangs". It is claimed that there have been 76 completed trials across the country of "Muslim abusers" in 46 separate localities. The intention here is to suggest that the well-publicized Rotherham case was not an isolated incident, but evidence of a structural weakness within the Muslim community nationally. A further

gender dimension is mentioned, whereby "Muslim women are not inclined to expose their criminal menfolk", as, it is suggested, a significant proportion of Muslims believe that their wives should "obey their husbands". Thus, not only are Muslims generally accused of being criminal, but also of frequently suppressing and obfuscating investigations into their criminality. A side-swipe is also delivered on gender inequality, which, it is implied, differentiates Muslim society from that of the majority British community.

Other acts of criminality mentioned in the statement and linked specifically to the Nottinghamshire environment include "honour based violence"; "forced marriage"; and one case of rape "by an asylum seeker". In all cases, a direct link to Muslims is implied by the context rather than specifically stated.

The second theme in the statement concerns the perceived wrong-doings of the establishment. This is a persistent theme throughout many of the EDL's statements, and indeed throughout much rhetoric more generally on the Far Right. As already mentioned, the June 2016 referendum on leaving the EU receives a lengthy analysis in the statement under review, in terms of it being a supposedly rare opportunity for the "British people" to "have their say"; and in a growing sense of anxiety that the establishment may attempt to delay or quash the result.

Interestingly, some of the imagery in the statement echoes that of the HUT statement, particularly in the shape of reference to a "thought police culture". In HUT's rhetoric, this Orwellian reference is made in order to equate the policing of supposedly radical ideologies with the actions of an authoritarian police state. In the EDL's rhetoric, however, the accusation of thought-policing is subtly different, in that a suggestion is made that the establishment is hide-bound by "political correctness" – a much-quoted accusation on the Far Right. In this way, the EDL suggests that the political establishment practices a sort of enforced Barthian depoliticizing of public rhetoric, whereby certain things cannot be said for fear of offending particular communities or causing social friction. In the Rotherham abuse case, this suppression of thought and rhetoric during the 1990s is perceived to have led directly to a serious crime being under-investigated and under-publicized for several years, with disastrous results. In most cases, the South Yorkshire police are in the direct firing-line of EDL's criticism, but there is also reference to a "cover-up" by "government officials". In one part of the statement, an establishment-led conspiracy is described, conducted by "officials and interest groups" to

"sidetrack us and exhaust us", and even to "manipulate the reality" in news reports about the problem by scrupulously avoiding the depiction of Muslims. In the wilderness of mirrors of political myth, it seems as if the EDL is presenting its own narrative as the "truth" and that counter-narratives can be dismissed as nefarious manipulation by the establishment. In many ways, this is a standard populist technique, as Donald Trump's accusations about media conspiracy during the 2016 American presidential elections aptly illustrate (Leibovich 2016).

On the question of immigration, the EDL is robustly suspicious of the authorities, and curiously equates the supposed problem of immigration from "outside the EU" with Muslims, when much of its concern is with Muslims who are British nationals. Much as with the case of crime, this slightly obscure linkage of issues connects the wider Muslim community with another "problem", namely that of immigration. The statement notes:

> **Immigration from *outside* the EU** – We are among the 17.5 millions who have a strong expectation that the referendum result will encourage our government to be far more selective in who it allows into the UK from *outside* Europe. This is really what the British people demand. And any government that tries to pretend that demand does not exist, or attempts to "fog up" their response to it, will have 17.5 million Britons demanding decisive action . . .
>
> The referendum was not about non-European immigration, but the feeling is widespread among Leave voters that we need to control all immigration and that freeing us from the EU is just the first of two important steps. The referendum vote sends a message that the second step must be decisive and *can begin immediately*. It must not be put into the "too hard basket" for fear of offending Muslims [emphasis in original].

In this way, a warning is made to the government that the people have spoken, and the government would do well to respond decisively and quickly on the immigration issue. Secondly, an implication is made that most non-EU immigration is of Muslims, when the figures suggest that the picture is far more complicated. For example, a report by the Oxford University Migration Observatory published in January 2016 found that, in a study of migrants to Britain derived from the 2013 Labour Force Survey, majority-Muslim countries of origin contributed only 8.4 percent of the total in terms of country of birth (namely Pakistan and Bangladesh (Migration Observatory 2016)). The single highest origin of migrants by

birth was India, at 9.2 percent (some of whom will be Muslim), but a combination of Poland, Ireland, Germany, South Africa, Nigeria, Romania and the United States together accounted for just over 26 percent of the rest. Of course, figures about country of birth do not necessarily equate to religious affiliation, nor are these figures necessarily a definitive count of all migrants, but it is clear that equating all non-EU immigration to Britain with Muslims is clumsy at best and misleading at worst.

The final theme in the statement is that of a panic over the "Islamification" of Britain. This is core territory for the EDL and is a thread through most of its communications. The main concerns are listed under the heading of "A national anti-sharia strategy to reduce the Islamist threat". Here, as has been noted elsewhere in EDL rhetoric, a purported concentration on the risks of violent extremists of an Islamist flavour becomes diluted into a general disquiet about the wider religion of Islam and the Muslim community. "Islamification", argues the statement, "threatens the British way of life". Again referring to immigrants trying to enter Britain, the EDL asks the question as to whether a growing number of Muslim immigrants will "make us safer" or indeed "confident about our children's future". In somewhat romantic nationalist terms, the statement asks:

> Take a walk or drive through a part of England you love – really love. Will what you see be better in 2030 when the Muslim population has doubled, as projected?
>
> **We are on track to getting sharia in the UK** – We know from experience that, as the proportion of Muslims in a population increases, so too does insistent Islamic assertiveness. Muslims demand more – more of things that change this country in an Islamic direction and away from its natural course [emphasis in original].

There is an implicit suggestion here of "us" and "them" intersubjective identification: "this country" is the land of "us", while Muslims are seeking to change this country, and are thus somehow seen as separate from and outside this notion of English (or British) identity. There is also an interesting primordialist equating of "land" to national identity. In his analysis of the essence of *ethnie*, Anthony Smith noted the "mythical and subjective quality" of "places" to ethnic identification. In this way, a person does not even have to be currently living within a place to feel its

allure within their identity, since "we belong to it, as much as it belongs to us" (Smith 1991:23).

In this case, England and British identity are defined as things with a "natural course" of development and form which are fundamentally incompatible with Islam and its values. This is not, furthermore, just a problem of the influence of a radical fringe, but of Muslims within the population more generally who will inevitably "demand more". Meanwhile, the EDL says that British people must not "be shy about recognising and supporting the Christian roots of our country, its history and culture". In this way, historical continuity is struck with the notion of *Republica Christiana*, equating a European identity with Christianity.

There then follows in the statement a detailed list of actions that would constitute the "anti-sharia strategy", and which are signalled as being essential "if we are to survive as a nation". Such existential language underlines the anxiety and panic about the perceived changes in national identity underway. The proposed measures are many and varied, but include a mixture of banning measures (such as bans on "sharia courts and councils"; new mosque constructions; and the wearing of the *burqa* or *niqab* in public places); measures aimed at the disruption and curtailment of Muslim religious activities (such as "stopping amplified calls to prayer"; and stopping certification of *halal* butchers); and other measures such as the disruption of finances to Islamic organizations and new measures to regulate and monitor mosques and imams.

Interestingly, the general ethos of the proposed measures is similar to that in some continental European countries who adopt a more assimilationist and less melting-pot multicultural policy, such as France (where *burqas* and *niqabs* are banned in public buildings) and Switzerland (where a prohibition has been placed recently on the building of new mosques). In some cases these measures have resulted from the rise of populist right-wing "freedom" parties, such as the Swiss People's Party in the latter case.

Over the last few years, *The Economist* magazine in Britain has conducted an annual check on perceptions of Islam in Europe. It has found that most European countries display a considerable mismatch between perception and reality in terms of the proportion of their population that are Muslim. By cross-referring several different public opinion surveys, it was found, for example, that in Britain, while the public perception is that Muslims constituted 21 percent of the population in 2010, the real figure was actually 6 percent. In France, the mismatch was a public perception of a Muslim population of around 31 percent when the reality was 8 percent;

and in Belgium the respective figures were 29 percent perception against 6 percent reality (Economist 2016).

It is the case that the demographics of many Western European states are changing. In Britain, as in many neighbouring countries, the Muslim population is growing faster than the majority white community, primarily due to a higher birth rate, while the proportion of the majority community in the elderly bracket is increasing (Gani 2015). It is the case that the Muslim population has doubled in Britain in the ten years up to 2011, to just under 3 million, and that it could feasibly double again by 2030, as the EDL statement under review predicts. But this would still make it a relatively small proportion of the overall population and still very much a minority community. The fact that, as a recent Ipsos Mori poll found, there is widespread misperception and exaggeration of factors such as the relative proportions of minority communities in Western societies and rates of immigration, fertile ground is created for the narratives of radical and xenophobic movements. There seems little realistic threat for the foreseeable future of Britain sliding towards becoming a *Sharia* state, but faulty perceptions can allow for romantic visions of a slowly disappearing utopia and an existential anxiety about the future.

6.4   CONCLUSIONS

In many ways, the fear about the manner in which an identified out-group may be changing and eroding the fundamental essence of the in-group's perceived identity, is echoed across all three narratives under discussion here, in different ways. The EDL's sense of a loss of a mythical notion of England and Britishness over the coming years as the Muslim population increases may be the sort of "dog-whistle" issue of wider concern across the majority community, on which the government is picking-up and reflecting in its narrative of "muscular liberalism". Thus, the supposed ills of less cohesive and perhaps isolationist communities may be seen to be a fundamentally bad thing for British society. The "muscularity" of a new proposed approach may be an attempt to counter the "pathetic" charge of populist groups and sentiment, which suggests that the political establishment have been too weak and tentative and allowed problems to grow under their feet. Perhaps curiously, the approach adopts a more assimilationist policy more commonly seen across the Channel in France, which is, in many ways, somewhat alien to British experience in its community relations policy. In political terms, we have seen how apparently "radical"

messages may nevertheless have a wider latent appeal across the majority community at-large. Thus, capturing some of the narratives that feed on fears of crumbling social cohesion and assimilation may make a lot of sense for the mainstream political parties, particularly when they are losing support to emergent freedom parties such as UKIP.

Meanwhile, organizations like HUT may play into the dog-whistle fears of the majority community to a certain extent by contesting the "entrenched secularity" of British society and calling for more assertive and distinctive expressions of Muslim identity. This includes calls for a sort of cultural separation away from mainstream British society and practices in terms of refusing to participate in traditional Christian ceremonies in school, eating only *halal* meat and segregating genders in certain assemblies. While the intentions underlying such practices may be misunderstood and misinterpreted (and indeed exaggerated) in some cases, a policy of harder assimilationism would bring them very much to the fore as areas of contention within the national community.

In ways that mirror the link between seemingly radical ideas and latent ideas in the wider electorate, while HUT is not widely followed or necessarily respected across the broad Muslim community in the UK (a community which is very diverse in its composition), some of its ideas may strike chords with many Muslims. Most would not necessarily advocate the physical segregation of genders in public spaces, but would identify with a desire to assertively express Muslim identity without fear of censure or intimidation, perhaps, for example, by wearing the *niqab*. In this way, the narratives of supposedly radical groups can offer much value in understanding the political touch-points in wider discourse and society.

In these examples, the use of carefully engineered narratives, political myths and speech acts are all clearly present and support the value of such narrative analysis in political science. On the more radical fringes of the identity communities under analysis here, we can see a set of narratives which are general at odds with each other, but which, in some cases, demonstrate a curious affinity. Both the EDL and HUT, for example, are highly suspicious of the agenda and competence of the government and ruling political class in their security and community cohesion policies. Both will even sometimes use the same Orwellian imagery relating to "thought police" and a sinister depoliticizing of language to generate a widely-accepted political myth, if for different reasons. Similarly, HUT complains that the British government and many citizens are essentially

"Islamophobic" and equate all Muslims with criminality: the EDL confirms this suspicion by doing exactly that.

In terms of identity, the EDL develop the *Weltschmerz* notion of a gradual loss of an Arcadian England under the weight of creeping immigration and changes to culture and society. Islam and Muslims are singled-out as the clearly identifiable out-group, and are denigrated through a broad linkage between them and criminality. Such a narrative process is not a million miles away from episodes of genocidal out-grouping in history, in which certain communities are essentially dehumanized, and the only solution is to rid society of them (in this case, manifesting itself not as a call for genocide, but for "repatriation" proposals, as espoused by many groups on the Far Right). One of the key narrative techniques that supports this conscious sense of societal anxiety is the method of playing on the general European public's tendency to greatly over-estimate the size of minority communities and rates of immigration from outside of Europe. In this way, the facts and figures become much less important than people's perceptions of reality.

HUT, meanwhile, attempts to develop a narrative that the very concepts underpinning radicalization and terrorism that have generally become accepted as normative paradigms, are themselves myths peddled by a totalitarian government that is little better than the authoritarian regimes around the world it claims to revile. This is a mechanism which seeks to undermine all normative arguments in the field by pulling away the foundation stones. In this way, HUT plays with the notion of political myth by challenging perceptions and replacing them with new ones.

In the middle of the piece is the government, which itself attempts to develop a normative paradigm that focuses on the ills of radical ideology rather than political disquiet with government policy. If we take Fairclough's notion of the link between power and discourse, the argument might be that the government is much better placed to develop and propagate narratives that become widely accepted than fringe movements such as the EDL or HUT, since the government is occupying the seat of power.[4] (As we saw, Cameron underlined this notion by beginning his speech at Ninestiles School by recalling what he said "on the steps of Downing Street".) At the same time, in the postmodern and postmaterialist period of politics, it appears that a general loss of confidence in the established political class may be reducing the ability of the government to develop normative discourses and allowing new space for more populist and identity-based politics to

enter the fray. In this way, a description of politics as a battle of narratives may be assuming ever greater significance.

NOTES

1. The Home Secretary of the new Coalition government elected in 2011, Theresa May, suggested this was a key factor in the Prevent review and relaunch of 2011, in which the strategy was de-coupled from the local community funding elements. See BBC (2011).
2. Channel is a specific programme within the Prevent policy that designs "interventions" for those considered to be at risk of violent radicalization.
3. Group discussion with *Salafi* prayer group, Aylesbury, 28 May 2010.
4. See for example Fairclough's notion of the "dominant bloc" in a capitalist state (Fairclough 2001:27).

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State Policy and Strategy: Prevent, "Multi-agency" Responses, and the Way Forward

7.1   INTRODUCTION

It is sometimes assumed by today's students of security, terrorism and radicalism that policy and its effects in the area of counter-terrorism in Western countries such as Britain began with the 9/11 attacks in the US and the subsequent experience of Al Qaeda-related terrorism. There is some logic to this line of thinking, in that there is no doubt that the amount of legislative activity in the area of counter-terrorism and security policy more generally has substantially proliferated and accelerated since the beginning of the twenty-first century. Where earlier problems such as that relating to terrorism in Northern Ireland are remembered (leaving aside the fact that its problems are not completely "over" per se), it is often assumed that this episode was a completely different frame of reference from the contemporary era and was governed by a different set of considerations.

Scholars such as Fisher (2015) offer a different thesis, in which there is a clear continuity between counter-terrorism polices and debates during the period of the "Troubles" in Northern Ireland, as they are somewhat curiously known, and the contemporary era. In some cases, the passing of time has suggested that the same difficulties and problems were experienced by communities and governments alike. In this way, modern counter-terrorism policy is not so much a story of post-9/11 history as one of a longer, post-war history.

The Northern Ireland problem was clearly different in some important respects from the contemporary problem of violent Islamist-related

movements. For a start, the former distinguished itself from the latter through the fact that the underlying foundation for the conflict was a nationalist issue relating to a very specific post-colonial problem in a clearly defined corner of Europe. It is certainly the case that a religious sectarian dimension is threaded through this political conflict in complex ways, and that it is not without some diasporic considerations when we think of "Irish" communities in places such as the US. At the same time, security practitioners and probably many in the wider population think of the two as essentially different types of problem: indeed, there is some evidence that the former think of Irish Republican and Loyalist belligerents as "our terrorists", different and easier to understand than present-day Islamist terrorists.[1]

Similarly, as discussed, the "new terrorism" thesis that emerged during the 1990s and in accelerating form after 9/11 pitched the contemporary Islamist threat as something new and more exceptional than any terrorist threat seen before, identified as it supposedly was by a new form of religious "fanaticism" which contemplated such approaches as the use of biological and chemical weapons, and suicide bombers; things that had never been in the terrorists' armoury during the Troubles. This may be how considerations of radical ideology have increasingly entered the thinking in the contemporary era, at least in policy circles.

At the same time, some of the basic identity considerations are not entirely dissimilar across the two periods. An interesting literature and set of competing debates have emerged over the "threat within" thesis that has been a central aspect of both periods, in which certain communities are considered both "risky and at risk" (Heath-Kelly 2012:78) from radicalizers or terrorist recruiters. Such thinking owes much to Paddy Hillyard's "suspect community" thesis about the way in which the British state supposedly viewed the Irish at the height of the Troubles (Hillyard 1993). It is worth noting that there are important dissenters to this normative thesis, such as Greer (2010), who suggests that not only is there a lacking empirical basis for such a generalized theory (Hillyard's thesis was based on the testimonies of 115 interviewees), but that such theories ignore the important differentiations within communities. (In Northern Ireland, Loyalists were not seen as suspect in the same way as Republicans, even though they all lived side by side. Similarly, it is highly debatable that there is a single Muslim community in the UK and that it thinks monolithically about government counter-terrorism policy.) Notwithstanding the mounting evidence that we are entering a period of

post-truth politics, this chapter will attempt to explore how far empirical evidence of how policy affecting notions of radicalization and extremism is delivered on the ground, matches either normative or critical theses about such policy.

7.2   COUNTER-TERRORISM LEGISLATION IN BRITAIN: A HISTORY

7.2.1   *Northern Ireland*

Fisher charts and delineates the British counter-terrorism story by identifying a number of distinct periods of political and legislative change and development, the first three of which deal with the Troubles in Northern Ireland between 1969 and 1998. The story begins in October 1968, when a march led by a civil rights organization in the Northern Ireland town of Londonderry/Derry was met with violence by the Royal Ulster Constabulary (RUC) police, who had banned the march. Events soon descended into sectarian clashes and rioting (Fisher 2015:54). By the end of the following year, British troops had been deployed to Northern Ireland's streets to quell serious inter-community violence; the Provisional IRA had split from the Official IRA with the aim of stepping up armed resistance to the British state; and the long period of the Troubles had begun.

The first period, which stretched into the late 1970s, was marked by an initial and immediate requirement to maintain law and order in the restive province of Northern Ireland, and which was led very much in the early years by the military rather than the police. The instability and violence during this period was very considerable, and, in many ways, far worse than anything seen subsequently in the post-9/11 period. The University of Ulster's Conflict Archive on the Internet (CAIN undated), for example, records that, between 1969 and the end of 1977, a total of 1,905 people lost their lives in the Troubles. Of these, just over 58 percent (1,107) were civilians, while just short of 27 percent (513) were members of British security forces; principally soldiers and police officers. Most of the rest comprised sectarian killings committed by either Republican or Loyalist paramilitary groups within Northern Ireland. In the worst year of the whole period (1972), 479 people lost their lives in the violence. This compares with just 58 deaths in Islamist terror-related attacks in Britain

in more than ten years since 2005 (nearly 97 percent of which happened on one day), and one fatality committed by a Far Right activist.

The severity of the violence and unrest led to two significant factors in the government's counter-terrorism response. First, a legal conceptualization of such incidents as relating to serious violence and disorder was supplanted by a new set of exceptionalist measures in which the notion of terrorism and terrorists was clearly delineated. This change was embodied in the passing of the Prevention of Terrorism Act in 1974 – the first of many terrorism bills put in place in the ensuing years – which supplanted the Prevention of Violence Act of 1939 as being the primary piece of legislation in security policy in Northern Ireland. (Note the significant transition in language from violence to terrorism.)

Second, many of the measures taken during this early period of the Troubles were at the more dramatic and "emergency" end of the response spectrum, and were essentially "proactive", in the words of Rosendorff and Sandler (2004). Internment of primarily (though not exclusively) Irish Republican suspects was undertaken between 1971 and 1975 under the Special Powers Act of 1922, marking a relatively unprecedented move towards the detention of certain suspects without charge for sometimes lengthy periods.[2] (Even the Home Office now describes internment as "a policy widely regarded as disastrous" (House of Commons 2016a.)) In 1973, jury-less courts dubbed "Diplock courts" (after the peer who recommended them in a report to parliament in 1972) were put into operation under the Northern Ireland (Emergency Provisions) Act of 1973, and remain on the statute books in slightly amended form today. In 1978, the European Court of Human Rights admonished Britain for its use of "inhuman and degrading treatment" of fourteen detainees interned in Northern Ireland in 1971, while stopping short of saying the treatment amounted to torture (McDonald 2014).

In focusing on a specific episode during this period in the shape of the Falls Curfew of July 1970, Campbell and Connolly's assessment is that the strongly militarized counter-terrorism strategy of this period was, with the benefit of hindsight, a poor model to follow for contemporary counter-terrorism strategists, not least since the violence escalated so markedly after the British military's deployment to the streets of Northern Ireland in 1969 (Campbell and Connolly 2003:342). Such an "untrammelled transposition of a military model to a civilian context" produced, in their view, "a straightforwardly repressive technique" (Campbell and Connolly 2003:372). In more contemporary terms, it may be the case that such a

militarized response may have contributed to the "radicalization" of members of the Republican community towards the British state (as measured by the rise of recruits to the IRA), although such words were generally not used in that way at the time.

The second period in Fisher's model, which spans the ten years from 1979 onwards, is that of "criminalization" of the problem by the British government (Fisher 2015:72). The period coincided with the first years of the lengthy Margaret Thatcher premiership in Britain, during which terrorists were increasingly cast as "murderers" and "criminals", and the counter-terror response shifted more towards the police (in the shape of the RUC) and away from the army, although the latter still remained deployed.

Casualties during this period reduced to almost 50 percent fewer than the first period between 1969 and 1977, although were still at a greatly elevated level compared to the contemporary era, with 973 fatalities between 1979 and 1989 (CAIN undated). Aside from a remarkable terrorist attack in Brighton in 1984, in which the Prime Minister and several of her cabinet colleagues were very nearly assassinated by an IRA bomb (and, following which, the IRA infamously reminded the British government that "we only have to be lucky once"; Richards 2012:33), the period was marked by the miserable episode of the hunger strikes in the Maze prison in Northern Ireland in the 1980–1981 period, during which ten Republican detainees starved themselves to death.

As we have observed several times in this book, words are very important. As PM Thatcher said in 1981:

> There is no such thing as political murder, political bombing or political violence. There is only criminal murder, criminal bombing and criminal violence (cited in Mulcahy 1995:449).

Some years later, on the tenth anniversary of the 9/11 attacks in the US, the former Director-General of the MI5 intelligence agency, Dame Eliza Manningham-Buller, suggested that what had happened on 11 September 2001 was "a crime and needs to be thought of as such". The only thing making the attacks different from earlier terrorist attacks was their "scale and audacity", but not their essential criminal nature (Manningham-Buller 2011).

The sentiment expressed here in both cases is that the institutions and essential essence of the democratic state are sacrosanct, and that terrorist

violence in this context is fundamentally *illegitimate*: there can be no freedom fighters in a democratic society. Similarly, opposition to British foreign policy can only be a matter of political debate within the democratic process, and never a justification for terrorist violence, the expression of which, by essence, could be labelled "extreme".

In Northern Ireland, a change in status of prisoners in the Maze prison during the 1970s from being essentially political prisoners to being standard criminals (which entailed a change to, and loss of certain privileges) led to the hunger strikes, in which ten IRA men were ultimately to die. The battle of narratives was well underway at the time. Mulcahy concludes that the British government's intransigence in the face of the strikers and attempts to dismiss them both as low-level criminals and duped pawns of the IRA, backfired in many ways by providing a boost to the Republican movement: it generated much sympathy for the cause in foreign media, and provided a set of "martyrs" who were subsequently glamourized in the Republican community (Mulcahy 1995:464). Certainly, the prevalence of murals depicting the hunger strikers, and particularly one Bobby Sands, on the sides of houses in Republican districts of Northern Ireland's towns attests to the cultural capital that Sands and his colleagues generated for the IRA at the time. The fact that Sands was elected as a member of parliament for Sinn Fein in a by-election a month before he died, also allowed for a complex set of counter-narratives to be weaved around the relative democratic legitimacies of the strikers and the British government.

Another key problem with this period, variously described as a period of criminalization or "Ulsterization" of the problem, concerned questions surrounding the legitimacy of the local police force, the Royal Ulster Constabulary (RUC). The fact that the majority of officers in the RUC were drawn from the Protestant community, and that the force was repeatedly implicated in colluding with Loyalist paramilitaries in sectarian and strategic murders, such as those of the lawyer Pat Finucaine, and civil rights activist Miriam Daly, to name but two celebrated cases of many, led to a widespread conviction in the Catholic and Republican communities that the police could not be trusted to protect their interests. It was no accident that a central plank of the Good Friday Agreement in 1998 was a substantial restructuring of the constabulary and its relaunch as the Police Service of Northern Ireland (PSNI).

In the years leading up to the agreement of 1998, intensive and (at the time) secret negotiations behind the scenes between paramilitaries and the government eventually bore fruit and largely resolved the crisis. There are, of course, dissident factions of the IRA who believe that the struggle goes on, such as the Real IRA (RIRA) and Continuity IRA (CIRA), but overall casualties in the region in the ten years since 1998 have fallen to 81, representing just over two percent of the total number of casualties over the preceding 40 years (CAIN undated). It is fair to say Northern Ireland is experiencing a period of relative calm in its history at the time of writing, even if the "Troubles" have not completely gone away and could re-ignite in the wrong set of circumstances.

7.2.2   After the Troubles

In the year 2000, the Prevention of Terrorism Act was updated as the Terrorism Act, and in 2006, the Counter-Terrorism Strategy (CONTEST) was formally launched. In this way, the waning of the Northern Ireland terrorist problem led relatively seamlessly into the emergence of a purported threat from "international terrorism", with a new "threat within" component appearing to manifest itself from within Muslim communities. A series of police raids in March 2004 in connection with Operation Crevice, which led three years later to the conviction of five young British Muslim men for conspiracy to cause explosions, seemed to underline a new notion of "home-grown terrorism". This was punctuated just over a year after the Crevice arrests by the London bombings, dubbed "7/7", which constituted the worst terrorist attack in British history since the bombing of Pan Am flight 103 in 1988, and which was perpetrated by three British-born Muslim men, and a fourth convert to Islam originally from Jamaica. A number of other incidents followed in subsequent years, including the 2006 "liquid bomb plot" which temporarily closed Heathrow airport and led to a substantial change in airline security.

Such developments have led to what Fisher describes as a "plateau of exceptionality" in security policy (Fisher 2015:147), whereby the state considers itself to be at an almost permanently heightened risk of terrorist attack, justifying a substantial array of intrusive surveillance and security measures.

In 2004, a court ruling found internment to be in breach of the Human Rights Act of 1998, but the practice was effectively replaced by a new

regime of "control orders" for foreign nationals "suspected of involvement in terrorism, who could neither be convicted nor deported" (House of Commons 2016a:4). In 2006, the Terrorism Act was updated to include a substantial extension of counter-terrorism measures, many of which were directed at the "home-grown" problem. These included extending the pre-charge detention period to 28 days (by far the longest period of any European country); adding new offences of encouraging terrorism, disseminating terrorist publications and training for terrorist acts; and extending the powers of the Home Secretary to proscribe groups considered to be of risk to national security.

A change of government in 2010 led to a review of counter-terrorism legislation, and to a small retrenchment from some of its more draconian measures under a new Protection of Freedoms Act (2012), which threw a small amount of cold water on the "plateau of exceptionality" argument. Pre-charge detention of terrorist suspects was halved to 14 days, for example. The controversial control orders were replaced by Terrorism Prevention and Investigation Measures (TPIMs), but it is fair to say these are very largely new wine in old bottles. Similarly, section 44 of the Terrorism Act pertaining to stop and search powers was amended, whereby the police can now only apply stop and search under an authorization from a senior officer in which the power is considered necessary to avert a potential emergency. While some critics suggest that these are largely cosmetic measures, major civil rights groups such as Liberty have welcomed some of these changes (Liberty undated).

7.2.3   Prevent

2015 saw the passing of the Counter Terrorism and Security Act (CTSA), the main thrust of which was to place Prevent and its component "Channel" intervention process on a statutory footing. The CTSA has led to a chorus of protest from many critics, especially in the education sector, where a narrative is presented by some that the measures are akin to those of a police state in which free speech is curtailed and political dissidents are placed under suspicion by the authorities.[3]

Prevent was initially launched as a programme of Preventing Violent Extremism (PVE) under the CONTEST Strategy in 2006. In response to the London bombings of July 2005 and the perceived emergent "home-grown threat" centred in Muslim communities, the Labour government of the time made a link between community cohesion activities and the

threat of terrorism arising from certain local communities. The logic was that local inter-community grievances were presumed to be core drivers of extremism and radicalization against mainstream society. Under the Local Authority Agreements, National Indicator 35 (NI35) concerning the enabling of communities to be "resilient to violent extremism" was used to identify a set of district councils for whom Prevent funding would be allocated, based on the proportion of their population identifying as Muslim. One of the underlying objectives of NI35 was "understanding of, and engagement with Muslim communities" (Richards 2010:10).

In this way, the programme did explicitly target Muslim communities as the core communities of relevance to the programme, effectively identifying them as both "risky and at risk", albeit for reasons that did carry some logic. (At the same time, there was no mention in the initial strategy documents of potentially dangerous forms of extremism other than that related to Al Qaeda-related ideology.) Engagement comprised a number of activities, including the establishment of a new set of Prevent Engagement Officers (PEOs) in many police forces with the duty of liaising with their local Muslim communities; the establishment of multi-agency Prevent steering committees, usually chaired by the district council; the disbursement of money to community projects such as youth groups, Muslim educational activities and women's groups; and the piloting of a multi-agency safeguarding intervention panel called "Channel", chaired by the local police.

Acceptance of the measures in local areas was patchy, probably relating to the variable way in which the measures were implemented across different regions with differing crime priorities and differing communal landscapes. In Reading in the south of Britain, for example, a protest group was formed within the local Muslim communities in the early years of the policy called the Preventing Violent Extremism (PVE) Crisis Group, which angrily protested the supposed damage being done to inter-community relations by the policy (Richards 2010:18). Less than forty miles away in the town of Aylesbury, however, a review of the local Prevent activities found that a conscious effort had been made from the start to wrap Prevent within a wider envelope of existing "safeguarding" activities, and this appeared to have delivered much better relations between Muslim communities and the local authorities (Richards 2010:18).

It became clear, however, that some degree of animosity towards the policy was present in a number of towns and cities. In 2009, the

parliamentary Communities and Local Government Committee conducted a comprehensive inquiry into the "complex and sensitive" policy and the concern it had generated in some quarters (House of Commons 2010), many of the results of which fed into updated policy when the government changed the following year.

The key judgement was that PVE was "contentious and unlikely ever to be fully accepted in its existing form by those it is most important to engage" (House of Commons 2010:3). In particular, it had become apparent that the marrying of a counter-terrorism policy with one directed at community cohesion and relations risked stigmatizing Muslim communities and emphasizing their paradoxical "risky and at risk" status within British society. Much of the inquiry's findings focused on a concern put forward by many respondents that the policy was a thinly-veiled mechanism for spying on the Muslim community, whereby surveillance was wrapped in Orwellian language about "monitoring" and "safeguarding". The fact that the police had such a leading role in the management and implementation of the policy was seen as testament to these concerns.

It was generally seen that an explicit focus on one particular community – Muslims – was ill-advised and put that community on the back foot from the start. Linked to this was a suggestion that there had been a "preoccupation with the theological basis of radicalisation" in the policy, when "evidence seems to indicate that politics, policy and socio-economics may be more important factors in the process" (House of Commons 2010:3). This echoes the narrative analysis in the previous chapter, in which Muslim groups such as HUT have been suggesting the same thing, while the government has avoided such issues and focused squarely on ideology in its discourse.

Crucially, the inquiry did not suggest, unlike many of Prevent's arch critics, that the programme should be scrapped forthwith. Indeed, the parliamentary select committee concluded that it remained "convinced" that "a targeted Prevent strategy at national level is required" (House of Commons 2010:63). It noted, however, that the contemporary terrorist threat was "extremely complicated to comprehend and tackle", and this meant that broadening the scope of the programme was a bad idea (House of Commons 2010:63). Significantly, the inquiry's report echoed a somewhat Anglo-Saxon approach to the problem, in that it suggested that a move by government into "theological" areas of public life "must be avoided" (House of Commons 2010:64). The suggested logic was that, not only is it difficult to identify a single reason why any one individual

may proceed down a pathway of violent radicalization, but that state-level dabbling in theological issues suggested there were "'good' and 'bad' forms of Islam" (House of Commons 2010:64). Not only was this not the business of the state, it was suggested, but it also introduced complications into the question of which community groups should be engaged and which should not. On this issue, the inquiry's findings that some of the more potentially "radical" elements of the Muslim community (such as *Salafists*, for example) may be the very people with a good connection to the sorts of young people supposedly at risk from radicalization, was not followed by the subsequent change of government. Indeed, there is much evidence that policy has swung away from any engagement with these elements of the community, probably for political reasons of being seen to be delivering a tough and uncompromising approach.

Some methodological problems were noted in the inquiry's data gathering. The assertion by Arun Kundnani (2009), for example, put forward in his stinging critique of PVE entitled *Spooked*, that the programme was a sinister mechanism for the state to spy on Muslims, was seen as being somewhat flawed by virtue of the small set of respondents on which it was based.[4] (We saw earlier in this chapter how Hillyard's "suspect community" thesis has faced similar criticisms.) Similarly, the inquiry advised caution in considering the views of *Hizb-ut Tahrir* (HUT), who were accused in the report of "exploiting" negative perceptions of Prevent within the Muslim community by virtue of being fundamentally and avowedly opposed to Muslim engagement with the institutions of the secular, democratic state (House of Commons 2010:13).

Such concerns are significant, and raise two important issues. First, the continued need for good, empirical work in these areas remains paramount. It is not at all clear, for example, how the majority of Muslims in Britain across regions feel about their connection with "Britishness" and the merits of security measures being enacted by the government; nor, indeed, is it clear at all that there is any such thing as a single Muslim community. Second, and connected to the first, state interactions with minority communities will be doubly complicated and potentially flawed when those communities do not have good or consistent levels of interaction with the institutions of the state. This leads to the potential trap of having to liaise with self-appointed "community leaders" and spokespeople, when it is not clear how far such voices adequately represent the majority of people for whom they claim to speak. In this way, the loudest voices may be the ones heard, but the concerns they raise may not be

shared in any uniform way across wider communities. When the state is not particularly well-versed in the internal complexities and variations of those minority communities, then the risks of listening too much to the wrong people are greatly heightened. In the meantime, policy is formed on the basis of multiple and sometimes conflicting mechanisms of data gathering about the public's views, including a bewildering array of parliamentary inquiries, constituency discussions with members of parliament, and claims and counter-claims by pressure groups and self-appointed community spokespeople.

The change of government in 2010 saw the Conservatives come back into power, initially in a coalition with the Liberal Democrats, then as a majority government following the 2015 elections. In 2010 they sought to respond to criticisms of Prevent by re-launching it, following extensive consultation with various stakeholders and careful note being taken of the 2009 Communities and Local Government select committee report. To the chagrin of critics such as HUT, the policy was not scrapped, but retained, albeit with some important fundamental changes. The new policy was published in 2011.

In the refreshed policy (HM Government 2011), a decoupling was enabled between the counter-terrorism aspects of the policy and those relating to community cohesion. The five key objectives of the original PVE policy were slimmed down to three, comprising:

- Respond to the ideological challenge of terrorism and the threat we face from those who promote it;
- Prevent people from being drawn into terrorism and ensure that they are given appropriate advice and support;
- Work with sectors and institutions where there are risks of radicalization that we need to address.

In this way, questions of addressing socio-economic or other grievances which may have been underpinning problems were removed from the purview of the strategy, in favour of a more focused approach to addressing "ideology" and "supporting" those who might be vulnerable to radicalization. In line with the new "muscular liberalism" approach, mention of such contentious words as "Islamist", which risks conflating terrorism with a religion, was not avoided: indeed, it is mentioned 25 times in the updated strategy, in conjunction with "ideology", "movements", "groups", and "extremism". At the same time, more explicit mention is

made of other forms of extremism, such as that of the "extreme right wing", which is mentioned even more often in the strategy document than the word "Islamist"; and that relating to Northern Ireland-related terrorist groups. Indeed in his foreword to the 2011 strategy document, the reviewer of counter-terrorism legislation at the time, Lord Carlile of Berriew QC, noted that:

> This new strategy is designed to endure. Already it has to deal with a range of terrorism threats, including Al Qaeda and right-wing extremism. None is singled out for special treatment outside the operational demands of current threat levels. New groups may emerge as others fade (HM Government 2011:3).

In this issue can be found a very important aspect of the perception-versus-reality debate. We saw in the previous chapter how, before the revised Prevent strategy was published, the growing talk amongst officials of being interested in a wider range of sources of extremism beyond that relating to Muslim communities was dismissed by Kundnani as a smokescreen, when the reality was that a disproportionate degree of attention was still being applied through Prevent to Muslims as the new "suspect community" (Kundnani 2009:24). At one level, it is the case that, for want of a better term, Islamist-related terrorism and "extremism" remain very much at the top of the security agencies' list of priorities in this area. We saw in chapter one the recent assertion by the head of Britain's MI5 security agency that approximately 3000 individuals with an active interest in committing terrorist acts supposedly relating to Islamist-related ideology were under surveillance (Burman 2015). This is clearly not an insignificant number and constitutes a serious threat. It also almost certainly eclipses by some margin the number of Far Right or other "extremists" currently residing in Britain with any serious or organized plan to carry out a terrorist act. As tax-payers whose money is being spent by the likes of MI5 to appropriately and effectively deliver security to our streets, we would hope and expect that relative priorities are being properly understood and form the basis of sensible operational plans. This is almost certainly a sentiment shared by many, regardless of their identity.

In a recent interview with senior police officers involved in Prevent delivery nationally, it was claimed that the split between Islamist-related and Far Right (and other) extremism cases under investigation currently accorded to a ratio of approximately 80/20.[5] With this said, the picture

varied regionally depending on local circumstances. In London, for example, there were relatively few current investigations involving individuals of concern on the Far Right, while in the North-East of England, a spike had recently been noted in Far Right extremism. It was noted that the figures often fluctuate in response to certain events, such as a terrorist attack, or, more recently, the "Brexit" vote, in addition to patterns of migration and other local incidents and controversies. Those present felt, however, that the relative proportions of effort against different extremist threats was entirely appropriate and "defensible" in the light of information being received.

In this way, as Lord Carlile noted above, the operational picture will relate to an assessment of the threat at any given time, and this will change constantly. Regardless of this point, however, or of various facts and figures about relative priorities, many in Muslim (or indeed any) communities will not necessarily have an accurate perception of the picture, and may be influenced by certain voices claiming that the inclusion of Far Right and other forms of extremism in the strategy is merely cosmetic. Much more importantly, the above relates to the more serious end of terrorist threat, while many people in Muslim communities may be more influenced by lower-level but daily animosity and prejudice, especially during times of heightened tension following events such as the "Brexit" vote in the Summer of 2016. In this way, the social construction of threat and perceptions about how well or otherwise the state is addressing it, may be much more resilient and influential than any facts or figures. This is a factor the state needs to consider carefully in its formulation of policies in this area. As the 2009 inquiry by the Communities and Local Government select committee noted, despite the fact that the government's monitoring and data gathering activities did not really equate to an organized programme of "spying" on the Muslim community, the fact remained that a fear of this happening was widespread amongst the people consulted by the inquiry team (House of Commons 2010:3). The construction of this fear within communities has to be considered and addressed as far as possible.

The second key area of change in the updated Prevent strategy of 2011 concerns an increased focus on working with "sectors and institutions where there are risks of radicalisation". This follows through from sometimes contentious research conducted during the initial PVE era, which suggested that institutions such as prisons and universities (and, to a lesser extent, schools) were significant focal points for the work of radicalizers

and ideologues. The Conservative government has decided to pick up on these ideas and make policy in this area much firmer. The most significant development to this end has been the passing of the CTSA of 2015, making it a statutory duty for employees of public sector institutions to discharge their Prevent responsibilities.

In universities in particular, there has been widespread discomfort about the way in which a duty to monitor students for signs of extremist sentiment or activity, or to curtail or ban events in which extreme views may be expressed, could be seen to militate against the fundamental principles of universities being places of unrestricted education and citadels of free speech. Right at the beginning of the PVE period, Professor Drummond Bone spoke on behalf of Universities UK to express "grave concerns that certain elements of the Terrorism Bill might cut across academic freedoms" (BBC 2005). In a carefully nuanced statement following the passing of the CTSA in 2015, Universities UK notes that, while it acknowledges the new statutory duty of universities to "prevent individuals from being drawn into terrorism", universities should also "remain spaces where controversial and sometimes offensive ideas can be explored and debated" (Universities UK 2016). Many are fearful of messy and unintended consequences emerging from a panic to comply with these new statutory obligations, such as an attempt in 2015 at Cardiff University to ban a talk by the renowned feminist, Germaine Greer, on the grounds of her supposedly "misogynistic views towards trans women" (Quinn 2015). While this particular case was undoubtedly complicated by the university's obligations to ensure the safety of students in a highly-charged environment of accusations and counter-accusations, the question of what is "extreme" in society to such an extent that it cannot be heard, is brought to the fore in highly questionable ways.

One of the more influential works in this area was a study conducted by Glees and Pope for the Social Affairs Unit in 2005, entitled *When Students Turn to Terror* (Glees and Pope 2005). The report suggested that a number of universities had been negligent in allowing "extremist" ideas and activities to proliferate on their campuses, and allowing Muslim groups in particular to propagate notions of *Sharia*-based society which fundamentally militated against secular, democratic norms. The muscular liberalism of the present government has picked up on these ideas in making it a legal duty for universities to address these concerns more rigorously.

Croft accuses Glees of "securitization of the Muslim identity" through this and other works (Croft 2012:238). The suggestion is that, whatever the merits of a suggestion that universities may have turned a potentially dangerous blind eye to the operation of certain radical groups on their premises, a general conflation of terrorist threat with a wider community-at-large has deleterious effects on the way in which young people in that community may feel connected to a British identity. In using the language of war, for example, by equating the present terrorist threat with the national security context of the second world war, Glees observed in 2006 that "internment needs to be talked about". He continued that:

> Not everything is permissible. Wearing the niqab is saying we don't want to be British. Forty percent of British Muslims say they want to live under sharia law. That is unacceptable. They should go to a country with sharia law (Glees 2006).

In using populist language ("we should not be blinkered by political correctness"), the sentiment expressed here is similar to that expressed by Michael Henderson in 2014 about the cricketer Moeen Ali, discussed in chapter two, in which the notion was conveyed that an Islamic expression of identity (such as the wearing of a *niqab* or of a long beard) is mutually incompatible with membership of the British nation (Henderson 2014). While this may be highly debatable, calling for *Sharia* law in a democratic country with a secular rule of law arguably *should* be seen as a different issue and one against which robust opposition should be presented. At the same time, if freedom of expression is one of the enshrining principles of British identity, as most would suggest, official moves to curb and criminalize certain "radical" expressions of thought surely constitute a peculiarly complex paradox.

7.3   CHANNEL

One of the core elements of the Prevent strategy, which was retained in the 2011 refresh, is the multi-agency intervention process called Channel. In many ways, this has been the beating heart of Prevent and the only part, arguably, in which concrete action is taken on the ground. The essence of Channel is a multi-agency group which considers cases of potential radicalization of particular concern in each district with a view to formulating whether some sort of "intervention"

is required to reduce the risk. Essentially, Channel operates very much in the "pre-criminal" space and is about spotting and mitigating potential cases of concern before they enter the criminal realm. The nature of intervention will vary a great deal and will depend on the particular case in question: some cases may be issues of mental health; others to do with support in an educational environment; and others might be considered suitable for "theological intervention" in some shape or form, on which more below. In every case, the aim is for the assembled representatives of the local authorities to consider the best and most appropriate form of action which will have the best chance of mitigating the risk to the individual in question. A number of cases can be referred to each local Channel panel for consideration, but only a relatively small percentage in most cases are formally taken-on by a panel as documented cases requiring formal intervention.

The National Police Chiefs Council (NPCC) has released details of the Channel process up to 2014 (NPCC 2016). This notes that between 2007 and 2014, there were just short of 4000 referrals, which constitute 20 percent of all cases placed before the panels for consideration. (Some of those not taken on as formal referrals will relate to safeguarding issues other than violent extremism.) The NPCC notes that:

> The greatest threat the UK currently faces is from terrorists who claim to act in the name of Islam, and who specifically target Muslims. Therefore Prevent activity such as the support offered through Channel predominately takes place in and with Muslim communities. However, the principles of Channel apply equally to other communities who may be the focus of attention from violent extremist groups (NPCC 2016).

Here, Muslim communities are explicitly identified, but in the language of "at risk" rather than "risky": members of Muslim communities are seen as requiring protection from "violent extremist groups".

Interestingly, the figures also suggest that only just over half (56 percent) of all referrals involve people identifying themselves as Muslim; the rest relate to individuals of other religious identities, or not identified by religion. While care needs to be taken about how these figures are collected and what they signify, they are another substantial challenge to narratives which suggest that Prevent and Channel are almost exclusively directed at Muslims, despite official rhetoric suggesting otherwise. In many ways it appears this perception is simply not borne out by the reality.

The battle of the narratives in this area can be conceptualized by two polarized views. On one side is the suggestion that Channel is no different from any number of other safeguarding processes which have been operating for some years, but merely adds a component of the risk of young people being drawn into extremist movements alongside those of getting into drugs, gangs and crime more generally. For example, in another area of policy, MAPPA (Multi-Agency Public Protection Arrangements) have been operating for some years in the area of ensuring the protection of the public from serious offenders, such as sexual and other violent offenders who have been released back onto the community following their prison term. Similarly, many county and district councils currently operate a MASH (Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub) which aims to facilitate referrals from the public about children or adults perceived to be at risk in some way and to ensure that the appropriate local authority, singly or in partnership with others, can take the appropriate mitigating action. All are essentially processes of multi-agency intervention and planning for the purposes of public safety.

Critics of Prevent, however, have suggested that Channel is part of a sinister state programme of stigmatizing and repressing political dissidents. Homa Khaleeli used the language of totalitarianism in suggesting that Prevent and Channel were slipping into the "Orwellian realm of thought crime: simply expressing beliefs that conflict with 'British values' could be enough to draw the attention of Prevent" (Khaleeli 2015). The pressure-group Cage, like HUT, has repeatedly called for Prevent to be scrapped. In late 2016 they received a boost when a group of academics published an open letter to the government, criticizing the scientific basis of the risk factors on which Channel's "vulnerability assessment framework" is based (Ross 2016). The framework is called Extremism Risk Guidance 22+, and is based on a set of 22 indicators which could signify an individual becoming a cause for concern and eligible for referral into the Channel process.

The charge is that the risk factors, which were based on interviews of a set of 22 prisoners who had committed terrorist offences, were flawed by virtue of relating to convicted terrorists rather than to individuals further back in the "pre-crime" space; and also that there are widely-discussed ethical and scientific issues concerning the reliability of data derived from incarcerated individuals. Concerns were also raised about the lack of scrutiny of the framework by the wider psychology community, although this seems a somewhat flawed criticism when the framework was published

in a respected and peer-reviewed academic journal published by the prestigious American Psychological Association (Lloyd and Dean 2015).

Part of the problem was that the government initially tried to suppress details of the science on which the vulnerability assessment framework was based, until it transpired that it had been published by the authors in an academic journal (Ross 2016). For groups such as Cage, this apparent obfuscation of how the policy works allowed an opportunity to develop the narrative of a totalitarian state controlling information in nefarious ways. A similar problem could be developing around the controversial area of "theological interventions" which form part of the Channel process's armoury. Here, the Channel panel may assess that a suitable intervention in a particular case might be to provide the individual in question with Islamic mentoring from a trusted source, in order to mitigate against a warped version of violent *jihadist* ideology being followed. The logic is that sometimes "more Islam" rather than less might be the answer. A highly controversial question, however, regards the nature of the theological providers being used and whether a charge could be developed against the government of promoting particular strands of Islamic thinking over others.

In a parliamentary question to the Home Office in January 2016 about Channel intervention providers, the Minister for Security at the time, John Hayes, responded that there were 55 approved intervention providers, selected by virtue of "proven experience in mentoring" and their "knowledge of extremist ideologies and recruitment narratives" (House of Commons 2016b). Attempts to establish the precise identities of theological mentoring providers, however, have generally fallen on stony ground. In a number of coordinated Freedom of Information Requests (FOIRs) to local authorities, the standard response has been that details about such providers and cases are exempt from release on national security grounds.[6]

Of course, there is clear logic in why this may be the case, in that these providers are working in controversial territory and release of their identities could subject them to intimidation or vilification by those with an aspiration to undermine or effect the demise of the strategy. At the same time, concerns noted in the 2009 Communities and Local Government select committee inquiry that the government may be trying to develop notions of "good Islam" and "bad Islam" may be exacerbated by the state-sanctioning of specific theological intervention providers, when, in the committee's view, it might be better for the state not to dabble in

theological matters at all (House of Commons 2010:64). Furthermore, anything that smacks of obfuscation by the government in response to queries in this area can be leapt upon by groups such as Cage in developing the narrative of the state as totalitarian and repressive, and engaged in a sinister re-engineering of religious ideology.

7.4   COUNTER EXTREMISM POLICY

A renewed focus on radical ideology in the current government's discourse has led to the development of legislative proposals parallel to the existing counter-terrorism activity such as Prevent, in the shape of a proposed Counter Extremism and Safeguarding Bill (CESB), put forward in the Queen's Speech in May 2016. The new proposed measures represent a considerable extension of the government's reach into the social affairs of communities under the rubric of "safeguarding", that is, protecting communities from the influences of radicalizers. The core set of proposals in the new bill include the following (House of Commons 2016a:29):

- A new "civil order regime" (which may include disruption, closure and banning orders directed at various institutions);
- Power to safeguard children from "extremist adults" by intervening in "intensive unregulated education settings";
- The closure of "loopholes" which will allow the media communications regulator, Ofcom, to restrict the internet-based streaming of some television content from outside of Europe;
- Powers to intervene in local areas where the local council is deemed to have failed to adequately tackle a problem of extremism;
- Formal consideration of further legislative measures following a review by Louise Casey,[7] tackling "integration in those communities most separated from the mainstream".

There are a number of points of debate in these proposals. First, they clearly represent a much more interventionist and extensive involvement by the state in the inter-community activities of communities within a multicultural society. Many of these measures are essentially authoritarian security measures, that is, powers to ban, disrupt and close certain activities, including restrictions on the media that can be accessed by members of the public. Many will recall the broadcasting ban introduced during

Margaret Thatcher's premiership in 1988 directed at 11 organizations in Northern Ireland including the Sinn Fein political party, described by Miller as "the first..use of this power since the beginning of British broadcasting history directly and overtly to rule out a whole class of political viewpoints" (Miller 1995:48). The ban resulted from Margaret Thatcher's infamous call to "starve the terrorist and the hijacker of the oxygen of publicity on which they depend" (cited in Edgerton 1996:115). In practice, the bans led to increasingly absurd ways of circumventing the restrictions on hearing the words of Sinn Fein members (such as using slightly-delayed voiceovers by actors with very similar accents). Foreign media around the world lamented the manner in which Britain appeared to be becoming as authoritarian as many of the regimes it criticized, and the apartheid South African regime of the time pointed out that Britain could no longer complain "when we adopt measures similar to those used by the British government" (Edgerton 1996:125). Lord Donaldson, Master of the Rolls, echoed the sentiments of many during a legal appeal by broadcast journalists against the restrictions that the reputational damage done to the independence of the broadcasters from the government was a price not worth paying "for so small an effect" (Edgerton 1996:125).

The mention of potential media restrictions on internet streaming from outside of Europe is a clear indicator that media from the Muslim world is specifically in the firing line. Other measures proposed in the CESB are also clearly directed at elements of the Muslim community in Britain, if not explicitly so. "Intensive unregulated education settings" is a clear reference to religious seminaries, and particularly to Muslim *madrassahs*, about which much panic has been generated from time to time in the media with respect to manner in which these institutions operate outside of the formal oversight and regulatory mechanisms of the educational sector. Communities "most separated from the mainstream" is a reference to certain Muslim districts which have been seen to be dangerously disconnected from communities around them. We saw in the previous chapter how "separationist" narratives work on several sides of the equation: Muslim groups such as HUT openly advocate Muslims withdrawing to a certain extent from majority-British culture through social and cultural practices, such as withdrawing children from activities in school perceived to be Christian and segregating genders in certain environments. Meanwhile, the Far Right expresses an existential panic about the way in which such cultural and social separation supposedly presages the collapse of British society; and the government is clearly picking up on

these fears and of implied criticism of it being "soft on terrorism" by promoting a more interventionist and "muscular" approach to such issues.

Again, there are clear political calculations here for the Conservative Party, and they are not just a simple equation of the centre-right trying to stop a flight of support to the harder right in politics. As discussed, parties such as UKIP have attracted support not only from the political right, but also from the Labour Party and from working-class heartlands from which it has traditionally drawn most of its support. Such existential issues underpinning the tougher and more interventionist sentiments in the CESB may be widely felt across much of the majority community, therefore.

With that said, there is some evidence that the proposals in the CESB are likely to have a hard time gaining approval in parliament. The initial reaction of the parliamentary Joint Committee on Human Rights was damning, branding the proposals "confusing" and "based on questionable assumptions" (Walker 2016). From the author's own enquiries among the UK police, there is much opposition to the notion of the state extending its powers into these areas of community activity and life, seeing the proposals as tantamount to creating a "thought police" which could do considerable long-term damage to their relations with communities.[8]

Other reactions have suggested a wider degree of opposition to the proposals. The former Attorney General, Dominic Grieve, said that "any restriction on freedom of expression of individuals outside the criminal law is something that has to be approached with very great caution" (House of Commons 2016a:30). Several members of the Conservative Party itself have expressed disquiet, including the former Culture Secretary, Sajid Javid, who echoed the discussions around the time of the broadcasting restrictions in the late 1980s in noting that "countries with a pre-transmission regulatory regime are not known for their compliance with rights relating to freedom of expression" (House of Commons 2016a:31). The current "Brexit minister" (Secretary of State for Exiting the European Union), David Davis, described the proposed orders as "quite incredible powers to limit democratic rights"; while the Liberal Democrats home affairs spokesperson, Alastair Carmichael, suggested that "the government seems to think that the answer to every problem is to ban it" (House of Commons 2016a:32).

7.5   CONCLUSIONS

It remains to be seen how much progress through parliament will be made by the government's proposed CESB, but at the time of writing, its prospects seem bleak. This may be because the measures represent a shift – uncomfortable for many - away from an Anglo-Saxon and towards a more European approach to the problem of identity and security, as framed by Neumann and discussed in chapter three. Thus, the proposed changes move away from the state simply "fire-fighting" criminality and terrorism as it happens, into a deeper policing of society and its cultural practices and expressions. For the state's detractors, such moves towards a more interventionist and hard-security set of policies can be caricatured as a shift towards totalitarianism, which, in ironic ways, has traditionally been seen as a curiously un-British way of doing things.

Taking a more expansive historical view, however, there are many parallels with the way in which policies developed during the Troubles in Northern Ireland, and how they continued through the transition into the contemporary picture of terrorist threat. In some ways this is surprising, since the Northern Ireland situation appeared to comprise a much greater level of threat if measured in pure casualty figures than anything seen in twenty-first century Britain. The fact that the initial period of security policy in Northern Ireland had to be led by the deployment of armed troops to British streets in substantial numbers, is just one of the many ways in which the two periods perhaps cannot be compared directly. In other ways, however, the numbers of individuals who MI5 claim represent a real and present terrorist threat in Britain suggest that the current threat is no less serious, even if we have been fortunate not to have experienced the same level of violence on the streets.

In policy terms too, both periods have seen exceptionalist and "emergency" measures increasingly put in place which cause the state to deviate away from standard peace-time policing into areas of policy that a liberal democratic state would not normally feel comfortable in pursuing. In both periods, detention or restrictions of individuals without formal charge have applied in different forms, as have considerations of jury-less courts, the proscription of organizations and restrictions on media and information.

From an identity point of view, the other obvious points of similarity between the two periods concern the intersubjective "suspect community" thesis, as initially described with regard to the Irish by Hillyard in

1993. Connected with this is the paradoxical "at risk and risky" status of the relevant communities, whereby they need to be protected from the nefarious agendas of radicalizers and terrorist recruiters while simultaneously offering information to the state about the problem individuals in their midst.

The risk for society is that the longitudinal trends may not be noticed while they are happening, and the high water-mark of security policy can creep ever upwards. In some ways, the Conservative/Liberal Democrat coalition government of 2010 attempted to capitalize on perceived concerns about a gathering risk-society by passing the romantically-named Protection of Freedoms Act in 2012, which rowed back a little on some of the counter-terrorist provisions of the previous era. Subsequently, however, the new era of "muscular liberalism" and "one-nation Toryism" that ushered in the majority Conservative government of 2015 has seen echoes of a strong Conservative government from the Troubles era, namely that of Margaret Thatcher (and subsequently John Major), which was in government for nearly twenty years after 1979.

Thatcher's signature was constituted by an apparently uncompromising and no-nonsense leader, which met a challenge to British rule in the Falkland Islands with military might, and which dealt with the Northern Ireland situation by dismissing any claims to legitimacy by the Republicans and demoting their cause to that of common-or-garden criminality. The ideological clash around this issue reached its apotheosis with the hunger strikes of 1981, when ten men died in the face of the Thatcher government's refusal to concede. Cameron's muscular liberalism may be a distant echo of such brutal and bitter times, but we can see a similar call to arms to those with a more zero-sum and exclusivist approach to notions of Britishness and compliance with supposed British values.

There is much evidence that draconian counter-terrorism laws and policies can pass more easily when the level of exceptional threat is perceived to be high. Pantazis and Pemberton remind us that the Prevention of Terrorism Act of 1974, which formed the basis of all subsequent counter-terrorism acts in Britain, was passed just a week after the Birmingham pub bombings in which an unprecedentedly new level of terrorist threat to ordinary civilians on mainland Britain had manifested itself (Pantazis and Pemberton 2009:646). Similarly, the CONTEST Strategy, of which Prevent has proved to be the most controversial and problematic element, was launched less than a year after the largest terrorist attack in Britain since the Lockerbie bombing nearly twenty years

previously. By 2011, when the refreshed Prevent strategy was launched by the new government, Fisher claims Britain had reached a "'plateau of exceptionality' whereby a particular topography of counterterrorism dominated the security horizon as far as could be seen" (Fisher 2015:148). Similarly, the former Attorney General's warnings about the manner in which the new CESB measures potentially break new ground in restrictions of freedom of speech, when these are supposedly at the heart of British values, should be carefully considered lest a slide towards disproportionate authoritarianism that may be difficult to repeal subsequently is effected.

Complicating the picture, however, is a factor discussed throughout this book, and namely the manner in which community perceptions of policies and processes may not always match reality. At one level this is particularly pertinent in relation to risk, and how that risk is perceived. When compared to the period of the Troubles, the current threat is essentially more latent and potential than actual, notwithstanding the terrorist attacks on 7 July 2005 in London which killed 56 people (including the perpetrators) and injured more than 700. This does not, of course, mean that the threat is mythical, but merely that it is a complicated process to properly quantify it and to communicate the assessment of risk to the wider public. This is especially so when most of the information about the risk resides in the secret realm.

The lightning-rod of contemporary counter-terrorism policy in Britain is the Prevent strategy. For those on the critical end of Islamist commentary, such as HUT and Cage, a strategy of denigrating the policy as the repressive arm of an essentially anti-Muslim state is the agenda, with the eventual scrapping of the policy the goal. There is some talk in government circles of changing the name of the policy to Engage, to try to rid it of the supposedly "toxic" aura that Prevent has acquired in some quarters, although many are of the view that this will be dismissed as window-dressing and will not solve the problem.[9]

Analysis in this chapter has shown that many of the criticisms of Prevent are not entirely accurate, however, and especially the suggestion that it exclusively targets Muslim extremists. All of the contemporary strategy documents and much of the official commentary surrounding Prevent and related areas of counter-terrorism policy explicitly and repeatedly stress that the policies are not aimed at Muslims, but at any individuals or groups that propagate potentially dangerous ideology. Analysis of Channel referral data shows that a number of non-Muslim cases are regularly under consideration, even if they

are a minority within the overall whole. It is not appropriate to selectively ignore this discourse as if it did not exist, or to dismiss it as cosmetic rhetoric from a government hell-bent on hiding what is really happening. It also appears to be the case that such policies are suitably geared to the relative levels of threat at the time, insofar as these can be accurately quantified. This is probably understood and indeed supported by a large proportion of British taxpayers across the spectrum, regardless of any identity labelling.

At the same time, a persistent message in this book is that perceptions are often more important than realities, and that those leaders and ideologues with an aspiration to shape and exploit perceptions in pursuit of an identity politics will take advantage of such a situation. It is also the case that a draconian set of measures which may be perceived to be discordant with the real level of threat, could do more damage by playing into the hands of the ideologues than it achieves in tactical security gains.

NOTES

1. Focus group discussion with UK police intelligence analysis officers, Oxford, 1 December 2015.
2. Internment had been used previously in Northern Ireland during the 1950s, and prior to that in colonial-era insurgencies such as Malaya.
3. See for example a call in London University's School of Oriental and African Studies (SOAS) during the Summer of 2015 for a programme of "opposition and non-cooperation" to the CTSA (NUS 2016).
4. *Spooked* was based on interviews with 32 individuals and a focus group comprising 24 further individuals, although Kundnani said in his oral evidence to the inquiry that he has regularly heard similar concerns from many others (House of Commons 2010:12).
5. Focus group with author, Metropolitan Police headquarters, London, 19 October 2016.
6. See Coventry City Council (2016) as one example of many.
7. Dame Louise Casey CB is leading a review on the request of the former Prime Minister, David Cameron, into questions of opportunity and integration in isolated communities. She has been dubbed the "ASBO tsar" in the media following her extensive policy work on social issues, including the introduction of Anti Social Behaviour Orders (ASBOs) under the former Labour government.
8. Focus groups, 1 December 2015 and 19 October 2016.
9. Focus group with UK Police Prevent delivery practitioners, London, 16 October 2016.

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Conclusions

On 16 June 2016, a British Labour MP, Jo Cox, was fatally shot and stabbed in her Leeds constituency office by a lone individual who is purported to have shouted "Britain First!" during the attack (Boyle and Akkoc 2016). It is presumed that the accused, Thomas Mair, singled out the MP for her vociferous support for the campaign to remain in the EU in the referendum that took place just over a week after the attack, and for her views on allowing more Syrian migrants into the UK. By this stage, it appeared that the acrimony surrounding the EU referendum and the identity issues it was unleashing had reached the most serious level of threat.

When Thomas Mair was tried and convicted for the murder in November 2016, a number of details emerged about his personal life and political views. This follows a standard pattern of analysis in the wake of terrorist attacks and other serious crimes, and reflects a strong interest in the micro-level psychological and sociological aspects of why individual people choose to take a path into violent extremism.

In Mair's case, it emerged that he had immediately identified the attack as "political", and had shouted "Britain first, this is for Britain!" at the scene (Rayner et al. 2016). In this way, he had self-identified himself as a terrorist, according to standard definitions, rather than a simple "murderer". Interestingly from a policy point of view, terrorist charges were never laid against Mair by the police, but only a standard murder charge, which would ultimately have the same effect of ensuring he received a full life sentence.

It emerged that Mair had an interest in white supremacist ideology. In the weeks and months leading up to the attack, he had browsed a number of sites on the internet connected with neo-Nazi ideology and movements, including the US-based online magazine "Occidental Observer". The latter is an avowedly anti-semitic publication, which proclaims on its banner headline that it is about "White identity, Interests and Culture". A casual glance at the magazine's website reveals a number of articles that play with the concept of "free speech" and political correctness, suggesting that media reports about Muslims, Jews and immigrants committing serious crimes are generally repressed and sanitized to avoid any offending connection between identity and crime; and that anti-semitism legislation and policy such as the Anti-Semitism Awareness Act in the US are effectively state sanctions on free speech (see for example Macdonald 2016). While this is very similar logic and argumentation to most groups on the Far Right, it also reflects critical stances towards British legislative proposals, such as the Counter Extremism Bill, from across the political and ideological spectrum. In this way, "truth" is used as a political and ideological football and mythical concept to be used in developing charges of conspiracy, corruption and totalitarianism against the liberal state.

Mair had also researched a number of MPs, including the former Foreign Secretary and leader of the Conservative Party, William Hague, and, significantly, the last sitting MP to be killed by a terrorist attack in Britain, Ian Gow. Also a Conservative politician, Gow was murdered in 1990 by a bomb placed underneath his car by the Provisional IRA.

In terms of his personal biography, Mair displayed many aspects of socio-economic and psychological vulnerability which may have been environmental factors ensuring he more easily fell prey to extremist and violent ideology. As a child, he had suffered bouts of severe epilepsy which had a serious effect on his academic performance. With no formal qualifications, he had struggled throughout his life to secure regular employment, but had undertaken a number of voluntary roles including teaching English and computer skills to foreign students (Rayner at al. 2016). This echoes a similarly ironic aspect of the life story of another Leeds resident, Muhammed Sidique Khan, who had worked as a carer for a period before turning to terrorism and leading the London bombing cell in July 2005.[1] Mair, meanwhile, had lived in the same house in the Leeds suburb of Birstall for more than 40 years, during which time he would have seen the ethnic and social character of the community change considerably. As with Khan and so many other convicted terrorists in recent years, friends and

neighbours had described Mair as generally unremarkable and "mild-mannered" (Rayner et al. 2016), in a way that belied his private consumption of violent extremist ideology.

Mair's proclamation of "Britain First" during the murder of Jo Cox generated immediate interest in a Far Right group of the same name. Britain First is believed to have broken away from the BNP shortly after the 2010 elections. Like the EDL, it has emerged as a largely internet-based pressure-group with a particular interest in lambasting Muslims and Islam in Britain, but shares the EDL's proclamations that it is not a standard racist far right group (Britain First 2016). The group's leader, Paul Golding, immediately distanced his organization from the attack on Jo Cox, saying that MPs "are sacrosanct", although he also took the opportunity to attack the media for nefariously linking his organization with the murder (Foster 2016).

Another Labour MP, Louise Haigh, has subsequently led calls for Britain First to be proscribed under the Terrorism Act of 2000 (Bulman 2016). The government has so far chosen not to take this action, but did, in early December, proscribe another Far Right and anti-semitic group called National Action, making it the first Far Right organization to be formally criminalized under terrorist legislation in the UK. In announcing the ban, Home Secretary Amber Rudd said:

> I am clear that the safety and security of our families, community and country comes first. So today I am taking action to proscribe the neo-Nazi group National Action. This will mean that being a member of, or inviting support for, this organisation will be a criminal offence. National Action is a racist, antisemitic and homophobic organisation which stirs up hatred, glorifies violence and promotes a vile ideology, and I will not stand for it. It has absolutely no place in a Britain that works for everyone (cited in Elgot 2016).

As with many previous examples discussed, a number of important factors can be seen in this statement which concern the relationship of the state to the national community and indeed to identity politics. The statement is a speech act which conveys power in shaping society and, indeed, in applying boundaries and curtailments to free speech. The order is indicative of a proactive security policy, and shows a continuity in powers from the first Prevention of Terrorism Act in 1974, which, for the first time, allowed for the proscription of organizations "concerned in terrorism occurring in the United Kingdom and connected with Northern Irish affairs, or in

promoting or encouraging it" (PTA 1974). The Terrorism Act of 2000 updated these powers to apply to any group operating in the UK, not necessarily connected with the Troubles in Northern Ireland, and the 2006 act extended the grounds for proscription to "glorifying terrorism" and undertaking training for and promotion of terrorist acts.

The above statement also promotes the multicultural, "one-nation" vision of British society, in which the security of "our community and country", and "a Britain that works for everyone" are described. An implicit reference is made to some of the values that underpin the national community and which define the boundaries of free speech and law, namely protection of people on the grounds of ethnic and sexual identity. In so doing, the Home Secretary adopts the robust language of muscular liberalism ("I will not stand for it") in which boundaries to acceptable behaviour and speech are not only announced but no apology is made for doing so. This could again be an implicit strike back against the "pathetic" and "politically correct" charges levelled at the government by populist leaders.

The move against National Action did not meet much opposition from observers across society, given the shock of the first murder of a democratically-elected sitting MP by a terrorist in over a quarter of a century[2] and the manner in which National Action (whose very name suggests going further than just discussing radical ideology) demonstrated an oblique connection to the murderer (Elgot 2016). Outspoken critics of government counter-terrorism policy discussed in this book, such as Cage and HUT, have so far been notably quiet about the ban. Only the Anti-Fascist Network, who one might suppose would be pleased, have suggested that the ban is not necessarily a good thing, on the grounds that it "opens the door to similar measures against all political dissent" (Freedom 2016).

In this critique we can see a more generalized concern that authoritarian measures that curtail free speech outside of straightforward legal measures to counter religious and racial hatred can risk taking a state into complicated areas of ideological control. Recalling Fisher's "plateau of exceptionality" critique (Fisher 2015:147), care must be taken to ensure that the high water-mark of authoritarian measures does not creep inexorably upwards, especially in times of national crisis or panic. At the same time, the state does have a duty to provide security to its citizens and curtailing the actions of a group clearly dedicated to violent action of grave consequence to British society must be within the

purview of policy and would probably be supported by most citizens across communities.

An interesting example of this dilemma was provided by the perhaps unlikely source of the novelist Salman Rushdie, who is heralded as one of the earlier examples of a contemporary postcolonial novelist of repute, whose central premise in most of his works is the struggle around multiple and hybridized identities springing from the postcolonial experience. As discussed, while many contemporary analysts of security and identity will take the 9/11 attacks in the US as the starting point, British society experienced an earlier example of violent schism between Muslim and non-Muslim communities in 1988, when Salman Rushdie published his controversial novel, *The Satanic Verses* (Rushdie 1988).[3] The response of the leader of the Iranian revolution, Ayatollah Khomeini, to Rushdie's cynical and bitter analysis of hybridized Muslim identity and to the religious politics of the Ayatollah himself, was to denounce it as a grave insult to Islam and to issue a *fatwa* calling for Rushdie's death. On the streets in certain parts of Britain, protests were held by some members of the Muslim community against the insult supposedly delivered by the novel and support was implicitly given to Khomeini's death threat. Rushdie subsequently had to go into hiding for his own safety; a situation that prevailed for many years afterwards.

Sharp described *Satanic Verses* as "a guidebook to the topography of the imagined community of the modern nation state" (Sharp 1994). Whatever its merits as a piece of literary fiction that grapples the complexities of hybridized and hyphenated identity in the modern, metropolitan state, however, Rushdie's novel also showed that problems lay beneath the surface in some communities as to popular conceptions of the right to free speech and its centrality to society and identity. Such problems have been replicated more recently in France and Denmark with the cartoons affair and the attacks on the satirical magazine *Charlie Hebdo*.

In a 2009 interview, Rushdie pointed out that there is a great deal to celebrate in a multicultural and multiracial society. But, he felt that positive multiculturalism had "decayed into something much less" and had become merely "cultural relativism" (Rushdie 2009). Under this model, differences between cultures were not only tolerated but left unchallenged, even where they ran counter to the central values of the majority culture, lest challenging them caused any offence. For one who so typifies the hybridized, postcolonial citizen, such sympathy with the "political correctness" challenge of the populist parties and organizations might

seem surprising. But from the perspective of one who has personally paid such a heavy price for transgressing cultural sensitivities, such a muscular reading of the importance of protecting free speech in a liberal society is perhaps understandable.

The stories of specific personalities in this area emphasize the micro-level approach to identity and security. Through a review of academic and empirical research and commentary on the question of radicalization and extremism, this book has noted a convergence around the notion that, as McGilloway et al. (2015:49) observed, there is "no single cause or route responsible for engaging in violent extremism". If accepted as a notion, radicalization is a process of change from one state of being and thinking to another of more problematic nature, but it is very difficult to predict which individuals will travel the route. In some cases, "catalytic events" or "precipitating factors" may be significant in tipping the balance, but generalities are difficult to identify.

In the case of Thomas Mair described above, medical problems leading to a socio-economic marginalization may have been the key factors leading to a pathway into violent radicalization. In a sense, this is the structural argument that socio-economic deprivation is more important than radical ideologies. But many other people will have experienced the same problems as Thomas Mair and the vast majority of them will not have found solace in violent extremism.

In a study of five major models of radicalization process, discussed in chapter three, King and Taylor highlighted an assumption that "radicalization is a transformation based on social-psychological processes." The consensus across the five models seems to be, however, that the key issues for the individual are relative deprivation and identity issues (King and Taylor 2011:609).

In her approach based on the narratives of individuals joining far right movements, we also saw Blee's assertion that a move into violent extremism can often be down to circumstantial and social developments in an individual's life (such as meeting a new person or group of people socially) which can offer the promise of a new narrative that helps to "make sense" of an otherwise seemingly disconnected and happenstance life (Blee 2002:45). In their study of EDL supporters in Britain, meanwhile, Treadwell and Garland noted a focus within the hate-crime literature on "masculinity-accomplishing aspects of targeted abuse" (Treadwell and Garland 2011:623–3). Thus, gender factors may be important (and under-analysed), but there is also a further consideration of individual

life-stories and circumstances, since some men will feel a need to vent their frustrations with violence directed inter-subjectively at others, while many will not.

One of the key questions is how far a micro-level focus on specific individual social and psychological processes represents a dangerous deflection of attention away from important structural factors in society. It is important to note that none of the factors described above of socialization, frustration at socio-economic marginalization or even a need to find an outlet for a violent urge, necessarily have anything to do with a higher ideological or moral purpose. At first glance, this gives pause for thought over the significance of ideologies and ideological organizations and movements. Mair, for example, may have chosen to dabble with white supremacist ideology and organizations while seeking some sort of narrative to explain why he had experienced a life of marginalization, but he could just have easily have turned to various other avenues to help find answers to his predicament, many of which could have been entirely positive, rather than those concerned with an agenda of violent extremism.

For structuralist critics, whether Marxist, Islamist, or subscribing to any number of other strands of ideology, such a micro-level focus on individual psycho-social factors may cause a dilution of attention away from the central struggle against socio-economic or political inequity, or indeed, from another perspective, from the need to buttress the supremacy of liberal democracy. There is also a somewhat elliptical argument that, if complexities around a hybridized identity can cause stress leading to violent extremism, why does this not happen in every case, or even in a majority of cases? Put more robustly, should minority communities merely get on with it and find a way of "adjusting" to the complexities of building a stable and hybridized identity that accords with the central tenets of the society in which they find themselves?

There is also a risk identified by some critics, that seeking to find reasons for why any one individual may turn towards a pathway of violent extremism, may cause the analyst to unwittingly suggest that violent courses of action are in some way justified. For the most part, such critiques should be readily dismissed under the rubric that seeking to understand human action is not necessarily to justify any particular choices that individuals make, but merely to try to fathom underpinning motivations and drivers with a view to formulating sensible policy accordingly. But some moral and ethical risks clearly do exist in these areas.

In identity theory, such questions have led to a recognition of the linkage between micro and macro-level approaches to identity, and specifically to the importance of the role played by societal contexts within a structural symbolic interactionalist reading of identity. It seems clear that no individual can operate completely in a vacuum without any reference to the social, political and economic context in which they are living. This might explain why "radicalism" has always existed in society, but has changed its nature and dominant ideologies over the years, passing variously through grand political ideologies of the right and left; nationalist politics; religiously-inspired movements; and identity politics, to name but a few. The anarchist of the late nineteenth century might therefore just as easily have been a revolutionary Marxist, Arab nationalist or Islamist, had he or she been born at different times or places in history.

Monroe et al. suggested that there was a key factor in "times of uncertainty" whereby "social representations of self and other" were more likely to be "intersubjectively constructed" to provide a political narrative in which large numbers of followers could find answers (Monroe et al. 2000:438). This might accord with Kitschelt's argument that post-industrial societies such as those in Europe have seen a restructuring of politics away from traditional right and left, but not from "distributive conflict in the politics of post-industrial capitalism". Importantly, this has meant that electorates are not only worried about distributions of resources but also about "governance structures of social organization and cultural life styles" (Kitschelt 2004:1). In short, space has been made for identity-based politics to marry concerns about economic distribution with questions of culture and identity.

In this way, the man who murdered MP Jo Cox might have been concerned not only about his economic marginalization, but about the way in which British society appeared to be changing to his detriment. This could have provided a framework for consuming ideas which championed his own identity and militated against that of others whom he perceived had arrived more recently and in seemingly accelerating numbers.

At a macro-psychological level, we have seen how theories such as Tajfel's "minimal group paradigm" are highly significant to this analysis. Through extensive experimentation and analysis over the years, Tajfel noted that intergroup discrimination was "depressingly similar" across societies, varying largely only in intensity rather than occurrence (Tajfel 1970:96). It seems that individuals appear very liable to accrete to a recognized in-group (however that may be defined) and to define that

group in contradistinction to an out-group. The perceived differences between the groups may be trivial in many circumstances, such as expressions of support for opposing sports teams, for example; but in other cases they may take on the characteristics of murderous dehumanization of the out-group and violently sectarian tendencies.

What we can conclude from this is that, unsurprisingly, a politics or ideology that emphasizes intersubjective antagonism can lead to serious security problems. In the face of such a threat, this is the logic of the state banning an anti-semitic group such as National Action, while simultaneously being the logic of critics of some counter-terrorism policy who urge caution over the wholesale creation of "suspect communities" within society.

We have seen how a significant element of the malleability of this problem is a notion that identity is not an essentialist or primordial factor. Foucault linked the temporality of discourse and history to that of individual identity. "We are difference", he remarked in *The Archeology of Knowledge*: "our reason is the difference of discourses, our history the difference of times, our selves the difference of masks" (Foucault 1972:131). Thus, much as history is myth in the sense that we can only interpret it in the context of various and variable discourses and narratives received, so the factors supposedly making up our own identities as subsections of the human race can only be based on similarly subjective and sometimes competing narratives.

Support for such ideas comes from the numerous examples in which identities have clearly been engineered or re-aligned to relate to relative accesses to economic and political power in different state systems. Similarly, in times of conflict when "ethnic" groups appear to be battling one another on a wholesale identity basis, the question has to be asked as to how far the conflicts on the ground actually represent deep-seated intersubjective animosities in any hard and fast way. Taking the examples of conflict in post-communist Yugoslavia and in Rwanda at a similar time, Mueller went as far as to suggest that "the whole concept of 'ethnic warfare' may be severely misguided". He continued that, in the cases of Croatia and Bosnia, conflict was:

> ..spawned not so much by the convulsive surging of ancient hatreds or by frenzies whipped up by demagogic politicians and the media as by the ministrations of small – sometimes very small – bands of opportunistic marauders recruited by political leaders and operating under their general guidance (Mueller 2000:42).

Mueller's conclusion was that the conflicts in both cases were often under-pinned by "remarkably banal" factors, involving a combination of "oppor-tunistic, sadistic and often distinctly nonideological" motivations and drivers (Mueller 2000:43).

These thoughts closely echo those of Blee in her analysis of how and why women join racist movements. "It is a mistake to assume", she suggests, "that the process of recruitment into racist groups differs mark-edly from that through which individuals enter churches, neighborhood associations, or bowling leagues". Often the catalytic factor is something as banal as a chance social contact rather than any "uniform acceptance of their group's ideologies" (Blee 2002:188).

None of this is to downplay the seriousness of certain instances of large-scale sectarianism or violent extremism based on intersubjective otherings of out-groups: the experience of 1930s Germany being a case in point. But the reality may be that individual human beings should not be seen as deterministic automatons doomed to particular courses of action; often there will be very specific and unique factors that cause an individual to become violent when his or her neighbour does not.

In his analysis of identity in postcolonial fiction, Alghamdi used the notion of liminality to describe the identity calculations and formations of the "Postcolonial subject" (Alghamdi 2011:8). Identity in this context is necessarily liminal and "hybrid" because it is "based on multiple notions of home". For a second or third-generation migrant born in a country such as Britain, "home" not only means where one was physically born, but also the ancestral and spiritual home of one's parents and grandparents, which inevitably forms a major part of one's social and cultural life. Such calcula-tions are very different for someone who was born and has remained living within a continuous and largely uniform majority culture. When asked if the "culture clash" factor came up often in their experiences of Prevent policy delivery on the ground, a group of senior officers explained to the author that it generally did not, but, at the same time, they recognized it was not something to which they could relate very readily given their membership of the majority community.[4] On a specific matter of policy, this further elevates the case for increased diversity in such organizations as the police.

Identity negotiations may be more complex therefore for minority, "postcolonial" communities, but the ways in which such hybridized iden-tities are developed may, in the view of Alghamdi (2011:25), be very variable and unpredictable. It is also the case that a hybrid identity can

be not only a weakness or complication for someone, but also a potential strength – it is something that someone of a more settled and monolithic identity does not have. Again, this raises the notion of multiple choices and pathways towards violent extremism or other courses of action that may relate in very variable ways to individual stories and circumstances.

At the same time, taking a notion of the importance of "home", adherents of a majority culture may experience different stresses and strains relating as much to time as to place. In this sense, a notion that, over time, the home of Britain has changed substantially in character and may continue to do so, could introduce a sense of loss that we have seen in Far Right narratives about a dissipating Arcadian notion of "England". Immigration, and social and economic change under the forces of globalization, may lead to a sense of an irretrievable loss of a home that was remembered from the past. In different ways, this necessitates a renegotiation and reshaping of one's identity to suit the changed circumstances.

If we do accept a Foucauldian conception of identity as essentially protean rather than prescribed, then opportunities exist for constantly reshaping and re-establishing the national identity in ways that make the nation stronger and, at the same time, reduce drivers of insecurity. In a sense, this is the opportunity offered by a multiculturalist notion of national identity, in which the label of "British" can transcend a multitude of sub-identities in positive ways, if it is understood and shared successfully.

At the policy level, we have seen how British counter-terrorism and indeed counter-extremism policy have shown both change and continuity through the course of the early twenty-first century. With reference to continuity, it is clear that a comparative analysis of British security policy through the period of the Troubles in Northern Ireland with that of the contemporary era of threat throws up a number of similarities in terms of approach, and in terms of the consequences (intended or otherwise) of specific policies. In very general terms, it appears to be the case that authoritarian and draconian responses by the state may deliver short-term tactical gains but longer-term losses, in terms of "radicalizing" antagonistic groups or prolonging a period of conflict. We have also seen how contemporary anti-terrorist legislation was forged during the Troubles with the passing of the Prevention of Terrorism Act in 1974; and how Conservative Party administrations at different times have often grappled with the same policy alternatives and used the same language.

The continuation of the Prevent policy from its initiation under a Labour administration through to the current Conservative government

is also an area of more recent continuity in policy, although it is important to note the changes in the re-launch of the policy in 2011. Through this transitional period it is interesting to note that Prevent and the Counter Terrorism Strategy within which it sits have changed in tone from being focused on social cohesion and inter-community relations, with a particular emphasis on the Muslim community as a group both "risky and at risk"; to two new emphases, which do not necessarily sit together very comfortably. The first of these is a rejection of the state's need to engineer social cohesion in quite the same way, and a retrenchment into worrying solely about "radical ideology" – importantly, in all its hues – and its effect on specific individuals. At the same time, the second emphasis is on a more forward-leaning and proactive security policy, reminiscent in many ways of the Thatcher era of criminalization of the terrorist problem in Northern Ireland during the 1980s, in which state action starts to make forays away from the waterfront of serious crime legislation and into questions of national ideology and free speech. In some ways, therefore, the current policy starts to look almost more like a continental European "counter-subversion" and assimilationist policy, and less like an Anglo-Saxon policy focused primarily on small-state gatekeeping of the red lines of law.

Writing in The Guardian newspaper in December 2016, Dame Louise Casey, who has been appointed to conduct a major study into social cohesion in the UK, has offered a robust critique of the condition of the multicultural state. She noted that serious disadvantage is still suffered by ethnic minorities in Britain, and in some Muslim communities, the problems are multifaceted:

> A vicious circle seems to exist whereby some Muslims feel they are being blamed for terrorism, extremism and everything else that is going wrong in the world. In turn, that's causing some to withdraw into their own communities, leading to suspicion, mistrust and hostility on all sides, and exacerbating disadvantage (Casey 2016).

Such an analysis accords with the number of empirical qualitative studies reviewed in this book, in which young Muslims have expressed a frustration at being part of a community that is viewed with suspicion and frequently blamed for most of society's ills.

The results for society, claims Casey, are complex and perhaps surprising, however. At one level, she reported much to applaud in the degree to which Britain had become a vibrant multicultural society, and how many

barriers to social mobility were being dismantled. At the same time, certain communities are experiencing a "sense of retreat and retrenchment" from mainstream society, especially in a selection of deprived urban districts where local populations are characterized by a strong predominance of a single ethnic identity. In particular, deprived Pakistani- and Bangladeshi-heritage communities in certain districts are particularly indicative of this isolation from mainstream society. Within this apparent ghettoization, the problems are often further compounded for women, who are not only isolated through a lack of English language capability and economic opportunity; but who find themselves living in districts in which a very conservative and patriarchal strand of Islamic culture often holds sway, in which women are substantially marginalized from society (Casey 2016).

The language in Casey's article is unflinching, but unapologetically so: she notes the "need to be prepared to have some tough conversations". She claims that "too often leaders and institutions have ducked these difficult issues". While this might seem reminiscent of some of the language that Far Right groups direct at the state, decrying what they see as its dangerous political correctness, Casey makes the point that not to have these conversations is to leave the political centre-ground open for more extreme views to hold sway. As we have observed on occasion in this analysis, Casey notes that the Far Right and Islamist extremists "actually share the same goal", namely to "show that Islam and modern Britain are somehow incompatible". Both, she claims, are wrong in this aim.

The sentiment is strong, almost Churchillian in its call to arms: Casey ends her article by noting:

> We have always been at our strongest when most united. We are better for being open and inclusive. Every person, in every community, in every part of Britain, should feel a part of our country and have every opportunity to succeed in it. There can be no exceptions to that by gender, colour or creed. Those are our rights. Those are our values. That is our history. It must be our future too (Casey 2016).

Here again, we see elements of a more assimilationist form of multiculturalism: more melting-pot than salad bowl. This is not necessarily the zero-sum assimilationism characterized by Lord Tebbitt's "cricket test", discussed in chapter two, however, but a sort of syncretic British identity, where factors of sub-identity are separated from the overarching principles of national citizenship. In such a society, a man with a long Muslim beard

can play cricket for England, or indeed, a *hijab*-wearing Bangladeshi-heritage woman can win the most widely-watched primetime British television competition in recent history.[5]

Of course, not everyone agrees with this approach. Fraser, for example, praised the "distinctiveness" of certain communities, and the way in which they recognize that "assimilation into the broader culture would mean the gradual dilution, and eventual extinction, of its own way of life" (Fraser 2016). One could argue, for example, that the isolated Pakistani- and Bangladeshi-heritage communities described above by Casey are not necessarily a problem to wider society unless and until they break any laws, and then they should be treated exactly the same way as any other community. And laws, in this context, would mean not only harbouring terrorists, but also factors that may be sensitive cultural territory, such as forcing women into under-aged marriages or practising female genital mutilation (FGM). In the meantime, communities should be left to follow cultural practices as long as they do not break any criminal or civil law or harm others.

This is the fundamental question facing multicultural, metropolitan societies in the advanced world today when they consider the question of the intersection between identity and security. The question is whether to follow a "hands-off" multiculturalism, whereby intervention in communities is determined solely by whether or not anyone has broken any laws, and these laws are applied in an entirely equitable and culturally-agnostic way; or to follow the "muscular liberalism" of the present British government. In the latter policy, not only are specific laws taken into consideration, but national "values" also, loosely defined as adherence to the rule of law; respect of the institutions of the democratic state; and respect and equality for all people regardless of age, gender, sexuality, ethnicity or religion. Under this policy, a retrenchment from such values cannot be tolerated within society, and intervention measures will be taken to establish greater "integration" and assimilation.

Both policies have their merits and disadvantages. The hands-off approach allows for small-state salad-bowl multiculturalism, in which a multitude of different cultures and communities can live alongside one another and enrich each other's culture and experience. This approach also largely avoids the problems of state intervention into the life of particular communities, who might then feel victimized and vilified. A more muscular approach, meanwhile, would not only entrench core values such as democracy, freedom and respect, but also allay the fears of many in the

majority community that the "good" elements of British society and culture are being gradually eroded and destroyed by the tide of globalization breaking on our shores.

Of course, the answers to such conundrums are far from clear. From the foregoing analysis of debates, discussions and a range of empirical research around the question of identity and security, however, I would offer the following concluding comments. These represent a mixture of assessments of the core debating points in this field of study; and policy recommendations for ensuring we continue to live in a safe, free and fair society:

Multiculturalism cannot unhappen, in the words of Salman Rushdie (2009). Britain, like many other Western states, has a history of imperialism which means that a multitude of ethnicities, religions and cultures are part-and-parcel of national history and life. Many of these communities have settled here permanently and are delivering new generations of British citizens with potentially very positive hybridized identities. It is also the case that Britain likes to see itself as a well-connected player on the global stage (a position perhaps somewhat undermined by its decision to leave the EU), which means that globalization has brought and is still bringing a range of nationalities and cultures into society. These processes cannot be reversed or even changed to any large degree, and should instead be celebrated and capitalized upon in building a rich and vibrant nation.

More importantly, Far Right and populist narratives that attempt to define communities in essentialist, Huntingtonian terms, and which generate a narrative of anxiety amongst the majority culture about a disappearing mythological England of the past, are recipes for division and insecurity in society. As the novelist L.P Hartley famously said, the past is a foreign country. It is the case that Britain, like many other countries, is changing in character very substantially. It is an inescapable fact that birthrates in some minority communities are much higher than in the majority community, which is itself increasingly ageing. It is also an inescapable fact that severe insecurity in some parts of the world is leading to a migratory flight away from the global South and towards the global North. None of these things are necessarily cause for existential panic if they are managed properly and if core values are understood and retained: Britain and indeed Europe can still be a positive place in the future, but will inevitably look different in certain ways from how it does now.

A light, hands-off multiculturalism is ultimately better for society, but one in which the law is applied entirely fairly and equitably in a way

that views all citizens with equal rights and equal grounds for protection by the state. The experience of counter-terrorism and counter-extremism policies in the modern era is generally that such policies are fraught with complications and controversies when they are perceived to create "suspect communities" and to differentiate between local communities beneath the national umbrella. Highly interventionist and authoritarian measures can not only greatly increase the long-term risk of lacking trust between certain communities at the state, but can create the problem of the "plateau of exceptionality" in security policy, whereby the high watermark of authoritarianism creeps ever higher and erodes ever further our basic principles of democracy and freedom.

It is also the case that any policy that sees hard boundaries around communities, rather than adopting the lens of over-arching national citizenship, again falls into the trap laid by populist leaders that there is a zero-sum element to national citizenship and that certain whole communities do not qualify. Such a view is a short step to othering and intersubjectively denigrating entire communities of people.

It is further the case that, while many will scoff at the loose and vague nature of "British values", there is no reason why we cannot or indeed do not share a broad understanding of the principles that should apply to an over-arching and culturally agnostic vision of national citizenship and identity. While Britain does not have the very clear and definite tripartite mantra of France's *liberté, égalité et fraternité,* there seems absolutely no reason why broadly the same republican principles should not apply to British society. It is recognized that there are occasionally complications in applying such principles across all communities, as the French and many other European states have sometimes found to their cost, but if the basic red lines of law are applied in upholding such principles, the chances of delivering a fair and just society should be enhanced.

This also means that, while terms such as "radicalization" and "extremism" are demonstrably relative (as has been the subject of much recent discussion), this aspect of their character does not disqualify them from being used as valid and prescient terms. With the central over-arching principles described above of a modern, liberal democratic state, it seems far from inappropriate to suggest that violent actions which seek to target democratic institutions and dehumanize selected citizens of the state should properly be described as extremism. Likewise, processes which cause an individual to move from being law-abiding to being violently extreme can and should reasonably be described as processes of

radicalization. At the same time, expressions of free speech which do not break any laws should not regulated as far as is possible and appropriate within localized security considerations. In some ways, this has been and should continue to be a founding principle of British society and identity.

Identity is circumstantialist and malleable. In this book, a Foucauldian notion of identity as being a constantly shifting and evolving perception of an individual's place in society is supported and followed. Despite the fact that many psychological experiments have shown a natural human tendency to identify with an in-group and to use hard definitions of that group to intersubjectively describe others, the precise nature and formulation of identity relates to a complex and constantly shifting environment of contextual factors. Much evidence exists of identities being deliberately engineered and shaped to suit specific political or institutional agendas, whether this related to community relations under colonialism; supposedly "ethnic" conflict in fractured societies; or competition for economic and political resources within ethnicized political systems. There is also much evidence of individuals for whom multiple and hybridized identities are a factor, shaping their identities in terms of both internal conceptions and outward expressions in multiple and varying ways. In this way, theories of identity and performativity should be closely intertwined to generate a notion of a constantly shifting expression of identity that adapts to a moving societal context.

It is also the case that identity formation cannot be seen in isolation in terms of symbiotic and sometimes conflictual relations between groups within society. The notion of "cumulative extremism" between groups is important and perhaps under-analysed as a phenomenon. It may be controversial to observe, but Far Right extremism, for example, does not happen in a vacuum and is as reactive as it is objective. In this way, political, cultural and societal developments in the majority community may be just as important to consider and research as those within minority communities, who may be drawn into violent extremism through marginalization or experiences of racism. This may be doubly so when we consider that politics in a democracy tend to be primarily driven by concerns across the majority community rather than those of minority communities, although the latter can of course be very important in certain cases. There is no doubt, for example, that mainstream centrist political parties across the Western world are currently engaged in a frantic pursuit of the best policy to take in stopping a Kitscheltian postmaterialist flight away from the mainstream and

towards more populist, anti-establishment parties. The events of 2016, and not least the election of Donald Trump in the US, have underlined the complexity of the situation and the panic that is being engendered in the established political mainstream. The risks, of course, are that the mainstream drifts to the right and becomes ever more authoritarian. This, in turn, could risk further inflammation of divisive, identity-based politics.

We have also seen that, much as identity and history are essentially myths, so is politics. A nuanced understanding of political myth and how it is articulated in political narratives will continue to be essential in seeking to understand the nexus between identity and security. Perhaps more than ever before, when political narratives and our consumption of them seem be becoming more selective, variable and contested; and where the relationship between perceptions and realities seem to be becoming ever more problematic, such considerations will need to remain at the centre of social and policy studies.

Ideologies are important, but individuals become violently extreme. There seems to be a broad consensus across the academic literature, much of it based on solid empirical research into the thoughts and behaviours of individuals, that the reasons why any one individual will turn to a pathway into violent extremism are very variable and often entirely case-specific. This, meanwhile, does not militate against the central principle of Stryker's (2008) structural symbolic interactionism, which stresses that there is a symbiotic relationship between an individual's identity formation and development, and the society in which he or she lives. This concomitantly means that radical groups, organizations, ideologies and individual ideologues *are* very important, as they provide the environmental conditions and cognitive openings for certain individuals to pursue a pathway into violent extremism in their quest to make sense of their lives. In many cases these processes of influence and recruitment will involve criminal activities, which should be prosecuted or proscribed as such. The important point, however, is that individuals make choices about whether or not to follow those groups or ideologues, and they do so in response to multiple and complex interweaving contextual circumstances.

The above observation means that **Prevent and related counter-terrorism policies should continue.** Various groups, such as HUT and Cage, have frequently called for Prevent to be scrapped as a flawed and "toxic" policy, and they have occasionally gained support for such an agenda from certain influential policy-makers. But the fact that HUT, Cage and many of their supporters are fundamentally opposed to the democratic system and to the

participation of British Muslims in it, means that their criticism of the policy is fundamentally degraded.

From this research it appears to be the case that suggestions that Prevent is squarely targeted at the Muslim community and is a front for spying on the Muslim community are simply not accurate. It does appear to be the case that Prevent is now (if not always so in the past) responding in an appropriate and evidence-based way to a proper reading of security in contemporary Britain and to the relative priorities of different extremist threats. Within this practice, Far Right threats are not ignored and are not dismissed by the state as being in any way less important than those from Islamist quarters.

The potential strength of Prevent is that it recognizes that the process of specific individuals being drawn into violent extremism is something that has to be addressed by a liberal democratic state that prides itself on good security, but that preventive action on the ground should be driven by case-specific, bottom-up awareness of localized threat. This is the fundamental essence of the Channel referral programme and is something that any modern and well-developed state should be delivering in its security policy.

It is also clear that the above description is very akin to general notions of "safeguarding", as they are understood and applied in other areas of social and societal threat, with much smaller levels of debate and controversy.

There were undoubtedly problems in the early days with the perception of Prevent and the trust in it from some Muslim communities, and it may be the case that any policy in this area is almost bound by definition to create problems of a "suspect community" nature. Concerns across sections of Muslim communities about the programme cannot be ignored and have to be taken seriously. At the same time, the author's own experience of work-ing with local authorities and citizens on Prevent delivery is that a great many people in the public are not necessarily aware of what Prevent is and are not at all familiar with the term. For most people, their day-to-day interactions with local authorities are the most important factor in their decision-making, and these are generally conducted without any reference to particular policy labels or agendas.

Where the policy has been applied using a generalized conception of "safeguarding" of young people and communities, and has been dovetailed with other, existing and well-established multi-agency safeguarding processes such as those dealing with vulnerable children or criminality, Prevent has often been understood, accepted and supported as an appropriate use of public money. Efforts to ensure that it continues to be framed and implemented in

this way, and that it responds to over-arching factors of law and threat in a properly assessed and prioritized way must, I would suggest, continue. It may indeed be the case that separating-out "Prevent" from the wider range of safeguarding activities is a mistake, not least since members of the public will not necessarily think about social problems in such clearly delineated ways.

Finally, it would be remiss of any academic not to suggest in his final comments that further research is needed. I would suggest this is most certainly the case here. As has been argued in this book, identity and its connection to security concerns is all about individuals. Much well-directed and useful research has been conducted into how individuals feel about their identity and about their place in society. But, as the sands beneath our feet are constantly shifting, so much more research into these factors is still needed, as we seek to understand the best way to deliver a safe and equitable society.

NOTES

1. In other ways, Khan and Mair differed: the former, for example, held reasonably good academic qualifications and had been to university.
2. In 2010, an attempt was made to assassinate the Labour MP Stephen Timms in his constituency office by Roshanara Choudhury, a lone attacker inspired by Al Qaeda ideology; and in 2000, a Liberal Democrat MP, Nigel Jones, was attacked in his constituency office by a man subsequently found to be suffering from a personality disorder. In the latter attack, a political aide was killed.
3. The novel took as its premise the controversial theory that some pre-islamic "heathen verses" made their way into the *Qur'an*.
4. Focus group with author, Metropolitan Police headquarters, London, 19 October 2016.
5. The woman in question is Nadya Hussain, who won the Great British Bake-Off in 2016 (a programme whose final episode was watched by more than 14 million people).

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