

# Stranger than Fiction

*How 'Pre-Crime' Approaches to "Countering Violent Extremism" institutionalise Islamophobia*

*A European Comparative Study*



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ISLAMOPHOBIA**

  
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# 1 Introduction

"...Whether in the queues of Heathrow, the tube stations of London or the streets of Kabul and Baghdad, the latest doctrine stresses that ways must be found to identify such people and threats before their deadly potential is realized, at a point when they are effectively indistinguishable from the wider urban populace."<sup>1</sup>

Studies on the issue of "pre-crime" regularly, if not customarily, include references to Philip K. Dick's short story 'The Minority Report', which initially coined the term - and rightfully so.

The story, written over half a century ago as a dystopian warning, remains deeply relevant, speaking to debates about free will, authoritarianism, the balance between freedom and the state; debates that continue to trouble us today.

Yet, at the same time as the question of "pre-crime" resonates with long-standing social and political anxieties, it is also a specifically present-day concern of politics and society - particularly in the context of pre-crime policies to counter violent "extremism".

"Counter-extremism" policies are now a global phenomenon. This briefing paper will outline and compare the trajectories of pre-crime policies for Countering Violent Extremism (CVE) in Britain, France and the Netherlands - three European countries where Muslims form a minority. It will also trace how, both through their overwhelming focus on Muslims, and by their nature as tools of lateral surveillance, they help institutionalise Islamophobic prejudice and suspicion.

In short, CVE policies mutually reinforce and institutionalise a process whereby Muslims are discursively and politically constructed as a threat, and who progressively become subject to expanding techniques of surveillance. It is through CVE policies that institutionalised prejudice and suspicion against Muslim populations were regenerated and legitimised. This paper will consider CVE policies in relation to these two process 'streams'.

In this paper we will look at the core concepts of CVE, provide background on the CVE programmes of the three countries concerned, and consider the role of CVE 'science' in legitimising Islamophobic prejudice inherent in the process. We will then turn to the role played by 'ideology' in CVE programmes, and how the 'culture', value-based and ideological framing of CVE policies have far-reaching ramifications for society, before tracing the shape of developments in the CVE field that advocates should be attentive to.

Britain has the most advanced and developed pre-criminal CVE policy today, in the form of its flagship PREVENT policy, which falls under its CONTEST (Countering Terrorism Strategy). PREVENT will therefore be the baseline against which we compare CVE policies in the Netherlands - which was claimed to be pioneering in Europe for its counter-extremism policies on Muslim citizens post-9/11 - and in France - which has in recent years belatedly begun to embrace and adopt the type of CVE model found across the continent.

## 2 Concepts

### 2.1 Pre-criminality

In their book on Pre-Crime, Jude McCulloch & Dean Wilson identify four overlapping categories of Pre-crime, which include:

- 1 Coercive interventions designed to pre-empt pathways to criminal careers.
- 2 Coercive intervention to pre-empt crimes by disrupting criminalised associations and ideologies.
- 3 Coercive interventions to pre-empt crimes it is believed that the target intends to commit in the future.
- 4 Detention or restrictions on people without criminal conviction or charge, on the basis that they may pose a threat or have information about threats.<sup>2</sup>

It is within this second category that CVE pre-crime policies most squarely fall, and which we will consider in this paper. That being said, it is important to note that in the realm of counter-terrorism, CVE policies often interact with and reinforce other pre-crime powers which fall within the other categories.

Though antecedents existed for pre-crime policies prior to 2001 - particularly with the incorporation of 'security' and 'risk' into policing logic in the preceding years<sup>3</sup> - the War on Terror and resultant counter-terror (CT) policies propelled and mainstreamed pre-crime as a governing logic.

What began as a framework to deal with 'terrorism' and 'extremism' has increasingly been stretched, with pre-crime policies becoming incorporated more fully into the policing of 'gangs' and social violence in the UK and US<sup>456</sup>.

## 2.2 What is Countering Violent Extremism (CVE)?

*Countering Violent Extremism* can refer to a broad spectrum of post-9/11 policies and powers, spanning education initiatives and extremist 'exit' strategies to militarised police surveillance, and is threaded through everything from nations' social integration, technology, welfare and foreign policy strategies.

Within the context of pre-crime, and unless stated otherwise, the CVE policies that we will be addressing in this paper are specifically those that seek to intervene in the process of extremist 'radicalisation' - policies that may also be referred to as *Preventing Violent Extremism* (PVE) policies.

We make a distinction between two 'phases' of pre-crime CVE policies; those developed in the years directly following 9/11 ('early' policies), and those introduced or refined post-2010/11 ('later' policies). Though there are clear continuities between these phases, there were also qualitative differences between them that demand analysis. These differences, which we will touch upon, relate to the shifting political context and terrain.

Pre-crime CVE policies generally concern themselves with cognitive/psychological, cultural and theological interventions, sitting somewhere in the middle of the counter-terrorism spectrum in terms of their level of coercion.

While they may lack the spectacular violence of the more punitive counter-terrorism initiatives - which blur into more overt operations of power - they arguably have the widest reach of all policies, by drawing layers of the public, civil society and public sector workers into the web of state surveillance. The implications of this will be explored in this paper.

The term "pre-crime" can be something of a misnomer, as pre-crime CVE policies do not - nor, generally, do they purport to - stop imminent crimes of violence from happening, as may appear to be the case on face value.

Rather, pre-crime as a concept leans heavily on the notion of *pre-empting* incidents. As such, pre-crime CVE policies intervene in order to disrupt the process of 'radicalisation' towards 'extremism' whereby people may come to the point in the future when they may desire to commit acts of 'terrorism'/political violence. It predicates the notion that the future is knowable.

To underscore the point, pre-crime CVE policies do not deal with actual scenarios or the roots of criminal violence, nor do they prevent these from coming to fruition - rather they deal with individuals that show, according to various analytic tools, inclinations towards an 'extremist' mindset or ideology. The policies aim to defuse and decommission *those individuals* and separate them from 'radicalising' influences.

Through pre-crime, the imagined possibility of violence in the future is dealt with in the present as if it were an imminent fact, and CVE policies actively encourage a practice of early intervention - hence, the practice of early referrals for 'suspect' individuals. The point at which such intervention is possible, or permitted, is explained with recourse to behavioural and ideological cues that are supposedly warning signs of 'radicalisation' - which are themselves formulated through the CVE 'science' described later.

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## 2.3 Eroding divides

A recurring feature, and a key critique, of modern anti-terror policies is that of the often unclear or elastic definitions for their operant terms, i.e. the meaning of 'radicalisation', 'extremism' and 'terrorism'.

Definitions may differ between countries, and also may change within countries' policies over time.

In **Britain**, for example, terrorism is defined under law, in the Terrorism Act 2000 (as amended in 2006), whereas 'extremism' has no such statutory basis - in fact the government has been unable to establish a functional legal definition thus far<sup>78</sup>. Yet the acceptance of such terminology has found its way into the UK courts, where senior judges such as Mr Justice Hayden have felt free to proclaim, "*Those words are sadly now so much a part of contemporary life – 'extremism' and 'radicalisation' – that they scarcely need definition.*"<sup>79</sup>

Meanwhile in **the Netherlands**, while terrorist *offences* are defined through the criminal code, both 'terrorism' at large, and 'extremism', merely have working definitions outlined in relevant government and agency strategies.

**France's** judicial/law & order approach to counter-terrorism has seen its Criminal Code expand into a wide corpus of terrorist offences, while the concept of 'radicalisation' has only recently been introduced into the political lexicon; both concepts are constituted through policies developed by government and governmental agencies rather than through law.

Generally speaking, 'radicalisation', 'extremism', and 'terrorism' are interrelated as follows: *radicalisation* is the process whereby individuals come to support or engage in *extremism/violent extremism*, which may or may not be criminal, and may lead in to (or mirror) *terrorist* offences which are criminal - yet may not necessarily be violent.<sup>10</sup>

These definitions have changed over time and between strategies, according to the dictates of government demands - and they have proved malleable enough for governments to 'stretch' at will, without having to go through any formal democratic process.

However the distinction between 'radicalisation', 'extremism' and 'terrorism' is often erased in political discourse, and the gap is increasingly narrowing in terms of how they are dealt with under counter-terror policing - not to mention in popular discourse, where these deeply emotive and politically-charged terms can be levelled interchangeably at individuals and groups.

'Early' (here referring to the pre-2010/11) CVE strategies, such as those in Britain and the Netherlands, were built around a dyad between the *extremist radicaliser* on the one hand and the individual *susceptible to being radicalised* on the other.

The radicaliser was accused of creating the climate for extremism whilst not committing violent acts themselves - for example the trope of the 'radical preacher'. They were to be dealt with more firmly by 'hard' powers granted under counter-terror (CT) law, including through deportation and/or imprisonment for offences such as 'glorifying' or 'encouraging' 'terrorism' and 'extremism'.

Those susceptible to radicalisation, meanwhile, were to be dealt with through 'softer' CVE interventions, which often revolved around social provisions, guided support and integration measures to deter them from extremism and incorporate them into the social 'mainstream'.

Over time these two 'branches' of counter-radicalisation have increasingly converged, as the temporal gap between *radicalisable*, *radicalised* and *radicaliser* has narrowed<sup>11</sup>; one can apparently cycle through these stages at a rapid pace. This has coincided with the shift in the prevailing policy discourse on 'radicalisation' - moving from a vertical, didactic model to a self-directed, 'auto-radicalisation' process enabled by the growth of the internet as a vessel of 'extremism'.

Now, 'hard' repression can be enacted at any stage of the radicalisation 'process' - for example, the UK's Counter-terrorism and Border Security Act 2019 has recently introduced up to 15 years imprisonment for those who view or store 'terrorist material' on their devices, something justified in the Parliamentary debate by reference to individuals being 'radicalised' by streaming videos online<sup>12</sup>.

Concurrently, CVE counter-radicalisation is more deeply intertwined with an expanding suite of CT powers, which are increasingly blurring into one another in practice.

In some cases, this has created a pre-criminal punitive pathway whereby 'soft' CVE interventions can become a gateway to escalating 'hard' policing interventions and sanctions under CT policy - all before any act of violence has been committed, or even conceived of.

Finally, the shift to so-called "whole society approaches" to countering extremism (see 9) has necessitated efforts to either expand the scope of 'extremism', or to co-opt other 'social ills' into the purview of CVE and counter-radicalisation initiatives.

France's *Stop Djihadisme* resource, as well as its 2018 *National Plan to Prevent Radicalisation* indict conspiracy theories as a radicalising influence<sup>1314</sup>, while the current British government has undertaken an exercise to develop a popular working definition of 'extremism' in order to circumvent its failure to define the term statutorily.

To that end, the Conservative government established the Commission for Countering Extremism (CCE) in 2018 which has commissioned research and undertaken consultation to identify the scope of 'extremism' in British society - making direct reference to the threat presented by 'far-left' extremism, among others.

As part of its evidence-gathering exercise to define extremism, the CCE proceeded on the circular logic that "people are able to describe what extremist activities, attitudes and behaviours look like" and wanted participants to "use their own perceptions on what they consider to be extremism"<sup>15</sup>. Its October 2019 report, *Challenging Hateful Extremism*, proposed the adoption of the term 'Hateful Extremism'<sup>16</sup>, a step further into the realm of pre-crime, and away from any meaningful notion of violence.

A recent speech by former British Home Secretary Sajid Javid made mention of an upcoming, revised Counter Extremism Strategy, which would likely operationalise any new definition offered by the CCE. He also referenced, in the context of "extremism", recent demonstrations against LGBTQ lessons in English schools, homophobic attacks, forced marriage, anti-semitism and racist attacks<sup>17</sup>.

Expanding the scope of the definition and the practice of extremism/counter-extremism in this way will serve to securitise governments' responses to a wider range of social matters, and expand the pre-crime logic of governance further in society.

The meaning of 'extremism' is being stretched so far beyond the realm of violence that it loses any analytic power, which in practice only serves to strengthen states' coercive powers.

In summary, pre-crime CVE policies have stretched the window of time in which the state can intervene to pre-empt 'terrorism', ever further from the point of action.

At the same time, a growing legal architecture of anti-terror laws has expanded the definition of 'terrorism' further away any connection to violence in any sense of the word, to enable CT and CVE policies to become expansive tools of social control.

### 3 CVE in Europe

Many individual European governments began experimenting, developing and refining their own CVE policies in the decade following 9/11 - and particularly after the attacks on European soil following the invasion of Iraq - with Britain eventually taking the lead with its PREVENT programme.

These early CVE policies introduced the theoretical underpinnings that have broadly remained intact ever since, including the fact that CVE policies were to focus primarily on the supposed ideological/theological bases of 'extremism' and/or 'terrorism' - while downplaying or outright eliding the complex roots of disenfranchisement that had led to acts of political violence. These early initiatives were also marked by their focus on social inclusion as culturally integrationist policies in countering 'radicalisation', rather than seeking to deal with structures of inequality.

Since 2010, later CVE policies have begun to more heavily emphasise the purported threat of radicalisation and extremism in the online sphere; the internet, chat rooms and social media. This period also saw the rise of various influential public-private partnerships and forums for CVE practitioners, companies and governments, such as the EU Radicalisation Awareness Network (EU RAN) and the Global Counter Terrorism Forum (GCTF). During this time, the social inclusion focus of policies was phased out.

The prominence of ISIS<sup>18</sup> from 2014, and the spectre of returning foreign fighters carrying out attacks upon their return, led to a renewed focus on CVE policies both among individual states and co-ordination through international forums like the European Union and the United Nations<sup>19</sup>.

The nature and trajectory of individual states' CVE policies have differed, naturally, depending on the circumstances within those states - as nationally inflected articulations of an inchoate, globalising policy agenda. In recent years however, CVE policies have begun to harmonise in line with the framework refined by Britain's PREVENT and promoted through multilateral forums such as the UN.

These mediating circumstances include the countries' own experiences with political violence and the motivations and ideological leanings of ruling parties but also the varying forms of resistance and acceptance that CVE policies have prompted domestically, and the historical political traditions of those countries.

**Britain's** PREVENT programme, for example, began life branding itself as a tool for "community cohesion", a policy concept that was popularised in British political life by the 'Cantle report'<sup>20</sup> following the 'race riots' in Oldham, Northern England, in summer 2001.

The hostile reputation that the British programme earned in its early years under the Labour government - especially from targeted Muslim communities - led to a crisis of confidence in the programme<sup>212223</sup>.

This lack of confidence was seized upon by the Conservative party which, upon forming a coalition government in 2010, undertook an internal review of the programme and revised it in line with their own political ethics - out went "community cohesion", in came the language of monocultural "muscular liberalism", and a more totalising, centrally-driven policy.

The **Dutch** CVE programme, which in many ways mirrors Britain's PREVENT, also went through a similar developmental process. Dutch Muslims were less resistant to CVE policies: mosques could be found developing anti-extremism initiatives to be taken up by municipalities, for example, whilst Moroccan communities set up a radicalisation helpline.<sup>24</sup> But teachers and social workers, the frontline of Dutch CVE initiatives, were initially reluctant to engage in informant work on behalf of the state. This was overcome by framing the initiatives as oriented towards the best interests of 'radicalised' individuals, rather than as an extension of policing - a framework adopted by Britain's PREVENT in 2015 with its rebranding as a 'safeguarding' tool.

**France** meanwhile eschewed CVE policies for many years in favour of increased policing and security-based measures through its legislation. State interventions into Islamic theology, as were seen in other CVE policies, were a feature of French counter-extremism, but were contested on the grounds of violating the *laïcité*, the principle of separating religion and state.

Additionally, the opening of de-radicalisation centres, one of the pioneering CVE policies of the Hollande government, met an early (albeit temporary) demise once locals vocalised their opposition to the idea of having 'jihadis' in their midst.

## 3.1 Individual CVE policies

### 3.1.1 Britain

The UK developed its first version of its CONTEST strategy as an unpublished document in 2003. Following the suicide bombings on London public transport on 7 July 2005, CONTEST was revised, expanded and published in July 2006 - introducing the '4 Ps' of British counter-terrorism: Prevent, Pursue, Protect and Prepare<sup>25</sup>.

PREVENT was the pre-crime CVE strand, charged with 'tackling the radicalisation of individuals'. Singularly focused on 'Islamist terrorism', the approach to radicalisation was rooted in the notion of a linear pathway towards extremism, and the idea that prevention was about winning the 'battle of ideas' against extremism.

PREVENT at first was driven by an emphasis on social inclusion and 'community cohesion', promoting social reform within Muslim communities to reduce the appeal of radical ideology and seeking to reform Muslim communities by supporting 'moderate' voices.

2007 saw the establishment of the governmental Office for Security and Counter-Terrorism (OSCT) to support CONTEST delivery, and the introduction of *Channel*, multi-agency panels (MAPPA) that would assess individuals considered vulnerable to extremism, and issue bespoke MAPPA plans to take an individual away from an alleged pathway to terrorism. That year, the Preventing Violent Extremism Pathfinder Fund was initiated through the Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG), with £6million made available to fund community projects in line with PREVENT's aims - a figure that rose to £27million in 2009/10<sup>26</sup>.

PREVENT was updated in the 2009 edition of CONTEST, broadly retaining the features introduced in 2006 and the intervening years. Most significantly, this edition included the first, and so far only, attempt by government to actively engage Muslim communities on British foreign policy through the Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO)<sup>27</sup> - whilst other versions were content to dismiss these as warped "perceptions" of injustice.

Nonetheless, the FCO programme was still described as a didactic exercise in *explaining* foreign policy motivations of the British state, rather than a reflexive or democratic exchange. Tellingly, a leaked version of the CONTEST strategy at the time included working guidelines for classifying as 'extremist' individuals who held views such as "[Believing] in jihad, or armed resistance, anywhere in the world. This would include armed resistance by Palestinians against the Israeli military" and "[Failing] to condemn the killing of British soldiers in Iraq or Afghanistan"<sup>28</sup> - in short, those dissenting from the standards of British foreign policy.

Opposition to PREVENT grew towards the end of the decade, especially with the revelation that PREVENT funding was prioritised for local areas proportional to the Muslim population within them, and for the fact that initiatives provided with PREVENT funding were expected to monitor and inform on users<sup>29</sup>. Additionally, the concentration of public funding for Muslims over others generated discord between communities, and political disquiet about fiscal responsibility in light of the 2007-08 financial crisis.

In 2010 the incumbent Labour party were beaten in the General Election by the rightwing Conservative Party-led Coalition government, whose political priorities included introducing austerity policies and further dismantling public services.

Seizing upon the discontent generated by PREVENT, they undertook an internal review of the programme and re-launched a new PREVENT strategy in June 2011. That strategy was scaled back in its expenditure, moving the locus away from local initiatives towards a sector-based top-down implementation of PREVENT through the OSCT - formally introducing it into the healthcare services and spaces of education such as universities.

In the 2011 strategy, 'extremism' - which could for the first time include the far-right - was now defined as "vocal or active opposition to fundamental British Values" (democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty and the mutual respect and tolerance of different faiths and beliefs) and could include "non-violent extremism" which supposedly formed part of the 'terrorist ideology'. As part of this, organisations that had previously received PREVENT funding, and/or been engaged by government for the purposes of countering extremism, were themselves effectively blacklisted as extremists<sup>30</sup><sup>31</sup>; the foreword to the new strategy also reserved particular ire for the Muslim representative body MCB (Muslim Council of Britain).

Section 26 of the 2015 Counter-terrorism and Security Act placed PREVENT on a statutory footing for those sectors initially brought into its remit by the 2011 strategy. Public sector institutions including universities, schools, hospital trusts, local authorities and prisons were now charged with having "due regard to the need to prevent people from being drawn into terrorism"<sup>32</sup> - accompanied by a rebranding of PREVENT as a *safeguarding* tool, in line with long-standing policies to protect vulnerable individuals from child sexual abuse and so on.

An amendment to the 2019 Counter-terrorism and Border Security Act has led to the initiation of a government-appointed “independent review of PREVENT”, which at the time of writing is due to commence - albeit headed by the same House of Lords peer who signed off on the 2010/11 internal review<sup>33</sup>.

### 3.1.2 Netherlands

In the Netherlands, the move towards counter-radicalisation policies was sparked both by the events of 9/11, and by the more localised incident of the January 2002 killing of two young Dutch men of Moroccan origin in Kashmir, said to have been recruited in the Netherlands.

The Dutch General Intelligence and Security Service (AIVD - *Algemene Inlichtingen- en Veiligheidsdienst*) was set up in May 2002, and in December of that year issued its report *Recruitment for the jihad in the Netherlands* which outlined the theoretical underpinnings of what would become CVE policy.

The threat was framed as a matter of ‘social polarisation’, and primarily as an issue of ‘recruitment’ to jihad of young second/third generation Dutch Muslims by former mujahideen fighters who had settled in the Netherlands, both legally and illegally<sup>34</sup>.

The solution was presented as twofold, addressing both the issue of ‘recruiters’ and also, the integration of alienated and susceptible second/third generation Dutch Muslims:

*“...Combating Islamic terrorism does not only require a major effort of the intelligence and security services, police and justice, but also requires continuous attention in other fields of policy, such as immigration and aliens and the policy of integration.”<sup>35</sup>*

Following the assassination of Theo Van Gogh, director of the incendiary film *Submission*, in 2004, early experiments in formal CVE programmes were undertaken by individual municipalities rather than through central government - with the capital Amsterdam taking the lead.

From 2005 onwards, Dutch counter-terror strategies were coordinated by the newly-formed National Coordinator for Counterterrorism (NCTb - *Nationaal Coördinator Terrorismebestrijding*), later renamed the National Coordinator for Security and Counterterrorism (NCTV - *Nationaal Coördinator Terrorismebestrijding en Veiligheid*).

Lessons from these municipal programmes were collated and consolidated into the Dutch government’s 2007 *Polarisation and Radicalisation Action Plan 2007 – 2011*. The Action Plan, whilst making reference to ‘right-wing extremism’ as among the “greatest social [threats] currently facing the Netherlands”<sup>36</sup> was clearly directed primarily at the threat presented by Muslims - specifically, by the Salafi movement.

The Action Plan spanned local, national and international branches of strategy and was framed as a three-level plan labelled the ‘comprehensive approach’, including:

- *Prevention* of isolation, polarisation and radicalisation
- *Pro-Action* to identify these processes at an early stage
- and *Repression*, to limit the influence on radicalisers.

The localised branch of the strategy entailed assessments of the threat of radicalisation within areas and neighbourhoods, for which a tailored action plan would be developed and executed alongside police, teachers, youth workers and more. Those actors who frequently worked with young people, such as youth workers, were to serve as the “eyes and ears” of local government, thus drawing them in to the web of surveillance.

In June 2011, the NCTV published an updated National Counterterrorism Strategy to run until 2015, the first issued under the new government led by the right-wing People’s Party for Freedom and Democracy (VVD).

Still directed overwhelmingly at the threat of ‘jihadis’, this strategy was framed around 5 ‘Ps’: Procure, Prevent, Protect, Prepare, Prosecute.

The updated CVE policy, under the Prevent policy strand, emphasised the virtue of early intervention and was framed around the idea of a 'supply and demand' model - 'supply' referring to the terrorists' narratives, which were to be undermined, and 'demand' referring to individuals' needs for identity and belonging, which were to be provided by state-led counter-messaging.

Though the 2011-15 strategy broadly continued with the comprehensive approach, CVE was placed somewhat apart from 'hard' CT policy, whilst the centrality of the Netherlands' nature as a 'democratic constitutional state' and its 'core values such as freedom, equality, solidarity and space for multiformity' were affirmed in the strategy<sup>37</sup>.

Additionally, CVE was now firmly decoupled from the integration agenda and spurned any mention of 'social cohesion', a policy which itself had been attacked by the new government.<sup>38</sup> Yet, counter-terrorism was strongly connected to civil immigration powers, with radicalisation being a possible basis for the "refusal, withdrawal and/or non-renewal of a residence permit, an exclusion order and the refusal or withdrawal of Dutch citizenship<sup>39</sup>".

A slimmer, updated version of the National Counterterrorism Strategy was released in 2016, which broadly retained the framework of the 2011-15 strategy whilst briefly reintroducing the notion of social cohesion into the realm of counter-extremism. The new strategy also brought up the use of 'multidisciplinary case meetings' for the purposes of drawing up action plans for deradicalisation - analogous to the Channel stream of Britain's PREVENT.

The duty of identifying radicalisation was mentioned as falling on 'educational institutions, government agencies, associations, community groups and professionals' and included co-operation with police, mental health providers, as well as intelligence and security services.

### 3.1.3 France

Contrasting quite markedly from the rest of Western Europe, France for many years avoided any pre-crime CVE policies.

Rather, its approach hinged on 'hard' counter-terror responses, through expanding judicial powers and formal securitised policing. There is a particular focus on 'recruitment' in French prisons - which have a notably high proportion of Muslims, estimated as being as high as 60-70% of the prison population relative to a national proportion of around 12% (circa 2008)<sup>40</sup>.

This began to change from 2012 with the shooting spree of French-Algerian Mohammed Merah in Toulouse and Montauban, and later with the 2014 attack on a Jewish museum in Brussels by French-Algerian Mehdi Nemmouche.

In April 2014, the Hollande government launched their Anti-Terrorism Plan *PLAT* and introduced an approach to counter-radicalisation co-ordinated by the Inter-Ministerial Committee for the Prevention of Delinquency (CIPD - *Comité Interministériel de Prévention de la Délinquance*) and the Anti-Terrorist Coordination Unit (UCLAT - *Unité de Coordination de la Lutte Antiterroriste*), and including the setting up of a helpline and online alert system for informing on potentially 'radicalised' individuals, pitched at relatives.

In January 2015 the government set up the '*Stop Djihadisme*' (Stop Jihadism) initiative, a website whose objectives included the promotion of:

**'understanding'**: identify stakeholders, their objectives and the targets of the terrorist threat in order to better respond to it;

**acting'**: raise awareness of the State's resources and actions concerning the fight against terrorism;

**deciphering'**: understand the propaganda and manipulation techniques used by Jihadist recruiters;

**mobilising'**: inform all citizens on how to behave in a threatening situation and in their day-to-day lives<sup>41</sup>.

*Stop Djihadisme* highlighted the helpline and online alert system, whilst identifying warning signs of radicalisation as including changes in behaviour such as diet, attire and stopping listening to music<sup>42</sup>.

Following the November 2015 ISIS attacks in Paris, the French government instituted a temporary State of Emergency which was extended multiple times before being instituted into new anti-terror legislation in late 2017.

In May 2016, a new 80-point Action Plan to Combat Radicalisation and Terrorism (*PART – Plan d'action contre la radicalisation et le terrorisme*) was adopted by the government. This plan placed an emphasis on education: schools were identified as being “on the front line in terms of taking early action to prevent radicalisation”, with organised sessions on spotting radicalisation being introduced in late 2017 for educators and social workers, and greater focus on civic education - a move sparked, in part, by reports of children disrupting school vigils for the Charlie Hebdo attacks in January 2015<sup>43</sup>. The plan also emphasised the role of women’s empowerment as part of counter-extremism, and issued a call out for research on radicalisation and counter-arguments to ‘extremist’ messaging<sup>44</sup>.

As part of the plan, a de-radicalisation ‘Center for Prevention, Integration, and Citizenship’ was set up in Pontourny in the French department of Indre-et-Loire in late 2016. Intended as the first of 13 planned centres, it was closed in 2017 following protests by locals and amidst internal divisions about the model of deradicalisation used at the centre.<sup>45</sup>

The latest plans to tackle radicalisation were introduced under the Macron government in February 2018 with its *National Plan to Prevent Radicalisation*. This 60-point plan resurrected the de-radicalisation centres, as well as emphasising the need to tackle potential radicalisation in education institutions, prisons and sports initiatives.

Individuals suspected of radicalisation were reported to the National Center for Assistance and Prevention of Radicalization (CNAPR), which could then choose whether to escalate referrals to Prefects, and potentially put them through a de-radicalisation process to better inculcate them with Republican values.

The French policy is open in its targeting of ‘extremist’ Muslims, or ‘jihadism’ and its use of Muslim intermediaries in counter-radicalisation. It is also explicit in its operationalisation of Republican values, such as secularism and French national culture, as the ideological norm both against which to define ‘radicalisation’, and in which to assimilate individuals in the process of de-radicalisation.

Ironically, the French CVE approach has been hamstrung by the governing Republican principle of *laïcité*, the separation of religion and state, and concerns that the theological interventions promoted through CVE violate that principle<sup>47</sup>.

Between their launch in 2014 and June 2016, 10,873 reports were made with 19% concerning under-18s and 52% made through family members<sup>48</sup>. As of February 2018, 25,000 state and local authority officers as well as social workers had been trained in identifying radicalisation, whilst 2,600 young people had been “supported and monitored” through de-radicalisation<sup>49</sup>.

## 4 The tools of pre-crime

### 4.1 Assessment tools

CVE draws legitimacy from, and seeks to instill confidence through, its self-promotion as ‘scientific’.

It is for this purpose that extensive efforts have been made into the ongoing pursuit of identifying, researching, consolidating and refining the assessment tools used in spotting the risk of ‘radicalisation’ and/or ‘extremism’.

Some of these draw from risk assessment tools that have been used in the context of general violence prevention, and they lean heavily on cognitive, psychological and social factors that can be used, supposedly, to identify the possible warning signs of future violence and/or ‘extremism’.

A number of tools are currently in use, including the ERG22+ (Extremism Risk Guidance) used in England and Wales, IR-46 (Islamic Radicalization) used in the Netherlands, and the VERA 2-R (Violent Extremism Risk Assessment) which is used globally.

CAGE’s 2016 report *The ‘science’ of pre-crime: The secret ‘radicalisation’ study underpinning PREVENT* hones in on the clandestine, and methodologically substandard, manner in which the ERG22+ was developed for use<sup>50</sup>.

### The sign of breakdown:

- physical changes and changes in clothing;
- asocial statements;
- sudden move to hyper-ritualised religious observance;
- rejection of authority and of life in community;
- brutal rejection of daily habits;
- self-hate, rejecting oneself, displacing self-hate onto another person;
- rejecting society and its institutions (school, etc.);
- distancing oneself from family and loved ones;
- sudden modification of centres of interest.

### The individual's personal environment:

- a weak or even deteriorated paternal or parental image and a weakened environment;
- relationships networks that are already based on dependence on a person, a group, or web sites;
- immersion in a radicalised family.

### Theories and discourse:

- conspiracy theories such as references to the end of the world, conspiracy references and victim-status references;
- veneration of terrorists;
- using hate speech and very violent speech towards a community or a religion;
- proselytising;
- taking part in sectarian religious groups or radical thought circles;
- taking part in conferences given by extremist religious preachers;
- binary behaviour that distinguishes "pure" from "impure".

### Techniques:

- using virtual or human networks;
- strategies involving concealment or duplicity;
- planning journeys to war zones,

*Possible signs of 'radicalisation', France* <sup>46</sup>

The ERG22+ consists of 22 factors, categorised along 3 dimensions, including those which indicate individuals as:

- **Engaging with a terrorist group, cause or ideology**
- **Developing the intent to cause harm**
- **Developing the capability to cause harm**

The ERG22+ was the product of a study (publicly withheld under grounds of national security) conducted by two former psychologists employed through the British government's National Offender Management Service (NOMS), Monica Lloyd and Christopher Dean.

That study drew from case notes on 20 convicted Muslim criminal offenders - including convictions unrelated to 'terrorist' violence - as the primary data set. The observations made from this narrow sample were then extended in order to develop an assessment framework for persons potentially being drawn into '*violent* extremism' more broadly.

The factors comprising the ERG22+ have been operationalised through the *Channel* component of PREVENT as the 'Channel Vulnerability Assessment (CVA) framework' according to which individuals are assessed for signs of 'radicalisation'. More significantly, they have been used as part of national training programmes under the UK government's e-learning 'radicalisation' awareness for public sector workers.

Despite the central study still remaining confidential and closed to scrutiny, and its containing a litany of methodological shortcomings and its authors' own admission that the ERG22+ is a 'work in progress', the assessment tool remains in use across England and Wales for the purposes of the PREVENT strategy.

## 4.2 The research

These shortcomings aren't unique to the ERG22+. As a 2017 literature review prepared for the US Department of Homeland Security (DHS) on CVE assessment tools candidly admits: "*The current state of the science regarding assessment tools for violent extremism is riddled with unknowns*"<sup>51</sup>.

This is despite the fact that these assessment tools are already operational across countries and localities, used to identify and intervene in the lives of individuals - effectively making those communities subject to CVE little more than experimental 'lab rats' for CVE science.

Beyond that, deep issues extend throughout the 'supply chain' of CVE assessment tools. Governments (and supra-national bodies such as the European Commission<sup>52</sup>) are often selective with which academic studies they commission, fund and accept in order to develop an uncritical research base on radicalisation theory and subsequent assessment tools<sup>53</sup>, leading to a phenomenon that has been described as 'policy-based evidence', as opposed to evidence-based policy<sup>54</sup>.

**The subsequent 'deradicalisation' initiatives that emerge from such an evidence-averse field are predictably sub-standard: an unpublished report by the British government's Behavioural Insights Team found that, of the 33 deradicalisation programmes under PREVENT that were studied, only two were deemed 'effective'**<sup>55</sup>.

In the production of extremism assessment tools, the empirical bases used can vary. Often they use as their sample individuals who have committed and been convicted of violent crimes, deemed 'terrorist' or otherwise, as in the case of the ERG22+.

Control groups against which to compare findings are notoriously difficult to access in the context of high security 'terrorist' offenders, so samples are often instead compared haphazardly to individuals in "*inconsistent comparison groups including non-extremist common violence offenders, nonviolent extremist offenders, violent offenders from other extremist groups, and the general population*"<sup>56</sup>. Significantly, no controls are possible for the violence of the state, inequality, structural racism and other forms of inequalities - leading to an emphasis on controlling the behaviour of individuals, rather than transforming the societies around them.

These assessments are then deployed to identify risk factors among individuals and populations who have not committed, nor shown any signs of committing, acts of violence - but rather who show signs of potential 'radicalisation' and/or extremism.

In this way the rhetorical and operational collapse of 'radicalisation', 'extremism', 'violent extremism' and 'terrorism' mentioned earlier comes to bear on the scientific tools of CVE, to cement the conflation of ideology and violence, and create frameworks unfit for purpose.

CVE practice is driven by the dictates of CVE policy, which seeks CVE research to validate itself.

Despite the pretense of scientific rigour, then, this research serves to provide an apparent retrospective legitimisation and/or refine CVE programmes that have been underway for over a decade in many cases. The research does not in general question the fundamental underpinnings of CVE programmes and their logic; and any that do are not made public.

### 4.3 Application

The practical applications of CVE assessment tools are deeply damaging and rife with issues.

Pre-crime CVE as a policy framework draws on the use of lateral surveillance - rather than employing specialised professionals, regular workers in various sectors like healthcare and social work, and the public at large, are encouraged and enlisted to look out for the warning signs of 'extremism'.

Those workers charged with implementing CVE surveillance are often primed with little more than perfunctory training sessions and bring their own preconceptions - which themselves are shaped by the wider socio-political context in which the figure of the Muslim has been established as an object of suspicion.

'Spotting signs of radicalisation' is invariably racialised, drawing on pre-existing prejudices and ideas of suspicious profiles. In determining an ideological 'norm' against which ideological 'deviations' can be identified and flagged up, Dutch youth/social workers were forthright in stating that *"when detecting such 'deviant behaviour' they did not use a specific tool or methodology, but trusted their own value judgements...[some] literally called this 'trusting your own intuition', your 'compass' or 'gut feelings'"*<sup>57</sup>.

Whilst some of the youth workers in this particular study mentioned feeling the training left them unprepared for the work they undertake, perhaps more concerning is that other frontline workers were unquestioning of the assumptions of CVE training and policies, or overconfident in their new investigative abilities following training<sup>58</sup>, whereas the more critically minded felt unable to speak out<sup>5960</sup>.

CVE policies also actively encourage a policy of early intervention; as France's *Stop Djihadisme* resource states *"The sooner a situation is detected, the more it will be possible to avoid a tragedy"*<sup>61</sup> which in the context of pre-crime policies requires a suspension of critical thought and an emphasis on hair trigger informing for 'suspicious' behaviour. There is therefore often an absence of critical thinking in the implementation of CVE policies among those charged with its implementation, which can contribute towards a culture of normalised prejudice and suspicion among public sector institutions.

CVE policies and anti-Muslim racism are products of the same discursive and policy process. It is for this reason that CVE assessments cannot be separated from a wider climate of Islamophobia and securitisation of Muslims, and why the apparently innocuous risk factors identified by CVE assessments such as 'A need for identity, meaning and belonging' (ERG22+/CVA), 'having lower socio-economic status' (multiple) and 'having psychological issues' (multiple) are recast in a distinctly sinister light when it comes to Muslims.

We can therefore say that CVE relies upon, and in turn further entrenches, prejudice against suspect populations, while seeking recourse to 'objective' science that is itself skewed to dispel any accusation of prejudice; both the practice and the research are deeply politicised, but hide behind the pretense of neutrality.

It is in this context that overreach and abuses of CVE policies are all but inevitable, yet apologists for CVE often deflect to the idea of individual 'bad apples' being responsible, rather than indicting the foundational dynamics of the policies.

## 4.4 Institutions

Beyond the individual prejudices of those charged with spotting risk factors, the institutional pressures imposed by CVE policies intensify the compulsion to monitor and inform on individuals.

Where CVE policies are challenged on ethical grounds, or for damaging the relationship between workers and users, these concerns run up against the institutional demands placed upon institutions by government policy.

Furthermore, as CVE policies have expanded, they have diffused across sectors and duties, which makes it difficult - and therefore undesirable - to extricate counter-extremism from the everyday responsibilities of work and society.

In **Britain**, funding of public universities is in part contingent on the proper implementation of PREVENT (as per the Prevent duty of the 2015 Counter-Terrorism and Security Act). Failure to do so can also be met with criminal sanctions and/or public naming-and-shaming of institutions by the government<sup>62</sup>. The pressure on university management is then inevitably applied downward to staff and educators to diligently inform on individuals via PREVENT rather than rock the boat<sup>63</sup>.

Similarly in the context of **Dutch** youth workers at the frontline of CVE, pressures come in the form of their responsibility towards their collaborative relationship with police, as well as their own self-compulsions, which "are encouraging them to go the proverbial 'extra mile' to meet their own perceived responsibility"<sup>64</sup>.

Tying CVE to the interests of national security in and of itself places a moral and social incentive on workers that can effortlessly overpower conscientious objection – a culture of deference that colours counter-terror operations at large. *It's better to spot than to not*, given the potentially catastrophic costs implied in doing otherwise.

The fear of criminal sanctions, professional incentives and the strength of political indoctrination combine to form a powerful buffer against moral conscience.

## 4.5 Prejudice

As stated earlier, CVE policies mutually reinforce and institutionalise a process whereby Muslims are discursively and politically constructed as a threat, and are subjected to progressively expanding techniques of surveillance.

Fundamentally, pre-crime CVE policies cannot be abstracted outside of the political context in which they emerged: the War on Terror directed against 'radical Islam' and/or 'extremist Muslims'. At every level of CVE policies, the threat embodied by Muslims and Islam is politically constructed against this backdrop.

Pre-crime as a mode of policy relies on the idea of embodied threat, leaning on dangerous identities in order to parse behaviours that are meant to indicate risk and justify state intervention<sup>65</sup>. The turn from 'classical' racism to the cultural racism of Islamophobia dovetails with CVE's search for cultural and ideological markers to identify the threat embodied by Muslims.

Islamophobia as mobilised through pre-crime CVE policies institutionalises prejudice against Muslims at multiple interrelated levels, and fundamentally shapes the relationship between

- Muslims with other national communities
- Muslims with public institutions
- Muslims with state policy

In terms of Muslims' relations with other communities, CVE policies draw upon, and in turn legitimise, the widespread suspicion, collective blame and mistrust of Muslims - and increases the salience of Muslims as a public threat.

The culture of informing encouraged through CVE policies - and CVE-adjacent public programmes - also poisons relations with those national communities. In the case of the *Stop Djihadisme* hotline, the forerunner to more fleshed out CVE policies in France, it has been reported that “people are being informed on by their neighbours for no good reason... [and has] led to an open door to denunciation – you don't like your neighbour, call the police on them”<sup>66</sup>.

As the Spinwatch report *Islamophobia in Europe: How governments are enabling the far-right 'counter-jihad' movement* has thoroughly detailed, this has also fuelled the resurgent far-right in Europe, particularly among activists of the 'counter-jihadist' subset who in the UK and Germany can be found using the language and framing of anti-terror policies to pressure the state to further institutionalise Islamophobia in public policy.

With regards to public institutions, a key feature of pre-crime CVE policies in Britain and the Netherlands (and since 2016, France) is the recruitment of frontline public sector workers to monitor and identify signs of 'radicalisation' and/or 'extremism'.

This securitises the relationship between those workers, public sector institutions and Muslim communities, which can deter those communities from accessing necessary services or otherwise further alienate them from society.

CVE policy is state policy, and the interplay between top-down Islamophobia mobilised by governments, the more bottom-up Islamophobia pushed by sections of the far-right on to governments, alongside the framing of Muslim mobilisation as 'radical', ensures a cycle whereby Muslims are firmly excluded and disenfranchised from public life.

The question of *how* CVE policies are prejudicial, racist and/or Islamophobic is the subject of an increasingly expansive body of literature.

At this point, then, we will turn to *why* that is so.

Importantly, it is necessary to understand that the racism and Islamophobia of CVE policies, whilst central to their formulation, are not the end goals of the programme in and of themselves. The racist prejudice and suspicion underpinning CVE policies have a structural purpose which cannot be explained solely in relation to Muslim communities within CVE-practising countries.

Rather, pre-crime CVE policies have been piloted on Muslims in order to introduce, mainstream and entrench a wider logic of governance across society defined by pre-emption and securitisation, and exercised through increased surveillance and militarisation - be that of public life, of policing, of borders or beyond.

Pre-crime and/or the CVE framework are increasingly becoming the modality through which public policy is enacted - as in the case of statutory 'knife crime' duties mirroring PREVENT being introduced in British public sector institutions, the Metropolitan Police's 'Gangs Matrix' in London<sup>67</sup> or the use of the Multidisciplinary Threat Assessment framework in Department of Justice-funded programmes<sup>68</sup> for school safety in Texas schools<sup>69</sup>.

As will be discussed in the final section, Professor Shoshana Zuboff highlights the extent to which tech companies have been involved in the development of pre-crime technologies in the 'The Age of Surveillance Capitalism'. Writing in the context of the US, she notes:

“[A] prominent surveillance-as-a-service company, Palantir, once touted by *Bloomberg Businessweek* as “the war on terror's secret weapon,” was found to be in secret collaboration with the New Orleans Police Department to test its “predictive policing” technology. Palantir's software not only identified gang members but also “traced people's ties to other gang members, outlined criminal histories, analyzed social media, and predicted the likelihood that individuals would commit violence or become a victim.”<sup>70</sup>

At the same time, the style of governance ushered in by the War on Terror rewrites the social compact in order to place the weight of surveillance upon ordinary citizens, undercut bonds of solidarity between them, and allow the state to retreat from its welfare responsibilities in favour of the further criminalisation of dispossession. Embedding pre-crime and counter-extremism into states' modes of governance is part of the neoliberalising project.

When it comes to defining target communities for counter-extremism, one cannot ignore the dialectic relationship between domestic demands and international interests.

The focus on Muslims under CVE policies is politically contingent, and can shift depending on the evolving dictates of politics and global allegiances, as new emerging 'threats' are defined by states and dealt with through CVE policies. Recent examples in Britain include the political Left, the environmental movement<sup>71</sup> and 'Sikh separatists'<sup>72</sup> who all have been described as 'extremists' in political discourse.

Within individual countries, pre-crime frameworks and policies may or may not have begun with CVE, but in any case they certainly will not end with CVE: public policy is increasingly subordinated to the demands of securitisation, and social relations are bent to the demand for surveillance.

We should defy attempts to exceptionalise the 'exceptional' powers granted by CT and CVE, and understand it as the increasingly commonplace terrain upon which much 'regular' policy is played out and normalised. For this reason, CVE is not an issue for Muslims alone but demands an active rejection from society at large.

## 5 The centrality of ideology

Within pre-crime CVE policies, identifying and combating the 'ideology' of extremism takes on central importance.

The fixation on 'ideology' has led to three strategic focuses of CVE policies

- *Ideological content* - the 'battle of hearts and minds' to combat extremism
- *Spaces for disseminating ideology* - encapsulated by the Dutch strategy's 'breeding ground' model, or the goal in the 2011 PREVENT strategy that there should be "no 'ungoverned spaces' in which extremism is allowed to flourish"
- *Individuals vulnerable to extremist ideology, and those who propagate it* - who were then targeted either for CVE interventions or more punitive sanctions, respectively.

In the case of Muslim-propagated violence, this 'ideology' of extremism is considered to be connected to Islamic theology, and tackled through individualised psycho-cognitive interventions, which defined CVE policies in their early (pre-2010/11) phase.

This ideological-psychological-theological focus was itself buttressed by a circuit of academic research commissioned and promoted by governments undertaking CVE programmes. Silva notes how, prior to 2012, academic research on 'radicalisation theory' leaned overwhelmingly on cultural-psychological explanations<sup>73</sup>.

Since then, while the focus on 'extremist ideology' remains central to CVE policies, there has been a shift away from cultural-psychological explanations - due in varying degrees to the expanding targets of (certain) CVE programmes, the growing body of research against cultural-psychological explanations, and the changing imperatives of national counter-terror policy.

The cultural-psychological model has been directly challenged by 'relational' models of political violence, which involve 'studying the space of reciprocal relationships as well as the moves that various actors make in a given social and political context'<sup>74</sup>. The focus is on the 'presence of social ties to larger radical milieus, groups, or movements during radicalisation processes'<sup>75</sup> and through which 'the claims made by various groups and individuals considered as terrorists citing [nations'] foreign policy ...are thus not merely the result of some sort of "indoctrination" that can be combated with a simple ideological response, or a "social malaise" that can be resolved by more welfare state'<sup>76</sup>. These relational models are for the most part silenced or flattened in official CVE practice and discourse, which consistently erase the role of the state in fostering the conditions for political violence.

The focus on ideology, and the attendant need to distinguish between those on the 'right side' and 'wrong side' of society's ideological norms, dovetailed with the culturalist turn of the War on Terror described below.

# 6 Culture wars and the impact of CVE on domestic policy

From the outset, the War on Terror was defined in distinctly 'culturalist' terms. The enemy was said to "hate our freedoms: our freedom of religion, our freedom of speech, our freedom to vote"<sup>77</sup>. The fundamental framing of the war was a clash of culturally-defined values and ideologies, which allowed for a growing list of purportedly 'liberal' values, such as women's rights or minority rights, to be co-opted and mobilised in defence of imperialism.

'Culture' in this context - as mobilised from above - was not merely *cultural*. It was an articulation of a governing ideology, and an expression of power. Indeed former British Prime Minister Tony Blair stated that his foreign policy motivations in Iraq, Afghanistan and elsewhere were justified "at least as much by reference to values as interests"<sup>78</sup> and that "the struggle in our world today [is] not just about security, it is a struggle about values"<sup>79</sup>.

Culture from above became a window into the machinations of state power and revealed how power in the context of the War on Terror was generated and consolidated on the back of selective cultural outsiders. Placing Islam or 'radical Islamism' outside of and in opposition to a national 'liberal' culture was part of the process by which racism was rearticulated into present-day Islamophobia.

The cultural dimension of CVE is thus important as much for what it reveals about the British, Dutch and French states as for what it obscures.

## 6.1 Culture and CVE

*"We must reject the thought that somehow we are the authors of our own distress; that if only we altered this decision or that, the extremism would fade away. The only way to win is: to recognise this phenomenon is a global ideology; to see all areas, in which it operates, as linked; and to defeat it by values and ideas set in opposition to those of the terrorists."*<sup>80</sup>

This culturalist/value-based framing has persisted, and found its way into the domestic frontiers of the War on Terror such as CVE.

Alongside the unerring emphasis on combating the supposed 'ideology' of extremism, the defence and promotion of liberal, national and/or pan-European values have gradually become more prominent features of a number of CVE programmes, including in the UK, Netherlands and France.

Successive British Prime Ministers have compared the fight against 'Islamist extremism' to the generation-defining battles against the Irish Republican Army, fascism and Communism which, it is said, were overcome by "superior" liberal values in the 20th century<sup>81</sup>.

In the 2017 Dutch elections, the incumbent Prime Minister stridently defended 'Dutch values' from religious 'extremists'<sup>82</sup>. The year before, French Prime Minister Manuel Valls announced new CVE measures, stating "there is an ideological battle within Islam itself...we will always stand alongside those who advocate peaceful action and support the values of the Republic"<sup>83</sup>.

This paternalistic approach to Muslims and Islam, echoed by other world leaders, has been critiqued by Professor Brian Klug, who highlighted former British Prime Minister David Cameron's now infamous speech at Munich in 2011:

*"Thus, what looks at first like a defence of Islam is actually an assertion of authority over Islam: an authority to which Cameron has no right. He speaks about Islam from on high. This is, in a word, a chutzpah."*<sup>84</sup>

In the context of CVE programmes particularly, we argue that the abstraction to the terrain of culture, values and ideology plays a fundamental role, by re-casting political violence as a question of incompatible values and obscuring its avowedly political roots. It also serves to depoliticise political violence, whilst simultaneously ramping up the politicisation and coercion of civic governance policies, such as social inclusion.

## 6.2 CVE, domestic policy and civil society: The carrot and the stick

The role of Western-led foreign policy interventions in and destabilisations of Muslim-majority countries as driving factors of modern political violence in Europe has been all but entirely wiped from the agenda of CVE strategies. Outrage at foreign policy has been dismissed as an issue of warped *perceptions* to be 'corrected'. The only exception was the short-lived and half-hearted acknowledgment in the 2009 version of Britain's CONTEST strategy of the need to engage Muslim communities on foreign policy concerns. The Dutch CVE strategies perform the same linguistic maneuver, recasting the question as one of the "perception of injustice vis-à-vis themselves or vis-à-vis other Muslims at home and abroad"<sup>85</sup>.

Rather than genuinely engage concerns around foreign policy, CVE policies often serve to redefine such interests as subversive, suspect and worthy of surveillance.

On the other hand, compared to the consistent avoidance of foreign policy, the approach of British and Dutch CVE policies towards domestic policy issues has been more complicated, especially prior to 2010/11. These early CVE policies did not completely ignore the degraded conditions affecting their target populations - the poverty of Muslim communities was acknowledged. But the way in which early CVE addressed this served three main purposes:

- 1 Focusing specifically on Muslim communities made them hyper-salient as a target group
- 2 Securitising social welfare, by merging community/social cohesion with counter-terrorism
- 3 Managing Muslim political mobilisation, by drawing Muslim civil society in under the aegis of counter-extremism

Taken together, this approach amounted to a policy of *coerced social inclusion*. Muslims, heretofore socially excluded and disenfranchised, were to be incorporated into society under the watchful eye of counter-extremism.

This disciplinary approach served to seemingly embrace Muslim communities while keeping them in check.

## 6.3 CVE and the welfare state

It could also be argued that this difference in approach between foreign and domestic/social policy came about for political reasons. While foreign policy was to be held beyond reproach in the context of the War on Terror, the system of social provisions across a number of European countries were undergoing a qualitative shift - which CVE could help accelerate.

This shift, towards *conditional* social welfare, was consonant with the form of coercive social inclusion offered through CVE policy - where those at risk of radicalisation could be more actively integrated into societal norms whilst drawing them into the web of state monitoring. Experimenting with these practices on a feared minority community was far more politically comfortable than taking on society at large.

From the late 1990s through the 2000s, the Netherlands was among a number of European nations that responded to concerns about 'welfare dependency' by shifting decisively away from its once vaunted welfare system towards the idea of an 'active welfare state'.

This active welfare state is a workfarist system in which social welfare is more contingent on active engagement with the job market, social participation, and schemes to encourage self-reliance; welfare is 'earned' on the basis of seeking self-improvement through integration into the labour market.

Dutch social welfare reforms in the mid-2000s, such as the 2007 Social Support Act (WMO), further institutionalised the move from generalised welfare provision towards more specific 'tailor-made' interventions, alongside promoting social cohesion<sup>86,87</sup>.

The early Dutch CVE policies, emerging at around the same time, echoed this concern with ensuring that youth supposedly at risk of radicalisation were instead diverted towards becoming economically productive agents, and the 2007-11 CVE strategy placed an emphasis on the integration of at-risk youth into the labour market, including through the "creation of traineeships or workplaces, specific labour market supervision"<sup>88</sup>.

In the British context, a similar shift towards conditionality in social welfare was undertaken during the 1990s and 2000s. Kundnani defines this as a feature of the post-welfarist British 'market-state' brought in by the 'New Labour' governments from 1997-2010. According to the ethos of this system, "recipients of welfare were no longer bearers of rights but objects of surveillance and coercion, which aimed at inducing in them appropriate forms of behaviour"<sup>89</sup>.

PREVENT served as just one such technology of surveillance, to identify those individuals who were, for the sake of maintaining social cohesion, to be integrated into societal norms while, again, being drawn into the web of state monitoring.

The strength of a growing Muslim civil society in Britain was incorporated as a focus into the British PREVENT strategy. Funds were made available for such initiatives through the Preventing Violent Extremism Pathfinder Fund; it later emerged that funding provided under PREVENT came with strings attached - namely, to monitor participants for signs of extremism and share this information with security services<sup>90,91,92</sup>.

This approach towards co-opting civil society for counter-extremist purposes has remained a feature of CVE policies. It is now incorporated as part of the 'whole society approach' to countering extremism discussed in section 9.

Through this process, the differing approaches towards domestic and foreign policy became the carrot and stick of CVE. Muslim mobilisation around foreign policy was recast as a sign of radicalisation and dealt with through CVE interventions, while mobilisation on local, politically convenient issues could be pandered to, co-opted and turned against 'radical elements' in the community through the wider counter-extremism policy apparatus.

## 7 CVE and multiculturalism

In order to understand the ways in which CVE policies in Europe institutionalised prejudice, it is worth assessing how CVE and CT policies interacted with the politics of multiculturalism and integration.

At its core, European 'multiculturalism' was a series of policies and programmes that concerned themselves with the management of migrant labour forces in the post-colonial era and during the reconstitution of post-war capitalism.

As such, these policies were intimately bound up with wider questions of European welfarism and social democracy. Analysing the fate of state multiculturalism cuts to the heart of questions of the changing nature of the state and its shifting modalities of governance.

The break from multicultural policies by a number of European leaders around 2010, therefore, was simultaneously a break from the remnants of a welfarist model towards austerity and intensified neoliberalism.

More specifically then, it is worth tracing how the combination of Islamophobia and xenophobia produced the figure of the un-integrated Muslim, a scapegoat for an increasingly contested multiculturalism, who later needed to be more forcefully assimilated through CVE and de-radicalisation work. These contradictions helped lead to the official 'demise' of state multiculturalism at the turn of this decade.

### 7.1 The long collapse of multiculturalism, and the construction of the radical Muslim threat (1990s-early 2000s)

*"The war on asylum in fact pre-dates the events of 11 September. But after the London bombings of 7 July, the two trajectories - the war on asylum and the war on terror - have converged to produce a racism which cannot tell a settler from an immigrant, an immigrant from an asylum seeker, an asylum seeker from a Muslim, a Muslim from a terrorist."<sup>93</sup>*

Official or state multiculturalism (as opposed to more radical forms of antiracism from below) was always a set of policies and governing ideologies riven with contradictions.

Emerging in Europe as a cornerstone of post-war liberalism, multicultural policies amounted to the management of migrant labour forces, and could still co-exist happily with institutionalised racism, xenophobia and - up to a point - Islamophobia.

In some places, forced on the agenda by grassroots struggles and bearing the promise of rights, multiculturalism co-opted the language of antiracism to advance 'colourblind' policies that benefited the market whilst deepening dispossession among the populace<sup>94</sup>.

Ironically, while the shift to the terrain of 'culture' represented a conscious rejection of the fiction of biological 'race' in Europe's dark history<sup>95</sup>, this cultural turn left open the door for Islamophobes to rearticulate their racism as merely critiques of Islamic *culture*, and as defences of European *values*.

CVE policies emerged in a number of countries simultaneously draped in the language of multiculturalism. They were an outgrowth of the coercive turn taken by multicultural policies as they moved from *pluralism-accommodation* towards more aggressive *integration-assimilation*.

The connecting thread was the way that the figure of the Muslim - especially, the immigrant Muslim, the deviant Muslim, the extremist Muslim - came to express the greatest threat to multiculturalism, and the object of attention for CVE policies.

In **Britain**, the 1988 'Rushdie Affair' and the emergence of an explicitly Muslim political identity ushered in debates about the failure of integrating Muslims under multiculturalism<sup>96</sup>, while the 1990-1 Gulf War saw Muslims in Britain accused of disloyalty to the country<sup>97</sup> and rendered political outsiders. These debates came to the fore again after the 2001 Oldham 'riots' and burst forth following the 7/7 attacks, once the notion of 'homegrown extremists' came into the equation.

In the **Netherlands**, the framework of multiculturalism underwent multiple revisions from the late 1970s, moving from a system of marked openness and cultural autonomy under its *pillarisation* policy towards increasingly interventionist assimilation policies<sup>98</sup>. This was driven to an increasingly large extent by the issue of integrating Muslim immigrants and their descendants. For example, in the early 1990s then-Opposition leader Frits Bolkestein announced that 'Islam was a threat to liberal-democracy and...immigrant integration should be handled with more courage'<sup>99</sup>.

Conversely, **France** had always rejected state multiculturalist policies and, in that respect, resembled the more traditional assimilationist approach taken by nation-states through the 19th and early 20th centuries<sup>100</sup>. Instead of the accommodation of minoritised groups, France has promoted 'antiracism' more broadly as an inherent property of the country's Republican values, which communities should be encouraged to assimilate *in toto*<sup>101</sup>.

Nonetheless, propelled by the 2005 uprisings in French *banlieues*, the 2007 general election campaign and subsequent presidency of Nicolas Sarkozy were defined by a loaded national conversation on French 'national identity'<sup>102103104</sup>. This was widely seen as an overture to the anti-immigrant platform of the National Front, and inherently centred on Muslims, given that "the conflict between French republican values and Islam drive[s] debates on French citizenship, in which the allegiance of dual French-Algerian citizens figures strongly"<sup>105</sup>.

Whilst operating outside of formal multiculturalism, France expressed its own version of top-down anti-migrant politics, and introduced new assimilatory migrant policies which were echoed in later CVE policies.

In sum, in order to manage the threat posed by Muslim migrants, in particular, to multiculturalism, multicultural policies in a number of European nations were stretched - taking a more coercive turn towards integration-assimilation, which lay the groundwork for later CVE policies.

Within this context early CVE policies were framed in Britain and the Netherlands as extensions of cohesion - where the issue of 'radicalisation' was articulated as a challenge to social cohesion and/or integration. It was also why, correspondingly, proposed interventions were presented as a means of better integrating communities within the national body politic.

This merging of integration and counter-terrorism served to securitise integration and produce Muslims as suspect communities, and objects of intense scrutiny in public policy.

## 7.2 Death of multiculturalism and opening of the floodgates (2010-now)

Multiculturalism, and its perceived failure to integrate radical Muslims, was increasingly contested through the 2000s.

The years 2010-11 were a watershed, during which a number of European leaders publicly proclaimed that multiculturalism 'had failed' and that greater emphasis needed to be placed on the assimilatory dimension of integration, rather than on the pluralism-accommodation side.

These included newly elected British Prime Minister David Cameron<sup>106</sup>, newly elected Dutch Prime Minister Mark Rutte<sup>107</sup>, German Chancellor Angela Merkel<sup>108</sup> and French President Nicolas Sarkozy<sup>109</sup>, and came on the back of the 2009 European Parliament elections when hard-right anti-immigrant parties in a number of these countries had strong results - including the United Kingdom Independence Party (UKIP) in Britain and Geert Wilders' Party for Freedom (PVV) in the Netherlands, both of which secured second place.

In some of these countries in the 2010/11 period, right-wing parties were newly elected which had lurched to the right on immigration, integration and the need for austerity compared to more centrist incumbent governments, including the British Conservative Party-led Coalition, and the Dutch People's Party for Freedom and Democracy (VVD) which formed an informal governing agreement with the PVV.

The rhetoric of 'failure' of multicultural policies opened the floodgates for a new type of CVE policy, which decoupled itself from multiculturalist social inclusion in favour of a more strident defence of national values, and demands upon Muslim communities for assimilation.

Then Prime Minister David Cameron best encapsulated this approach in his 'muscular liberalism' speech at the Munich Security Conference in February 2011. He stated that:

*"Frankly, we need a lot less of the passive tolerance of recent years and a much more active, muscular liberalism. A passively tolerant society says to its citizens, as long as you obey the law we will just leave you alone. It stands neutral between different values....Now, each of us in our own countries, I believe, must be unambiguous and hard-nosed about this defence of our liberty."<sup>110</sup>*

Similarly, the Dutch government announced in June of that year that *"the government is distancing itself from the relativism embedded in the model of the multicultural society...[We believe] that integration policy with a more mandatory character is needed to prevent fragmentation and segregation in society"<sup>111</sup>*

This logic was reflected in both the Dutch CVE and British PREVENT programmes, both of which were revised in 2011.

In **Britain**, 'extremism' was now formally defined as 'vocal or active opposition to Fundamental British Values', which includes 'democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty and the mutual respect and tolerance of different faiths and beliefs'.

Meanwhile the **Dutch** strategy included a more forceful assertion of the core values of the 'democratic constitutional state' including freedom, equality, solidarity and space for multiformity' - alongside a distinct paranoia about the 'misuse' of migration for terrorist purposes.

In **France**, the 2011 law on Immigration, Integration and Nationality (2011-672) required, among other things, naturalised citizens to sign a charter affirming the 'principles, values and essential symbols of the French Republic'. These principles were emphasised in CVE policies introduced a few years later<sup>112</sup>.

In the Dutch and British context, the muscular liberal turn was accompanied by a narrowing of the acceptable ideological range of Muslim organisations; henceforth any organisations or individuals perceived as in any way 'extreme' were to be excluded by government<sup>113</sup>.

Unencumbered after 2010 by the constraints placed upon them by the ethos of multiculturalism, governments could take their CVE policies further in the direction of assimilation-integration at the same as instituting more aggressive neoliberal reform.

Through this process, the blame for social discord and political violence was shifted away from the state and onto surveilled communities. The problem was less about the government policies from which 'extremists' drew succour, and more about the ideology of problem communities, who needed to be better inculcated with the values and cultural logic of the state.

### 7.3 Nexus of immigration and CE (2000s)

*'It is in the name of integration that ever-increasing and always-shifting 'cultural preconditions' on citizenship and legitimate belonging are being articulated and enforced – as well as other strategies of control through anti-terror legislation the linking of immigration reform to questions of 'acceptable behaviour' and 'speech crime'<sup>114</sup>*

The corollary of this is the fact that, **in the context of the War on Terror, counter-extremism/counter-terrorism and the securitisation of immigration, nationality and citizenship policies are inherently intertwined.**

CVE has emerged in the turn to more coercive integration policies, to both cement the nexus of counter-extremist/counter-terror powers with immigration management policies, and to more directly connect these as tools of social control.

Efforts to ramp up CVE/CT policies were almost invariably tied to efforts to limit migration and/or more forcefully assimilate migrants.

And in turn, anti-migrant discourse was inevitably constructed around - whilst not remaining confined to - the spectre of the Muslim foreigner - whether the Arab or South Asian in Britain, the Maghrebi in France, or the Moroccan in the Netherlands.

During the 2000s, new legal powers at the intersection of immigration management and counter-terrorism often took the form of strengthened pre-crime speech offences enabling individuals - the 'radical foreign preacher' - to be deported or have their residency revoked for supporting extremism or terrorist groups, without necessarily inciting violence.

Though beyond the scope of this paper, it is worth noting that in recent years there has also been a renewed drive to expand and exploit citizenship revocation powers under the pretense of countering extremism - powers which also operate in the pre-crime space.

Whereas pre-crime CVE policies lowered the bar for state interventions into private life to 'extremist' behaviour, immigration management achieved this through concepts related to national sovereignty - for example, engaging in acts that are deemed "not conducive to the public good" can be used as justification for deportations and bans in Britain.

The first citizenship deprivation in the **Netherlands** occurred in September 2017. Then Minister of Security and Justice Stef Blok revoked the nationality of four alleged Dutch-Moroccan foreign fighters, on the grounds that "their behaviour goes against all Dutch values and that they are, therefore, no longer worthy of being Dutch nationals"<sup>115</sup>.

In **Britain**, the use of citizenship deprivation powers under nationality and immigration laws was progressively strengthened by War on Terror legislation and expanded with the 2014 Immigration Act. Since 2012, the use of such executive powers has increased significantly<sup>116117</sup>, both on grounds of national security, of being 'not conducive to the public good' and for serious crime - most infamously with the recent deprivation of Shamima Begum, the London schoolgirl who fled to Syria in 2016, thus rendering her effectively stateless.

In **France**, though the last two decades have seen amendments to the civil code allowing for increased citizenship deprivation for naturalised citizens upon conviction of 'terrorist' offences, numerous attempts to expand these to all dual-nationals, or to other non-terrorist 'offences', have so far failed to reach the required political support<sup>118</sup>.

# 8 The whole society approach

In recent years, national governments and political figures have been calling for ‘whole society approaches’ to combatting ‘extremism’ - whereby surveillance and security step decisively out of the exclusive realm of government agencies, and into the totalising imperatives of governance across society.

In the Dutch Counterterrorism Strategy 2016-20, this was outlined as requiring the “resilience of the whole country: from members of the public and civil society organisations to the business community and the authorities” echoing a call in the 2018 French National Plan to Prevent Radicalisation that “it is now necessary to devise a national anti-radicalisation and terrorism strategy which involves actions in all areas of public life”. Following a knife attack in the Paris police headquarters in October 2019, President Macron reiterated the need to activate a “society of vigilance” to counter the “Islamist Hydra”<sup>119</sup>.

Britain has developed a particularly advanced version of the whole-society approach, outlined in its 2015 Counter Extremism Strategy<sup>120</sup> and supplemented by the Commission for Countering Extremism, whose head has explicitly called for the development of a ‘counter-extremism movement’ in civil society<sup>121</sup>.

As of 2015, the architecture of British counter-extremism has expanded into three interconnected poles consisting of: PREVENT, Countering Extremism, and Integration.

In this tripolar, concentric-circles approach, PREVENT deals with defusing people who are perceived to be drawn towards terrorism via ‘extremist ideology’; Countering Extremism covers wider socio-cultural anxieties and issues which are supposedly indicative of ‘extremist ideologies’ flourishing; and Integration deals with creating “resilient communities” which can be buffered from ‘extremist ideologies’ and practices. The renewed focus on Integration reaches back into the early versions of PREVENT, albeit now ostensibly placing that policy agenda at arms length from counter-extremism proper.

These initiatives often take form in transnational collaborations, facilitated by forums like the EU and UN.

This section will trace the shape of these emerging ‘whole society approaches’ in order to map out the frontiers of CVE going forward.

## 8.1 Public-Private Partnerships

As mentioned earlier, since 2010/11 there has been a growing emphasis on developing public-private partnerships (PPPs) in countering extremism.

These have been facilitated by transnational and multinational forums and initiatives such as the EU and the European Commission, the Radicalisation Awareness Network (RAN), the Gen Next Foundation and the Institute for Strategic Dialogue.

PPPs are explicitly referred to in the 2011 versions of the British and Dutch CVE policies, and include both open and clandestine collaborations with private enterprises and civil society organisations.

As outlined in a report written for the US Department of State by the National Consortium for the Study of Terrorism and Responses to Terrorism (START), the purpose of PPPs in the context of CVE initiatives include:

- Strategic benefit, to advance the aims of CVE programmes
- Decentralisation of CVE policies, and the deployment of a wider pool of actors at arms-length from government to promote CVE overtly and covertly
- Harnessing entrepreneurialism, through the private sector<sup>122</sup>.

Though at one level PPPs have been a feature of some CVE programmes from start - with funding towards civil society organisations being part of Britain's PREVENT from 2007 - this renewed focus was in part propelled by the shift towards targeting the online space under CVE policies. Governments felt that this task could best be achieved through collaboration with private and/or technology companies, such as Google, Youtube and the social media companies Facebook and Twitter, especially through the use of 'counter-messaging' and content removal initiatives to challenge 'extremist' messaging online.

PPPs also include the production and promotion of government agency-supported 'sock puppet' programmes to disseminate CVE 'counter-narratives', often through apparently independent front organisations.

In Britain this work has been undertaken since 2007 by the Research, Information and Communications Unit (RICU), constituted as part of the Office for Security and Counter-terrorism (OSCT) and alongside the PREVENT programme.

Its work has included targeted propaganda on social media platforms as well as commissioning the services of media development companies to produce slick multimedia 'fronts' to disseminate counter-narratives.

## 8.2 Co-optation of civil society

Relatedly, CVE initiatives have relied on the co-optation of civil society - particularly organisations within targeted communities - in order to promote counter-extremism.

Under CVE, governments present Muslim civil society with a carrot and stick choice. Those who fall on the right side of ideological norms can be courted and supported by state funding, initiatives and access, whereas those who fall outside of this ideological range are labelled 'extremist' and subject to various sanctions.

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One of RICU's core partners, Zinc Network (previously known as Breakthrough Media), was recently exposed as having created the social media network *This is Woke* on behalf of the OSCT<sup>123</sup> while another lifestyle media platform aimed at young Muslim teenagers, *SuperSisters*, was found to have been funded by a government counter-extremism programme<sup>124</sup>.

France's CVE approach has initiated a veritable counter-extremism industry<sup>125</sup> with over a hundred initiatives launched between 2014 and 2015<sup>126</sup>. A Senate report criticised these initiatives for their lack of transparency and questionable rate of success<sup>127</sup>.

In the Netherlands, early CVE initiatives were developed with the participation of mosques and Muslim organisations, with Muslim civil society there notably compliant in comparison to the other countries analysed.

The evolving relationship between civil society and government should be assessed in relation to austerity policies introduced from 2010, something that is particularly pronounced in **Britain**.

There, austerity has led to the erosion of civil society and the existing community infrastructure by closing the tap on public funding - which was replaced by funding pots relating to PREVENT and the counter-extremism agenda.

As a result, the principle of an independent civil society has been undermined. Civil society has been broken, then brought within the orbit of counter-extremism, creating a dependency on systems like PREVENT.

This tactical maneuvering, as well as the shift towards tackling far-right 'extremism', has led to a perverse situation in which nominally 'antiracist' organisations are engaging in counter-extremism work, which itself is a product of a highly racialised CVE agenda<sup>128</sup>.

## 8.3 Technology

In recent years there has been a heavy emphasis on targeting radicalising and/or 'terrorist' content on social media, as well as a concerted effort by governments to apply pressure on social media companies to comply with government-led directives to counter extremism on their platforms.

Though this objective was outlined from the turn of the decade, the rise of ISIS and its professional-level media output, and more recently the 2019 Christchurch attacks in New Zealand, have catalysed the work of countering online extremism, which often draws upon collaboration between governments and NGOs/INGOs.

While often framed in terms of the spread of online 'extremism' necessitating the expansion of CVE into the online space, we argue that technological advancements have facilitated the expansion of CVE initiatives as part of the insatiable drive to mainstream their logic across society - and for allowing for more precise mapping, monitoring and analysis of target populations identified by CVE.

The incidents mentioned above have, however, been crucial in galvanising the political impetus to crack down on online spaces, and in overcoming the non-cooperation of online media giants. Workarounds were delivered by these tech companies, despite claims of not wanting to be seen as fulfilling the role of government, by increasing their capacity to have reporting functions built in, such as "spell check for hate"<sup>129</sup>.

These new online CVE initiatives often seek out technology-based solutions in the field of machine learning, artificial intelligence, advertising technology and open source technology, which themselves demand further PPPs in order to develop. Implementation of the Prevent duty in British education, for example, often includes the use of website blocking<sup>130</sup>, IT tracking software<sup>131</sup> and email monitoring<sup>132</sup>.

The role of technology took on increasingly nefarious turns as the Obama-era White House encouraged tech companies to:

*"...develop a "radicalism algorithm" that would digest social media and other sources of surplus to produce something comparable to a credit score, but aimed at evaluating the "radicalness" of online content."*<sup>133</sup>

In 2015, the EU's Internet Referral Unit (IRU) was established at Europol's European Counter Terrorism Centre. Its work includes detecting, flagging and requesting the taking down of terrorist and extremist content<sup>134</sup>.

In 2017, Facebook, Twitter, Youtube and Microsoft formed the Global Internet Forum to Counter Terrorism (GIFCT) whose goals are to

- *"**Improve** the capacity of a broad range of technology companies, independently and collectively, to prevent and respond to abuse of their digital platforms by terrorists and violent extremists*
- ***Enable** multi-stakeholder engagement around terrorist and violent extremist misuse of the internet and encourage stakeholders to meet key commitments consistent with the GIFCT mission*
- ***Encourage** those dedicated to online civil dialogue and empower efforts to direct positive alternatives to the messages of terrorists and violent extremists*
- ***Advance** broad understanding of terrorist and violent extremist operations and their evolution, including the intersection of online and offline activities"*<sup>135</sup>.

In 2019, the British government conducted a consultation on the *Online Harms White Paper*, to inform upcoming legislation to remove 'sources of online harm' - including "extremist content and activity".

Intended to ensure, among other things, that there is "no safe spaces for terrorists to operate online", the upcoming legislation will seek to pioneer a regulatory framework for online content, and place a statutory duty of care on internet providers alongside a sanctions regime, handing unprecedented control of the online space to governments.

Tellingly, the White Paper adopts a model very similar to the Prevent duty, and conflates a broad range of 'social harms' to target, including many below the threshold of crime, such as online abuse, 'disinformation' and coercion alongside hate crime, child sexual abuse, and serious violence.

## 9 Conclusion

As this paper has traced, the introduction of pre-crime CVE policies in Europe was contingent on the construction of Muslims as dangerous 'outsiders' in society who were deserving of Islamophobic suspicion and surveillance.

Though the national contexts and trajectories of the countries analysed here - Britain, France and the Netherlands - differ in certain ways, their CVE policies all rest on this fundamental point.

In turn, CVE policies have expanded into a vast apparatus of surveillance and the imperative to 'counter extremism' has diffused outside of specialist agencies and across sectors in society, backed up by a scientific circuit that legitimises invasive technologies.

Islamophobia, advanced both from above and from below, has been crucial in facilitating this process, and the focus on minoritised communities has allowed for CVE policies to be broadly overlooked as a priority for political resistance, despite the implications it has for society and civil liberties.

Whilst CVE policies cannot be decoupled from Islamophobia, we would, perhaps counter-intuitively, propose that solutions to CVE and its impacts are directed towards strengthening 'universally' applied civil and democratic rights, rather than focusing on the particularity of Muslim oppression.

In other words, the solution to CVE is not to make it *less Islamophobic*, or to diversify surveillance to other communities, but instead to restore the rights and civil liberties that society at large, and Muslim communities in particular, have lost over the last 18 years of the War on Terror. Only by abolishing CVE programmes will it be possible to achieve that.

This is borne out of the understanding that CVE is not a narrow policy but rather, as stated earlier, now constitutes a logic of governance spanning society, underpinned by a pre-crime framework. Well-intentioned aims such as countering Islamophobia or supporting victimised individuals can, under this framework, be subordinated to the logic of governance - and therefore co-opted to bolster CVE and other arms of state coercion.

Therefore even concerns about 'safety' and welfare can be used to advance further surveillance of communities: the flipside of the *villainous extremist* is the *vulnerable individual* - according to the logic of CVE, both can become objects of surveillance.

For a concrete example, in Britain and the US, CVE is being touted as a way of defending Muslim and other racialised communities from the far-right, which is now being recast as a form of 'extremism'. Additionally, the dyad between *extremist radicaliser* and *individual susceptible to being radicalised* that defined early CVE policies operated on the basis that CVE could 'protect' the latter, through the use of surveillance; this could feasibly be brought back in another guise to 'protect' Muslims from harassment and attacks.

To accept either of these premises would be to expand the scope of CVE policies, rather than contract it.

So rather than retreating to vague notions of anti-discrimination to advance our case, or remaining confined to the depoliticised terrain offered to us by CVE proponents, we argue that CVE be framed as a political issue that must be confronted with political arguments.

This must necessarily include the task of re-politicising political violence and pushing back against an increasingly bureaucratic and banal violence. This task will also require centring the role of the state in fostering political violence in our analysis, as well as the state's relationship to its citizens, and how this dynamic is being progressively reshaped and policed through programmes like CVE.

This necessarily entails grappling with broad questions of society, the social compact, welfarism, foreign policy and policing outside of CVE; CVE is not a single-issue struggle that can be addressed outside of its context.

While universally applied rights are incomplete and more universal in name than in practice thus far, the recourse to re-asserting them is necessary in order to reclaim the civil liberties that have been progressively eroded and hollowed out under the policies of the War on Terror.

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