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## **Counter-Terrorism and the Counterfactual: Producing the ‘Radicalisation’ Discourse and the UK PREVENT Strategy**

**Abstract:** This article interrogates the production of the ‘radicalisation’ discourse which underpins efforts to govern ‘terrorism’ pre-emptively through the UK’s PREVENT strategy. British counter-terrorism currently relies upon the invention of ‘radicalisation’ and related knowledge about transitions to ‘terrorism’ to undertake governance of communities rendered suspicious. The article argues that such conceptions make terrorism knowable and governable through conceptions of risk. Radicalisation knowledge provides a counterfactual to terrorism—enabling governmental intervention in its supposed production. It makes the future actionable. However, while the deployment of ‘radicalisation’ functions to make terrorism pre-emptively governable and knowable, it also renders PREVENT unstable by simultaneously presenting ‘vulnerability indicators’ for radicalisation as threats to the wider collective—these conducts are framed as both ‘at risk’ and ‘risky’, both vulnerable and dangerous. This instability speaks to ad hoc production of the radicalisation discourse by scholarly and policy-making communities for the governance of terrorism through radicalisation knowledge. This article analyses the production of the radicalisation discourse to explore its performance as a form of risk governance within British counter-terrorism.

**Keywords:** PREVENT; CONTEST; radicalisation; prevention

### **Introduction: Risk and the War on Terror**

The UK PREVENT strategy is presented as acting upon the risk of terrorism. In its most recent formulation, PREVENT is understood to address ‘radicalisation’ in the face of the ‘greatest risk to our security’—al Qa’eda-related terrorism and the ‘extremist ideas’ that ‘terrorist ideologies’ draw upon (Home Office 2011, 59). This idea of ‘radicalisation’ is a key component within PREVENT doctrine. In their project to ‘reduce the risk to the UK and its interests overseas from international terrorism’ (Home Office 2009a, 8, 18, 54, 56), the Home Office and the Office for Security and Counter-Terrorism theorise ‘radicalisation’ as the process whereby international terrorism poses a new challenge to UK security by acting through British citizens. For example, after analysing the emergence of the al Qa’eda organisation in quite surprising depth for a policy document, the 2009 CONTEST strategy situates the UK within a diaspora of militants from violent extremist organisations from Egypt and Afghanistan, and the mandate of the PREVENT strategy is directed towards ‘radicalisation’—‘the process by which people come to support violent extremism and, in some cases, join terrorist groups’ (Home Office 2009a, 10–11). Evidently there is a shift in how radicalisation is conceived between the three published incarnations of CONTEST, moving the focus from extremist ideologues through to campus organisations and then to the contemporary interest in online dynamics; however, in this article I will analyse the concept as a more-or-less cohesive project of risk knowledge which is deployed to render terrorism pre-emptively governable.

The centrality of risk to contemporary security policy is well noted in analyses of government and policy (Aradau 2004; Amoore and De Goede 2008; Mythen and Walklate 2005 and 2008), and this article aims to situate the discourse of ‘radicalisation’ and the UK PREVENT strategy within that literature. Ulrich Beck’s (1992 and 1999) work on ‘risk society’ sparked the interest in risk within the social sciences by providing a macro-level, sociological analysis of environmental risk which theorists of governmentality and the war on terror have developed to their own ends. These Foucauldian analyses focus on how risk-management technologies manage population through abstract factors, noted in an early analysis by Robert Castel in 1991 (Castel 1991) before the recent renaissance of risk in poststructuralist studies of security. This growing critical body of scholarship has re-appropriated risk from Beck ‘to engage with the practices that are enacted *in the name of* managing risk and uncertainty’ within the war on terror (Amoore and De Goede 2008, 9, emphasis added). The phrase ‘*in the name of*’ is crucial here, as it denotes a move that distances studies of risk from objective threats. In this growing critical literature, risk is understood as ‘performative’, in that it ‘produces’ the effects it names. Critical risk scholarship within international politics, geography and criminology engages with the Foucauldian notion of risk as a productive technique of governance which makes security actionable (cf. Aradau and Van Munster 2008, 23–40). Within the analysis of terrorism and counter-terrorism, these analyses highlight the ‘new penology’ of preventative detention, the satellite tracking of suspects, and the creation of suspect populations through risk profiles based on aggregate characteristics (Mythen and Walklate 2005; Bonelli 2006, 127).

Performative risk-management technologies, such as passenger screening and ‘dataveillance’, are also highlighted by Amoore and De Goede as they ‘make visible’ the unknown ‘which would not otherwise be seen’ and produce exceptions on the basis of risk profiles (Amoore and De Goede 2008). Risk is not the objective threat, then, but the processes by which the world is ordered in terms of danger—or even blame, from Mary Douglas’ anthropological perspective (Douglas 1992, 3–21). Given this focus upon risk within the war on terror, it is surprising that the operations of PREVENT and the discourse of ‘radicalisation’ have not been analysed from this perspective. The closest examples of scholarly exploration can be found in Gabe Mythen and Sandra Walklate’s examination of the production of British Muslims as ‘risky’ communities in the post-9/11 era, and the social consequences of this (Mythen, Walklate and Khan 2009; see also Pantazis and Pemberton 2009).

These articles problematise the creation of Muslim ‘suspect communities’ through prejudicial treatment in official discourse and policing, making analogies to Paddy Hillyard’s seminal analysis of the Irish suspect community fostered by the Prevention of Terrorism Acts in the 1970s. In this article, I will build upon these sociological analyses to provide an explanation of how the production of knowledge about ‘radicalisation’ has been incorporated into British counter-terrorism. My focus will be on the relationship between knowledge, opacity and security practice—so this article can be understood to focus on the ‘why’ and ‘how’ of risk-

based counter-terrorism, rather than the ‘what’ of its consequences. Similarly, in relation to David Omand’s discussion of the CONTEST strategy from his unique position as a security practitioner, I aim to build on his description of a post-cold war trend in British security from avoidance of armed conflict towards ‘protection from major disruptive events, ... an emphasis on the value of anticipation ... and the value in investing in national resilience’ (Omand 2010, 11–13). Taking these assertions as given, this article interrogates the *dynamics within these shifts*. It focuses on the ‘hows’ and ‘whys’ that need to be examined relative to the incorporation of risk-based models within UK counter-terrorism, and specifically the governance of population through PREVENT.

Another departure which this article makes from existing analysis of risk and suspect communities within British counter-terrorism is that it directly engages the radicalisation discourse within academic and policy knowledge production. While the PREVENT strategy has been critiqued from a number of angles (Githens-Mazer and Lambert 2010; Thomas 2010) this article will sketch some of the performative risk knowledge utilised within PREVENT practices, looking at the intersections between knowledge and security utilised within the discourse of ‘radicalisation’. The article argues that the concept of radicalisation enables policy-making and scholarly communities to render a linear narrative around the production of terrorism, making it accessible to problem-solving approaches (or ‘governance’). As such, the invention of a ‘radicalisation process’ is a crucial component within the governance of terrorism through pre-emptive technologies and categories of risk. In this way, the article speaks to Jonathan Githens-Mazer and Robert Lambert’s claim that ‘the label of “radicalization” has become a tool of power exercised by the state and non-Muslim communities against, and to control, Muslim communities in the twenty-first century’ (Githens-Mazer and Lambert 2010, 901). This sentence is used by Githens-Mazer and Lambert to conclude their discussion of the ‘conventional wisdom’ of radicalisation. Their analysis shows how this conventional wisdom about transitions to terrorism oversimplifies the complex realities of such situations. I accept their conclusions that such a concept of radicalisation is a tool of power used against Muslim communities, but this article is more concerned with looking at *how* the ‘radicalisation’ discourse is deployed as a technique of governance, one that operates through frames of the risky and the unknown, rather than the validity of the concept when tested against real transitions to violence. I examine PREVENT and its discourse of ‘radicalisation’ as projects of risk governance, rather than asking questions about the deficiencies of the discourse in comparison to reality (cf. Githens-Mazer and Lambert 2010). In this way, I hope to complement the critiques of PREVENT and the ‘conventional wisdom’ of ‘radicalisation’ by introducing a critical risk perspective which is more frequently applied to the war on terror technologies of biometrics and data mining of financial transactions, or the re-evaluation of security practice around risk after the Revolution in Military Affairs (Amoore 2006; Amoore and De Goede 2005; Coaffee and Wood 2006).

The article will argue, then, that PREVENT actively tries to induce specific types of conduct from British Muslim communities while also securitising them in terms of ‘risk’. The policy deploys numerous practices to govern the conduct of subjects that it understands as ‘risky’, but also those it considers ‘at risk of becoming risky’, using knowledge about radicalisation to perform counter-terrorism. The role of knowledge production and opacity within security framings is of particular interest to this investigation of terrorism governance. The article argues that the radicalisation discourse produces the risk practices within contemporary British counterterrorism (like the Channel scheme) by rendering a linear narrative about transitions to terrorism—enabling interventions in the conduct of communities through the supposed governance of terrorism.

### **The Discourse of Radicalisation**

As has been stated, a major assumption behind PREVENT is that a ‘radicalisation process’ exists. Despite the growing literature that posits the existence of a radicalisation process, the concept is beginning to experience challenge. As Anthony Richards has recently argued, academic conferences and workshops hosted to examine what has been learned from the London bombings five years on have revealed that:

We don’t know—nor, it appears, are we ever likely to know—why some young men resort to violent extremism and others do not. Nor, it seems, has there been any consistent notion of what is meant by ‘radicalization’, with the last five years providing a legacy of confusion as to what forms of ‘radicalization’ should be the focus of a counterterrorism strategy (Richards 2011, 143).

Similarly, Michael King and Donald Taylor have recently argued: ‘Many theories purport to describe the exact stages involved in the radicalization process, yet paradoxically, very little empirical data exists on the psychology of those who become radicalized’ (King and Taylor 2011, 603). Radicalisation is invoked by theory to serve a narrative that explains transitions to terrorism, much like the invocation of dark matter which is theorised into existence to fill holes in existing theoretical physics, but we should be cautious about assuming that the process necessarily exists.

This article does not try to test the existence of ‘radicalisation’ but rather interrogates its discursive popularity and salience when, as King and Taylor put it, ‘very little empirical data exists’. It tries to go beyond the contestations that highlight the imprecision of the ‘radicalisation’ concept (King and Taylor 2011; Richards 2011) and the negative consequences of the PREVENT strategy (Mythen, Walklate and Khan 2009; Pantazis and Pemberton 2009). The article attempts to ‘add value’ to these discussions of ‘radicalisation’, risk, security and PREVENT by using a Foucauldian-inspired analysis to interrogate *how* the radicalisation discourse has emerged, and *how* it engenders the performance of risk governance within British counterterrorism. The added value, in a sense, of this analysis is that it can connect with debates about

the relationship between the production of knowledge and security practice. In some ways, the article attempts this through the situation of critical risk analysis alongside ‘radicalisation’ and PREVENT. These aspects of British counter-terrorism have not been subjected to analysis of how they deploy risk, as critical risk theorists have preferred to deploy broader examinations (cf. Mythen, Walklate and Khan 2009). Additionally, this article deploys conceptions of knowledge production in relation to ‘opacity’, reframing the relationship between security and knowledge, and between risk apparatuses and the unknown, to examine the emergence and salience of the ‘radicalisation discourse’.

In summary, the article will argue that radicalisation knowledge is salient because it produces a possible counterfactual to terrorism by inventing a narrative about transitions to militancy, one that allows security mechanisms to perform interventions into the supposed production of terrorism. While the formulations of, and revisions made to, PREVENT and CONTEST show how the government presents itself as *reacting* to increased knowledge about the threat of terrorism and its driver ‘radicalisation’ (Home Office 2009a, 14), this article investigates how ‘radicalisation’ has been made possible as a discourse—one that performs a story about terrorism, and *enables the performance of security* around it. This will not be a story about reaction, but rather an analysis of how the concept of ‘radicalisation’ makes it possible for British counter-terrorism to act upon futurity.

Now is the time to have this discussion about ‘radicalisation’ and PREVENT because even the ‘Terrorism Studies’ literature, while criticised for its role in reproducing security narratives (Silke 1998 and 2009; Jackson 2007b; Raphael 2009), is beginning to note that ‘radicalisation’ remains inconclusively defined. As Mark Sedgwick notes, ‘the term’s ubiquity suggests an established consensus about its meaning’, but given its differing uses in the security, integration and foreign policy contexts, it seems to operate only as a rough signifier for ‘what happens before the bomb goes off’ (Sedgwick 2010, 479). Such concerns within Terrorism Studies about the concept of radicalisation appear motivated by the plurality of published understandings of the concept. For instance, Anja Dalgaard-Nielsen has found that academic discourse on ‘radicalisation’ in Europe can be divided into three categories—French sociology, social movement studies and empiricism—which all make different arguments about the nature of the phenomenon (Dalgaard-Nielsen 2010). David Mandel (2009) and Githens-Mazer (2010) make similar points about the plural uses of ‘radicalisation’ by the Senate Committee on Homeland Security, the New York Police Department and other policy-making bodies. Additionally, Githens-Mazer and Lambert have together inquired into the politicality of the radicalisation discourse, given the crude and substandard rendering of transitions to terrorism within policy (Githens-Mazer and Lambert 2010).

While these articles provoke questions, and sometimes provide hefty critiques, of the ‘radicalisation’ concept, none analyse how it emerged, and how it operates, as a form of knowledge that enables the performance of terrorism governance. This article draws from the

apparent instability of the ‘radicalisation’ concept to suggest that it performs a political function, but rather than positing the claims of the discourse against messier ‘real-world’ examples of transitions to terrorism (as Githens-Mazer and Lambert have done) it interrogates the emergence of the ‘radicalisation’ signifier and its embedment in pre-existing governances and knowledges. It centrally addresses the role of ‘radicalisation’ knowledge for the performance of security, situating itself within arguments which suggest that the social sciences function to produce knowledge for the benefit of governance and/or political-economic arrangements (Foucault 1970; Cox 1981; Horkheimer 2002).

The emergence of the ‘radicalisation discourse’ within Terrorism Studies appears to have been provoked by difficulties in applying existing models to the emergence of violence deemed to be ‘religious’ (cf. Juergensmeyer 2000; Rapoport 2002). In contrast to long-established literatures on the ‘root causes’ of terrorism which address varieties of structural and social psychological factors (Crenshaw 1981 and 1995; Della Porta 1992; Bjorgo 2005; Newmann 2006), the concept of ‘radicalisation’ has only recently gained prominence—its usage escalating after the emergence of ‘home-grown terrorism’ *circa* 2005, according to Sedgwick’s (2010, 480) research. Indeed Peter Neumann has linked this recent ascendancy to the post-9/11 context where researchers have been discursively constrained by considerations of patriotism, fearing that any research into the causes of terrorism may be interpreted as an apology for it. He argues that the new terminology of radicalisation has provided space for renewed examination of the causes of terrorism (Neumann 2008a, 4). However, as a concept, ‘radicalisation’ is notably different from pre-existing literatures about ‘root causes’ because it emphasises the individual as driven by a persuasive ideology (Sedgwick 2010, 480) which becomes salient through social networks (Sageman 2004). The assertions of the radicalisation discourse come from different literatures and place emphasis on different dynamics, but such academic studies highlight the importance of networks of peers and personal crises for the uptake of extremist ideas (Pedhazur 2005; Horgan 2008; Ranstorp 2010, 5–6; Sageman 2004; Wiktorowicz 2005). It should also be acknowledged that scholars have argued that images and ideas of violent repression upon Islamic communities can affect processes of ‘oxygenation’ which can ‘facilitate terrorist networks’ (Githens-Mazer 2008, 550)—new terminology within studies of ‘radicalisation’.

This discourse about exposure to religious ideas, and the conditions that make them salient, underpins the PREVENT strategy’s focus on vulnerability to ideologues and can be understood as genealogically related to the ‘New Terrorism’ literature. Indeed, the UK government CONTEST strategy makes this link blatantly apparent in statements (which precede the ‘securitisation’ of ideologues and ‘self-starting networks’ of terrorists) that ‘A new form of terrorism emerged overseas in the late seventies and early eighties’ (Home Office 2009a, 10). Furthermore, Mythen and Walklate connect the discourse of ‘New Terrorism’ to the rise of risk-based counterterrorism in the post-9/11 era (Mythen and Walklate 2008, 221–223). The ‘New

'Terrorism' discourse depicts a fundamentally more dangerous (because it is) religious terrorism, contrasting it with old-fashioned political and instrumental terrorism. Its authors consider 'jihadist' or 'Islamist' violence as more deadly and more prone to attempt to acquire weapons of mass destruction (WMD) than any previous strain of terrorism due to 'apocalyptic' beliefs of its adherents that they are acting in accordance with God's will (Hoffman 1995; Laqueur 1999; Simon and Benjamin 2000). Of the 'New Terrorism' discourse, David Rapoport's 1984 article, 'Fear and Trembling: Terrorism in Three Religious Traditions', was the first to produce a difference between 'holy' and 'secular' terrorism (Rapoport 1984)—a distinction that was leaped upon in the mid-1990s by Terrorism Studies' authors producing knowledge about the 1993 World Trade Centre bombing and Aum Shinrikyo's poison gas attack in a Tokyo subway in 1995 (Hoffman 1995; Laqueur 1996 and 1999; Juergensmeyer 2000; Rapoport 2002). As an example of the threat production undertaken about religious imperatives within terrorism, Bruce Hoffman introduces his 1995 piece with the following statement about religious irrationality and risk:

One of the distinguishing features of international terrorism the past fifteen years has been the resurgence and proliferation of terrorist groups motivated by a religious imperative. Such groups are far more lethal than their secular counterparts, regarding violence as a divine duty or sacramental act conveyed by sacred text and imparted by clerical authority (Hoffman 1995, 271).

Considerations of lethal religious ideology seem to have bled over from the 'New Terrorism' discourse into post-9/11 and post-7/7 knowledge about 'radicalisation', alongside the reframing of British counter-terrorism into a post-cold war paradigm that focused on anticipating disruptive events and consolidating resilience within national infrastructure (Omand 2010, 11–13). This has occurred partially through the production of powerful signifiers of 'Islamic' or 'Islamist terror' (Jackson 2007a) in academic and security literature, but the legibility of terrorist attacks in terms of integration problems is also important. For example, the construction of the events of 7/7 as revealing deficiencies in integration built upon the community cohesion discourse in the UK (see the later section of this article, 'Opacity', for details), and this propensity to read the attacks as failures of integration stretched as far as Denmark, where the prime minister highlighted the importance of an 'active integration policy' in preventing such attacks (Pram Gad 2011). Later in this article, the perceived opacities of British Muslim communities which produced knowledge building exercises into integration and violence, like the Cantle Report, are examined. For now though, the academic literature that gave credence to considerations of 'radicalisation' is examined.

Various pieces of work in Terrorism Studies were central to the emergence of the 'radicalisation' discourse, which bears some relation to the 'New Terrorism' discourse even if scholars of radicalisation can be dismissive of its 'overemphasised' and oversimplified claims (Silke 2008, 102–103). These works resituated discourses about involvement in terrorism

previously produced about violent Islamist organisations, often in the Middle East, and applied them to Muslim diaspora communities in Europe (Nesser 2004; Bakker 2009; Cesari 2009). Often this type of research invokes the impact of ‘globalisation’ upon religious groups that have relocated to the secular west, and in Oliver Roy’s formulation, the resulting emergence of ‘re-Islamisation’ processes (Roy 2004). While this type of interpretation might sit within Dalgaard-Nielsen’s formulation of the ‘French sociology’ approach to radicalisation (Dalgaard-Nielsen 2010), other important contributions have been made that also focused terrorism studies upon the conditions in which ‘extreme’ religious ideas become salient for individuals.

Marc Sageman, a former CIA operative, prominently contributed to this shift in the consideration of ‘religious terrorism’ towards the level of the individual and his or her network of peers. He introduced this focus by examining the biographical data of ‘terrorists’ as relevant to their adopting of violence in his popular book. His study of 172 biographies from the ‘Salafi global jihad’ centralised the level of the individual, and interaction with networks of others, within the production of knowledge about religious ideology and terrorism (Sageman 2004). Subsequently other influential works have taken up these themes, and moved them away from profiling by positing the sociological importance of gateway organisations and activists, and places of vulnerability to extremist messages like prisons and radical mosques, to the dynamics of radicalisation processes (Neumann 2008b). Such approaches can seem preferable to the deployment of biographical profiles, as they display a more nuanced attunement to the ‘gradual nature of the relevant socialisation processes into terrorism’, the pull factors associated with recruitment and the shifting roles embodied by protagonists, according to John Horgan (2008, 82–84).

One particularly nuanced and subtle characterisation of the ways in which extreme ideas become salient for individuals has been provided by Richard English, who makes note of the way novelists have situated protagonists of contemporary violence within competing demands of rival cultures, which sharpen lines of division and lead to insecurity, and even rage (English 2009, 33–34). Within these debates about the nature of radicalisation and approaches to studying it, ideology and its conditions of salience within underground and semi-clandestine networks have become dominant features of terrorism discourse, replacing some previously dominant sociological considerations like organisational dynamics and political opportunity structures (Della Porta 1992; Crenshaw 1995). The utilisation of biographical data and narratives about ‘pull’ and ‘push’ factors in Muslim communities has engendered the deployment of composites of risk factors in responses to ‘home-grown terrorism’ (such as the London bombings), and is mirrored in scholarly attempts to explain the transformation of British Muslims into suicide bombers. Aidan Kirby, for example, utilises biographical data about the bombers to interrogate their acceptance of jihadist ideology within the sociological settings of under-representation and perceived exclusion (Kirby 2007). This more nuanced reproduction of ‘New Terrorism’ knowledge about the centrality of religious ideology amidst conditions of relative deprivation (now framed as ‘radicalisation’) has even been reproduced within not-so-

nuanced viral metaphors about vulnerable individuals and the contagious ideas responsible for violence; for example, as Chief Constable Norman Bettison of West Yorkshire Police and the Association of Chief Police Officers, who takes the lead on issues concerning PREVENT, has stated:

The *post hoc* analysis of the four bombers revealed that each of them was well educated, well integrated and living, ostensibly, in a cohesive community ... It may be more useful ... to think of Al Qaeda as a virus that has carriers and that can affect some who come into contact with the source. The ‘virus’ metaphor is particularly useful in thinking about strategies to target the most susceptible and vulnerable in our communities ... This sort of endeavour will help us to provide barriers to infection (Bettison 2009, 129–131).

The riskiness of those vulnerable subjects, who are flagged through aggregate composites of risk factors, is further enhanced by their surface normality (‘each of them was well educated ...’). In both its nuanced and not-so-nuanced formulations, then, the radicalisation discourse frames Muslim individuals and communities through risk—and such deployments are enhanced through the simultaneous discourse of the unknown, as only ‘some who come into contact with the source’ become radicalised, emphasising the need for security practices that can better identify which Muslims are dangerous. The contagiousness of ‘radicalisation’ within this discourse is further borne out in academic and media securitisation of prisons. The prison environment is depicted as a prominent frontier in the combating of the ‘viral’ radicalisation discourse as its confined and enclosed spaces can be described as providing an ‘ideal environment’ for transmission due to the ‘captive audience’, which is simultaneously vulnerable due to ‘the normal prison environment, which can generate feelings of rejection, alienation, and isolation ... such acute feelings may create a “cognitive opening” ’ (Warnes and Hannah 2008, 402–403; see also Cuthbertson 2004).

These discursive deployments of risk and of ‘opening’—an embodiment of vulnerability—fit perfectly with the governmental practices that they enable, as PREVENT aims to foster communities that are ‘resilient to violent extremism’ (see the wording of ‘National Indicator 35’: DCLG 2008b). Indeed the interface between the radicalisation discourse of ‘contagious risk’ and PREVENT is further evidenced by the governmental framing of Muslim neighbourhoods of significant density as risky sites of possible contagion. The targeting of counterterrorism resources towards local authorities consisting of 5 per cent Muslims or more (DCLG 2007, 6) bore witness to the heritage of PREVENT in the radicalisation discourse about vulnerability to dangerous ideas, as the policy performed conceptions of risk that framed terrorism in terms of pathology. The interconnections between ‘knowledges’ about radicalisation and the practices of security they enable will now be addressed through an examination of PREVENT policy. The following section interrogates how British counter-terrorism deploys conceptions of risk and vulnerability to enact supposed pre-emptive governance over terrorism.

### **The Performance of Risk and Vulnerability within PREVENT**

UK counter-terrorism is organised into four strands within the CONTEST strategy: PURSUE (which deals with detection, investigation and prosecution of terrorism); PROTECT (which addresses the protection of infrastructure, crowded places and the transport system); PREPARE (which is concerned with strengthening the response of emergency services); and PREVENT (the stopping of people from becoming involved in terrorism or supporting violent extremism) (Home Office 2009a, 13). David Omand has commented how the original PREVENT campaign focused upon targeted diplomacy and military intervention overseas (Omand 2010, 101), but by the time of its public formulation in 2009 it was focused upon countering violent extremist ideology on the British mainland through supporting community-based ‘approaches’ (Spalek and McDonald 2009; Home Office 2009a; Briggs 2010, 123). Communities were formulated as the battlegrounds on which a campaign to ‘reject the ideology of violent extremism, isolate apologists for terrorism and provide support to vulnerable individuals’ (Home Office 2009a, 84) was to be fought, but, paralleling Foucault’s insight into population as an instrument of government (Foucault 2007, 103–105), communities were also understood as protagonists in this contestation. For example, Rachel Briggs has stated that the 7/7 attacks have evidenced the existence of networks of radicalised people within Muslim communities and that these communities can, and should, provide information to the police about potential plots and ‘work upstream to prevent young people becoming radicalised’ through challenging the presence of ‘radicalisers’ and extremist narratives (Briggs 2010, 973).

CONTEST echoes the injunction that communities must learn to deploy themselves against extremists and extremist narratives in their midst:

The Government and the Devolved Administrations cannot deliver the Prevent agenda on its own. This programme depends on collaborative work alongside the vast majority of people across all communities in this country who reject violent extremism and are determined to challenge it (Home Office 2009a, 84).

The framing of communities as both risky/suspect and as protagonists in campaigns against terrorism is something that scholars of ‘suspect communities’ have noted as shared between the experiences of Irish communities during the era of the Provisional Irish Republican Army (PIRA) and those of contemporary Muslim communities (Hickman et al. 2011, 14). Funding for Briggs’ favoured ‘community-based’ approaches to counter-terrorism was first provided in 2007 with the provision of £6 million to 70 local authorities through the ‘Preventing Violent Extremism Pathfinder Fund’. The initial £6 million of PREVENT counter-terrorism provision was distributed to those 70 local authorities in England that have Muslims as 5 per cent or more of their populations; the Department for Communities and Local Government explained, apparently without problematisation, that:

It is important that funds are focused on those areas of highest priority ... The fund will therefore be focused on local authorities with sizeable Muslim communities. As a starting point, authorities with populations of 5% or more should be considered for funding. We are aware,

however, that there are areas ... with significant Muslim communities concentrated in a few wards that fall below the threshold that should [also] be considered (DCLG 2007, 6).

This funding was increased dramatically to £45 million in April 2008, with a further increase of £7.5 million announced in August 2009<sup>1</sup> (Home Office 2009a, 25). Alongside funding increases, the eligibility criteria for local authorities changed from a percentage-based structure to the presence of 4,000 or more Muslims within their bounds (Thomas 2010, 443–444), although Arun Kundnani's (2009, 12) calculations suggest that 'every area with more than 2,000 Muslims has been allocated funding through DCLG area-based grants'. In a review (published by the DCLG) of how local authorities spent the original £6 million PREVENT budget between 2007 and 2008, funded projects were divided into seven types of governmental intervention within Muslim communities—aimed at conducting the conduct of those deemed vulnerable to 'extremist ideology'. These involved training activities, education, debate/discussion, leadership and management activities, sports and/or recreation, arts/cultural and 'other' (DCLG 2008a, 19). The most common activities (54 per cent) funded by local authorities involved fostering discussion and debate among Muslims about violent extremism, with arts and cultural activities (such as a local theatre production on extremism in communities) making up 19 per cent of the total, and sports and recreation activities (such as the funding of a boxing club as a diversion for young Muslims) making up 13 per cent (DCLG 2008a, 18–23).

Such interventions attempt to instil responsibility for the self-management of one's conduct, a central feature of 'liberal' assumptions about the self (Rose 2000), while simultaneously deploying conceptions about the potential riskiness of Muslim communities. Local authorities have reached the apparently bizarre conclusion, given the discourses of 'radicalisation' and security risk, that terrorism can and should be prevented through funding young Muslims to play cricket and football (as Wakefield council have done with their DCLG grant, among other things: Kundnani 2009, 18). The apparent absurdity of spending counter-terrorism funds on cricket stems from the coupling of frames of both vulnerability and riskiness. Young individuals can often be simultaneously presented as vulnerable to extremist ideology *and* as the potential terrorist of the near future within PREVENT. This often occurs, paradoxically, within attempts to separate designations of risky persons from Muslim communities. For example, in efforts to separate the categories of 'at risk' and 'risky', the language of (susceptibility to) persuasion, disadvantage and vulnerability is used to create a vulnerable *potential terrorist* subject separate from *existing radical* subjects (who prey on the weak, promote contagious ideas and take advantage of our 'open institutions'). Such attempts to separate risk from vulnerability are evident in the following quotation from 'Pursue Prevent Protect Prepare':

On 7 July 2005 *four British terrorists* attacked the London transport system, *murdering* 52 people and injuring hundreds more ... The revised Prevent strategy is based on an assessment that support for violent extremism in the UK is the result of ... A *persuasive ideology* ... *Ideologues* and social networks who promote that ideology and help those prepared to support it; and who often *operate in open institutions in this country* ... Individuals who are *vulnerable to*

*violent extremist messaging* for a range of *personal reasons*, variously relating to issues of identity, faith, *frustrated ambition, migration and displacement* (Home Office 2009a, 11, 83, emphasis added).

Anthony Richards has recently highlighted the inappropriateness of applying a language of ‘vulnerability’ to terrorists and potential terrorists within PREVENT (Richards 2011, 150–151). He argues, within his article on the imprecision of the ‘radicalisation’ concept, that conceptions of vulnerability to extremist ideology distract policy-makers from dealing with the real issues of terrorism—making an allusion to the evident dynamics of the pathologisation of dissent within PREVENT (Richards 2011, 151). While Richards briefly touches upon this issue within the paper, I would like to extend the discussion of the pathologisation of Muslim dissent within PREVENT as the issue speaks to how the future has been made governable through the radicalisation discourse.

Vulnerability can also implicitly imply potential riskiness. In 2004, Claudia Aradau distinguished such a double identification of trafficked human beings within EU policies as both victims and, as illegal migrants, as causes of insecurity (Aradau 2004). Despite an apparent contradiction between humanitarian identification and securitisation, the two discourses had been easily coupled—simultaneously constituting the subject group of trafficked women through a ‘politics of pity’ and a risk’ (Aradau 2004, 254). Rather than being opposed to each other, Aradau showed how such articulations actually shared an ‘uncanny complicity, structurally related by the logic of their [governmental] functioning’ (Aradau 2004, 254).

In a similar fashion, the logic of PREVENT produces the British Muslim population as both ‘risky’ and ‘at risk’. While not recipients of a ‘politics of pity’, British Muslim communities are classified by PREVENT as ‘at risk’—necessitating interventions under a bio-political duty of care to ‘increase the resilience of communities to violent extremism’ (in one of many allusions to a risk of contagion), ‘tackling the under-achievement of Pakistani boys’ and training ‘local Muslim women how to access local services’ (DCLG 2008a, 9, 12, 20–21, 29; see also Home Office 2009b, 6, 13). The centrality of categories of vulnerability to the deployment of governmental counter-terrorism has even reached the extent to which counter-terrorism intelligence officers are involved in the development of a ‘local vulnerability index’ (Bettison 2009, 136). This framing of Muslim communities as collectively ‘at risk’ or vulnerable has the paradoxical effect of also *securitising* them concerning what they *might* produce; disciplinary governance thus merging with securitisation. Aradau’s study, on this note, highlighted how a ‘politics of pity’ (and knowledge mobilised by NGOs) revealed past *and* contemporary traumas suffered by trafficked women, factors that became subverted by and indicative of future risks the women might themselves pose:

The risk of women migrating or being re-trafficked is thus to be contained and prevented; they are to be surveyed and disciplined, subject to trauma therapy with the purpose of turning them into subjects able to monitor their own risk. Risk technologies have made possible the

specification of the victim—previously the object of pity—as inherently and perpetually ‘risky’, thus subverting the emotional promise of the politics of pity and turning it into an abstract suspicion of risk (Aradau 2004, 275).

‘At-risk’ populations can thus simultaneously be produced as ‘risky’ through the actions of risk-management and security technologies—blurring the actions of disciplinary and securitising governance, and turning vulnerability into potential dangerousness. Indeed, the ‘broad-brush’ identification of terrorism with ‘at-risk’ Muslim communities within PREVENT communicates this ‘riskiness’ (Thomas 2010, 446), securitising their occupants *in the name of others*, as a locale from which future threats might emerge, while simultaneously disciplining them for *their own good*.

The concurrent, yet not contrasting, operations of disciplinary and securitising governance within PREVENT result in the funding of cricket games with counterterrorism money, but are most overt and dangerous when they are applied to individual bodies. This double identification of individuals occurs through the ‘Channel Programme’. The Channel Programme uses partnerships between the police, local authorities and local communities to identify those persons ‘at risk’ from violent extremism and to ‘support’ them. In its policy formulation: ‘Channel will provide a focus for public sector professionals and members of the community to refer *individuals of concern* to a multi-agency *risk assessment* and case management system bringing to bear a variety of resources and expertise to counter radicalisation’ (Home Office 2009a, 136, emphasis added; see also Home Office 2009b, 11–12). After this referral, risk assessments are made on each individual case and a programme of ‘intervention’ is tailored to suit the individual’s needs (Home Office 2009a, 172–173, fn. 150). Echoing the treatment of Aradau’s trafficked human beings, ‘they are to be surveyed and disciplined, subject to trauma therapy with the purpose of turning them into subjects able to monitor their own risk’ (Aradau 2004, 275).

This kind of invasive intervention into young lives confirms the blurring of vulnerability into presumed riskiness, and the connections between the production of knowledge about causes of terrorism and acting upon the future. By 2009, 200 children (some as young as 13) had been subject to interventions *vis-à-vis* the Channel Programme, according to the Association of Chief Police Officers’ spokesman on terrorism, Norman Bettison (Kundnani 2009, 33). By June 2011, this figure had exceeded 1,000 young people (Bettison 2011). The paradoxical unification of riskiness and vulnerability has even been formalised by government in advice given to schools (who can refer pupils for Channel interventions). In the document *Learning to be Safe Together: A Toolkit to Help Schools Contribute to the Prevention of Violent Extremism*, the Department for Children, Schools and Families merged the categories of ‘at risk’ and ‘riskiness’ to form a new subjectivity of ‘young people [who need to be protected] from harm or causing harm’ (DCSF 2008, 13). Indeed, in advice from government to teachers, indicators that flag a child who needs to be ‘protected from becoming risky’ include ‘expressions of political ideology

such as support for the Islamic political system', 'a focus on scripture as an exclusive moral source', 'a conspiratorial mindset' and 'seeing the West as a source of evil' (Kundnani 2009, 33; Quilliam Foundation 2008). Apparently, according to the Quilliam Foundation, whose recommendations were adopted by the Department for Children, Schools and Families, it is possible to distinguish 'between young people who are extremists and those who are rebellious teenagers' (Quilliam Foundation 2008). Interventions are then made within the Channel Programme in such cases as students who expressed 'risky/at-risk' views within the PREVENT funded discussion activity at their college (Kundnani 2009, 33) and Channel has even begun taking interest in schoolchildren and gangs who have appropriated Al Qaeda's name and rhetoric within their graffiti (Hindle 2010).

Having introduced the governmental interventions of PREVENT, and the bizarre at-risk/risky subjectivities it produces based upon the discourse of radicalisation, the following section deepens the investigation of the connections between radicalisation 'knowledge' and the governance of terrorism.

### **The Counterfactual Operations of 'Radicalisation'**

A counterfactual is the name given to thinking about how things could have been otherwise. It often takes the following form of expression: 'if x did not occur, then what outcome would have arisen?' In this sense, the framing of 'radicalisation' as offering counterfactual knowledge is not a complete fit. Rather than identifying a specific episode in history that could have been changed to prevent an act of terrorism, this article argues that policy-making and scholarly communities have *invented* that 'x' within their story about preventing terrorism and governing the future. That 'x' is the radicalisation discourse, which deploys categories of riskiness and vulnerability to ideology to provide a narrative about things that are unknown. Of course, many scholars and policy-makers make assurances that transitions to terrorism fit the path of 'radicalisation'—the discourse and the signifier are well established in both domestic and international spheres (Coolsaet 2009; Ranstorp 2010).

However this article argues that several features of the radicalisation discourse and of PREVENT practice betray the instability of the concept, and suggest that it serves the purpose of rendering certain targeted communities as governable through knowledges produced about them (see also Githens-Mazer and Lambert 2010, 901). These instabilities relate both to the plurality of understandings of 'radicalisation' utilised within scholarly communities (Mandel 2009; Dalgaard-Nielsen 2010; Githens-Mazer 2010), such that radicalisation might be understood as a rough signifier for 'what happens before the bomb goes off' (Sedgwick 2010, 479), and to the bizarre consequences of producing the targets of PREVENT as both 'at risk' and 'risky'. PREVENT deploys conceptions of vulnerability to render a linear narrative about good-Muslims-gone-bad, presenting an understanding that youths can be 'at risk' of 'becoming risky'. But the deployments of risk and vulnerability in PREVENT can never satisfactorily model

transitions to terrorism. In failing to address some lacunas between the categories of at risk and risky, and suffering blurred distinctions between them, it becomes clear that the PREVENT strategy is not responding to knowledge about a radicalisation process that happens in the real world, but is instead performing such assumptions to give the impression of governing terrorism. For instance, neither the PREVENT strategy nor scholars of radicalisation can explain when a person makes the transition from being ‘at risk’ to ‘risky’. When should they be determined as having completed the ‘process’ of radicalisation and to have reached a point of being ‘radicalised’?

There is a gap between these two posited subjectivities of ‘at risk’ and ‘risky’ which should not be there, where ‘radicalisation’ knowledge performs a reliable model of transitions to terrorism. This kind of gap has been hinted at by Omand in his reflections upon CONTEST. He details how PREVENT originally engendered counter-terrorism practices that focused upon ‘focused diplomacy’ and ‘military intervention overseas’ before the ‘winning back of the hearts and minds of young British Muslims’ became centralised within the pre-emptive approach to terrorism (Omand 2010, 101). On reflecting upon the difficulties of getting the balance right in this domestic focus, he invokes the lack of distinction between communities who hold anti-sectular views and those who commit terrorist offences within the discourses of ‘radicalisation’ and PREVENT. The uncertainty of the tipping point between those who are ‘at risk’ of becoming terrorists, and those who are, is framed in terms of the unknown:

Holding radical views, providing that they are promoted in non-violent ways, is not in-itself normally regarded as incompatible with membership of a democratic free society ... For government to seek to divert extremists from violence into such non-violent but nonetheless highly extreme groups might be thought to serve the ends of counter-terrorism in the short term, but is liable to undermine majority trust in the actions of government. *Nor is there any certainty over whether and when a holder of extreme Islamist views might, if the circumstances arose, tip over into violent action* (Omand 2010, 101–102, emphasis added).

Where is the tipping point? This lacuna between ‘at-risk’ and ‘risky’ subjectivities is also paradoxically complemented by the bleeding through of each category into the other. For example, being ‘risky’ suggests that one has a propensity to be dangerous, but framings (either blatant or implicit) of subjects who are ‘at risk’ of becoming ‘risky’ reads that propensity backwards within PREVENT. The ‘at-risk’ subject of radicalisation is vulnerable to developing a propensity of dangerousness—meaning that they are *always already rendered as dangerous*. Any distinction between vulnerability and riskiness is thus defunct within PREVENT, despite the nominal efforts made to separate Muslim communities from notions of being dangerous. These instabilities suggest, I argue, that the radicalisation discourse should be considered as performative security knowledge—a discourse that actually produces (discursively) the threats it claims to identify for the performance of governance, rather than as reacting to the existence of such risks. Indeed, this article has commented on the imperfect construction of ‘radicalisation’ from other discourses to facilitate the illusion of preventative governance over

terrorism, and knowledge about it. The ‘New Terrorism’ discourse has been instrumental in sustaining narratives about religious ideology and terrorism, while notions of the appropriate conduct of Muslim subjects have contributed to the practices utilised within PREVENT. This is not the end of the story about radicalisation’s supposed counterfactual to terrorism, though, as forms of knowledge also interact with opacities to produce security policy—especially regarding the deployment of categories of risk.

The following section explores how opacities contributed to the framing of PREVENT around a ‘radicalisation process’, commenting on how previous security scares have informed the type of knowledge produced about contemporary terrorism and governance over it.

### **Opacity**

Wolfram Lacher has analysed the processes by which Saharan populations became objects of official knowledge production, post-9/11. He found that security concerns about the Sahara and its borderlands had less to do with information about worrying developments there than with the absence of information and the *illegibility* of the area for surveillance apparatuses (Lacher 2008, 384). The Sahara rapidly became a governable entity through its constitution as a ‘breeding ground for terrorism’. The very opacity of the area provided a source of anxiety, coupled with almost limitless scope for newly produced information and risk analysis—where no information previously existed.

An intimate relationship therefore exists between knowledge as the constitutor of threats, the creator of its own field of intervention and action (Lacher 2008, 387–388), and opacity, or illegibility. It is fear of the unknown that creates a ‘will to knowledge’; knowledge which when produced constitutes a governable entity. James Der Derian traces this insecurity at the root of knowledge, and its relationship to IR and Security Studies, with a parallel to Nietzsche’s understandings of existential insecurity and knowledge:

The causal instinct is thus conditional upon, and excited by, the feeling of fear ... one not only searches for some kind of explanation, to serve as a cause, but for a particularly selected and preferred kind of explanation—that which most quickly and frequently abolished the feeling of the strange, new and hitherto unexperienced (Nietzsche, quoted in Der Derian 1993, 103).

The fear that opacity generates, then, both relies upon and produces knowledge. But what unknown did PREVENT and the concept of ‘radicalisation’ respond to, and upon what previous knowledge was the constitution of Muslim communities as a ‘known unknown’ reliant? This article argues that the opacity that contributed to the formulation of both the radicalisation discourse and PREVENT was the existing constitution of British Muslim communities as ‘known unknowns’. To paraphrase Donald Rumsfeld, that architect of other unpopular security policies, one must be conscious of an ‘unknown’ in order to begin securing against it—it must be ‘known’ that a gap in knowledge exists (Rumsfeld 2002). British Muslim communities began to

be produced as opaque through the ‘evidences’ of the Oldham, Bradford and Leeds riots of Summer 2001, and *The Satanic Verses* controversy of 1988/89. However, multiple factors have contributed to the constitution of a Muslim ‘other’ in British society, including (in the recent past) the Gulf War, the divisive ‘Muslim schools’ debate and the rise of far right groups (Poynting and Mason 2007, 73). This article, however, focuses on events that played a central role in linking Muslim communities to violent disorder within this narrative, and the continuing heritage of such a discourse in PREVENT.

One early such incident involved the burning of Salman Rushdie’s book and effigy by protesters in Bradford in 1989. While the protesters had hoped to gain support for their outrage at Rushdie’s book, which was perceived by some as blasphemous, the media representations of the protest generated widespread shock in British society at a perceived attack on the freedom of speech; and, as Gilles Kepel notes, the coverage evoked ‘images of Nazism or the Inquisition’ for its audiences (Kepel 1997, 138; Poynting and Mason 2007, 68). Commentaries at the time labelled ‘Muslim society’ as ‘repulsive from the point of Western post Enlightenment values’ (Cruise O’Brien, quoted in Alibhai-Brown 1998, 124), and Lord Jenkins (author of the 1976 Race Relations Act) commented that ‘in retrospect we might have been more cautious about allowing the creation in the 1950s [*sic*] of substantial Muslim communities here’ (Jenkins, quoted in Parekh 1990, 5).

While a ‘watershed moment for framing the Muslim “other” as a threat’ (Poynting and Mason 2007, 69), a further 11 years of continued othering (see, for example, the ‘Muslim schools’ debate, the detention of British Muslims during the Gulf War and the rise of far right groups) passed before disturbances erupted in Bradford, Oldham and Burnley in the summer of 2001 (although Bradford had already seen three days of street battles in 1995 when 300 young men from British-Pakistani communities fought against heavy-handed police (Poynting and Mason 2007, 74)). The riots of 2001 were originally sparked by racist gang attacks on Pakistani and Bangladeshi neighbourhoods, but the government characterised the rioters with populist law-and-order rhetoric about ‘thugs’, while the media blamed the minority communities for unwillingness to integrate and community leaders for failing to control their youth (Poynting and Mason 2007, 74–75).

In this spirit, the ‘community cohesion’ discourse was introduced following Oldham, and Arun Kundnani of the Institute for Race Relations states that the introduction of related government rhetoric indicated:

That it was a declaration of the end of multiculturalism and an assertion that Asians, Muslims in particular, would have to develop ‘a greater acceptance of the principal national institutions’ and assimilate to ‘core British values’ ... [Government has also] mistakenly presented this fragmentation as the result of an over-tolerance of diversity which allowed non-white communities to ‘self-segregate’ (Kundnani 2009, 23).

This shift towards viewing Muslims as responsible for their non-assimilation (presented within the community cohesion discourse) can be understood as an oversimplification of, and yet originating from, the far more complex ‘Ritchie Report’ on the Oldham disturbances (Ritchie 2001, 9). By 2006, ‘community cohesion’ was so rich a signifier that a prominent institute, founded to further its cause (the Institute for Community Cohesion), re-examined the Oldham riots and the progress made by the local authority to decrease racial segregation and—in cohesion rhetoric—to increase ‘strong and positive relationships between people from different backgrounds’ (Cantle et al. 2006, 14). The ‘Cantle Report’ broadly praised the efforts of the local authority, but placed a large degree of emphasis on the need for *communities to desire change* (understood as increased ‘cohesion’)—reinforcing the discursive resonance of ‘self-segregation’ (opacity) by Muslim communities as problematic.

Riots have a long history in providing scope for the re-imagination and securitisation of communities. For instance, Robert Miles has argued how the ‘race riots’ of 1958 were central to emergence of the race relations discourse itself (Miles 1984), while Peter Jackson has examined the centrality of the 1976 carnival riots to the construction of a discourse about ‘black youth’ as an ‘implicitly male, homogenous and hostile group’ (Jackson 1988, 214). Events that disrupt the normal functioning of politics produce the perceptions of opacities, or unknowns, which are followed by the instantiation of security–knowledge nexuses. From the stimulation of the will-to-knowledge came the governmental forms of the race relations and community cohesion discourses, and their eventual descendant after 2005—the radicalisation discourse.

Kundnani (2009, 23) traces the trajectory of negative aspects of the ‘community cohesion programme’ into PREVENT, which has absorbed ‘the part which was most alienating to many Muslims, what is seen as a one-sided demand to assimilate to ill-defined values of Britishness’. In fact, even some of the (easier) recommendations of reports into Oldham can be directly traced into PREVENT problematisations of, and interventions into, Muslim communities. For example, the 2001 report by David Ritchie suggests, among many other things, the funding and organisation of racially integrated sports, and problematises difficulties in accessing Pakistani and Bangladeshi women, and their diminished access to leisure, education and employment—both of which can be located within current PREVENT-funded activities (DCLG 2008a, 22–23).

The governance of Muslim communities through PREVENT and radicalisation, then, was partially made possible through their perceived (risky) opacity and the knowledge production undertaken in the Ritchie and Cantle reports. These reports introduced the community cohesion discourse (which can be directly traced into PREVENT through rhetoric and activities) and, through government use, constituted British Muslim communities as problematic ‘borderlands’ within known society—liable to produce violent outbursts, dangerous and only partly known (perfect conditions for risk). The events of 9/11 and, in particular, 7/7 reactivated this discourse in the service of counter-terrorism, allowing the ‘known unknown’ to be

reproduced, mapped and intervened upon. Forms of knowledge and the opacities that drove them contributed to the invention of radicalisation, such that claims could be made to the pre-emptive governance of terrorism.

### Conclusion

While the news that the PREVENT strategy would undergo review during 2010/11 was greeted with enthusiasm by commentators in sections of the British press (Lambert and Githens-Mazer 2010; Travis 2010) and by the Institute of Race Relations (IRR 2010), the results of the procedure have not resulted in major changes to the deployment of the ‘radicalisation’ discourse. In practice, the odious connection between counter-terrorism funding and the numbers of Muslims within a local authority has been removed—which can only be a positive step. However the assertions of the new PREVENT that *all* extremist ideologies would be subject to investigation, and that the funding of community cohesion work would be separated from counter-terrorism, have not succeeded in making PREVENT benign. The new CONTEST strategy still deploys the discourse of a ‘radicalisation process’, asserting that terrorism emanates from the exposure of vulnerable individuals to extremist ideology, of which Al Qaeda is presumed to be the largest purveyor (Home Office 2011).

The central concerns of this article have been to present the PREVENT strategy, and its relatively novel treatment of a potential terrorist subject as governable, as practices born of certain forms of knowledge and opacity. PREVENT has combined the individualised ideological narrative of the ‘New Terrorism’ discourse with other knowledges derived from the ‘opacity’ of British Muslim communities to produce a subjectivity that is simultaneously ‘at risk/risky’. Embedded within the narrative of a radicalisation process, this has resulted in the opening of new areas of intervention to political economies of danger and governance. The double identification of Muslim communities as both vulnerable and risky has aided the proliferation of security practices through the deployment of both disciplinary and security governances.

Aided by allusions to viral contaminants, cognitive ‘openings’ and resilience, these deployments have extended the reach of bio-political apparatuses into previous ‘borderlands’—which became constructed as such by reports into the Salman Rushdie controversy and the Oldham, Burnley and Bradford riots of summer 2001.

To conclude then, this article has attempted to expose the reliance of PREVENT upon events and forms of knowledge which have been used to frame British Muslims as partially opaque, as well as exposing instabilities in the deployment of radicalisation discourse. The numerous instabilities and contradictions implicit within the rendering of a ‘radicalisation process’ have been exposed to highlight the function of this narrative for governance. As post-structuralist scholars have argued about projects of surveillance and screening, such security practices may act in the name of managing risk but they are actually performative of it—producing risk to enable interventions. The story of ‘radicalisation’ has fitted a gap in the governance of

terrorism, and the governance of the future, and can tell us much more about nexuses between security and knowledge than it can about transitions to terrorism.

### Notes

1. For a fuller overview of funding streams within PREVENT, see Kundnani (2009, 11–12).
2. ‘Schools will observe or hear how communities are *feeling*, may witness an *event* that has happened, or be aware that something *might happen*. In all these three types of situation information from schools is important to help the local authority or police gain a whole community view and so protect young people from harm or causing harm’ (DCSF 2008, 13, emphasis in original).

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