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Policing Strategies against Islamic Terrorism in the UK after 9/11: The Socio-Political Realities for British Muslims

STEFANO BONINO

Abstract

This paper explores the socio-political dimensions of the strategies that have been employed in the UK against Islamic terrorism following the attacks of 9/11/2001 in the United States. The role that Muslims, as a suspect population, play must be contextualized within the socio-political framework of late modernity. This framework will be posited as a driver behind the increased isolation, exclusion and embitterment of Muslim communities in the UK. One of the main arguments proposed is a prompt for governments and counter-terrorism forces to: address the drivers and ideological grounds on which radicalisation and terrorism pose a threat; tackle the socio-political grievances experienced by Muslims; and partner with and empower Muslim communities. The British multi-pronged counter-terrorism strategy will be explored in order to demonstrate that some soft measures aimed at de-radicalising vulnerable individuals, marginalising extremists, removing the human capital and support for terrorist organisations and improving both the dialogue with and the integration of Muslim communities within wider society should be among the top priorities. Such measures would be essential in order to achieve durable results in fighting Islamic terrorism at the grassroots level. In following such an approach, Britain will also have to face the challenges posed by both plural Muslim identities and communities and the differing Islamic and Western values and aim at achieving full social integration of Muslims within the wider society.

Introduction

The importance of understanding the processes behind governmental responses to Islamic terrorism and its counter-terrorism strategies is evident in the prominence that terrorist threats have acquired within Western societies after 9/11, at both the political and public level. Whatever the likelihood of a terrorist attack, from a sociological point of view it is clear that the culture of risk that characterises late modernity has placed an increased stress on Islamic terrorism per se, and an augmented strain is experienced by Muslims, who are regarded as a suspect population. A pervasive culture of risk and social insecurity have shaped Western socio-political Islamophobic and discriminating attitudes that cast shadow on Muslims and further their resentment, thus playing into the hands of radical and violent propaganda.

This paper will examine the British Counter Terrorism Strategy (CONTEST) and the various policing strategies employed in combating Islamic terrorism. Two models of policing

will be identified: the ‘high policing’ or ‘hard power’ model and the ‘low policing’ or ‘soft power’ model. This paper will suggest that soft approaches rather than hard approaches could be fundamental in fighting Islamic terrorism at the grassroots level, both by defeating the socio-political grievances experienced by Muslims and the ideological grounds for radicalisation, adherence and support to terrorist combat doctrines. Furthermore, the employment of community policing strategies, partnerships between the police and Muslim communities, and the strengthening of networks of informal social control will be explored as potentially viable ways to both address social stigma and exclusion and empower communities. Some of the hindrances that hamper such strategies will also be mentioned.

Combating radicalisation and terrorism raises various challenging issues, such as: governmental dispositions and policing strategies dealing with Muslims; the threat posed by Islamic terrorism; the multi-faceted and elusive dimensions of modern terrorist organisations; the complex nature of Muslim identities and communities; and the full integration of Muslim values within Western societies. All these issues will be explored within the socio-political framework of late modernity and will fit within the main argument, which is itself supportive of strategies aimed at addressing socio-political grievances, combating terrorist ideologies, and partnering with and empowering communities.

The Folk Devils of Late Modernity

In the last ten years Western societies have shown Muslim communities in a bad light, defined Muslim identities by their ‘religion’¹ and deployed an “overlapping three-pronged strategy”² and a set of contrasting policies that, at the same time, presumably aim to integrate Muslims, fight international terrorism and repress perpetrators of religious violence. This attitude towards Muslim communities has molded governmental agendas, policing methods and social dispositions. Undoubtedly, Muslims have emerged as the folk devils of late modernity; as Cohen³ would argue, nowadays Muslims play the role of suitable enemies, while Western societies play that of suitable victims. Muslims are not simply considered immigrants who are ‘non-persons,’⁴ or “threatening outcast[s],”⁵ or people whose foreignness⁶ and Asianness⁷ is criminalised. They are also deemed responsible for the ‘crime’ of their religious identity, stigmatized⁸ and labelled as outsiders⁹ purely as a result of being Muslim. Studies found that visible markers of ‘Muslimness’ are connected with a rise in the probability of experiencing marginalization, racism and issues over access to employment,¹⁰ as well as daily discrimination in the form of verbal and even physical assault and violence.¹¹

Islamophobia and prejudice against Muslims are broadly linked to the European progressive shift to the far right and socio-political discourses that consider Muslims as a security, economic, social and cultural threat.¹² Hellyer¹³ notes that in the UK Muslims were not protected by legal norms on religious discrimination until very recently, and opines that British Muslims have been portrayed as a ‘fifth column’ by society. The media have surely played an important role in spreading moral panics, furthering ideological racism, and promoting hostility towards and criminalisation of Muslims.¹⁴ The Commission on British Muslims and Islamophobia¹⁵ has made clear allegations of institutional Islamophobia. Some politicians, such as Jack Straw,¹⁶ have surely not eased inter-racial tensions or promoted social attitudes based on racial equality. Islamophobic attitudes have reached academia too.

This should raise particular concerns, given the educational and influential role that academics have on students. A vivid example of academic Islamophobia is offered by Sookhdeo's popular book *Understanding Islamic Terrorism: The Islamic Doctrine of War*¹⁷ which presents several misleading passages on the Islamic faith. Interviewed by Jackson,¹⁸ Lambert states that his Muslim police colleagues "found part of it [i.e. Sookhdeo's book] to be deeply offensive and Islamophobic". Clearly, a widespread diffusion of Islamophobic attitudes against Muslims poses those risks that Goode and Ben-Yehuda¹⁹ have associated with moral panics, namely a potential change in the social fabric and the rise of a collective conscience that sets an absolute moral boundary between right and wrong, acceptable and not acceptable, normal and deviant.

On the issue of anti-Muslim prejudice, the study conducted by Strabac and Listhaug²⁰ deserves some space. Employing data from 30 countries included in the 1999-2000 wave of the European Value Study, the authors note that the "aggregate level of anti-Muslim prejudice [is] significantly higher than the corresponding level of anti-immigrant prejudice in both Western and Eastern Europe."²¹ This study is clearly highly time-specific, since it was conducted before 9/11 and 7/7; however, it shows a pattern that has surely worsened after the terrorist attacks on the American and British soils. Rana and Rosas²² posit that nowadays there is strong evidence that the terms 'al-Qaeda', 'Islamic fundamentalism' and 'Muslim' are used interchangeably, thus furthering socio-political targeting and discrimination of Muslim communities.

The terrorist attacks on the West have not only cast shadow on Muslim communities,²³ but have also molded governmental anti-terror laws, policing strategies and societal attitudes that revolve around terrorism, risk and global insecurities. Thus, before exploring the British counter-terrorism strategies and measures and the impact that these have had on Muslim communities, the risk posed by terrorism will be briefly assessed, while the socio-political context of post-modern risk societies will be sketched in order to understand within what framework Muslims are confined and violence and terrorism take place.

Living in Western Risk Societies: Terrorism, Violence, Insecurity and Social Exclusion

The risk posed by terrorism is of a double-infinite nature, featuring both elements of catastrophe and elements of uncertainty.²⁴ As Beck²⁵ would argue, such a risk cannot be predicted since it is statistically unlikely and non-recurring. Moreover, the global micro-structured dimension of new terrorist systems (al-Qaeda being the best example) adds another element of unpredictability and augmented uncertainty around the terrorist threat. In employing micro-structures – which were originally applied in the field of global financial markets²⁶ in the analysis of new terrorist systems, Knorr Cetina²⁷ argues that terrorist organisations "do not exhibit institutional complexity but rather the asymmetries, unpredictabilities and playfulness of complex (and dispersed) interaction patterns." Thus, such systems are dispersed, micro-structured, temporally complex and unrelated to formal authorities. Expanding Goffman's traditional face-to-face interaction order,²⁸ Knorr Cetina²⁹ also argues that interactions between terrorist systems and networks are now played out in global domains. In fact, through 'scopic' methods and modern technological means, terrorist organisations, such as al-Qaeda, manage to obtain both internal global co-ordination –

projecting interests, activities and events to dispersed users in the same way – and external global communication – presenting the same messages and images to the public, irrespective of time and space. In such a way, the boundaries between the fictional, informational and mediated world and the real, material and natural world become difficult to detect, given the intangibility of virtual structures. Thus, terrorism gains the symbolic power of threatening people simply due to its existence as a threat, and can spread its ideologies on a global level in such a way that counter-terrorism must face the manifold and elusive dimensions associated with terrorism. Thus, multi-pronged strategies that may result in failure are often deployed.

Against this background, preventative policies become the paradigm of a global risk society, which places a stress on the control of unmanageable bad future events (a terrorist attack being the most feared). Aradau and Van Munster posit that “the rationality of catastrophic risk translates into policies that *actively* seek to prevent situations from becoming catastrophic at some indefinite point in the future”³⁰ (emphasis in original). The socio-political attitude towards the risk posed by terrorism could fall within the adoption of precautionary risk policies which might tend to over-criminalise an entire population, as though all Muslims were terrorists or supporters of terrorism. As Ewald argues:

The precautionary principle does not target all risk situations but only those marked by two principal features: a context of scientific uncertainty on the one hand and the possibility of serious and irreversible damage on the other.³¹

‘Selling’ the risk of an always potential terrorist attack, due to elements of unpredictability and catastrophe, seems to be performed in a top-down manner, so that citizens can see it as the legitimate warning from a credible authority. This governmental activity of ‘selling’ panics and risk (through propaganda, the media, etc.) could influence social dispositions towards the targets of precautionary policies. However, as will be noted throughout this paper, the theoretical framework that any counter-terrorism strategy should focus its activities on is the engagement with communities in both policing partnership and self-policing (for example, through strengthened networks of informal social control) and the disruption of the ideological grounds (including the socio-economic grievances that hamper Muslims’ full integration within Western countries) on which terrorism and radicalisation pose. Labelling Muslims as inherently dangerous – dangerousness carries a moral category and thus, leads to stigma³² promotes further alienation and could depict them as “threatening outcast[s].”³³ In this sense, the darkest future scenario could picture Muslims as placed outside social structures and, thus, outside the state infrastructure of Western countries. In fact, as Aristotle³⁴ would posit, an individual who has been isolated and given no society to live in, becomes no longer part of that state.

As Mythen and Walklate³⁵ suggest, post-modern societies “trace the connections between macro-social transformations and the rising cultural prevalence of risk”. As theorised especially by Giddens³⁶ and Garland,³⁷ this pervasive culture of risk has reached almost every strata of the population. In particular, Garland³⁸ lies in line with Mythen and Walklate’s point of view and argues that changes and developments in the socio-political structures have constructed a notion of crime as a normal fact. Consumerism, capitalism, the advancement of the private security sector, ‘responsabilization’ strategies, and the decline of

welfare measures are some of the macro-social transformations that have increased feelings of precariousness which are experienced by ordinary citizens on a daily basis. What Garland calls “criminology of the other,”³⁹ in depicting current socio-political tendencies to over-criminalise and harshly punish delinquents as a response to a state of insecurity, can be applied to the description of the orientations that societies have displayed recently in treating Muslim communities. Nowadays, the hazard is that Muslims could be treated as “aliens [...] posing risks to be controlled rather than managed”⁴⁰ or as those ‘usual suspects’ that McAra and McVie⁴¹ detected, in their broader longitudinal study on youth crime in Edinburgh, as disadvantaged individuals who are over-criminalised and over-targeted by the police, which act as a religious or class (but not a legal) subject.

Modern social control goes hand in hand with a visible display of state power and toughness, in a way, as Foucault⁴² would argue, to reaffirm the state sovereignty. The culture of control and fear that post-modern societies have instilled in their citizens has taken the path of shaping “ontologically insecure individual[s]”⁴³ whose “docile bod[ies] may be subjected, used, transformed and improved.”⁴⁴ Perceptions of stability are superimposed on uncertain identities emerging in post-modern societies.⁴⁵ Social practices shape, orient and develop individual attitudes, actions and behaviours,⁴⁶ while risk is the main tool employed by the political apparatus in order to govern social problems.⁴⁷ As Ibrahim⁴⁸ argues, the notion of risk is a key element of globalized societies and manifests its pervasiveness in the daily experiences of ordinary citizens. Against such background, it is not surprising that the risk posed by terrorism possesses symbolic and rhetorical features, while the statistically low likelihood associated to the possibility of a terrorist attack is often disregarded. In fact, “despite the attention it gets in the global media, terrorism is much rarer than most violent crime.”⁴⁹

Following all these arguments, terrorism can also fit into Melossi’s enlightening argument, according to which “controlling crime has often been but an instrument used in order to control society.”⁵⁰ If the construction of risk is globally performed and locally experienced by ordinary citizens, the fighting of this risk, as Beck⁵¹ would argue, is devolved upon the state, for an Hobbesian reason – namely, because the state is the main and traditional provider of security. In order to reiterate their sovereignty, states have used crime as a main tool, along with several incapacitating and preventative measures that have been advanced all over the world, both at the national and local level.⁵² When also considering that the rhetoric of tough American socio-political policies (for example, ‘zero tolerance’ or ‘broken windows’) aimed at fighting delinquency at the grassroots level has been advanced all over Europe,⁵³ it is clear that the strain posed on delinquents and suspects (who do not always benefit from the legal right to be considered innocent until proven guilty) could become unbearable. Far from realizing Loader’s hope for a public philosophy of punishment grounded on penal moderation and the values of restraint,⁵⁴ parsimony and dignity, the US strong penal culture portrayed by super-max prisons⁵⁵ and the European iron fist in tackling immigration and criminalizing foreignness⁵⁶ have produced a political and cultural retreat into fear, insecurity and suspicion. As Wacquant⁵⁷ argues, the contemporary neo-liberal turn towards penalization both responds and feeds social (not criminal) insecurities, in a segregative manner in the United States and in a panoptic (through the police and the courts) fashion in Europe. The current liberal-paternalistic state portrayed by Wacquant is a dynamic

actor (and not just a repressive one) that produces effects on the social, political and bureaucratic spheres. State economic deregulation has promoted a shift from protective welfare measures to disciplinary measures. Such a system has generated social disorder and insecurities and penalization attitudes. An upsurge in penalization feeds and responds to both such social disorder and insecurities and a deficit of state legitimacy that the law-and-order right hand of the state must fill by reasserting the state sovereignty.

In addition, Garland⁵⁸ opines that such a disposition furthers the seclusion of the lowest strata of the population into misery and degradation. Such “*a bulimic society* where massive cultural inclusion is accompanied by systematic structural exclusion”⁵⁹ (emphasis in original) promotes the strengthening of the highest classes’ supremacy and the exclusion of disadvantaged individuals (such as Muslims), who could resort to violence as a response to their strain⁶⁰ or as a form of secondary deviance⁶¹ arising from stigmatisation and labelling. Including here the argument provided by Bourdieu and Passeron,⁶² in modern capitalist societies, the ruling classes maintain power by retaining a privilege over the cultural capital which preconditions what individuals will be able to obtain in life; disadvantaged and excluded people’s inequalities are then culturally reproduced by those educational and social institutions that aim to preserve the hegemonic class’ primacy over culture. The implications that such cultural primacy have on the micro-level must be carefully handled, but could it be posited that Muslims (here considered in an overly-simplistic way as a whole ethnic-religious minority) could fall within the disadvantaged class which is excluded from the hegemonic socio-cultural domain. This argument may be even stretched to affirm that Western Muslims could be currently experiencing a double cultural submission to both the particular hegemonic class power and the overarching Western social, cultural and political framework. In other words, it is a marginalisation within and submission to the dominant society ruled by the “morally lazy white middle class.”⁶³

Such is the socio-political framework within which Muslims play their role and from which counter-terrorism springs. Against such a background, the operational deployment of policing measures aimed at fighting Islamic terrorism will be explored also in terms of their impact on British Muslim communities. However, before embarking on this, it will be useful to outline the UK multi-pronged counter-terrorism strategy (CONTEST) upon which policing measures are based.

CONTEST

After the 9/11 attacks in the United States and the subsequent terrorist attacks in Madrid, London, and Glasgow, the securitization of European spaces and the fight against Islamic terrorism have been given priority in governmental agendas, while Muslim communities have come under close scrutiny in the UK, all over Europe and beyond.⁶⁴ In dealing with the threat posed by Islamic terrorism, the UK has deployed a multi-faceted strategy called CONTEST (an acronym for ‘Counter-Terrorism Strategy’), which aims to ‘Pursue’, ‘Prevent’, ‘Protect’ and ‘Prepare’ the country in the face of potential terrorist attacks.⁶⁵ Such a strategy is replicated at the European level, where the focus is placed on a long-term strategy aimed at combating home-based Islamic terrorism, unlike the U.S. short-term strategy based on winning the ‘war on terrorism’ abroad and targeting ‘rogue states’ involved in the training of

terrorists.⁶⁶ The *European Action Plan on Combating Terrorism*⁶⁷ was developed in order to tackle terrorism in a multi-pronged fashion that is aimed to ‘Prevent’, ‘Protect’, ‘Pursue’ and ‘Respond’ to any terrorism threat posed within European borders. Such a strategy evidently resembles the British CONTEST. However, the E.U. is left with just some strategic decision-making powers, since tactical and operational powers remain within national domains, due to both practical (efficiency and goal achievement) and symbolic (preservation of national security and defence identities) reasons.⁶⁸ Basically, counter-terrorism intelligence remains and is performed predominantly at the national level,⁶⁹ since it “falls under the mandate of national secret intelligence services.”⁷⁰ Thus, the contours of the UK CONTEST strategy will now be outlined.

Focus and Terrorist Threats

The evolution of the British CONTEST strategy has passed through three stages: a first unpublished classified version (2003-2006); a second partly declassified version (2006-2009); and a third almost fully declassified version (2009-now), which has been overseen by the Office for Security and Counter-Terrorism in the Home Office and not by the Cabinet Office, as was the case for the first two stages.⁷¹ As mentioned in *The United Kingdom’s Strategy for Countering International Terrorism - Annual Report* (Home Office, 2010), there are four threats that the UK and its interests abroad face as a result of the activities of international terrorist groups. These four threats are:

- 1) the al-Qaeda core leadership group;
- 2) al-Qaeda affiliates;
- 3) al-Qaeda inspired threats;
- 4) other terrorist groups.⁷²

Arguably, the dimension of terrorism is confined to Islamic terrorism only, as there is no explicit mention of any other particular kind of terrorist group in the fourth point. In fact, if the fourth source of threat is not considered as a way to keep doors open to prospective and unexpected further sources of terrorism, but only represents an institutional façade aimed at preserving a ‘politically correct’ stance towards the Muslim world, then Islamic terrorism must be considered the true and only threat that the British government has deemed as such. Thus, this is a unique Islamic terrorist threat that comes from three inter-connected sources, the latter (al-Qaeda inspired terrorism) being the most dangerous and problematic, given the difficulties in detecting self-radicalised individuals who operate as small secret cells, often in partial or total isolation from the core command structure or other cells.⁷³

Factors Driving International Terrorism

As Gregory⁷⁴ notes, the four sources of threats mentioned were introduced by the 2009 version of the CONTEST strategy, while the 2006 version simply focused on a general threat posed by radicalised individuals. However, both versions refer to religious justifications in committing acts of terrorism and CONTEST 2009 clearly states that “contemporary terrorist groups claim a religious justification for their actions and have a wide-ranging religious and

political agenda; they are no longer concerned with a single issue.”⁷⁵ In considering the strategic factors that have driven international terrorism (namely, Islamic terrorism), the Home Office⁷⁶ identified the following four:

- 1) conflict and instability;
- 2) ideology;
- 3) technology;
- 4) radicalization.

Conflict and Instability

This first factor is related to the conditions of socio-political uncertainty and instability, ongoing conflicts and global events involving Muslim communities⁷⁷ in areas such as Iraq, Afghanistan, the Pakistan/Afghanistan border area, Yemen and Somalia.⁷⁸ Exploring global conflicts involving Muslim countries and the particular situation of such areas is beyond the scope of this work, but the argument of this paper is that, in fighting the proliferation of extreme ideologies in terrorists’ home countries, driving national and European foreign policies towards the establishment of systems of liberal democracies and the acquisition of the support of public and political majorities may be more successful than the deployment of military troops and the engagement in prolonged wars. As Roberts⁷⁹ argues, open wars produce little benefit to counter-terrorism at the best and painful tragedies to societies at the worst. Historically, there is no proven result that combating terrorism at its source through military interventions ultimately defeats it. On the contrary, such an aggressive strategy could revive imperialistic forces and spread the false idea that terrorism can be fully eradicated at the grassroots. It clearly emerges that the concept of attack as the best form of defence should be reconsidered.

Ideology

Ideology is a factor strictly interconnected with the last two drivers for terrorism, namely technology and radicalisation. In analysing al-Qaeda, its organisational structure can be effectively described as a “network of networks.”⁸⁰ In fact, as previously mentioned, al-Qaeda is a new terrorist organisation that is globally dispersed and operates through an horizontal structure. In this way, the core leadership provides inspirational and ideological prompts,⁸¹ but it is the affiliates’ duty to pursue al-Qaeda’s ideologies by carrying out terrorist attacks.⁸² Affiliation to al-Qaeda is based on ideological adherence, as this terrorist network is ready to welcome, accommodate and recognise individuals or groups willing to join the political cause and combat doctrine set by the al-Qaeda core leadership group.⁸³ Islamic terrorism in Europe is highly individualised, carried out by small groups, inspired by al-Qaeda ideology and lacks institutional ties to jihadist organisations.⁸⁴ Al-Qaeda represents a sort of ‘brand’ or an ideology that could be sold as if it were a product. Furthermore, al-Qaeda walks the path traced by the nineteenth century’s Muslim political antagonism to the West and exploits the rhetoric of the Crusaders, the Islamic faith and Muslim protest and politics to call the Muslim global community to arms in the fight against the Western

‘oppressors’.⁸⁵ The concept of ‘*ummah*’ defines such a global Muslim community “that supersedes national or ethnic identities”⁸⁶ and enhances the global reach of Islamic terrorism, as it can also rely on such a Muslim historical, cultural and ideological value.

Technology

In shaping a transnational Muslim identity, the element of ‘*ummah*’ is even stronger in the light of contemporary processes of globalisation⁸⁷ and could further and sustain processes of radicalization and recruitment. The employment of modern means of technology has supported and quickened such processes. As previously mentioned, terrorist organisations can advance both internal global co-ordination and external global communication through virtual systems. According to the New York City Police Department (NYPD) Intelligence Division,⁸⁸ the Internet plays a fundamental role throughout the process of radicalisation (mainly during the ‘Self-Identification phase’; ‘Indoctrination phase’; and ‘Jihadization phase’) of Islamic terrorists because:

[The Internet,] with its thousands of extremist websites and chat-rooms, is a virtual incubator of its own. In fact, many of the extremists began their radical conversion while researching or just surfing in the cyber world.⁸⁹

The use of the Internet has also enabled terrorists to plan their attacks in detail. In fact:

The Internet has been used extensively by the plotters of terrorist attacks in choosing targets, formulating the mode of attack, and acquiring the technical capability. The Internet’s broad and unrestricted access to information has provided attack planners with a variety of options and advice for launching an attack.⁹⁰

Without disregarding this further use of the Internet for terrorists’ scopes, the most delicate matter connected with the Internet seems to be its capacity to serve as a provider of fundamentalist ideologies and a radicalisation incubator on a global level. The ways in which the CONTEST strategy aims to control sources of radicalisation, such as the Internet, will be subsequently explored, when considering the preventative strategies employed by the British counter-terrorism within Muslim communities. Now, the focus will turn to the general issue of that radicalisation which sustains human capital, itself a vital element for terrorist organisations.

Radicalization

In analysing radicalization as a driver for Islamic terrorism, it is necessary to start by discussing whether it is possible to draw a profile of a ‘radicalized’ individual – namely, that kind of person who may be more likely to embrace the cause of Islamic terrorism. In *The United Kingdom’s Strategy for Countering International Terrorism*, the Home Office⁹¹ has not provided a specific profile for a potential Islamic terrorist. In the *Report of the Official Account of the Bombings in London on 7th July 2005*,⁹² it is clearly stated that “what we know of previous extremists in the UK shows that there is not a consistent profile to help

identify who may be vulnerable to radicalisation.”⁹³ In an analysis of the socio-economic background of the four plotters of the London terrorist attack, a unique and coherent picture does not emerge. Three out of four terrorists were second generation British citizens; some were educated, while some others were not; some were economically disadvantaged, while some others lived in normal economic conditions; some were apparently integrated into British society, while some others were not; some had committed petty crimes prior to the bombings in London, while some others were law-abiding citizens; some had minor trauma during their childhood, while some others had happy upbringings. In this sense, the House of Commons recognizes the concrete problem “for law enforcement agencies and local communities in identifying potential terrorists.”⁹⁴

Such a position contrasts with Silber and Bhatt’s argument,⁹⁵ which provides a clear profile of the alleged ‘candidate’ Islamic terrorist, according to the profiles of the terrorists and supporting individuals who were linked to five main Western-based plots and groups: 1) the 2004 Madrid attack; 2) the 2005 London attack; 3) the Amsterdam’s Hofstad Group; 4) the Toronto 18 Case; and 5) the Australia’s Operation Pendennis. According to Silber and Bhatt,⁹⁶ the commonalities shared by many of the Islamist terrorists and supporters involved would lead to a picture of the ‘candidate’ terrorist at a pre-radicalization stage, as follows:

- Sex: Male
- Age: 18-35
- Religion: Islam
- Relationship with religion: recent convert, does not start as a fanatic
- Ethnic background: mixed but often a second/ third generation in his home country
- Place of residence or citizenship: Western country
- Socio-economic class: middle-class
- Education: from high school up to university
- Life and job: unremarkable, ordinary
- Criminal background: little or non-existent

Such a figure should not be generalized, but it could be the closest profile of a self-radicalized individual. In the work of Krueger and Malečková,⁹⁷ a similar picture emerges. In fact, in drawing a parallel between terrorism and political violence, Krueger and Malečková challenge the assumption that terrorists feature a background of illiteracy and poverty. As a matter of fact, they argue that terrorists require an interest, commitment and effort to engage in politics, in order to sustain the ideological battle pursued by a terrorist organisation. For this reason:

Well-educated, middle- or upper-class individuals are better suited to carry out acts of international terrorism than are impoverished illiterates because the terrorists must fit into a foreign environment to be successful.⁹⁸

Arguably, a fundamental factor that Muslims need to acquire during their process of radicalization and embracement of terrorist ideologies is a disposition towards violence and criminal activities. In the specific case of young Muslims, McVie and Wiltshire⁹⁹ present various findings which, despite not being directly related to terrorism, draw attention to the question of violence and social exclusion as a prominent feature of Western post-modern

societies. McVie and Wiltshire argue that an important driver towards violence should be connected with social marginalization and discrimination. In fact, conditions of alienation could generate a sense of injustice and grievance¹⁰⁰ and, thus, further and speed up processes of radicalization. Also, McVie and Wiltshire found that being male and part of a criminal peer group could be a stronger predictor of engagement in illegal activities than religious affiliation.

The important role played by social affiliation in the radicalization process is supported also by Bakker's findings.¹⁰¹ In taking this argument to its extreme, the 'paintballing hypothesis' proposed by Githens-Mazer¹⁰² posits that peer groups could be the primary cause for radicalization, through a process "beginning with a paintballing outing, and ending with a backpack full [of] explosives on the Tube."¹⁰³ In fact, following Sutherland's differential association theory,¹⁰⁴ criminal behaviour could be learned through exposure and social interaction with others, and a terrorist mindset could be promoted by "definitions favorable to violation of law over definitions unfavorable to violation of law."¹⁰⁵ Moreover, pressures towards deviance from the criminal group can overcome dominant dispositions to conform with institutions of formal control,¹⁰⁶ and favour the creation of sub-cultures within micro-communities, in a similar way as happens within hardcore and street gangs.¹⁰⁷ A fertile ground for such processes could be exemplified by prison, where opportunities for radicalization and recruitment are very high.¹⁰⁸ Appropriate neutralisation techniques¹⁰⁹ and moral disengagement strategies¹¹⁰ could be assimilated within fundamentalist groups and ground on alleged superior ideologies and divine goals.

In a new study conducted for the British think-tank DEMOS, Bartlett, Birdwell and King¹¹¹ draw a line between non-violent radicals and violent-radicals (or terrorists), noting that radical ideas do not always lead to violence. According to the authors, governments and counter-terrorism agencies should not target whole communities, but only those individuals prone to violent action and terrorism, and fight radical ideas with strong counter-arguments instead of bans. The spread of violent ideas is encapsulated in the notion of 'social epidemic', with reference to the impact that peer groups have in pressuring individuals towards violent radicalization. Also enriched by the romantic and counter-cultural appeal of al-Qaeda, the authors define the path from radicalization to violent action as characterised by "a culture of violence, in-group peer pressure, and an internal code of honour where violence can be a route to accruing status."¹¹² Clearly, radicalization presents itself as a complex jigsaw that will need further specific research to be solved. As of now, it should be noted that we have an out of focus picture of radicalization that needs to be brought into focus.

Keeping such four drivers for terrorism in mind, the paper will now explore the operational deployment of the British counter-terrorism strategy. In analysing the two main policing models employed, it will be noted that measures aimed at tackling the human capital and ideological grounds, addressing the socio-political grievances behind radicalization and terrorist combat doctrines, and engaging communities in both partnerships with the police and self-policing could prove vital in shaping effective, though not too intrusive, policies.

The Operational Deployment of CONTEST

In tracing the path followed by the ‘pursue’ and ‘prevent’ strands contained in the CONTEST strategy, two main overarching models could emerge as the most notable ways of performing such counter-terrorism activities on an operative level.

The High Policing/Hard Power ‘Latin Model’

The first strategy – exemplified by the ‘Latin model’ – has been fully and primarily embraced by the French government and focuses on harsh primary counter-terrorism measures based on preventative arrest and extradition¹¹³ and on a Foucauldian reaffirmation of state sovereignty.¹¹⁴ Such a ‘hard power’ exclusionary model, which is focused on low visible activities of intelligence, human and financial repression and disruption and the symbol of state power, could fit into Brodeur’s concept of ‘high policing’.¹¹⁵ It must be noted that in France, where such a system has been employed as the main counter-terrorism strategy, this “has been the source of fairly egregious violation of civil rights” and “risks creating dangerous social cleavages within French society through its excessive zeal and intrusiveness, particularly into the life of the French Arab community.”¹¹⁶ In deploying massive anti-terrorist legislation, surveillance and control¹¹⁷ the British government openly admitted that, in dealing with terrorist threats and extreme Islamism, “some of our counter-terrorist powers will be disproportionately experienced by people in the Muslim community.”¹¹⁸

This highlights the eternal dilemma between the protection of the public and the respect for civil rights.¹¹⁹ On this topic, Ignatieff notes the struggle of governments when dealing with terrorism, public protection and civil rights and states that:

The suppression of civil liberties, surveillance of individuals, targeted assassination, torture, and pre-emptive war put liberal commitments to dignity under such obvious strain, and the harms they entail are so serious, that, even if mandated by peremptory majority interest, they should only be spoken of in the language of evil.¹²⁰

In choosing the ‘lesser evil’ (the infringement of some civil liberties and rights) in order to prevent a terrorist attack and protect citizens, and due to the exceptional threat posed by such a ‘greater evil’, Ignatieff¹²¹ seems to condone some of the toughest ‘hard power’ counter-terrorism measures. However, as Dannreuther¹²² argues, the necessity of addressing the needs of reassurance and conviction of both the domestic audience and the audience of those who could sympathise with the ideologies of terrorism must be kept in serious consideration. Dannreuther’s approach can in some way constitute an embryonic structure that resembles the multi-pronged system employed by the British CONTEST and will lead to further discussion on the ‘prevent’ strand, which will be linked to the so-called ‘British model’. On the one hand, the domestic audience expects offensive and defensive strategies that could reduce the impact and likelihood of a terrorist attack. Measures aimed at the targeting of terrorists (‘pursue’ strategies), along with terrorism deterrence, containment and pre-emption (a blend of ‘pursue and ‘prevent’ strategies) should go hand in hand with an enhanced protection of infrastructure, homeland security and civil defences, in order to ‘protect’ and

‘prepare’¹²³ the nation against a terrorist attack. On the other hand, those communities who may sympathise or even support the terrorist cause need to be addressed and considered as well. In the words of Dannreuther:

A key objective of counter-terrorism must be to undermine this support by delegitimizing the tactics of the terrorist organization and showing that there are legitimate, non-criminal ways to resolve the root causes behind popular alienation and disaffection.¹²⁴

This fundamental issue of tackling the support for terrorism will be examined later, within the discussion about the ‘low policing’ strand of CONTEST and those measures that are classified under the name of ‘prevent’ and are aimed at “stop[ping] people becoming terrorists or supporting violent extremism.”¹²⁵

Tackling the Financing of Terrorism

Before moving on to an analysis of the ‘British Model’ based on preventative strategies, the particular approach aimed at disrupting financial support of terrorism should be briefly mentioned, as it could represent a particularly interesting measure, although problematic to put into practice. Falling within the ‘pursue’ strand, the fight against the financing of terrorism could be an effective strategy, mainly to combat global terrorism and impact on large terrorist organisations. As Levi¹²⁶ notes, the financing of terrorism could be aimed at supporting: 1) global persuasion and diffusion of extreme interpretations of the Islamic doctrine; 2) terrorist infrastructures, such as terrorist training and recruitment processes; and 3) the costs of a terrorist attack. However, Levi also argues that home-based attacks usually require low operational expenditure. Thus, when considering that the London bombings cost around one thousand pounds and the Madrid bombings a few thousand pounds,¹²⁷ it is clear that the financial support for this kind of terrorist attack is modest and, thus, extremely difficult to detect. It therefore emerges that tackling the financing of terrorism could be successful with regard to global organisations, but may be less effective in impacting on self-radicalised individuals who operate as small, local, secret, self-funded cells. The Home Office Treasury, the Home Office, the Serious Organised Crime Agency and the Foreign & Commonwealth Office¹²⁸ jointly launched *The Financial Challenge to Crime and Terrorism* strategy aimed at a sort of partnership between the public and private sector in fighting the financial support of terrorism. In particular, the British strategy focuses on preventing funds being raised, disrupting the financing of core terrorist groups and affiliated cells, as well as the funding of radicalization.¹²⁹

If the aim of British counter-terrorism is to eradicate Islamic terrorism at the grassroots level, then the main focus should be on tackling the funding of radicalization. Thus, depriving terrorist organisations of human resources would achieve a huge impact on the overall fight against terrorism. As will be noted later, cutting human and ideological support can be a very effective way to combat terrorism. Thus, as well as tackling the socio-political causes of radicalization, disrupting the structures and networks behind the funding of radicalization could be an interesting strategy. However, this might also pass through the targeting of the funding of those important Islamic socio-religious centres (i.e. mosques) that

could act as radicalization incubators and encourage violence. Such a measure “would provoke a serious conflict with some Islamic countries (and a variety of religious ‘extremist’ groups within the West) and is far beyond current political doctrine.”¹³⁰ Despite sounding very intriguing, the employment of financial disruption strategies in order to increase the success of anti-radicalization measures should be treated very carefully. Without ruling out the possibility of targeting centres that may act as radicalization incubators – while still keeping in mind that radicalizing ideologies are mostly spread through virtual, elusive systems on global levels – such a measure needs to be well-thought-out and deployed in an invisible way, in order not to achieve likely adverse consequences. Namely, a further indiscriminate targeting of Muslim communities’ cultural and religious values and symbols would cause more strained relations between Muslims and non-Muslims. Possibly, this is the most dramatic effect that high-policing counter-terrorism strategies could achieve.

As will be examined in the next section, in order to increase the success of counter-terrorism, policies aimed at lowering the sense of isolation, discrimination and targeting of Muslims and enhancing the integration of Muslim communities within British society, as well as strategies that directly impact terrorist ideologies, prove to be invaluable.

The Low Policing/Soft Power ‘British Model’

Preventative measures constitute the core of the second counter-terrorism strategy – exemplified by the ‘British model’. This model aims to employ community-based counter-terrorism approaches to impact Muslim communities and improve communications, marginalize extremists and favour social integration.¹³¹ Such a counter-terrorism system can be considered a kind of ‘low policing’¹³² or a ‘soft power’ inclusionary model. Given the fact that most terrorist organizations aim principally at disrupting the national socio-political infrastructures and, subsequently – by exploiting governmental responses based on repressive measures – at further feeding terrorist ideologies and activities,¹³³ such an inclusionary model undermines the rhetorical ground on which terrorist organizations rely. Furthermore, the British model utilises soft power techniques through “processes of persuasion, negotiation, and agenda setting”¹³⁴ and the employment of community policing, and assumes that communities can help to provide useful information and further intelligence goals. However, as Innes¹³⁵ argues, soft policing as a persuasive form of social control could be limited by various inhibitors such as the fact that by empowering some communities the police should be more receptive to such communities’ demands and the need to “negotiate solutions to problems rather than enforce them.”¹³⁶ Also, preventative measures are not always community-based or employed through soft approaches, thus combining low policing with high policing.

As argued at the beginning of the paper, the infrastructure of post-modern societies is built upon risk management, social insecurities and global threats. Preventative strategies seem to fit perfectly within the socio-political framework explored at the beginning of the paper and could possibly promote the targeting and discrimination of a whole population. For example, Pantazis and Pemberton¹³⁷ state that the ‘terror of prevention’ is a “day-to-day harassment of Muslims through stop and search to high-profile police raid [that] has had a corrosive effect on the relations between Muslim communities and the police”¹³⁸ and can

both further radicalization and hamper those counter-terrorism strategies that ground on a flow of information between the police and Muslim communities. Stop and search figures clearly show that all-catching preventative measures might have targeted whole ethnic communities. In England and Wales, police officers carried out 302% more stop and search operations against Asians in 2002-2003 than in 2001-2002.¹³⁹ Similarly, British Transport Police's figures show that, after the London bombings, in the period of time from 7th July 2005 to 10th August 2005, Asians were five times more likely to be stopped and searched than whites.¹⁴⁰ Recently, Birmingham has experienced the first attempt to monitor and control a whole suspect population. More than 200 CCTV (Closed Circuit Television) were deployed in two neighbourhoods of the city, predominantly inhabited by Asians.¹⁴¹ Such a violation of civil and moral rights clearly obstructs the promotion of legitimacy and trust in policing activities, and is in line with a long history of troubled relations between ethnic minorities and law enforcement agencies¹⁴² since the end of the 'golden age'.¹⁴³ Arguably, such Orwellian dispositions that governments have displayed in developing Big Brother's oriented and crime-preventative measures impact on augmenting fears of crime¹⁴⁴ by "alerting citizens to risk and scattering the world with visible reminders of the threat of crime."¹⁴⁵ The rationale of the CONTEST 'Prevent' strand is understandable however it needs to be reformed. As Bartlett and Birdwell¹⁴⁶ argue, preventative measures under CONTEST have been hampered by various ethical and practical problems. Preventative approaches are considered to have targeted the wrong people, alienated Muslims, furthered intercommunity tensions and jeopardized some initiatives that could promote community cohesion. The authors propose a new preventative approach that specifically focuses on those individuals who might be connected with violence and crime and engages non-violent radical ideas, not through a repressive culture grounded on bans but through a liberal and open culture that proposes strong counter-arguments to demolish radical ideas and propaganda.

Tackling the Social-Political and Ideological Grounds for Terrorism

The Home Office, in its *Preventing Violent Extremism: A Strategy for Delivery*,¹⁴⁷ in dealing with the grievances that cause discontent and may fuel violent extremism, states that the UK is "already carrying out programmes domestically and internationally to address the underlying socio-economic factors that cause poverty and inequality" and "addressing perceived grievances through wider policies to promote equality and tackle racism and bullying."¹⁴⁸ This demonstrates that the UK, at least theoretically, seems to be deploying programmes aimed at combating the fuelling of the socio-political causes behind radicalization. In addition, CONTEST¹⁴⁹ is particularly concerned with addressing grievances that may be exploited or created to justify terrorism or nurture radicalization. Such grievances include, for example, discrimination, racism, inequalities, under-employment, and other socio-economic factors. Furthermore, the Home Office notes that "actions taken in support of the *Pursue* agenda can be exploited by apologists for violence and indirectly facilitate radicalisation"¹⁵⁰ (emphasis in original) This, in particular, poses the problem of conjugating strategies aimed at both pursuing and preventing terrorism.¹⁵¹

Without downplaying the socio-political and ideological importance of advancing measures that try to stop terrorist attacks, it must be noted that such approaches have notable

drawbacks. In particular, as noted before, the fact that some cells operate on a local and secret basis and are constituted of self-funded, self-radicalized individuals, usually with no prior criminal history, combined with the relatively modest cost of bombings, makes it difficult for any counter-terrorism intelligence to detect suspicious activities and potential terrorist plots. Innes and Thiel's argument should be added to this stance, as it confirms the 'problem of quantity', in terms of potential 'candidate terrorists' that the British counter-terrorism must face and the important shift towards prevention that is therefore required. In fact, Innes and Thiel¹⁵² note that the current central issue is how to handle multiple potential threats and deal with global ideologies as potentially embraced by Muslims in general, and not with well-trained Islamic 'soldiers' who openly embrace the terrorist combat doctrine. Furthermore, Innes and Thiel also cast light on a recurring theme of this paper, namely the possible criminalisation of a whole population that could be seen as being composed of 'potential suspects'.

Against this background, the impact that policies aimed at addressing those grievances upon which terrorist ideologies and doctrine are grounded is prominent and, fortunately, partly recognised by the British government as well. Such attitude should also follow De Vries's remark that counter-terrorism preventative strategies must be aimed at cutting any source of public support and radicalization within Muslim communities.¹⁵³ As noted before, working on the human capital that terrorism requires to sustain its network and carry out its activities should be a top priority. In fact, such an approach is meant to primarily focus on the causes (ideologies and factors driving terrorism), instead of concerning itself only with the symptoms (terrorist activities), and improve the chances of reducing the proliferation of terrorist doctrines.

In line with the socio-political framework of risk societies proposed in the first part of this paper, it is first necessary that governmental and social dispositions towards the problem of terrorism are taken away from the business of politics and rhetoric. Smelser interestingly argues that counter-terrorism policing "is conceptualized as integral to the rhetorical battle of symbols"¹⁵⁴ and symbolically props up the state legitimacy so as to win the battle for the public and political trust and faith.¹⁵⁵ The fight against terrorism cannot be a pretext for indiscriminately infringing individuals' rights in order to pursue the common good. There is an already existing feeling that the "war against terror" has been extremely profitable for many people."¹⁵⁶ Also, there seems to be governmental dispositions towards terrorism grounded on the display of symbolic and rhetoric toughness, since, in the words of Lambert, "politicians and counterterrorism officials are certainly more comfortable when they can appear in the media being tough on terrorism."¹⁵⁷ Thus, it is time that Western governments started placing counter-terrorism activities and political attitudes towards terrorism in a less shadowy area, in order to write off the sensation of over-discrimination and undue targeting of particular communities. As argued by De Vries¹⁵⁸ and Wilkinson,¹⁵⁹ counter-terrorism should focus on some key points grounded on democracy and human rights, such as: the key role of the rule of law; the refusal of any kind of repression; the protection of human rights; the enhancement of systems of democratic accountability; and control and limit over special powers of law enforcement agencies.

Without denying that the security of a nation should be placed ahead of any individual right, two considerations could emerge. First, the security of a nation is also a result of

individuals' law-abiding attitudes. The shaping of these attitudes through removal of socio-political grounds for extreme violence is a first step towards the securitization of a whole country. Second, a concrete risk must be present, if individual liberties have to be limited. By comparing al-Qaeda to a 'ticking bomb' and noting the increasing array of emergency measures adopted to fight terrorism, Zedner¹⁶⁰ proposes some requirements that should exist for governments to introduce intrusive, emergency measures. Such requirements are: a real, imminent and grave threat; firm evidence against one or more individuals; and the absence of less intrusive, more efficient, alternative measures.

Community Policing: Integration and De-Radicalisation Goals

In promoting integration and communication with Muslim communities, the employment of community policing could be extremely important, as this could represent an effective middle way between policing and social work. In dealing with ethnic minorities, the attempt of the Chicago Alternative Policing Strategy (CAPS) showed some promising results.¹⁶¹ In particular, the communities most in need of community policing activities displayed high involvement, which promises well for the future. As Innes¹⁶² notes, community policing strategies could achieve improved dialogue with communities and the reinforcement of informal social control. Furthermore, community policing can promote both reassurance and acceptance of the role of the police, thus lowering the tensions and counter-culture strands that may exist between problematic communities and the law enforcement agency. Security is posed in an acceptable and visible space and is performed by both the actors involved: the police, as the institutional representative, and the community, as the societal representative. In line with the low policing strand of CONTEST mentioned before, community policing activities could promote better dialogue; isolate extremists; and further social integration of Muslim within the wider society.

Similarly, the institution of the Muslim Contact Unit (MCU) displays a concrete, though particular, example of a community-based counterterrorism strategy employed within Muslim communities. The MCU, a small specialist police unit established in 2002 within the Special Branch of the Metropolitan Police and headed by Robert Lambert, utilizes values, practices and working methods typical of community-policing and inclusionary partnerships in the context of a Special Branch.¹⁶³ In pulling together aspects of high policing and low policing and working towards the de-radicalization of Muslims both at risk of radicalization or already radicalized,¹⁶⁴ the MCU empowered a small number of Salafi and Islamist groups in order to perform a blend of community and counter-terrorism work and influence those Muslims more vulnerable to the al-Qaeda propaganda.¹⁶⁵ However, from Lambert's perspective, empowering Muslims not only poses the problem of socio-political suspicion but, when coupled with the prospect of employing them as insiders in performing counter-terrorism (both in preventing vulnerable individuals from radicalization and in driving radicalized people towards milder stances), could generate possible negative consequences within both Muslim communities and the mainstream society. Thus, such a strategy should not be completely ruled out, but needs refinement and a well-thought-out deployment in order to achieve the desired effect (i.e. reduction of radicalization) and avoid pitfalls.

However, driven by the notion of policing by consent and engaging with communities a partnership such as the one proposed by MCU can surely serve the purpose of building confidence and trust in Muslim communities and reassurance that Muslims are not a suspect population.¹⁶⁶ In their work, Bartlett, Birdwell and King¹⁶⁷ suggest that local de-radicalization should be enforced through partnership with both non-violent radicals and non-religious leaders (such as teachers, social workers and sport caches) who know the community and have a street credibility that can dissuade Muslims from violent radical ideas. Interviewed by Jackson, Lambert brilliantly advocates for partnership by arguing that:

When torture is replaced by trust building you have the basis of a solid partnership that can reduce the impact of al-Qaida propaganda in the communities where it seeks recruits and supporters. It has also the potential to address the real root causes of terrorism and provide viable alternatives for young people that are drawn towards it.¹⁶⁸

Another interesting strategy is the devolution of Muslims' policing to Muslim families and social networks. As Lowe and Innes¹⁶⁹ argue, by strengthening networks of informal social control, Muslim communities could operate a sort of self-policing. However, the authors argue that self-policing has become less effective, since younger individuals have loosened their connections with social networks and the culture of first generation immigrants' countries. Mixed with racial or religious discrimination, a loss of informal social control could lead young Muslims to a lack of social identity. This clearly leads to the necessity of furthering the integration and identity construction of Muslims living within Western societies.

Partnerships with communities and the promotion of self-policing could be obstructed by Muslim communities themselves. Sagar¹⁷⁰ challenges assumptions which argue that, most of the time Muslims do not possess information about terrorist ideologies, aims and plans.¹⁷¹ As Bartlett, Birdwell and King¹⁷² note, radicals and community leaders usually have a clear knowledge of what happens within the community (this being a sort of internal intelligence) and argue that Muslim communities may produce a strong moral infrastructure of tacit support or sympathy towards violence that hampers the efforts of those engaged in the diffusion of moderate ideas and partnership with policing bodies. Sagar¹⁷³ openly claims that Muslim communities could provide terrorist groups with tacit support. This is not only logistical support (accommodation, funds, transport, privileged information about potential targets, expertise in weapons and firearms, etc.), but is also support "conveyed through shared ideas and values that have the effect of turning a blind eye to those engaged in the organization and delivery of violence."¹⁷⁴ This attitude is not so rare within tight communities. As discovered by Horowitz¹⁷⁵ in a study conducted within a Chicago Chicano community, "non-gang community residents, but not outsiders, manage to co-exist successfully with violent gangs."¹⁷⁶ From Horowitz' prospective, violence is in some way negotiated and, as long as it is kept out of the community and directed towards outsiders, it can be tolerated and placed within a cultural framework of cohesion and pride that allows community members to passively support it. Although partnerships with and empowerment of Muslim communities are problematic per se, such measures are just part of an overall strategy aimed at tackling the

ideological grounds for terrorism, integrating Muslims within the Western social fabric and reducing the burden of social stigma and exclusion that fall on Muslims' shoulders.

Negotiating Complexities: Muslim Communities and Identities in the West

The idea of an Islamic bond of faith that could provide unconditional solidarity and support clearly calls into question the identity of Muslims as a global community and the values on which Western and Islamic societies are grounded. As Hellyer¹⁷⁷ notes, Muslim political identities as grounded on religion are in clear contrast with European secularism. This is particularly evident in countries such as France, where tension over Islamic symbols (for example, *burqa*-style veils) has been a longstanding issue.¹⁷⁸ Furthermore, in the process of Muslim integration, European countries have experienced their Western multiculturalism stretching towards an excessive liberalism and a tension between privacy rights and national security.¹⁷⁹ As an example of European multiculturalism, the UK has a long-standing tradition as a guest-country for religious movements and, especially in the 1990s, gave asylum to Islamic radical preachers and activists who arrived "fresh from the politically repressive societies of the Muslim world."¹⁸⁰ However, such a policy of openness must now deal with its unintended consequences. The massive immigration of Muslims within the UK and European borders, as an unplanned result of guest-worker exchanges after World War II, has caused the isolation of Muslim communities from mainstream society.¹⁸¹ As highlighted by the Brixton riots and the Rushdie protests, multiculturalism has been contested in its incapacity to both grant minorities political equality in relation to the state,¹⁸² and address socio-economic marginalization. As Brighton argues, racial segregation has molded "a multi-ethnic Britain composed of 'communities' without a 'meta-community' [which should be laden with values and identities in order to provide a shared communal framework] to tie them together."¹⁸³

Although the concept of '*ummah*' works as a bonding and solidarity tool, Muslims in Europe and in the UK do not constitute a monolithic group. Roy¹⁸⁴ brilliantly illustrates the case by arguing that Muslims in the West have usually paid lip service to the '*ummah*' idea, but remain committed to communities in a Western manner on a daily basis. The authors grounds his arguments on a two-leveled community: the universal, global and ideal community of all Muslims as based on the notion of '*ummah*'; and the local or national congregations of Muslims framed within the socio-legal structure of society. Islam surely is a 'badge of identity' for European and British Muslims,¹⁸⁵ but studies¹⁸⁶ show that Muslims' religious identities go hand in hand with their national identities. Arguably, most Muslims cling to multiple identities. Clearly, the daily negotiation of identity and sense of community intersect with the ontological complexities featuring the conceptual understanding of what a Muslim is expected to be. One could argue that Muslims (particularly in the case of older generations) might choose to create micro-communities as a way of reiterating their cultural values. This would be bolstered by the fact that immigration generally features a tendency shared by migrants to reproduce their socio-cultural patterns in the new setting, in order to preserve their identities and sense of nationhood.¹⁸⁷ Such a cultural and spatial retreat would be triggered and promoted by the current Western "penal discourse about immigrant crime [which] can be seen as a symbolic protection of the national from the threatening foreign

element.”¹⁸⁸ In the case of Muslims, this isolationist process could also be grounded on and further their sense of ‘*ummah*’ – a global Islamic community, which expands the traditional notion of community as a “cluster of values: solidarity, reciprocity, mutuality, connection, care, sharing.”¹⁸⁹ However, such an argument is overly-simplistic and does not account for the complexities and pluralities of Muslim communities. Although the ‘*ummah*’ is a powerful tool both in terms of cultural and identity reassurance and for the interests of terrorist propaganda, some Muslims are aware of differences and diversity within the global Muslim community and do not shape their daily experiences and cultural negotiations on the ‘*ummah*’.¹⁹⁰ This can be particularly true for those many second and third generation European and British Muslims who have been ‘Westernized’ and might be struggling between their multiple identities and cultural influences.

According to Hellyer,¹⁹¹ second and third generation British Muslims have experienced an aggravated sense of isolation and alienation. In fact, the author claims that the contrasting requirements set by family sub-cultures and mainstream values, the lack of indigenous religious authorities, and socio-political Islamophobic dispositions have deepened the conditions of social exclusion and victim-hood of Muslims. This further problematizes the already difficult conditions of ethnic minority populations who usually have to face hard living conditions – or, as Young¹⁹² would say, they have to cope with both misrecognition and relative deprivation – and are victim of under-protection and over-control.¹⁹³ The global picture of Muslim identities and communities is a complex one and calls into examination the various characteristics and requirements of ethnically and culturally different sets of individuals. It is clear that Western governments must endeavour to address those social, political and cultural issues that hamper the full integration of Muslims and further alienation, isolation and discrimination, which are potential factors for embitterment and radicalization and must be tackled by effective social policies and counter-terrorism strategies also aimed at reducing the proliferation of extreme and terrorist ideologies.

The Challenging Path Towards Social Inclusion

As noted throughout this paper, in dealing with Muslim communities and the threat posed by Islamic terrorism, the UK should first trace a path aimed at removing the ideological grounds for extreme violence. In recognising the differences in terms of history, tradition, legal and political systems and cultural values between European and Islamic countries, the UK is also required to bridge this large gap. Bridging such a gap would help show a more open and welcoming stance towards the social inclusion of Muslims within British society at the political, economic and social level. This could be effective in addressing the grievances currently faced by (British) Muslims. However, the UK should not override its solid European and Western roots. In particular, such roots are reminders that maintaining the basic assumption set by the social contract¹⁹⁴ in particular, the state’s authority over the governance of law and social order on behalf of its citizens – as the common ground upon which Western democracies are based is fundamental. In this sense, the requirements of some British Muslim leaders for legal duality and the application of *shari’ah* (Islamic law) in private law,¹⁹⁵ or in the resolution of any dispute, seems to clash with the preservation of Western identities and socio-political cohesion. Thus, it emerges that the path towards

integration, recognition and respect for Muslim minorities will be extremely challenging. Along with the issues mentioned, the outcomes of different Western integration policies have proved to be, at times, paradoxical. For example, as Joppke notes, in recognising the limit of the British integration policies:

Considering that, in the dreaded ‘Jacobin state’ across the Channel, which did much less on the ‘respect and recognition’ front and instead prescribed one-size-fits-all *citoyenneté* on its Muslim minority, the non-Muslim majority *and* the Muslim minority held equally benign views of one another, one might take this as a failure of British multiculturalism and a success of French Republicanism.¹⁹⁶ (Emphasis in original)

In this sense, the British effort to further the integration of Muslims within mainstream society should both recognise its limits¹⁹⁷ and show openness towards the introduction of new policies. For example, Angenendt¹⁹⁸ proposes four different policies that could advance the integration of Muslims within European countries. Although state neutrality, legal pluralism and group-based autonomy for national or regional minorities could be not easily feasible, the idea of granting special rights to minority groups as a way to recognize their cultural specificity seem to be an interesting one. At least, it shows that something could be done in order to move forward from the status quo. However, along with such approaches, it would also be suggested that Muslims are fully educated about those Western values on which European democracies are grounded, and always be reminded of the need to conform to such values, as a precondition for complete and mutual social integration. Such a process could be more easily carried out with second and third generation Muslims, although it must be kept in mind that family sub-cultures, as instilled by first generation Muslims, could contrast with the values set by the mainstream society and aggravate the social exclusion experienced by second/third generation Muslims.¹⁹⁹ In this sense, a global approach that is performed by various social and institutional actors and focused on mutual understandings of the different historical, social and political frameworks on which Western and Islamic societies work could be implemented and may have some chance of success.

Such a global approach should take into consideration the inevitable expansion of Muslim communities or ‘Islamization’ of Europe. As Savage²⁰⁰ notes, Muslims have a birth rate three times higher than non-Muslims and have reinforced a demographic panic spreading in Western societies. Sendagorta,²⁰¹ borrowing Yassin’s concept of ‘alternation of civilizations’,²⁰² takes this matter to an extreme by arguing that “the vast difference in the birth rate is thus interpreted as heralding a new cycle in history, one in which Europe’s faltering civilization gives way to a flourishing young Islamic civilization.”²⁰³ The picture may not be so gloomy, but, as Taspinar²⁰⁴ argues, such a fast growth will surely enable Muslims to have important political weight within European countries. Acknowledging the inevitability of such a global and globalizing process should not be seen as a state failure or the passive acceptance of the Islamization of the West. On the contrary, awareness of the changes in our daily lives and realities would allow governments to mold what Taspinar²⁰⁵ defines as a moderate Euro-Islam driven by a sound political integration of European Muslims. Hopefully, integration will be the new mantra that replaces the word terrorism in socio-political discourses concerning Muslims. The impact that current counter-terrorism

strategies can have on Muslims are not just restricted to the fight against terrorism. In combining counter-terrorism goals with the reduction of Muslim alienation, those strategies that aim at fighting terrorist and radicalising ideologies and addressing those socio-political grievances on which Muslim embitterment is based could prove fundamental. Also, those soft approaches that seek a partnership between the law enforcement agency and Muslims could pave the way for the empowerment of Muslim communities, thus fighting social stigma and exclusion, giving voice to communities and promoting equality within difference. In such a way, the strengthening of networks of informal social control and the promotion of Muslims' self-policing could find a more stable dimension within a social fabric which would not be impregnated with resentment, extremism and a culture of opposition, which all work towards the fueling of radicalization and the clash between Muslim communities and mainstream society.

Conclusion

This paper has outlined the manifold issues that the UK, as a European country, has to face in dealing with the threat posed by Islamic terrorism. As noted, the socio-political framework that features post-modern societies is grounded on a pervasive culture of risk. Along with the global, multiform and dynamic elements that feature new terrorist organisations, such as al-Qaeda, such a culture of risk has shaped governmental and social dispositions that usually overemphasise the threat posed by terrorist attacks and over-criminalise Muslims, who experience social, political and cultural discrimination and exclusion and, as victims of both Islamophobia and the Western penal culture, are considered as suspects or potential terrorists. The UK has developed a multi-pronged counter-terrorism strategy that aims at tackling different causes and symptoms of terrorism. Among the factors driving international terrorism, it must be noted that ideology, technology and radicalisation are three interconnected elements that could give birth to new home-based terrorists. Thus, the employment of soft approaches aimed at combating and preventing radicalisation should be given priority over 'hard power' approaches, which could further the isolation, embitterment and targeting of Muslims and, in turn, play into the hands of terrorists and recruiters. In impacting on the human capital needed by terrorist organisations, tackling the financing of terrorism and the funding of radicalization could be considered, but must be handled very carefully.

The preventative approach as a whole could target whole communities, however those well-conceived, visible, 'soft power' strategies aimed at fighting terrorism at the grassroots level should be given priority. Such strategies need to focus on the socio-political grievances experienced by socially excluded and embittered Muslims and the rhetorical, symbolical and ideological ground on which terrorism is based. If their intrinsic problems were to be fixed, partnership with and empowerment of Muslim communities, as well as the strengthening of networks of informal social control, could prove decisive in contrasting both radicalization and social exclusion and facilitating the integration of Muslims within the social fabric. Awareness of Muslim plural identities and communities is fundamental in understanding the various audiences to which governmental policies and policing strategies will have to refer to. A mutual understanding of the different values built in Western and Islamic identities would

help tackle the problems involved in integrating Muslims within Western societies. In conclusion, the employment of low policing strategies and the drafting of governmental policies aimed at tackling terrorism human capital and addressing the socio-political and ideological issues behind radicalisation, adherence and support to terrorist combat doctrine could be extremely helpful, but needs to go hand in hand with a well-thought-out parallel work that empowers communities, grasps the complexities of Muslim identities, and furthers both the mutual acceptance of diversity in terms of tradition, religion, ideologies and so on and the coexistence of Islamic values with Western ones within Western societies.

NOTES

¹ Erik Bleich, 'Muslims and the State in the Post-9/11 West: Introduction', *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*, Vol. 35, No. 3, 2009, pp. 353-360.

² Erik Bleich, 'State Responses to "Muslim" Violence: A Comparison of Six West European Countries', *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*, Vol. 35, No. 3, 2009, pp. 361-379.

³ Stanley Cohen, *Folk Devils and Moral Panics*, London: Routledge, 2002.

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- ²⁰² Abdessalam Yassin, *Islamiser la modernité (Islamizing Modernity)*, Casablanca: Al Ofok, 1998.
- ²⁰³ Sendagorta, 'Jihad in Europe', *op. cit.*, p. 70.
- ²⁰⁴ Omer Taspinar, 'Europe's Muslim Streets', *Foreign Policy*, No. 135, 2003, pp. 76-77.
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