The Broadening Remit of UK Counter-Terrorism - from Terrorism to 'Radicalization' to 'Extremism': C-T Imperative or Loss of Focus?

Introduction

This article argues that the discourses of radicalization and, more lately, of extremism have served to confuse the remit of counter-terrorism. Indeed, it appears that 'terrorism', 'radicalization' and 'extremism' have increasingly become merged into a single discursive framework, one consequence of which has been to blur the important distinction between 'extremism' *of thought* and 'extremism' *of method*, and which has therefore arguably seen counter-terrorism lose its focus in the UK. This seems to be particularly evident in the C-T policy concern with 'extremist' but *non-violent* ideology that is nevertheless deemed to be 'conducive' to terrorism.[1] Such a notion of non-violent ideology as itself having some kind of intrinsic link to terrorism would to most seasoned terrorism scholars be something of a paradox – for terrorism is conventionally understood as ineluctably about violence or the threat of violence, and if a non-violent ideology is culpable for terrorism in some way then it ceases to become non-violent.

The broadening of the concern of counter-terrorism in recent years has taken place in the context of a radical shift in the structure of terrorism from the so-called 'traditional' hierarchical or centralised type to the more predominant decentralised and horizontal form (epitomised through the contemporary incarnation of the 'Al Qaeda' threat). This has presented a fundamental challenge for counter-terrorism - not least in relation to where the parameters of C-T should lie in order to anticipate at the earliest possible stage all potential terrorist threats and individual trajectories towards terrorism. It is against this decentralised, diffuse and amorphous backdrop that there is a governmental concern with the apparent propensity of certain non-violent ideologies or organisations to attract those *who then go on to commit or plan acts of terrorism*.[2] This, and the belief that rejection of 'the principles of participation and cohesion' is 'associated with an increased willingness to use violence', appear to underpin the characterisation of such ideology as itself intrinsically linked to terrorism.[3]

To reiterate, however, a *non-violent* ideology cannot itself be culpable for this but rather it is those who use, encourage or endorse the *method* of terrorism to pursue it. In other words if there are those who 'deliberately [avoid]… open support for violence but knowingly

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[1] 'Contest: The United Kingdom's Strategy for Countering Terrorism', July 2011, p. 12, available at: http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/publications/counter-terrorism/counter-terrorism-strategy/strategy-contest?view=Binary (accessed April 27th 2014).

[2] UK Prevent Strategy, 2011, p. 24, available at: http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/publications/counter-terrorism/prevent/prevent-strategy/ (accessed April 27th 2014); 'Contest: The United Kingdom's Strategy for Countering Terrorism', July 2011, p. 62, available at: http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/publications/counter-terrorism/counter-terrorism-strategy/strategy-contest?view=Binary (accessed April 27th 2014).

[3] Ibid. p. 20.

[create]… an environment in which people can be drawn into terrorism itself'[4] then it is they who are, surreptitiously or otherwise, culpable, rather than any non-violent doctrine. The danger of marking out certain non-violent ideologies as linked to terrorism, however undemocratic these doctrines may be, is that it potentially alienates large sections of the population who might abhor the terrorist methods of Al Qaeda and ISIS, and yet who are, by implication, seen as part of the 'terrorist problem', and who might otherwise be important and effective allies in countering what C-T should really be concerned with: *countering terrorism*. And one should be clear – *this does not mean legitimising in any way the undemocratic ideology espoused by those who one is engaging with in order to prevent acts of terrorism*.

Nor should the argument presented here be mistaken in any way as diminishing the importance of ideologies and narratives of *terrorist violence* which *is* of vital concern to counter-terrorism (such as those espoused by Al Qaeda and ISIS), or the imperative of scrutinising ideologies in general (including non-violent ones) in order to determine the doctrinal parameters of terrorist targeting.[5] The concern here, however, is that counter-terrorism, it seems, is increasingly becoming *counter-ideological* alongside, and as an outcome of, the convergence of the policy discourses on terrorism and extremism.[6] And while the emphasis on 'radicalization' (as a focus of C-T) has 'led to a policy focus on 'radicalization studies' and an approach to investment and funding that has helped to shape and determine research agendas accordingly',[7] the concern is that a similar research momentum will follow the adoption of (non-violent) 'extremism' as a central theme in counter-terrorism discourse.

The Discourses of 'Radicalization' and 'Extremism'

Prior to the recent emphasis on 'extremism' within C-T discourse 'radicalization' was adopted from around the mid-2000s as a focus for the UK's counter-terrorism response, and from this has emerged a voluminous policymaking and academic discourse around the concept. Within this discourse, while it has generally been agreed that radicalization is a *process*, and although it seems reasonable to suggest that the concept emerged to describe the threat emanating from those claiming to be acting on behalf of Islam, it has been almost impossible to agree *who ultimately constitutes the radicalized*.[8] Much of this confusion has

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[4] Op. cit. 'Contest: The United Kingdom's Strategy for Countering Terrorism', p. 12 (note 1).

[5] See, for example, Drake, C., *Terrorists' Target Selection*, Macmillan Press, 1998.

[6] For the convergence of these policy discourses see the Contest and Prevent strategies (notes 1 and 2); and 'Tackling extremism in the UK', Report from the Prime Minister's Task Force on Tackling Radicalization and Extremism', December 2013, available at:
https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/263181/ETF_FINAL.pdf
(accessed April 21st 2014); and Home Office, 'Challenge online terrorism and extremism', April 2011, available at: https://www.gov.uk/government/news/challenge-online-terrorism-and-extremism (accessed April 21st 2014).

[7] Richards, A., 'The problem with 'radicalization', the remit of 'Prevent', and the need to refocus on *terrorism* in the UK', *International Affairs*, January, 2011, p 143.

[8] Have the 'radicalized', for example, included those who support the Taleban abroad but disapprove of violence in the UK, or those who sympathise with the causes espoused by terrorists but who deplore their methods? Have

lain in the extent that what one understands as the process of 'radicalization' should include trajectories into non-violent but 'extremist' ideology and, indeed, the Prevent strategy prior to 2011 was unclear on this. The revised Prevent version of 2011, however, has addressed this lack of clarity and is unequivocal in its emphasis on ideology itself as a cause for concern even where it is acknowledged that such doctrine is in and of itself *non-violent*. There is a clear concern with 'extremist' but non-violent ideas that are said to be 'conducive' to terrorism as a focus for a counter-terrorism response - that 'preventing terrorism will mean challenging extremist (and non-violent) ideas that are also part of a terrorist ideology'.[9] The strategy expresses its particular unease that a 'significant percentage of people who engage in terrorism have previously been associated with [non-violent] extremist groups'.[10]

The 2011 version of Contest also emphasises that '[g]reater effort will be focused on responding to the ideological challenge and the threat from those who promote it'[11] and goes on to argue that:

> 'We believe that Prevent work to date has not clearly recognised the way in which some terrorist ideologies draw on and make use of extremist ideas which are espoused and circulated by apparently non-violent organisations, very often operating within the law… preventing radicalization must mean challenging extremist ideas that are conducive to terrorism and also part of a terrorist narrative.'[12]

Conventional academic wisdom within terrorism studies, however, *views terrorism as ineluctably about violence or the threat of violence* and so the idea of a *non-violent* ideology that is conducive to terrorism would seem to be something of a contradiction. Hence, for a belief system itself to be conducive to terrorism it must have at least some element of doctrinal endorsement or justification for it, in which case one cannot then refer to it as non-violent.

A significant development that has clearly had implications for the remit of C-T response has been the *changing structure of terrorism* - from so-called 'traditional' and relatively centralised forms (such as that of the IRA and ETA) to decentralised and horizontal forms where the threat is more amorphous, and one manifestation of this is the apparent greater propensity for lower level 'small group' and 'lone wolf' terrorism.[13] The absence of clear organisational boundaries around those that might be willing to resort to violence poses a serious challenge: where along the road of transition from peaceful citizen to terrorist does the state intervene in the absence of the organisational threshold of joining a terrorist group?

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they, for instance, included those who think that Islam is incompatible with democracy, or who peacefully advocate the application of Shari'a law in the UK, or who support the idea of an Islamic caliphate?

[9] UK Prevent Strategy, 2011, p. 6 (note 2). Extremism is defined in the Prevent document as 'vocal or active opposition to fundamental British values, including democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty and mutual respect and tolerance of different faiths and beliefs.'

[10] Op. cit. Contest, 2011, pp. 61-2 (note 1).

[11] Ibid. p. 6.

[12] Ibid. p. 12.

[13] This is certainly not to suggest that the more centralised structure type has disappeared, but that the predominant form of contemporary terrorism represents a more decentralised and horizontal threat.

Thus, in this context, and where it is generally believed that there is no one pathway to terrorism, UK counter-terrorism has been concerned with capturing all such trajectories at the earliest possible stage, however varied or embryonic they might be.

While those joining (or suspected of joining) the IRA provided at least the semblance of a tangible threshold upon which to henceforth and unequivocally focus counter-terrorist efforts, little is known about the trajectories of individuals or groups of friends who may have very intimately and privately decided to engage in violence. Hence, not only (in the context of the decentralised nature of the threat) has C-T sought to intervene in the potential pathways towards terrorism much earlier in a *linear* way, prompting the Institute for Policy Research and Development to argue that if there is no 'typical pathway to violent extremism' then the 'scope of risk-assessment is rendered potentially unlimited' for British Muslims'[14], but its remit has also become much *wider* in that it is concerned with extremist but non-violent ideology *as well as* the terrorist methods that might be used or endorsed to pursue it.[15]

The adoption of 'extremism' as a concept is not just due to this wider concern with non-violent doctrine. While 'radicalization' evolved to primarily refer to Islamic 'extremism' and terrorism, the use of 'extremism' in general has allowed for the inclusion of *all extremisms* as of concern to public safety and security, and in particular the addition of what has been called 'the far right' or 'right-wing extremism'. It is perhaps not surprising then, with the increasing concern over the latter (and the related notions of reciprocal extremism or 'cumulative extremism'[16]), along with the emphasis on certain non-violent but *extremist* ideologies as part of the focus of counter-terrorism, that a broader discourse of extremism is fast emerging[17] and that, further, the discourses of terrorism and radicalization have become increasingly merged with it.[18]

Ideology and Terrorism

Terrorism has often been classified according to the ideology or belief system of its perpetrators – hence nationalist/separatist terrorism, left-wing terrorism, right-wing terrorism, religious terrorism, single issue terrorism and so on. Indeed, this classification has often been

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[14] Institute for Policy Research and Development, cited in Communities and Local Government Select Committee, 'Preventing violent extremism', 30 March 2010, p. 9, available at: http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm200910/cmselect/cmcomloc/65/65.pdf (accessed November 19th 2013) .

[15] For a review of the literature on the causes of radicalization (including at the micro, meso and macro levels) see: Schmid, A., Radicalization, De-Radicalization, Counter-Radicalization: A Conceptual Discussion and Literature Review, International Centre for Counter-Terrorism – the Hague, March 2013, available at: http://www.icct.nl/download/file/ICCT-Schmid-Radicalization-De-Radicalization-Counter-Radicalization-March-2013.pdf (accessed April 16th 2014).

[16] See, for example, Busher, J., and Macklin, G., (2014) 'Interpreting "cumulative extremism": Six proposals for enhancing conceptual clarity', *Terrorism and Political Violence*, ISSN 0954-6553 (forthcoming).

[17] As with radicalization what is meant by 'extremism' is also highly contested and its parameters are equally unclear. Indeed, extremism, like radicalization, has limited analytical utility as a concept. These limitations are brought into particular focus by the debates as to what constitutes extremism within the heterogeneous milieu of 'right wing extremism'.

[18] For examples of this see note 6.

employed as a useful breakdown for teaching purposes. It has certainly not, however, been the case that all of these ideologies themselves have some intrinsic doctrinal connection to terrorism (even if they were sometimes called 'terrorist ideologies' or the 'ideologies of terrorism') - for terrorism has been used in the cause of a wide range of ideologies, many of which are not inherently violent or 'terroristic'.

There are belief systems where violence is integral to them and there may also be ideologies that have been interpreted, adapted or distorted to explicitly justify the use of terrorism and where terrorism may then become 'ideologically embedded'. In this sense one might indeed more accurately refer to them as 'terrorist ideologies' where the use of terrorism is intrinsic to the doctrine. It could be argued that this is the case with Al Qaeda and the notion of terrorism and political violence as a religious duty, or indeed with the tradition of 'physical force' Irish republicanism – for example, Patrick Pearse's proclamations of the notion of self-sacrificial acts as being a compelling symbol of republican ideology. But there are, of course, many nationalist, religious, left-wing, right-wing, and single issue (anti-abortion, animal rights, environmental) dogmas that are not in and of themselves inherently violent although terrorism has often been employed in their name. Terrorism is not something intrinsic to any particular non-violent ideology but is a *method* of violence that has at some time or other been perpetrated in the cause of doctrines within all of these categories.[19]

Indeed, the notion that terrorism should be understood and conceptualized as a particular *method* of violence, regardless of the ideological cause, is one held by conventional academic wisdom within the terrorism studies literature. Schmid, in 1983, suggested that 'terrorism is a method of combat in which random or symbolic victims become targets of violence …' and makes no reference as to who carries out this 'method of combat'[20]. Crenshaw also makes the point that: 'the identity of the actor [whether state or non-state] does not matter to the specification of the method'.[21] Pillar too argued that terrorism is something that 'people (or groups, or states) *do*, rather than who they are or what they are trying to achieve' (original author's italics)[22]. Terrorism, then, should be 'defined by the nature of the act, not by the identity of the perpetrators or the nature of their cause.'[23]

It is quite possible, therefore, that terrorism (as an *extremist activity*) may be carried out in pursuit of non-extremist doctrines, while, conversely, it is also true that non-extremist activity may be used in pursuit of extremist ideologies. Such distinctions, however, appear to be overlooked in Prevent's own definition of extremism which is: 'vocal or active opposition to fundamental British values, including democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty and

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[19] The points made in this paragraph have also been made by the author in: Richards, A., 'Conceptualizing Terrorism'*, Studies in Conflict and Terrorism*, Volume 37, No. 3, March 2014, pp. 225-6.

[20] Schmid, A., *Political Terrorism: A Research Guide to Concepts, Theories, Data Bases and Literature*. New Brunswick: Transaction, 1983, p. 111.

[21] Crenshaw, M., *Explaining Terrorism, Causes, Processes and Consequences*, Routledge, p. 207.

[22] Pillar, P., 'The Dimensions of Terrorism and Counterterrorism', in Howard, R. and Sawyer, R., (eds.), *Terrorism and Counterterrorism, Understanding the New Security Environment, Readings and Interpretations*, McGraw-Hill, 2002, p. 28.

[23] Jenkins, B., 'The Study of Terrorism: Definitional Problems' in Alexander, Y., and Gleason, J., *Behavioural and Quantitative Perspectives on Terrorism*, Pergamon Press, New York and Oxford, 1981, pp. 2-3.

mutual respect and tolerance of different faiths and beliefs'.[24] This definition implies that *any* activity (peaceful or otherwise) is extremism if it is in support of an extremist ideology. Conversely, the definition also excludes, then, 'extremist' *methods* that might be undertaken in support of 'non-extremist' positions or ideologies. Even in the 'extreme' case of using the method of terrorism, Saul, for example, considers that the international community might regard 'some terrorist-type violence as "illegal but justifiable" … where it was committed in the "collective defence of human rights"' – which one would hardly consider to be an extremist doctrine.[25]

The Prevent definition, then, appears to extrematise *activity*, whatever activity that might be, if it is carried out for an extremist cause (hence a peaceful, public and legal protest in support of extremist views itself becomes an act of extremism) at the same time as excluding the possibility of extremist activity carried in the cause of a non-extremist doctrine . Yet, *it makes no analytical sense to extrematise the method just because of antipathy towards the goal, nor to dilute the extremity of the method just because one has greater sympathy with the cause.* Adopting such positions would have clear parallels with the subjective application of the term 'terrorism' at the expense of more objective analytical utility.[26] Thus, if we are to engage with the concept of extremism, and most particularly in a counter-terrorism context, there needs to be a clearer distinction made between *extremism of (non-violent) thought* and *extremism of method* because it is surely violence and the threat of violence (integral to terrorism) that should be of primary concern to counter-terrorism.

It is perhaps not surprising that there has been little policy illumination on this important distinction if we are to be persuaded that certain 'extremist' but non-violent ideologies are intrinsically linked to terrorism, that (non-violent) rejection of 'the principles of participation and cohesion' is 'associated with an increased willingness to use violence'[27] – a notion that puts us, rather dangerously, somewhere along the trajectory of viewing them as one and the same. Yet, even while there may have been clarity in explicitly and unequivocally expressing the intent to tackle extremist but non-violent ideology as part of counter-terrorism, a clear focus hasn't always been apparent. This is exemplified in a recent report from the Prime Minister's own Task Force on Tackling Radicalization and Extremism which states that its 'response is broader than dealing only with those who espouse violence' but then goes on to state that the 'distinctive ideology' of particular concern 'betrays Islam's peaceful principles'.[28] What then is the focus here: to go beyond 'those who espouse violence' or to limit the focus to ideology that 'betrays Islam's peaceful principles'?

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[24] Op. cit. Prevent, 2011 p. 107 (note 2).
[25] Saul, B., 'Defining Terrorism to Protect Human Rights', in Staines, D., (ed.), *Interrogating the War on Terror: Interdisciplinary Perspectives*, Cambridge Scholars Publishing, Newcastle (UK), 2007, p. 208.
[26] For example, the more one refrains from using the word 'terrorism' because of sympathy with the cause, or the more that one is inclined to use it because of antipathy towards the goal, then the further away we are from enhancing terrorism as an analytical (and more neutral) concept (see Richards, A., Conceptualizing Terrorism, *Studies in Conflict and Terrorism*, 37, no. 3, 2014).
[27] Prevent, for example, argues that the line between '[non-violent] extremism and terrorism is often blurred' (op. cit. p. 19, note 2).
[28] Op. cit. 'Tackling extremism in the UK', Report from the Prime Minister's Task Force on Tackling Radicalization and Extremism, pp. 1-2 (note 6).

If there are those who would surreptitiously or covertly endorse the method of terrorism then it is they who are culpable for it. One could therefore be forgiven for finding the following Prevent statement also rather perplexing:

> 'Terrorist groups of all kinds very often draw upon ideologies which have been developed, disseminated and popularised by extremist organisations that appear to be non-violent (such as groups which neither use violence nor specifically and openly endorse its use by others).'[29]

If 'appearances' are not what they seem, as implied above, and if these extremist organisations (that 'appear to be non-violent' and who do not 'openly' endorse the use of violence by others) do in fact privately endorse violence then they are culpable for terrorism – *in which case they are not then non-violent organisations*. Similarly, if a non-violent ideology is culpable for terrorism in any way then it also ceases to become non-violent.

This is not to suggest that one shouldn't scrutinise the belief systems of those who carry out acts of terrorism. Indeed, apart from the concern of C-T with doctrines and narratives of violence and terrorism, the ideological framework in general of those employing the method of terrorism can indicate the parameters for both terrorist target selection and the lethality of the violence – both of indisputable interest to counter-terrorism.[30] A key part of the targeting strategy of those using terrorism in pursuit of nationalist/separatist causes, for example, has often been a focus on symbols of the opposing state (such as its policemen and soldiers), or for the European left wing organisations of the 1970s and 1980s it was individuals who they saw as symbols of the 'exploitative' capitalist and imperialist classes.[31] For Al Qaeda its religious doctrine called for 'every Muslim' to 'kill the Americans and their allies' 'in any country',[32] which has sanctioned lethal and mass casualty attacks against what Hoffman has called a 'virtually open-ended category of targets'.[33] In other words from a C-T perspective it is vitally important to examine the belief systems, whether violent or not, of those who use terrorism because they can reveal much about the likely parameters of terrorist targeting and tactics.

Nor should the argument here be mistaken in any way as endorsing or legitimising non-violent ideologies that one may find abhorrent. But, if they are non-violent, then there are many other more appropriate fora in public and political life for countering them, rather than through the sphere of counter-terrorism. Engaging with those that hold such views *but who disapprove of violence* in order to prevent terrorism *does not amount to the legitimation of such belief systems*. The focus for such cooperation is to dissuade those inclined to resort to

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[29] Op. cit. Prevent, 2011, p. 19 (note 2).

[30] See, for example, Drake, C., *Terrorists' Target Selection*, Macmillan Press, 1998.

[31] Such organisations have been called the 'Fighting Communist Organisations', such as Direct Action (France), the Red Army Faction (Germany) and the Red Brigades (Italy). See Alexander, Y., and Pluchinsky, D., *Europe's Red Terrorists, The Fighting Communist Organizations*, Frank Cass, London, 1992.

[32] From a 1998 'fatwa' issued by bin Laden's 'World Islamic Front for Jihad against the Jews and Crusaders', available at: http://www.fas.org/irp/world/para/docs/980223-fatwa.htm (accessed May 2nd 2014).

[33] Hoffman, B., *Inside Terrorism*, Columbia University Press, 1998, p. 95.

violence and to prevent deadly acts of terrorism – which is the central purpose of counter-terrorism.

One therefore has to question the wisdom of excluding 'intervention providers'[34] who share the same ideological outlook as those who engage in terrorism (Contest states that 'intervention providers must not have extremist beliefs' and yet 'they must have credibility' and be 'able to reach and relate to' them[35]). While there is no evidence on this available to the author it does prompt the question as to how effective 'non-extremist' interveners are in comparison to 'extremist' ones, and to what extent, if at all, the exclusion of the latter helps or hinders what should surely be the primary goal of counter-terrorism – preventing acts of terrorism. It is, of course, an entirely different matter if the ideology itself justifies and endorses the use of terrorism for an integral part of counter-terrorism *is* to counter ideologies and narratives of *violence*.

Moreover, however repugnant one might find ideologies that contravene British democratic values, labelling certain non-violent doctrines as conducive to terrorism risks alienating large swathes of the population who may sympathise with such beliefs but who at the same time deplore the methods of violence and terrorism used to pursue them - a population who might otherwise be powerful and effective allies in countering terrorism. As Demos argued, 'to be a radical is to reject the status quo, but not necessarily in a violent or even problematic manner' and 'assuming that radical views constitute the base of the terrorist pyramid can allow for counter-radicalization strategies against large numbers of people who object entirely to al Qaeda's methods.'[36]

It is, furthermore, worth reflecting on research that suggests that changing someone's belief system is a far more formidable challenge (and less realistically achievable) than changing an individual's *methods* in pursuit of whatever that belief system may be. Writing on the clear distinction between 'disengagement' and 'deradicalization', Horgan's empirical research found that:

> 'the disengaged terrorist may not necessarily be … 'deradicalized' at all … In fact, in the sample of former terrorists I interviewed from 2006 to 2008, while almost all of the interviewees could be described as disengaged, the vast majority of them could not be said to be 'deradicalized.'[37]

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[34] Intervention providers are tasked with preventing individuals from becoming terrorists.
[35] Op. cit. Contest, 2011, p. 65 (note 1).
[36] J. Bartlett, J. Birdwell and M. King, 'The edge of violence: a radical approach to extremism', (London: Demos, 16 April 2010), p.13, http://www.demos.co.uk/files/Edge_of_Violence_-_web.pdf (accessed February 13th 2014).
[37] Horgan, J., 'Individual disengagement: a psychological analysis', in Bjorgo, T., and Horgan, J., *Leaving Terrorism Behind*, Routledge 2009, p. 27.

Crenshaw, in her research on why terrorism might recede as a problem, also found that 'in no case did groups abandon terrorism because they changed their ideological orientation or long-term goals'.[38]

Policymaking and Academia: Bridging the Gap?

If academic wisdom perceives terrorism to be ineluctably about violence or the threat of violence then how can this be reconciled with the notion of a *non-violent* ideology that is said to be conducive to terrorism? The Northern Irish Social and Democratic Labour Party, for example, would have treated with consternation any notion that its nationalist ideology was conducive to terrorism simply because of the violent methods pursued by the nationalist IRA. Animal welfare organisations opposed to animal experiments would too presumably be horrified if their beliefs were deemed to be conducive to terrorism by virtue of the fact that the method of terrorism has been employed by some in pursuit of the same cause.

Or are we to infer that *non-democratic* ideologies have greater propensity to be linked to the method of terrorism than ideologies in general? *What, then, informs the judgement that the rejection of 'the principles of participation and cohesion' is 'associated with an increased willingness to use violence'?* Is it the case that such ideologies are viewed as culpable solely on the basis of the apparent propensity of people who have passed through certain non-violent organisations to then go on to commit acts of terrorism? The evidence presented for this link, however, seems to be rather tenuous.[39] Or are such ideologies deemed to be 'conducive' to terrorism simply because they represent the non-violent version or versions of Al Qaeda's doctrine (for example, Prevent states that 'preventing terrorism will mean challenging extremist (and non-violent) ideas that are also part of a terrorist ideology'[40])? If this is the case then one can have the paradoxical situation of those who might adamantly urge peaceful methods but who simultaneously hold extremist views that are said to be conducive to terrorism - an unhelpful C-T conundrum that fails to draw the important distinction between extremism of *thought* and extremism of *method* when countering terrorism.

Conclusion

The argument made here isn't that 'extremism' as defined by the British government should not be of concern for a democracy, nor that there aren't some individuals who would resort to the method of terrorism to pursue these ideologies. But there are many fora in public and

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[38] Op. cit. Crenshaw, M., p. 15 (note 21).
[39] Prevent states that: 'According to …[an]… open source …about 15% of people convicted for terrorist-related offences here between 1999 and 2009 had been connected with the extremist group Al-Muhajiroun (which, with its various successor organisations, is now proscribed under terrorism legislation). We know that a handful of others have been connected to Hizb-ut-Tahrir' (p. 20). It footnotes, however, that: 'it will not always be clear to what extent a person who engages in terrorist-related activity here has been involved with extremist groups, so these statistics need to be treated with some caution'.
[40] Op. cit., 2011, p. 6 (note 2).

political life for countering *non-violent* ideologies other than through the sphere of counter-terrorism. It would be an entirely different matter, of course, if violence is ideologically sanctioned, for counter-terrorism should most certainly be concerned with doctrines and narratives of violence. It would also be foolhardy not to scrutinise the belief systems, whether they themselves are intrinsically violent or not, of those carrying out acts of terrorism in order to be better informed about terrorist targeting and tactics. But non-violent ideologies, if indeed they are non-violent, cannot themselves be intrinsically linked to terrorism. One of the foremost researchers on radicalization has argued that 'the idea that the adoption of radical ideas causes terrorism is perhaps the greatest myth alive today in terrorism research'.[41]

As with any ideology if the *method* of terrorism is used to pursue your beliefs then, naturally, those who adopt this method become of paramount concern for those engaged in counter-terrorism. There is a danger, however, that, by suggesting that there is some kind of intrinsic link between certain non-violent dogmas and terrorism, that a threshold has been crossed - that large sections of the population who exercise their democratic right to hold such views, however unpalatable they may be, will become further alienated as part of the 'terrorist problem', when in fact they might have no truck with the use of violence and whom we exclude as potential dissuaders against those who would resort to terrorism. The concern is that counter-terrorism, rather than focusing on the threat from terrorism, *has itself become increasingly ideological* – that it has gone beyond the remit of countering terrorism and has ventured into the broader realm of tackling ideological threats to the state.

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[41] Horgan, J. quoted in Knefel, J., 'Everything You've Been Told About Radicalization Is Wrong', *Rolling Stone Politics*, May 6th 2013, available at: http://www.rollingstone.com/politics/news/everything-youve-been-told-about-radicalization-is-wrong-20130506 (accessed May 8th 2014).