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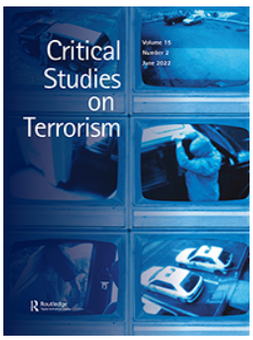

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Counter-terrorism training "at your kitchen table": the promotion of "CT citizens" and the securitisation of everyday life in the UK

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ABSTRACT

The growing call for public participation in counter-terrorism in Britain is reflected by the number of recent campaigns directed towards different sectors of the population and, increasingly, towards "ordinary" citizens. However, there has been a lack of research examining how counter-radicalisation campaigns seek to target the whole population and have an impact on everyday subjectivities and actions. Drawing on studies on governmentality, this article examines the promotion of the "CT citizen" as a distinctive political agent and social identity embedded in the participation of mass surveillance and the normalisation of pre-emptive security logics. Based on a critical discourse analysis of the most recent official counter-terrorism and counter-radicalisation websites and e-learning materials (Let's Talk About It, Educate Against Hate, Action Counters Terrorism, and the Prevent duty), I show how citizens are being inscribed as counter-terrorism officials through discourses of responsibility, care, awareness, empowerment, and action. This article explores the role of British counter-terrorism in the production of new models of citizenship based on a generalised culture of suspicion and in the participation in security duties previously reserved to the authorities. The discussion highlights ultimately that the securitisation of everyday life and the inscription of individuals in "national security" results in the depoliticisation of both the civil society and political violence.

KEYWORDS

Counter-terrorism; prevent strategy; governmentality; securitisation; citizenship

Introduction

On 10 June 2020, a news story was published on the British government website entitled, "CT training at your kitchen table" (National Counter Terrorism Security Office 2020), encouraging people to engage with the Action Counter Terrorism (ACT) 45-minute free online course. The ACT government campaign is not an anomaly; over the last decade, a number of campaigns such as Educate Against Hate, created by the Department for Education and the Home Office and directed at teachers, parents, and school leaders, and Let's Talk About It, directed at parents and the general public, also with the aim of engaging the population in counter-terrorism, have been introduced.[1] Moreover, since 2015, public sector workers, including NHS staff and teachers, have a legal duty to

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participate in counter-terrorism and national security by preventing people from being drawn into terrorism. This involves reporting those who are vulnerable to, or show signs of, radicalisation, and undertaking official security training (HO 2015). This article aims to show how rather than limiting itself to the detection and "correction" of particular subjects, British counter-terrorism is securitising everyday life and pushing for new forms of citizenship.

Exploring the processes of subjectivisation involved in the growing call for public participation in counter-terrorism, it is argued that counter-terrorism (and counter-radicalisation) is embedded in the promotion of ideal subjects that are referred to as "CT citizen(s)". It demonstrates how, under these new norms of citizenship, "ordinary" people are no longer limited to their traditional role of informants and reporters, but they are encouraged to become empowered and active individuals who possess different kinds of national security and counter-terrorism expertise. These include skills to identify signs of radicalisation, suspect items and behaviours, to investigate them, and to follow a wide range of protocols as professionally as an official security agent would. Thus, most recent national security e-learning packages and websites constitute a qualitative change from previous discourses that directed individuals' conduct to watch and report suspiciousness (e.g. the message repeated in the Uk's public transportation network: "See it, say it, sorted"; see Pearce et al. 2020).

The article draws on studies on governmentality (Foucault 1991; Dean 2010; Brown 2015) as a theoretical framework to analyse the discourses and narratives found in official counter-terrorism and counter-radicalisation campaigns and online training courses directed towards the general public.[2] A governmental perspective proves valuable for deepening understanding of current security approaches that seek to create and govern responsibilised security subjects. Research in governmentality reveals the ways in which discourses of care, responsibility, empowerment, and risk, among others, shape individuals' mentalities, ways of engaging with social realities, and ultimately, play a crucial role in directing their conduct and ambitions (Gordon 1991; Dean 2010; Butler 2004). Despite a growing literature on the impact the Prevent Strategy initiatives has in education and health-care (see Jerome, Elwick, and Kazim 2019; Heath-Kelly and Strausz 2018, 2019; Younis and Jadhav 2019; MedAct 2020; Winter et al. 2021), there is a gap in the analysis of the effects of the most recent terrorism and radicalisation prevention campaigns addressed at the whole population.

Thus, although research has revealed how counter-radicalisation and de-radicalisation strategies can be understood as strategies which aim to "promote an assimilationist agenda" (Poole 2016), and to produce alternative Muslim subjectivities (e.g. "moderate Muslims") (Elshimi 2017; Mythen, Walklate, and Khan 2009; Abbas 2019), less has been written on counter-radicalisation as a technology of government that (heterogeneously) affects the whole population and is embedded in processes of identity formation that go beyond the "rectification" of those deemed "extremists" and/or "at risk" of radicalisation. In other words, literature that centres on the subtle effects of counter-radicalisation on "ordinary" citizens and explores the participation of counter-terrorism in general processes of identity formation and in the "conduct of conduct" (Dean 2010) is still scarce.

This article aims to help fill this gap through a critical discourse analysis (CDA) (Fairclough 1992; Wodak and Meyer 2001) of public statements and, particularly, official counter-terrorism campaigns and websites directed at the population, paying special

attention to the ACT awareness e-learning course, the online Prevent Duty training package accessible to the public on the UK government website, and the Educate Against Hate and Let's Talk About It online campaigns. It also considers the Families Against Terrorism and Extremism (FATE) international network's online training resource, and British charity-led campaigns, such as the Web Guardiansinitiative (See Appendix 1). These sites and materials were selected because they are the most popular counter-terrorism and counter-radicalisation campaigns and trainings directed at "ordinary" individuals in the UK, and also because of their novelty (they were produced between 2013 and 2020) and promotion by the British Government and the Metropolitan police.

CDA as a qualitative method offers countless opportunities to explore how language in a particular context is used to engage in significance, practices, identities, relationships, politics, connections, and sign systems and knowledge (Gee 2010, 122). Thus, from a CDA perspective, discourse does not neutrally describe the world, but it signifies it; it constitutes social realities (Fairclough 1992; Barker and Galasiński 2001). Discourse constitutes identities and relations, and discursive acts can "restore, justify and perpetuate [but also transform] the social status quo" (Barker and Galasiński 2001, 65). As critical terrorism scholars have shown, analysing the discourse is a compelling way to understand how particular counter-terrorism practices are legitimised and normalised, and "how social and political consensus is produced and reproduced" (Jackson 2005; see also Bogain 2017). On this basis, this article approaches the recent counter-terrorism materials directed at the population in the UK (see Appendix 1) and, from a governmental perspective, questions which identities, conducts, and knowledges encourage and constitute, and, ultimately, which social status quo seek to transform and/or to reinforce.

The CDA of these websites and e-learning materials was carried out in two phases: the first consisted of reading, viewing, and listening to the texts, videos, and images of the selected materials (Appendix 1), and completing the ACT and Prevent e-learning courses several times to get familiarised with all their content, and to gain a general picture of the main narratives directed at the population. These sites and materials were explored through the following questions: How are individuals asked to be like and/or to behave in these trainings? What are they requested/trained to do? And, which knowledge(s) do these sites transmit to the participants? Thus, this part of the analysis involved identifying and coding the most relevant parts of the trainings and websites, and transcribing particular statements that answered these questions. The second stage involved the identification of the five main and common themes (i.e. "responsibility", "care", "awareness", "empowerment" and "action") across the materials that are analysed throughout the article. This final methodological stage also included "selecting quotations; and ultimately, generating theory grounded in the data" (Basit 2003, 147).

The overall argument is that these counter-terrorism campaigns and training directed at "ordinary" citizens should be comprehended as technologies that aim to create and cultivate distinct political subjects and collective identities through the employment of particular discourses. These includes the "good" and "moderate" citizen, but also the "active", "responsible", and "empowered" (security) individual epitomised by the CT citizen. From a governmental perspective, these public initiatives are also comprehended as "programmes of the reform of conduct" (Dean 2010) embedded in the promotion of particular attitudes and practices within the population. These are identified as a permanent state of "awareness" and a generalised attitude of surveillance and

suspicion towards the people around us, the naturalisation of precautionary and anticipatory logics (i.e. "what if" and "worst-case" logics, see Amoore 2007; Mythen and Walklate 2008; Anderson 2010), and the internalisation (and use) of security protocols. Evaluating how individuals' subjectivities are being transformed by these calls and training materials, and/or how these positionings might be contested and disrupted within the population is beyond the scope of this article. Similarly, this research does not analyse the way in which Muslim individuals and/or communities might be distinctively affected by the growing public involvement in counter-terrorism and national security practices. Nonetheless, this article seeks to shed light on how counter-terrorism training aims to participate in the constitution of particular identities, subjectivities, and conducts through the use of the narratives and logics that are explored in the following sections.

The article is divided in two main sections that describe and discuss the central narratives identified through the CDA: First, it shows how calls for public participation in countering terrorism are being increasingly expanded to the whole society and examines how the encouragement of public participation in countering terrorism is being enacted through discourses of responsibility and care. Despite the authorities' initial focus on engaging with "Muslim communities", the article stresses how over the last five years or so, every citizen is increasingly being encouraged to get involved in counter-radicalisation and security duties. Analysing the responsibilisation techniques deployed in official statements and counter-terrorism online training material, the article argues that British citizens are being assigned new roles and inscribed as counter-terrorism officials. It is also discusses how discourses on safeguarding vulnerable individuals, which make the participation in counter-terrorism more acceptable, result in the individualisation of conflicts, the pathologisation of individuals who do not embody idealised forms of citizenship and/or adscribe to official security discourses and practices, and in the depoliticisation of families and the civil society which are represented as a naturally peaceful and consensual government-aligned spheres. The responsibilisation of individuals and families might also result in the blame of those who "failed" to imagine potential dangers and/or did not actively make referrals to the authorities.

Second, the article shows how discourses of awareness, empowerment, and action deployed throughout ACT and Prevent e-learning packages are central to the new security subjectivities that assign citizens new tasks that go beyond their traditional role of informants. Empowerment and "trust your instincts" messages seek to mobilise and direct civilian action and to combat "passivity" which is equated to failure in terrorism prevention and to (potential) catastrophe. The article also explores how discourses of awareness repeatedly ask citizens to remain vigilant, producing a generalised atmosphere of suspicion and a constant "vigilant mode", based on precautionary and anticipatory rationales (Amoore 2007; Anderson 2010), bringing combatant and heroism logics to urban life.

My analysis reveals that the new subjectivities that British counter-terrorism encourages are surprisingly active and resemble professional security agents. In opposition to vulnerable citizens who live in fear, CT citizens personify a new ideal citizenship: the CT citizen is not paralysed by fear but is aware of threats, intuitive, responsible and brave, possesses counter-terrorism expertise and actively participates in prevention and

deterrence tasks. Finally, the article addresses how far from being neutral, CT citizens' gaze is politicised, directing individuals to act on particular scenarios whilst other violences and risks are overlooked.

Public responsibilisation: "we all have the responsibility"

On 20 March 2018, BBC news published a news story entitled, "Police call for counter-terrorism citizens", in which the Metropolitan Police's Assistant Commissioner, Neil Basu, stated that "police want every good citizen to become a 'counter-terrorism citizen'" (BBC News 2018). This call came as police launched their campaign, Action Counters Terrorism (ACT), which trains "ordinary" people to conduct as professional security agents. Similarly, in the 2020 RUSI Annual Lecture, Metropolitan Police Commissioner Cressida Dick highlighted "Mobilising partners – that's people like you and the public. Encouraging more active citizens" as the second priority of the "Met Direction Strategy" (Dick 2020). Dick recalled Met founder Robert Peel's words from 190 years earlier: "The police are the public and the public the police". She added: "I strongly believe it holds true today" (Dick 2020). Later on, she remarked "[w]e all have a responsibility to prevent crime – as Peel said" (Ibid.).

Thus, calls for public participation with the police is not a new phenomenon; "public engagement within the police has been a key element" (Wray 2018, 24) since the Metropolitan Force was establish in 1829. Although the appeal to citizens' vigilance and participation in security provision is not an anomaly, previous examples include a crime prevention programme established by the Metropolitan Police in 1943 called Good Neighbours Can Prevent Crime (Bullock 2014, 126), and the Neighbourhood Watch scheme and Crimestoppers campaign during the 1980s in the UK (Biressi 2001). And, messages and campaigns encouraging the public to collaborate in national security and/or counter-terrorism have dramatically increased since 9/11 (Ahmed 2004; Koskela 2011; Cameron 2013; Jarvis and Lister 2010; Thomas et al. 2020, – see also other initiatives that seek to involve landlords and housing providers in border control practices through the Right to Rent part of the Immigration Act 2016; see; Crawford, McKee, and Leathy 2019).

This section explores the way in which this trend of public involvement in counter-terrorism duties has intensified since 2015, and how this is being facilitated by responsibilisation discourses deployed in official statements and counter-radicalisation and counter-terrorism online campaigns and training directed to the whole public.

Muslims, teachers, parents, and the general public: "play your part"

During the first years of the Prevent Strategy (from 2003 to 2011), "Muslim communities" were responsibilised and asked to fulfil their role in countering terrorism. The 2006 Prevent Strategy held the logic that since the risk of radicalisation comes from "Muslim communities", then Muslims must work in partnership with the authorities to prevent terrorism (HO 2006). This highly racialised discourse was reproduced in the updated 2009 Prevent Strategy, which stated: "Because the greatest threat at present is from terrorists who claim to act in the name of Islam, much Prevent activity takes place in and with Muslim communities" (HO 2009, 15). Thus, not only the initial funding designed to tackle radicalisation was distinctively delivered in areas where there was at least 5% of Muslim

population (Heath-Kelly 2013; Elshimi 2017), but Muslim individuals, especially Muslim women, were almost exclusively responsibilised in countering terrorism and risks of radicalisation (see Brown 2013; Rafiq and Malik 2015; Awan and Guru 2016; Abbas 2019). Nonetheless, British counter-terrorism's focus has since then expanded, as it is shown below.

Although the 2009 Prevent Strategy already pointed to "other communities who may be the focus of attention from violent extremist groups" as potential partners in countering terrorism (HO 2009, 15), it was not until 2011 when the Prevent Strategy clearly referred to the need of "widen(ing) the scope of Prevent" and depending on a "successful integration strategy, which establishes a stronger sense of common ground and shared values, [and] which enables participation and the empowerment of all communities [. . .]" (HO 2011, 12). Furthermore, in 2013, a report from the Prime Minister's Task Force "Tackling Radicalisation and Extremism" announced that "challenging and tackling extremism is a shared effort", and stated that "the government, as much as organisations and communities in the UK, must take responsibility" (HM Government 2013, 2). This contested trend to responsibilise specific sectors of society in counter-terrorism duties culminated in 2015 when "specific authorities" (such as local government, criminal justice, education, child care, health and social care, and police) were obligated to prevent people from being drawn into terrorism by detecting and reporting radicalisation (HO 2015). Since then, the latest Prevent Strategy (2018) as well as the abovementioned official campaigns and a number of national and international charities have only reinforced the idea that all the citizens must play an active role in countering terrorism.[3]

For instance, the Educate Against Hate government website, Let's Talk About It and Act Early campaigns provide the general public with counter-radicalisation knowledge and guidance for action. This includes information on Prevent Strategy and Channel, knowledge to "spot the signs" of radicalisation, and details on how to make referrals. These campaigns often highlight parents' unique position to identify and support "someone who may be vulnerable to becoming involved in extremism or terrorism" (Let's Talk About It 2020). Both the National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children (NSPCC) and JAN Trust charities have also focused on parents' duty to prevent radicalisation. Similarly, Web Guardians, an initiative launched by the JAN Trust charity in 2010, is designed to "educate and empower" mothers to prevent online extremism and radicalisation (Web Guardians n.d.). Without underestimating the priority placed on families to prevent radicalisation and terrorism, the intensification of calls for "CT citizens" shows that the participation of the general population in counter-terrorism is being continuously expanded and enhanced.

My discourse analysis reveals that the responsibilisation of citizens in national security comes accompanied by three main narratives. According to the first, security is everyone's responsibility and every single person needs to "play their part"; the second refers to the unprecedented threat that terrorism poses and thus demands citizens' help and cooperation; and the last narrative points to the strategic position of citizens (including teachers, parents, carers, and friends) in delivering this task. For example, the ACT awareness e-learning package clearly states that: "All of us, not just the police and security services, have a responsibility to keep ourselves safe" (Counter Terrorism Policing n.d.). The training reminds the user that: "We can all play a part in identifying [. . .] opportunities to disrupt the planning phase of an attack", and that "your actions could help avert an attack and

save lives" (Ibid.). Highly emotive language has also been used in public appeals, such as former Prime Minister David Cameron's 2015 speech on extremism at the Ninestiles School in Birmingham, in which he referred to countering extremism as "the struggle of our generation" (Prime Minister's Office and The Rt Hon David Cameron 2015). He also added: "[. . .] we have all got to contribute to this process. This isn't an issue for just any one community or any one part of our society – it's for all of us" (Ibid.). Similarly, a FATE training video explains: "Often, people believe that tackling these issues [extremism and countering terrorism] is down to governments, the police or other major institutions. In reality, though large firms and governments do play a crucial role, the most important one rests with you – civil society" (Find FATE 2017).

In this scenario, individuals are increasingly responsibilised for their own security and even for the security of their families, communities, and nations. A governmental perspective shows us how these discourses and practices of responsibilisation are at the very centre of the governance of individuals and populations (Rose 2004; Brown 2015). In Wendy Brown's words, "responsibilisation signals a regime in which the singular human capacity for responsibility is deployed to constitute and govern subjects and through which their conduct is organised and measured . . . " (2015, 133).

Calls for "good citizens to become CT citizens" then should be comprehended as discourses that seek to constitute particular subjectivities and encourage individuals to conduct in particular modes. Thus, British counter-terrorism not only aims to engage the public in counter-terrorism tasks through techniques of responsibilisation but it also participates in the constitution of determined security subjects, the CT citizens. In other words, not only have responsibilisation techniques largely deployed in the public discourse and official campaigns remarkably intensified the pressure for citizens' involvement in contemporary counter-terrorism, but they are also substantially positioning the population as counter-terrorism (security) subjects. This is explored in the following sections.

Discourses of care and safeguarding: "keep them safe"

My qualitative analysis shows how civilian responsibilisation is notably facilitated by safeguarding and care discourses at the counter-radicalisation online training directed at the general population. Since 2011, safeguarding occupies a central position in British counter-terrorism (Heath-Kelly 2016; Heath-Kelly and Strausz 2018; Dresser 2019) and over the last decade, terrorism prevention narratives have remarkably reproduced analogies with well-being and public health (Younis 2020). On 9 September 2019, at a conference in Israel, Assistant Commissioner Neil Basu even referred to Prevent as "the closest thing to a public health solution we have" (Basu 2019).

Hence, care and safeguarding discourses seem to work as an effective form of civilian responsibilisation in tasks of national security. Marieke de Goede and Stephanie Simon have noticed that "the language of care and protection effaces connotations of punitive intervention, evoking instead a questionably more palatable brand of normalisation that keeps 'everyone on board'" (2012, 329). Joel Busher et al. also suggest that the initial criticism of Prevent in education might have been diminished and softened because of "the way in which Prevent has been enacted and incorporated within existing professional [safeguarding] practices" (2019, 459). For instance, the Prevent e-learning course

directed at education staff emphasises that Prevent "is just part of safeguarding" (Prevent e-Learning n.d.-a). In the training material, Hifsa Haroon-Iqbal from the Department of Education states: "[. . .] there is nothing to be scared of, this is about safeguarding. You've been doing safeguarding for a very long time" (Ibid.).

Care and safeguarding narratives would make (civilian) participation in counter-terrorism more acceptable in two ways: the first is related to the existing public approval and consent around caring discourses and interventions, and the second has to do with the fact that situating Prevent within pre-existing duties means that professionals find it easier to tolerate. In this sense, it is important to highlight how, while equating counter-terrorism to a caring intervention on an vulnerable body, British counter-radicalisation portrays individuals as victims of (ideological) abuse whilst political violence is rendered as an "illness" (see Heath-Kelly 2016). Put simply, involvement in terrorism is explained through the vulnerability framework and any other, more complex, reading of the context in which certain individuals opt for political violence is rejected. This view, which limits its focus to the individual, ignores a broader reading of historical, social, political, and cultural contexts in which conflicts are generated (see Blakeley et al. 2019).

In this process, individuals with mental health issues are seen as bodies at high risk of radicalisation, and as a result, mental illness is potentially criminalised.[4] Therefore, it should not be surprising that people with mental health conditions are disproportionately referred to Prevent, as recent research has demonstrated (see MedAct 2020). Within this frame, "radicalised individuals", or even individuals who simply question or do not accept the official counter-terrorism narratives and practices, are pathologised, whilst members of civil society (family and friends, teachers, doctors, etc.) are responsibilised for the detection of the early "signs" of radicalisation on fellow citizens. Thus, the responsibilisation of families comes with a double standard: since families are regarded as responsible for their family members' violent and/or extremist behaviour and/or ideology, they might be also potentially blamed for (their failure in preventing) terrorism.

Another consequence of making families responsible for safeguarding their children from radicalisation and, ultimately, preventing terrorism is that (heteronormative) families, especially (Muslim) women, are pictured as natural peace-makers and moderate agents and/or moderating forces (see K. E. Brown 2013). Family homes are depicted as cooperative and protective safe spaces, at the same time that any potential scenario of violence and abuse within them is ignored, even though figures show that so-called domestic violence "kills 15 times as many people as terrorism in Britain" (Doward 2019). These discourses also show the way in which all family members (parents, children, and siblings) are expected to hold the same political views and positions. Families, like civil society, are portrayed as naturally peaceful and consensual government-aligned spheres that only outsider extremist influences can disturb. Drawing on Brown (2015, 21), it could be said that in this landscape, any political consciousness is replaced with "team consciousness", while the classical image of the nation "comprising diverse concerns, issues, interests, points of power, and points of view", is converted into the "Wal-Mart model" where police are "team leaders" and citizens are "junior associates".

Through counter-terrorism and counter-radicalisation training, British counter-terrorism portrays families and the civil society as a "consensus model of conduct" (W. Brown 2015). This entails a double process of depoliticisation: First, individuals who are involved in, or support, political violence (or simply those who criticise official

radicalisation narratives) are depoliticised, since their views are only seen as a result of their vulnerabilities to (radicalising) abuse, and thus invalidated. They are regarded as "patients" without agency requiring state action, rather than as complex (political) agents. And secondly, citizens who are treated as volunteers of the national security project are also depoliticised in the sense that (only) complete cooperation and agreement with the state and/or the authorities is expected. This is visible when counter-radicalisation material directed at "parents" repeatedly asks them to "start a conversation" with their child, and to "talk about *your* views on extremism" [emphasis added] (Educate Against Hate 2018). This approach presupposes that individuals' views will reproduce official radicalisation and counter-terrorism narratives and will naturally align with those held by the government and/or national security agencies.

Empowerment, awareness and action: counter-terrorism as a "programme for the reform of conduct"

An unpacking of the counter-terrorism and counter-radicalisation online training directed to the public reveals that the promotion of new models of citizenship, i.e., CT citizens, involves the encouragement of particular practices and attitudes (conducts) within the population. This article is interested in showing how British counter-radicalisation should be understood as a (governing) technology that cultivates particular political subjects and collective identities (i.e., the "CT citizen") as well as a "programme of the reform of conduct" (Dean 2010). New ideal (security) citizens comprise the adoption of practices and ways of behaving and acting that include an internalisation of a "warrior" logic and pre-emptive rationality (dominated by worst-case and what if logics), the participation in and acceptance of generalised suspicion and mass-surveillance practices, as well as learning to behave as security personnel following a number of security protocols and even leading investigations.

This section shows the role of discourses of empowerment, awareness, and action disseminated in online counter-terrorist training material (primarily in the ACT course and the Prevent e-learning resource) shaping new subjectivities within the population. In other words, it explores how particular discourses disseminated in British counter-terrorism training packages seek to direct individuals' conduct, inscribing them as active citizens who resemble security agents. As shown in the following sections, in opposition to risky subjects and populations, CT citizens represent the active and empowered (security) agents who participate in national security and terrorism prevention by undertaking tasks that go beyond the act of reporting to the authorities. Finally, the article also discusses the politicised gaze of the new agents and social identities and the conceptions of the society (and the family) as a neutral and depoliticised realm (naturalising certain violences and power relations).

Empowerment: "have the confidence to ACT"

The notion of empowerment is vital in the responsibilisation techniques of contemporary security and counter-terrorism discourses. The idea goes that since families and teachers are already safeguarding experts (either because of their natural qualities or because it is simply part of their job), what they mainly need is the confidence to act when they see

"signs" of radicalisation. This is evident in the Web Guardian initiative, which aims to empower women to prevent radicalisation (Web Guardians n.d.), while the Educate Against Hate campaign provides teachers with "top tips" to build their "confidence in protecting students from radicalisation" (HM Government 2020). The emphasis on asking citizens to "trust your instincts" reveals an assumption that preventing radicalisation does not consist in providing the civilian population with CT expertise as much as it does in making them feel empowered and confident. The Eyes Wide Open training video for Security Personnel (and now for the wider public, as it is part of the ACT awareness supporting material), repeatedly asks individuals to "trust" their instincts and "have confidence and remember the purpose of your role" (CPNI UK 2013).

The discourse of empowerment seeks to combat passivity and lack of confidence, while its main objective is to direct individuals to action. The Prevent training package for NHS staff tells individuals: "Don't sit back and do nothing. Trust your instincts, and say something if you are worried" (Prevent e-Learning n.d.-b); while the ACT Awareness e-learning directed at companies and the general public warns: "Don't be afraid of taking action, have the confidence to ACT. Your actions could help avert an attack and save lives" (Counter Terrorism Policing n.d.). One of the training's main aims is to mobilise civilian action. For that purpose, it provides messages such as: "You may feel that reporting it could be seen as trivial, and a waste of your manager's or the police's time. It isn't", and: "Don't be concerned about wasting police time" (Ibid.). This confidence-boosting discourse works to reinforce civilian responsibilisation in countering terrorism, since individuals' passivity is equated to failure in terrorism prevention, and to potential catastrophe.

By looking at these narratives, one might argue that conceptualisations of citizens and their roles are going through a fundamental transformation, according to which citizens no longer live in fear, nor are they only defined by their victimhood. Instead, citizens are presented as (fearless) empowered and active agents. They are all potential heroes. Citizens are not just portrayed as (potential) victims of terrorism, but are encouraged and nurtured to become "CT citizens". In contrast to the fearful individual awaiting protection from the authorities and state's forces, the "CT citizen" is not paralysed by fear, but is aware of (not alarmed by) threats, knows the threat level, knows their role and the procedures, is intuitive, responsible, brave, possesses counter-terrorism expertise (recognises the signs of radicalisation and detects suspicious objects and behaviour), and actively participates in prevention (e.g. creating counter-extremist narratives and campaigns). According to this narrative, individuals no longer engage with social issues through the lens of fear, as Frank Furedi (2002) theorised in the late 1990s, but rather that the "culture of fear" is being transformed into a (highly neoliberal and business-oriented) empowerment culture in which (fearless) individuals act through rationalities of self-promotion, responsibilisation, and empowerment.

Awareness: "please, be vigilant"

The new official mantra is "be aware, not alarmed". In the aftermath of the Manchester Arena attack in May 2017, then-Prime Minister Theresa May said: "I do not want the public to feel unduly alarmed [. . .] I ask everybody to be vigilant, and to cooperate with and support the police as they go about their important work" (May 2017). A tweet from the Metropolitan Police in 2019 reads: "Our advice to the public is to continue with your

plans as usual. Please be vigilant but be alert, not alarmed. If you see anything suspicious then, please ACT, and report it to police [. . .]" (Metropolitan Police 2019).[5] After the incident where a man killed three people in a park in Reading in June 2020, Neil Basu asked the public to: "[. . .] continue in your daily lives but to be alert, not alarmed, when you are in public places" (Basu 2020). The ACT awareness training repeatedly asks users to "be aware", to "remain vigilant", and to "look a little bit closer" (Counter Terrorism Policing n.d.). In the same manner, the Let's Talk About It campaign (2020) cites "the need for consistent awareness of the threat of radicalisation to become part of our daily lives". Furthermore, the Eyes Wide Open training video even claims that: "Being alert could just be enough to deter a criminal or terrorist from continuing with their plans" (CPNI UK 2013).

The rise of situational awareness in urban security has been discussed by Susanne Krasmann and Christine Hentschel (2019), who argue that this call to alertness, smartness, sensitivity, and prompt reactions brings a peculiar "warrior logic" to urban life. In this restructuring of security, anticipatory logics such as prevention, pre-emption, and prediction are prevalent (see Anderson 2010), showing the increasing integration of military experience and emergency management into the police sector and also into the population (Krasmann and Hentschel 2019). Drawing on critical security scholarship, Krasmann and Hentschel argue that the new alert and resilient subject – who is tasked with national security – must accept "living with uncertainty", "be prepared for surprises", "preempt the unforeseeable", "learn through catastrophic events", and "be vigilant while not panicking" (2019, 4). This rationale of situational awareness includes a technique that Louise Amoore conceptualises as "vigilant visualities", a particular mode of vigilant or watchful visuality mobilised in the "homefront" of the war on terror (2007, 217).

This way of seeing looks out with an anticipatory gaze, and this is why, according to Amoore, "the appeal to report suspicious activity is only intelligible if there is some basis for recognising who and what is alien, who and what is unusual, who and what is outside" (2007, 217–218). This constant vigilant mode of looking, based on precautionary and anticipatory logics (Amoore 2007), is demanded of the whole population, even children. In the video produced by the NSPCC and *The Times*, a young boy asks his father in the aftermath of a terrorist attack "[. . .] the government couldn't do anything about it, could they?" and the father tells him: "That's true [. . .] that just means you have to be more vigilant" [emphasis added] (The Times and The Sunday Times 2016).

The changing nature of surveillance, embedded in these practices which demand that the population participates in daily active surveillance, has been conceptualised by Hille Koskela (2011) as a new stage in the politics of surveillance. The proliferation of information and communication technologies have enabled participatory surveillance, such as the Texas Virtual Border Watch Program(Ibid.). A reversal of Foucault's panopticon, where a few watch many, according to Koskela, the Border Watch Programme promotes a culture of synopticism, where the many watch the few. Moreover, current counter-terrorism encourages a vigilant and suspicious culture of many watching many since, according to the dominant rationale, radicalising influences could potentially be found everywhere, and everyone can be both potentially vulnerable to them and able to detect them. In the scenario where citizens are responsibilised, encouraged, and assumed to take positions previously held by authorities (Koskela 2011, 57), citizenship takes a new form (see also Ahmed 2004; Jarvis and Lister 2010; McGhee 2010).

Training the individual's gaze to identify suspicious objects and behaviour is one of the central themes of the ACT awareness training, as it is in the Prevent e-learning package, and the Let's Talk About It campaign. Module 2 in the ACT training includes an exercise in which the user needs to click "Act now" when they see a "security vulnerability" (Counter Terrorism Policing n.d.). "Security vulnerabilities" are displayed all the way through the short video, which is set in a hospital, and include various things such as an unauthorised person trespassing by a door, as well as general "poor working practices" (Ibid.). The exercise reminds the user that "each missed item could cost lives" (Ibid.). Similarly, Module 4 focuses on training individuals to identify potentially suspicious items by employing the "HOT protocol" (Hidden, Obvious and Typical) (Ibid.). The exercise immerses the user in the gaze of someone heading to a train and underground station in London. The viewer is asked to click on the "suspicious items" they find along the way. These include a rubbish bag, an unattended backpack, an abandoned tool box, an unattended cleaning trolley, and, finally, a hidden bomb. Everything happens in less than 40 seconds.

This training, together with the Prevent e-learning package, seeks to teach individuals to learn to look differently at everyday scenarios and encounters, since the goal is to note and identify signs of radicalisation, extremist influences, and suspicious items and/or behaviour. It does not just address what to look out for and how to interpret or understand things and people, but also focuses on how to look at the reality that surrounds us, and how to react. We could regard these visual economies as regimes of (in)visibility (Martin 2018) that actively produce illuminated threatening subjects and objects while obscuring others (see also Ali 2020).

Since terrorism and radicalisation are highly mediated phenomena, it is important to remember that citizens will not limit themselves to reporting what they are taught to "see" in the training sessions. On the contrary, their gaze might be shaped and directed by very problematic (racist, Islamophobic, and sexist) hegemonic imaginaries, which are effectively reinforced by the demand to "trust your instincts" (Heath-Kelly and Strausz 2018; Younis and Jadhav 2019; Dresser 2019; Pettinger 2020). As a consequence, it must be highlighted that the "CT" citizen's gaze is highly politicised and influenced to detect certain things and overlook others. For instance, although racially motivated violence is extremely common, Islamophobic attacks have been increasing for the last few years, and so-called domestic violence is deadlier than terrorism in Britain; citizens' awareness, attention, and imagination is moulded, produced, and directed "to see" and "to react" to much rarer and/or more unlikely potential acts of violence. As a result, while certain modes of violence occupy by far the greatest amount of resources, public repudiation and attention, others remain invisible and therefore become normalised and naturalised.

The production CT citizens not only involves incorporating and learning a new way of seeing, perceiving, and detecting reality, but also of conducting and reacting. This is clearly represented in the ACT campaign video (BVRLA 2018), as well as through the training. The campaign video (BVRLA 2018) shows four individuals, a young black male exercising, a middle-aged white woman working in a cafe, a young woman of colour in a street market, and a middle-aged white man in a shop. They all look back, double check, and immediately afterwards make a report to the police. Scenarios that initially seemed "normal" became "suspicious" when individuals observed with awareness. In the first scenario, someone was not merely taking out garbage, he was in fact disposing of empty bottles of an inflammable liquid; the man seated at the cafe was

actually looking at a picture of a bomb on his mobile phone; in the third scenario, someone was not just walking down the street, they were taking pictures of police officers; and finally, the individual in the tool shop was actually buying hammers and knives for a potential terrorist attack. The video reminds the viewer to pay attention and not to settle for first impressions. In the ACT awareness training, learning to look, to watch well, is as important as reporting. The video reassures the individual that "reporting it won't ruin lives, but it may save them" (Counter Terrorism Policing n.d.).

In this culture of suspicion and security vigilance, where individuals living in a state of "perpetual war mindedness" (Packer 2006) or in "permanent war mentality" (Cameron 2007) know that they could be blamed if they did not see the threat or failed to imagine it, "what if" (see Mythen and Walklate 2008) and "worst-case logics" (see Pettinger 2020) have a central place. For example, in their research based on 70 interviews with teachers, Busher et al. observe states of anxiety and fear among education staff about the possibility of "miss[ing] something" that could be a sign of vulnerability to radicalisation (2019, 449). The MedAct report on Prevent in the NHS presents the case of a GP who referred a patient to Prevent (even though she admitted not thinking the patient was either radicalised or a terrorist) because she did not want to see her name "in the headlines" (2020, 42) if anything happened. Counter-terrorism discourses, then, do not only promote an economy of the gaze, but also a way of reasoning and performing according to worst-case scenarios and calculations of risk logics. The next section analyses the ways in which individual conduct is directed through CT training.

Action: "deny, detect and deter"

The novelty of current civilian recruitment to counter-terrorism duties consists in demanding action from citizens beyond that of the act of reporting. "CT citizens" are expected to be an active part of investigations rather than mere informers. For instance, ACT awareness training reminds the user: "The evidence you provide, no matter how small, could be the final piece of the puzzle to foil a terrorist attack and save lives" (Counter Terrorism Policing n.d.). Individuals become "citizen-detectives" (Vaughan-Williams 2008) who are able to interpret signs of radicalisation and to inspect their children's online activity and interactions to spot potential radicalisers, and security agents capable of performing protocols to detect suspicious items and interrogating individuals suspected of carrying out "hostile reconnaissance" tasks. This signifies a qualitative step from the calls to reporting such as "see it, say it, sorted".

While calls to report anything that makes you feel nervous or suspicious are repeated, these trainings packages also motivate individuals to take a step further. For example, individuals are encouraged to approach a suspicious person and ask: "Can I help you?", as a way of interrupting their potentially dangerous activity. In this way, the CT course presents "SCaN", which stands for "See, Check and Notify", as the "current awareness strategy" (Counter Terrorism Policing n.d.). According to this procedure, individuals must play an active role in "checking" before they inform the authorities. Checking, or investigating, includes a wide range of activities, from employing the "HOT protocol" (Counter Terrorism Policing n.d.) when encountering suspicious items, to approaching and

interrogating suspicious individuals at work, or "avoiding questions that result in a yes/no answer" when trying to find out whether your children could be at risk of radicalisation (Educate Against Hate 2018).

Consequently, when citizens find a suspicious item, the ACT course teaches them to ask themselves three questions: Is it hidden? Is it obvious? And finally, is it typical? (Counter Terrorism Policing n.d.). Rather than depending on experts' assessment, the CT training reminds the individual: "You will need to use your own judgment" (Ibid.). Once the individual decides that the item might not be dangerous (either because it seems typical, because it is not hidden, or because it obviously looks like a regular item, such as a bag containing leftover food), the training states: "Having undertaken the HOT protocol and confirmed there is nothing suspicious [. . .] you would need to proceed to *look inside to check* there is nothing suspicious" [emphasis added] (Counter Terrorism Policing n.d.). Unlike a regular citizen, who would inform the local authorities or the transport police, a "CT citizen" performs as a trained agent, able to proceed according to protocols previously reserved for the authorities, and even performing activities involving risk, such as "looking inside" items.

However, the CT training is not always presented as transmitting new expertise, but is also enacted and incorporated within existing professional practices. For example, the Module 2 of the ACT awareness e-learning package explains to the user that good customer service skills can deter criminal and terrorist activity, while "poor working practices" could be exploited by terrorists (Counter Terrorism Policing n.d.). As a result, someone who has good customer skills and good working practices is already better able to counter terrorism. By making use of their "good customer skills", the training encourages individuals to employ "the power of hello" and "can I help you" to challenge suspected unauthorised persons, or simply anyone displaying suspicious behaviour (Ibid.). Similarly, as with the above example, citizens are expected to go further in their roles as informers and co-operators, and are encouraged to play more significant roles in counter-terrorism policing. As proper "CT agents", individuals are expected to put their fears aside and to be able to perform normality, and even friendliness, when approaching potential terrorists.

Where a regular hotel receptionist sees a person wandering around the reception area, a "CT citizen" sees a potential case of "hostile reconnaissance", and makes use of their professional skills to approach the subject with the aim of thwarting their plan, as well as to find out more about them, before making a report to the authorities. In conclusion, "CT citizens" act according to the three D's: "Deny, Detect, Deter", in which detecting is just one of the tasks (Module 2, ACT e-learning in Counter Terrorism Policing n.d.).

A good example of this citizen-agent role is provided in the Eyes Wide Open video (CPNI UK 2013). This training material represents a fictional scenario in which a security staff member does not immediately ask an individual who has spent a long time in a building looking around and taking notes to leave, but neither does he report the subject to the police. Rather, the subject approaches the suspicious individual and interrogates him, tries to obtain the maximum amount of information, and later verifies the suspect's story before making an official report. The video shows how security personnel are expected to approach suspicious people to make them talk as much as possible and are then tasked with authenticating what they have heard. Following this scene, a Behavioural Detection Expert from Essex Police evaluates the staff member's performance and reminds the user to pay attention to what potential suspects ask, but also to how they answer questions. The expert concludes: "The lack of details in his

responses meant for me that his story was unconvincing", and he adds: "What was now crucial was that the security guard went away and verified his story" (CPNI UK 2013). Once the CT citizen/staff has interrogated the suspect and investigated and checked their story, the training video provides another protocol, "SALUTE", for a successful reporting (Counter Terrorism Policing n.d.).

My analysis shows how contemporary British counter-terrorism is preoccupied with forming specific subjects, and how, under calls for civilian participation, citizens are no longer limited to their traditional role of informants and reporters. These new subjectivities embody empowered and active individuals who possess different kinds of expertise and skills to identify signs of radicalisation, suspect items and behaviours, to investigate them, to approach and interrogate subjects, to evaluate and/or judge their answers, and to follow a wide range of protocols as professionally as an official security agent would. There is no difference in the way ideal "CT citizens" and the security forces and authorities would read, think about, and ultimately, approach their environment. They would not only perceive and assess the same risks, but they would also employ the same logics, and undertake the same actions.

Conclusion

The growing call for public participation in counter-terrorism and national security is reflected by the number of recent campaigns directed towards different sectors of the population (such as teachers and parents), and more generally towards "ordinary" citizens. Although the authorities' initial aim was to engage with Muslim communities, the article has shown how calls for public participation in countering terrorism are being expanded to the whole of society. Taking a governmental perspective to investigate some of the most prevalent security and counter-radicalisation campaigns and discourses, it has been argued that the current counter-terrorism marks a new moment in which distinctive political agents and social identities are being manufactured.

This article has shown how counter-terrorism functions as a technology involved in the production of certain subjectivities and (political) agents, i.e. CT citizens. A thorough analysis of the discourses used in radicalisation prevention and counter-terrorism training materials reveals how the counter-terrorism training promotes certain attitudes and practices, and cultivates political subjects and collective identities. In other words, a governmental analysis enables us to grasp the ways in which the discourses of care, responsibility, empowerment, and risk currently employed in counter-terrorism material directed at the whole population, seek to shape individuals' mentalities and ways of engaging with social realities, and to direct their conducts.

The article has also examined how the employment of responsibility and care discourses encourages the population to undertake specific counter-terrorism tasks. This widespread responsibilisation is being facilitated by safeguarding and care discourses that occupy a central space in Prevent e-learning and ACT training. These discourses are highly influential because of the overall acceptance of discourses of care, and because they situate counter-terrorism within pre-existing duties, such as safeguarding. The article has discussed the consequences that merging care and security entails for the conceptualisation of political violence and for the possible responses to conflict. For instance, families are portrayed as natural peace makers, moderate agents, and protective spaces,

while violence and abuse within them is categorically (and problematically) invisibilised. Importantly, where families are made responsible for preventing radicalisation, they are also potentially blamed and criminalised for any failure to counter terrorism. In this way, the article highlighted the double process of depoliticisation that current counter-radicalisation discourses produce: first, individuals involved in political violence and/or terrorism are reduced to the role of (brainwashed) victims (victims of grooming or abuse), and second, individuals and citizens are expected to fully agree and cooperate with the state/authorities, to become security agents.

Analysing the crucial role that discourses of empowerment and awareness play in the radicalisation *dispositif*, this article has demonstrated how individuals are asked to go beyond practices of reporting and to act as fearless security officers. Protocols, such as SCaN and "Deny, Detect, Deter", reveal counter-terrorism's preoccupation with forming specific subjects. Constant calls to be aware and to remain vigilant, but also to be confident and to act, promote new subjectivities within the population. The new subjectivities that British counter-terrorism encourages are surprisingly active and resemble professional security agents. The CT citizen is embedded in a constant mode of vigilance and is guided by a combatant logic in everyday life, constituting new forms of citizenship. It has been suggested that this gaze is highly politicised, since it is directed to see, and to act on, certain issues and scenarios, whilst other violences and risks are overlooked. In short, CT training not only teaches the popular gaze to watch for suspicious objects, individuals, and signs of radicalisation, but also configures the subject with certain knowledges, perceptions, protocols, and/or ways of behaving.

Notes

1. The latest public campaign and website (launched in November 2020) directed at "families and friends" who are worried that a loved one is "vulnerable" to radicalisation and/or is becoming radicalised is ACT Early (#ACTEarly). The website not only provides a link for reporting an individual, but also contains information and "real stories" about processes of radicalisation and teaches individuals how to "spot the signs". For a critical discussion of the concept of "vulnerability" in British counter-terrorism, see Elshimi (2017), Heath-Kelly (2016), and Heath-Kelly and Strausz (2018).
2. According to official figures, the Prevent e-learning course "has been completed over one million times" (HO 2018, 31), and "nearly 70,000 citizens" have signed up to participate in the ACT online course (National Counter Terrorism Security Office 2020).
3. The latest Prevent Strategy stipulates the aim to: "Build stronger partnerships with communities, civil society groups, public sector institutions and industry to improve Prevent delivery" (HO 2018, 10). In the most recent CONTEST, Home Secretary Sajid Javid states: "[B]y working together, with the police, security and intelligence agencies, the private and *public sectors, civil society*, international partners, and of course *the public*, we will make sure that terrorists cannot and will not change our way of life" [emphasis added] (HO 2018, 5).
4. Although Prevent training acknowledges the lack of evidence linking mental health issues to radicalisation, it still insists on the idea that people with mental health issues have an "increased vulnerability" to radicalising influences. Moreover, Prevent online training points to "lone actors" as having a "high prevalence of mental health conditions compared to the general population" (HM Government n.d.).

5. According to official figures, 30,984 reports were made in 2017, and more than 6,000 of those "helped inform live investigations" (Metropolitan Police 2019).

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Appendix 1. List of Analysed E-learning Courses, Websites, and Materials in Alphabetical Order

(1) ACT Action Counters Terrorism. ACT (Action Counters Terrorism). 2020. *ACT Early*. Accessed 15 December 2020. https://actearly.uk/
(2) Action Counters Terrorism (ACT) campaign video. BVRLA. (20 March 2018). *Action Counters Terrorism (ACT)* [Video]. YouTube. Accessed 15 December 2020. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RsCiAQXQTgc
(3) Educate Against Hate Parents' Hub. Educate Against Hate. 2018. Parents: Protecting your Children from Extremism (booklet). Educate Against Hate. Accessed 15 December 2020. https://educateagainsthate.com/resources/parents-protecting-children-extremism-2/
(4) Eyes Wide Open video. CPNI UK. 2013. *Personnel security – Eyes Wide Open* [Video]. YouTube. Accessed 15 December 2020. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GTFNYtKf6m8
(5) FATE online workshop. Find FATE. 2017. FATE – Online Workshop – Introduction [Video]. YouTube. Accessed 15 December 2020. https://www.youtube.com/watch?list=PL61fG0shOql0VD5JIJPuH-9OZr4FRLbAf&v=UMhx8spVfg8&feature=emb_logo
(6) How should you talk to your children about terrorism? The Times and The Sunday Times. (19 February 2016) [Video]. YouTube. Accessed 15 December 2020. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PyeVdGvgdS0&feature=emb_logo
(7) Let's Talk About It campaign website. Let's Talk About It [website]. Accessed 15 December 2020. https://www.ltai.info/
(8) Life Has No Rewind Button, ACT supporting material. Counter Terrorism Policing UK [Video]. YouTube. Accessed 15 December 2020. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RX6x1HuOWeU
(9) Prevent e-Learning.HM Government [online package]. Home Office. Accessed 15 December 2020. https://www.elearning.prevent.homeoffice.gov.uk/edu/screen1.html