"Still a bit uncomfortable, to be an arm of the state": Making sense and subjects of counter-extremism in the UK and Morocco

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Abstract
Countering violent extremism (CVE) policies infiltrate every corner of public life, travelling across the Global North and South. However, scholars have under-analysed the perspective of those charged with CVE's implementation, and have treated CVE in a spatial binary, implying that its operationalisations in the Global North and South are conceptually distinct. This article presents a comparative political ethnography of CVE projects framed as care provision in the field of education in Morocco and the UK. It asks, how is CVE rationalised for and by non-traditional security actors in education, such as university and NGO administrators, and how is it integrated into the ordinary across the North and the South? In both contexts, implementation does not "just" enrol those involved with care duties at their institution into the government of the "dangerous other." It also shapes the self-governance of those transformed into hesitant security actors. This paper argues that implementers leverage the 'normal politics' of institutional care to implement the global counter-extremist agenda. CVE enters spaces of education globally through camouflage – it blends itself into existing understandings and practices of institutional care, whatever they may be. By working across the North and the South through similar mechanisms of sense and subject-making, CVE recruits implementers for the co-production of an expansive global geography of exclusion that locates marginalised young Muslims as global outsiders within.

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Introduction

Once a tactic of national security, contemporary counter-terrorism now operates through areas of government concerned primarily with matters of public welfare, such as education and healthcare (Busher et al., 2017; Younis, 2020). Global North countries have integrated counter-terrorism into everyday life, with the UK emerging as a leader in this shift. The expansion of counter-terrorism through surveillance and pre-emptive policing in the North has received extensive scholarly examination since the beginnings of the 'War on Terror' (Amoore, 2009; Bigo and Tsoukala, 2008), as has the more recent reframing of countering violent extremism (CVE) as a form of care and welfare provision (Heath-Kelly, 2017; Younis and Jadhav, 2019). 'Care' as development assistance and humanitarian aid in the Global South has been linked to the security concerns of powerful interests in the North (Duffield, 2007). Existing literature, however, presents two significant oversights. First, the perspectives of implementers – the bureaucrats that bring CVE to life in their institutions – have been significantly understudied (de Goede et al., 2014). Scholars have analysed how CVE takes shape in an international system already organised through racial hierarchies that facilitate the construction of a suspect profile, casting (those perceived as) Muslims as potential extremists (Kundnani, 2015; Sian, 2017). Such analyses have revealed how CVE governs both how those deemed "suspect" come to know and perform their selves (Elshimi, 2015), and how they are perceived by those called on to act as "the vigilant public" (Amoore, 2009). Less scholarship has payed attention to how implementers too are shaped by and shape CVE (Qurashi, 2017; Taylor and Soni, 2017). Without sufficient attention to the construction of non-traditional security actors as the vigilant public, we risk a reductive understanding of the latter as the willing "eyes and ears" of the state. By non-traditional security actors, we refer to individuals and organisations that are coopted in the implementation of CVE policies, although they mainly operate as providers of social services rather than security (unlike traditional security providers, like the police and army). As policy implementers always have to "negotiate between different normative demands" (Zacka, 2017: 18), implementation sheds a critical light on the norms that allow CVE to reproduce itself through new actors in new spaces, and to become ordinary therein.

Second, studies have predominantly analysed CVE in the Global North and South in a conceptual binary.[1] This implies that what happens in the North is separate and entirely distinct from what happens in the South. However, CVE relies on mechanisms of global connection to expand its exclusionary logics. Northern states operationalise CVE globally, through structures like development cooperation. The policy approach that intertwines CVE with social care provision trespasses the boundaries of state sovereignty to govern "dangerous" populations abroad – as is also done through other forms of humanitarian assistance (Duffield, 2007). Simultaneously, CVE-as-care in the North fosters internal borders that profile identities with supposed links to the South – so that Muslims in the North embody the threat of outsiders within (Abbas, 2019). Investigating CVE in the North and South together lays these connections bare, and provides insights into how CVE contributes to the creation of a truly *global* colour line (Anievas et al., 2014).

Focusing on institutions that provide educational services, we ask: *how do non-traditional security actors in the North and South make sense of their involvement in CVE? How is profiling accommodated in distant educational spaces?* By analysing such spaces in the UK and in Morocco, we argue that CVE takes shape through its expansion, as non-traditional security actors navigate its structures and reconcile conflicting demands. In the North and in the South, CVE dons the guise of care to blend into the background of distinct institutional

spaces. This shared mechanism produces parallel, collaborative and multi-sited exclusionary geographies, placing young Muslims at global margins.

In the following section, we outline our research design, methodology and case studies. Next, we locate our questions in the critical literature on CVE in relation to the shift to pre-emptive policing, the racist dimension of this shift, and CVE's expansion in public life. We then present the findings of the two case studies, and proceed to a comparative discussion.

Research design

We examine CVE interventions through the perspective of implementers in two case studies: the Prevent duty in the UK, with interviews conducted at the University of Cambridge[2], and two anti-radicalisation projects in Tangier and Beni Mellal, funded by USAID and the EU respectively.

While CVE in a super elite, predominantly white university in a high-income country and through development organisations in a lower middle-income, Muslim-majority country may seem entirely distinct, we examine overlaps that point to the emergence of a global CVE geography. First, the Northern counter-terror state presents similar chronologies of intervention in both contexts. Although counter-terrorism escalated with 9/11, CVE more decisively infiltrated social services in the early 2010s – in the 2011 Prevent Review in the UK, and the first USAID-funded CVE projects in Morocco in 2012. A decade after, this approach has become "common sense" in both contexts. Second, Northern agendas of "containment" motivate implementation in both contexts. This is particularly evident in Morocco, where the implementation of CVE projects by foreign actors is not motivated by domestic terrorist threats, but by international incidents provoked by Moroccan foreign firefighters joining Daesh in Syria. Third, the countries share a story of securitisation of marginalised youth (Sukarieh and Tannock, 2018). The 2011 Prevent Review marks "confusion among young Muslims" in the UK – or, "second or third generation Muslims" (Home Office, 2011: 17) – about their faith and place in society (Home Office, 2011: 19) as a potential cause for radicalisation. In Morocco, both Tangier and Beni Mellal suffer high rates of youth unemployment, and large parts of their young population migrate abroad in search of better livelihoods. They have been on donors' radars as "areas of origin" of irregular Moroccan migrants in Europe (Gazzotti, 2018). Our comparative analysis therefore focuses on contexts where those perceived as 'young, unstable Muslims' are targets of welfare surveillance. Context matters and the violence of CVE is often more extensive in the South. Still, global patterns also exist in the mechanisms that facilitate CVE's implementation in distinct but interconnected spaces.

This paper draws on primary source policy documents of the CVE initiatives under scrutiny and on semi-structured interviews with senior staff involved in CVE implementation in the field of education in the UK (n:17) and Morocco (n:11).[3] Respondents were recruited through purposeful and snowball sampling. The main criteria for recruitment was their direct involvement in the implementation of CVE projects. In the UK, half of the individuals contacted were willing to be interviewed, although they often expressed hesitation about "not having expertise to add" to what is stated by the policy and other respondents. The hesitance around speaking as an authority, while simultaneously *acting* as such, speaks to the unease of those in charge of implementing surveillance, whose implementation is in turn watched and evaluated by the Department for Education. Those interviewed were middle-aged, white, and all held a bachelor's degree, and more often, also master's and doctoral degrees. Their demographic qualities are indicative of the whiteness of the University, and of the seniority of their institutional status. In Morocco, most of the

respondents contacted agreed to participate in the interview. However, they too spoke cautiously, out of concern for disturbing local and national authorities. The author encountered unusual resistance from contacts at USAID – emails and calls went unanswered, and arranging an interview was impossible. This speaks to the delicate place that CVE inhabits in international relations between donors and recipients. Respondents were mostly in their forties, and included both Moroccan and foreign respondents, reflecting the local/international divide characterising development cooperation.

Data of the two case studies were analysed jointly, through deductive and inductive methods, and an interpretive approach attentive to subjectification and sense-making.

Making sense and subjects of counter-extremism

The global CVE agenda relies on non-traditional security actors to animate it. Its far-reaching geography is characteristic of a security apparatus's "constant tendency to expand" (Foucault, 2007: 45). This expansion relies on ongoing "stimulation of the fear of danger" (Foucault, 2008: 67) – here, of extremism. The latter justifies the need for biopolitical intervention in new spaces and temporalities to regulate the "well-being" of individuals (Foucault, 2007: 346). New agents are required for such expansion.

CVE is expansive in multiple senses. First, it relies on strategies of 'proactive' policing – an approach that does not tackle *actual* crimes, but rather maintains order through *preventative* techniques (Massumi, 2007). Preventative methods are inquisitorial. They assess the *likelihood* of future crime, and need to proactively source suspects through creative techniques of evidence-making and evaluation (Butterfield, 2004). Prevention thus stretches the spatio-temporal scope of CVE to the "pre-criminal space" (Heath-Kelly, 2017). Second, the inquisitorial nature of CVE expands the possible sources of threat to include mundane spaces of everyday life: it demands pre-emptive work to be done everywhere, by everyone (Amoore, 2009). In so doing, CVE travels across borders to tackle threats wherever they may be found, especially at "their roots" (Bigo and Tsoukala, 2008). CVE thus elides boundaries between ordinary/exceptional and national/international – the ordinary may be a *potential* site of emergency; the international may be the *root* of domestic threat.

Educators who are charged with implementing CVE find themselves in this spatiotemporal realm: the future is in the present, and the elsewhere is here. Non-traditional security actors tasked with the surveillance of those showing 'signs' of radicalisation shape and are shaped by the security agendas that co-opt them (de Goede et al., 2014). Negotiating the implementation of a policy informs and is informed by implementers' own identity construction, as well as the institutional structures they navigate (Ahmed, 2012). These newly recruited soldiers of surveillance then facilitate the expansion of CVE by co-governing the "suspect" other and themselves as "good" institutional actors.

CVE is shaped by the institutional spaces it assails. In the encounter between the world of policy and the everyday, frontline bureaucrats have to reconcile the need to follow procedures, wisely spend resources, and live up to new and old responsibilities (Zacka, 2017). To reconcile these (at times contradictory) demands, non-traditional security actors resort to some discretion, informed by institutional context. Policy implementers within an institution have to perform a certain kind of subjectivity to be taken seriously. They often have to appeal to institutionalised values – "how we do things here" – in order to present their work in a way that can be accepted by the rest of the institution (Ahmed, 2012: 25). The sense- and subject-making processes involved in implementation then shape CVE policy in real time. The question becomes, how do they do so?

Counter-extremism in the UK

The prevent duty

The Prevent strategy has undergone several revamps since its creation in 2003 as part of the broader counter-terrorism agenda, CONTEST. Prevent was designed with the stated aim of preventing individuals from being radicalised. The Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015, Section 26, more forcefully enrolled new institutions into this effort, making Prevent's implementation a statutory duty for "specified authorities" – mainly health and education providers. The duty requires education institutions for all ages (from nurseries to higher and further education) to identify those vulnerable to extremism, defined 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" (Home Office, 2015a, paragraph 7). Relevant institutions must make necessary interventions, including referrals to "Channel," the Home Office's de-radicalisation and mentorship programme (Home Office, 2015a, paragraph 44).

In response to earlier critiques that Prevent endangers civil liberties and academic freedom, and that it discriminatorily targets Muslim communities (eg. Nabulsi, 2017), the 2015 articulation of the Duty presents itself as part of the existing responsibility to care for and protect the welfare of individuals within an institution (Busher et al., 2017). The "Prevent duty guidance: for higher education institutions in England and Wales" (2015a)[4] outlines the two main areas of intervention as the management of external speakers and events, and the provision of "welfare and pastoral care/chaplaincy support" (Home Office, 2015b). The former entails ensuring that events do not foster an environment conducive to radicalisation, and the latter that adequate welfare support is available to students who may be "vulnerable to radicalisation." The emphasis on welfare reconciles contradictions between policing students and the "free" pursuit of knowledge (Home Office, 2015b, pargraph 8). It posits that the duty to protect student welfare precedes Prevent: as higher education bodies "have a clear role to play in the welfare of their students *and we would expect there to be* sufficient ...support available for all students" (Home Office, 2015b, pargraph 25, our emphasis). Universities have largely adopted this framing of Prevent as routine care.

Making sense of prevent as care

Those in charge of implementing the policy at the University are mostly senior educationalists who are already responsible for overseeing welfare provision. Their narrative of Prevent echoed the official understanding of the Duty as a continuation of already institutionalised practices of pastoral care. Dr. James Peters described Prevent as "an extension of welfare obligations,":

> [...] With vulnerable students, they may be exposed to extremism through friends, online, ...
> we'd be aware of these issues [of radicalisation] anyways (Interview 1).

Similarly, Dr. Mike Atwood explained, "Because [the University] by and large takes care of students, it's business as usual" (Interview 2).

Some expressed that this University is especially suitable for implementing Prevent, because of the already intensive system of pastoral care. Dr. Bill Smith explained:

> Collegiate universities are the best places to implement Prevent, because you can't move here in colleges without someone noticing ... everyone has eyes on everyone so unusual behaviour would be noticed (Interview 3).

Dr. Smith had evidently reflected on critiques of Prevent; he noted having spoken with "dissenters" among colleagues who were concerned that Prevent "might single out" Muslims (Interview 3). Still, he maintained that Prevent does not diverge from existing commitments to "reassuring the safety of students." He added, "...Given all the huge noise made about it, it's for me a bit of a non-issue" (Interview 3). For these respondents, the easy fit between "how we do things here" and Prevent makes the latter unconcerning.

   Others connected existing care practices more tentatively to Prevent. Dr Elizabeth Finch was hesitant:

> I don't like it as a concept that you're monitoring students, but we watch out for them in lots of ways, in some ways it's another way of watching out for students – but it's still a bit uncomfortable, to be an arm of the state (Interview 4).

Similarly, Dr. Sam Watson was clearly sceptical about the policy to an extent, but presented it as unconcerning *if* it does not change how things are done:

> I don't think it has altered anything, because tutors would notice concerning behaviour anyway... I see it as a tiny corner of pastoral care, things we are already doing but now we also have to jump through some Prevent hoops (Interview 5).

Still, he expressed some frustration when asked whether Prevent's category of "fundamental British values" might alter how care is undertaken:

> – You would think core British values would be not being asked to invade someone's... [*drifts off, putting a hand over his face*]
> – Do you think Prevent is an invasion of privacy?
> – It can be, but it depends on how you implement it. [...]
> – Does Prevent contradict any of business as usual? Could there be negative impacts to use of discretion or how it's implemented [generally]?
> – My role as prevent lead to make sure that doesn't happen (Interview 5).

Despite some hesitance then, these respondents re-affirmed a lack of concern if Prevent is contained to existing practices.

   That Prevent can fit the usual business of caring for students was only fully rejected by a few interviewees. Dr. Raymond Davis took on a leading role with implementation because he was concerned. He explained that he thinks Prevent will "create a culture of informal surveillance" (Interview 6), which he explained, is filtered through anti-Muslim prejudice.

   The more common critique raised by respondents was the increased bureaucratic work: ensuring that there is a free speech policy, that there is a procedure for assessing the risk of events, and that staff are trained. These respondents associated the changes caused by Prevent as meaningless, but a waste of time: "bureaucratic clutter" or a "tick-box" exercise.

   Dr. Jack Park, a respondent in a particularly senior position, presented the making of Prevent into a tick-box exercise as an advantageous strategy for minimising its impact: "Students might not even notice its presence" (Interview 7). He acknowledged that

some staff had raised concerns that it could "undermine freedom of speech" or lead to "inappropriate monitoring strategies" (Interview 7). Dr. Park, however, argued that because Prevent is integrated into existing welfare procedures, "in practice, nothing new would happen" (Interview 7). He claimed then that those who had been initially hesitant have accepted its integration into welfare as "the best of a bad job" (Interview 7).

Rationalising profiling

The standard Prevent training used at the University is informed by the Extremism Risk Guidance 22+ (ERG22+) framework (Lloyd and Dean, 2015), derived from psychology research conducted at the National Offenders Management Service. The framework lists risk factors that make an individual more vulnerable to radicalisation, including the "need to redress injustice"; "us and them thinking"; and "need for identity" (Lloyd and Dean, 2015: 30–31). However, the framework draws on data collected from people already convicted of terrorism-related offences, not those who are "at risk." In 2016, publication of the framework's methodology sparked criticism from academics who pointed to a lack of sufficient evidence and rigour for applying the findings to a wide-reaching prevention strategy (The Guardian, 2016).

Prevent calls on non-traditional security actors to survey these risk factors through a racialised lens. The 2011 Prevent review lists the following drivers:

> . . . radicalization occurs as people search *for identity, meaning and community*. . .some *second or third generation Muslims* in Europe, facing *apparent or real* discrimination and socio-economic disadvantage, can find in terrorism a 'value system', a community and an apparently just cause (Home Office, 2011: 17; our emphases).

This framing suggests that Muslims may be radicalised due to psychological deficits: a lack of "identity, meaning, and community," and experiences of "apparent or real" discrimination. "Muslim identity" thus appears as a risk in itself. The category of "second or third generation Muslims in Europe" draws a border between being European and being a Muslim European national. The latter are "in Europe," but are not really of here.

The 2011 Review further states:

> . . . Support for violence is associated with . . .an aspiration to defend Muslims when they *appear to be* under attack or unjustly treated. Issues which can contribute to *a sense* that Muslim communities are being unfairly treated include so-called 'stop and search' powers used by the police under counter-terrorism legislation; the UK's counter-terrorism strategy; *a perception* of biased and Islamophobic media coverage; and UK foreign policy, notably with regard to Muslim countries. . . (Home Office, 2011: 18; our emphases).

In this characterisation, discomfort with the state's surveillance of Muslims – the "sense" that Muslims are "under attack" – is a (mis)perception associated with potential violence.

The later 2015 Revised Prevent Guidance for England and Wales (Home Office, 2015a) responds to earlier criticisms regarding the policy's focus on Muslims. It is more brief and subtle, but its underlying logic is unchanged. Muslim identity is still presented as vulnerable to radicalisation through "us-versus-them" thinking:

Islamist extremists regard Western intervention in Muslim-majority countries as a 'war with Islam', creating a narrative of 'them' and 'us'. Their ideology includes the uncompromising belief that people cannot be both Muslim and British, and that Muslims living here should not participate in our democracy (Home Office, 2015a, paragraph 10).

The problematisation of the "belief that people cannot be both Muslim and British" suggests that spreading such a belief puts Muslims at risk. The implicit response to criticism of Prevent is that the policy does not target Muslims as outsiders; rather, Islamist extremists do so by suggesting that being a British Muslim is impossible. Yet, the second half of the same sentence, which criticises the belief "that Muslims living *here* should not participate in *our* democracy," (our emphases) posits that Muslims are outsiders "living *here*" in "our" democracy. The 2015 revisions then still frame Muslims in the UK as risky and at risk others.

The Prevent training used at universities similarly presents doubts about the policy's discriminatory nature as a misperception. One slide in the training asks, "What does Prevent say about terrorism?" and responds:

One of the controversies surrounding Prevent is that ... the Prevent duty itself encourages Islamophobia and alienates Muslim communities. Those responsible for implementing Prevent need to be sensitive to these *perceptions* and *feelings*.

Implementers are obliged to (re)present the policy in a positive light.[5]

A few interviewees raised concerns about taking part in discriminatory profiling when looking for vulnerable students. Dr. Laine expressed concern about the whiteness of Prevent's watchful gaze. She said, "I wonder about whether it's my place to enforce something like fundamental British values" (Interview 9), and elaborated:

When I see someone who is covered head to toe and walking behind a man, there is the good liberal in me that thinks no, you can't do that *here*, but then I think, is it my place to say? (Interview 9)

Dr. Wesworth, another white woman, noted similar discomfort:

What slightly worries me is the focus on one particular area of concern – we are being asked to look at Islam. It's like wearing blinkers, it closes other issues.

Contrary to the training, Dr. Laine and Dr. Westworth are uncomfortable with the reality of profiling. However, they seemed convinced that self-awareness would guard them from partaking in discriminatory implementation. They thus take up the responsibility of mitigating Prevent's discrimination to reconcile themselves to performing their legal duty.

Some, like Dr. Watson, who was dubious about Prevent's implications for privacy, expressed broader suspicion regarding the ways in which universities' involvement is contorted to appear positive. He noted, in reference to the annual reporting documents:

One of the questions was 'What evidence can you provide that Prevent *has helped* your already existing procedures?' There seems to be some seeking of justification or fishing for evidence (Interview 5).

We, the authors, had a similar sense when attending the Security & Counter Terror Expo 2019 (SCTX) in London, where the National Coordinator for Prevent presented the high

number of referrals as a testament to the program's success. According to the presentation at the Expo, 7,318 referrals were made in 2017–18, with 33% from education institutions. Still, according to other statistics presented at the Expo, the majority of referrals (58%) are dismissed out of hand. As is apparent to hesitant implementers, their task is less about identifying those vulnerable to extremism "correctly," and more about doing so abundantly, through a racialised lens.

CVE in Morocco

Donor-funded CVE programmes

In Morocco, Global North powers implement CVE through programs delivered by International Organisations and local and international NGOs. We analysed two projects. The first is funded by USAID and implemented by the International Organisation for Migration (IOM), through the intermediary of Moroccan NGOs. The project promoted a range of social and economic activities targeting Moroccan youths, including educational (tutoring at schools, after-school clubs), leisure (recreational activities, summer camps) and labour integration activities (vocational training, internship programmes). As a document from the USAID-funded program argues:

> . . . The FORSATY project seeks to mitigate youth grievances and hopelessness by linking them to educational and economic opportunities, as well as helping them to connect positively to their communities and local institutions. Youth so benefitting should be much less likely to turn to extremist messaging . . . (USAID, 2016a: 5–6).

The second project was funded by the EU and implemented by an international NGO, in collaboration with local authorities and NGOs. This programme gave the same critical importance to education, but more through capacity-building than service delivery. The project aimed at strengthening the capacity of educators in the school system and in civil society organisations to prevent youth radicalisation through an especially devised educational pathway. Training and financial support were also provided to civil society organisations to implement small projects on the promotion of "interculturality" and the prevention of radicalisation. A third component of the project aimed at establishing focal points for psycho-social support in marginalised neighbourhoods and schools (Interview 13).

These two projects speak to a well-established tendency of international organisations led by Global North powers to view the Middle East and North Africa as a source of international and domestic "threat." Since the launch of the 'War on Terror,' US development policy became increasingly intertwined with counter-terrorism objectives – the Trans-Sahara Counterterrorism Partnership, which Morocco is part of, is symptomatic of such indirect US intervention (Schmidt, 2013). The EU followed a similar pattern: although it already had a long history of economic and technical cooperation with countries in the Southern Mediterranean, security has become increasingly relevant in the articulation of strategic priorities for the EU-Mediterranean partnership since the Barcelona Declaration in 1995. Development cooperation is characterised by a discourse of protecting EU citizens from "risks" emerging in the region, including terrorism and irregular migration (Afailal, 2016). The relevance of counter-terrorism in the EU's development policy escalated after 9/11. In 2004, the European Council officially sanctioned the external dimension of the EU

counter-terrorism policy, which integrated counter-terrorism in relations with third countries (Wolff, 2009).

The localisation of US and EU counter-terror policies overlaps with Morocco's own engagement in counter-terrorism. Until 2004, Morocco had kept its distance from the 'War on Terror,' for fear of alienating its own citizens. The 2003 terrorist bombings in Casablanca, however, pushed the government to adopt a local counter-terror strategy, which unfolded in the approval of counter-terrorism legislation, bureaucratisation of religious practice, and policing of suspect terrorist cells (Wainscott, 2017). The expansion of state control over religion allowed Moroccan authorities to forge new alliance with religious actors and neutralise dissenters, further silencing opposition through the curtailment of civil rights (Human Rights Watch, 2004). Morocco was also proactive in repurposing its counter-terrorism policy as a form of diplomacy to garner the support of African, European and North American allies in unresolved territorial disputes, in the negotiation of trade agreements, and more broadly in nurturing an international reputation as a modern, progressive and "religiously moderate" country in North Africa (Salime, 2007).

Making sense of donor-funded CVE as care

When asked about how CVE projects connect to previous activities implemented by the same international organisations under scrutiny or in the same geographical areas, most respondents gestured toward a continuity with past youth-oriented projects. The USAID-funded programme used the physical space of a social-educational centre, built with Spanish funding in the early 2000s in a marginalised neighbourhood of Tangier. Rachid, an aid worker based at this complex, with much experience working with youths in that neighbourhood, explained that the centre had implemented development projects with children and young people for a long time, but in relation to the prevention of irregular emigration. He argued:

> What changed is the objective: with the Spanish, it was all migration prevention, now it is all prevention of radicalisation, anti-terrorism. We, the people that take the decisions, know it, but the people that come to animate the workshops, they do not know. It is a question of politics, if the relations between the two countries change, the funds change as well (Interview 10).

The difference between the past and the present, he highlighted, was minimal, and mainly rhetorical.

Didier, a development consultant who had long worked on youth development projects in Morocco, echoed Rachid. He characterised these shifts as evocative of the evolution of European security concerns:

> The programs that twenty years ago you would have called "youth disease" ten years ago were labelled as "prevention of irregular emigration" and now they are "prevention of radicalisation" (Interview 11).

According to this description, the substance of the project does not change; what changes is the label, according to the political rent that donors want to extract.

The difference between counter-terrorism and previous youth interventions was further desacralized by aid workers as a routine expression of "how we do things here." Angel, a representative of the EU delegation in Rabat, commented:

> Oh well, but the fight against radicalisation is a trendy topic! I have been working in this field [the development sector] for fifteen years. First there was the environmental impact, then the gender aspect, then there was migration... now there is radicalisation. [...] Because people [aid workers] have to write this if they want money ... because with the word "prevention" we can do whatever! Implementing a programme on the fight against poverty is [now] prevention of radicalisation, a programme of sanitation in the slums, same thing... and then, how will you measure this? I am sorry but this is really the perverse effect of [international development] cooperation (Interview 12).

The shift to CVE priorities was thus presented as an example of how development work has to "run behind the money" and operate according to donor trends.

Maria, one of the NGO officers at the organisation implementing the EU-funded anti-radicalisation project, however, explained the shift as keeping up with the main problems affecting Moroccan youth. The project was implemented by an NGO that had been working for a long time on projects benefiting marginalised Moroccan youths. This, however, was their first anti-radicalisation initiative, as previous projects operated within the framework of preventing irregular emigration. Maria explained:

> The phenomenon of unaccompanied minors [lasted] from 2000 onwards up to 2010-2011 maximum, because [then] it drastically reduced. [...] Therefore we also started reflecting a bit and we said, "Ok, thank God this is no longer an emergency as it had been the past ten years and maybe we could keep on working on migration, but adapting it to current topics." [...] Now our main project is on the prevention of youth radicalisation. If in fifteen years someone asked me this question [why did you start working on youth radicalisation], I would say because we had experience in working with youth, with schools and because this is *the* main question that youths have (Interview 13).

In a later interview, however, Maria said:

> ... You know better than me that [international development] cooperation is based on trends. Now it is no longer possible to do a project without linking it to the fight against youth radicalisation... The other day I was writing a project and at a certain point I stopped and told myself "What am I, a far-right political leader?" (Interview 14).

She thus eventually echoed the others in describing the emergence of counter-terrorism in the agenda of donors and aid agencies.

Being overly critical about the label attached to the money, however, was considered overly idealistic by some practitioners. Didier mentioned:

> There are three approaches [vis-à-vis these sort of programmes]: the critical approach, which is essential, but that then does not really propose solutions ...; the institutional, that does just and only what institutions want; and then there is the critical-pragmatic, that says "let's see what there is, and let's try to do something useful with it" (Interview 11).

Within the aid world, shrinking budgets threaten organisational survival. As security is localising resources that would otherwise be unavailable, adapting to security imperative is considered an acceptable, or inescapable, reality by CVE implementers.

Still, practitioners do not deem all forms of security as workable frameworks. One of my interlocutors drew my attention to a USAID-funded "community-oriented policing

activity" (COPA). COPA is a 4.9 million dollars project that emerged as a response to "a USAID participatory youth assessment conducted in 2015 in Tangier and Tétouan," which

> revealed that youth's sense of insecurity in their neighbourhoods could be attributed to a lack of positive police presence (USAID, 2018).

The programme works to bring police and citizens closer together through "strengthening community capacity," "training and technical assistance," and "building trust and collaboration" (USAID, 2018). Such an agenda can be alienating in a country where everyday state surveillance is a reality implemented through neighbourhood informants. The association of this programme to CVE is unclear: although the implementing partners are different, one of the centres hosting the USAID CVE programme also hosts an office for the COPA project (fieldnotes, September 2017). It seems the projects were conceived together, but grew apart due to staff concerns about linking development and security so bluntly. Sara, an IOM project officer told me, "The two programmes emerged together, but then they were divided, because they [the COPA] is really security, they work with the police (Interview 15). Security *tout court* trespasses the boundaries of what implementers tolerate.

Rationalising profiling

Both projects justify the need for CVE work in virtue of Morocco's record of people leaving to join terrorist organisations (Interview 14). A document related to a USAID-funded project explains:

> While only a small minority of disaffected and frustrated youth can be expected to embrace violent extremism, the northern region of Tangier-Tétouan has already been linked to this phenomenon (USAID, 2016a: 5).

Implementers are socialised into associating certain signs with "at risk" youth through publications and workshops. In the case of the EU-funded programme, part of the funding for the project was used for a psycho-social study on youth radicalisation. The report is largely based on an extensive literature review, assessing the conditions of youths in Morocco and retracing the evolution of (mainly Islamic) fundamentalism, religious radicalisation and its decline in Morocco, as well as an assessment of psycho-social theories of radicalisation. The study includes an empirical section based on a survey measuring "the perception of youths on the phenomenon of religious radicalization and their possible engagement in a radicalization path" (Aalla and Lovato, n.d.: 13).[6] The author specifies that "the questionnaire has been built following the terms of reference defined during the contractual phase, to define whether elements favouring a risk of radicalization exist for Moroccan youths residing in the areas tackled by the project" (Aalla and Lovato, n.d.: 86). The author notes the elements that would define the risk subject, including "he would not feel well [psychologically]," "he would consider his parents as misbelievers and therefore unable to exercise parental authority," and "he would delegitimise the power of other adults and of the authorities" (Aalla and Lovato, n.d.: 86). The introduction to the empirical phase suggests that these indicators have been defined *before* the creation of the survey, not identified by the findings. The survey therefore measures the incidence of these predetermined factors in the population sample; it does not assess whether these factors are in fact connected to radicalisation. The research is inquisitorial, insofar as it seeks findings to corroborate its conclusions, rather than drawing conclusions from findings.

The interpretation of the survey responses by the author of the report looks to prove (as opposed to assess) the hypothesised "push factors" presented in the literature review. For example, to the question "When you need information or important advice on moral and religious questions, who do you go to?" 50.5% answered "the family." The author comments on this finding with concern, stating that:

> This invites us to question the other half (of the sample) that never asks the family [for advice] in these cases. Could we then talk about a delegitimation [of the family] or a form of distancing oneself, considering that the acquisition of knowledge from the family in this area ended with childhood and [this suggests these respondents believe] that their family has nothing to add? (Aalla and Lovato, n.d.: 101).

The comment on this empirical finding ties up directly with the analysis pre-empted in the report's literature review, where the author identifies the distance between children and parents as a source of "anomie" and conducive to radicalisation. That half of the young people interviewed as part of the empirical research does not ask the family for advice regarding morality therefore becomes a red flag due to a predetermined interpretation of the findings.

The risk frameworks provided by donors are not always unconditionally accepted by implementers. In 2015, USAID gathered practitioners based in the Maghreb and the Sahel for a workshop in Casablanca on "Participatory and Collaborative Approaches to Countering Violent Extremism." Participants were asked to comment on the drivers to violent extremism in their own country, "using participatory methodologies." After completing the exercise, the workshop facilitators presented the Violent Extremism (VE) Framework used by USAID and opened the floor for comments (USAID, 2015: 7). USAID's framework includes as risks: "Existence of radical institutions or venues (mosques, madrasas)" and "*Perception* that the international system is fundamentally unfair and hostile to Muslim societies and peoples" (USAID, n.d.: 4). Like Prevent, USAID also includes "social exclusion and marginality" and "frustrated expectations" (USAID, n.d.: 3) amongst the "socio-economic drivers," especially for youth. Despite a large consensus on socio-economic drivers, the participants at the workshop questioned other parts of the framework, namely its focus on Islam (and religion, broadly). As the workshop report states:

> There was widespread agreement that insofar as ideology is a factor (the import of which was debated by the group), extremist ideology should be discussed instead of specific religions. The pull factor "existence of radical institutions or venues" should not list, or not only list, "mosques and madrassas" (USAID, 2015: 7).

Workshop participants, who had been invited to learn and further disseminate USAID'S CVE framework, judged that it targets Muslims disproportionately. There was no mention in the report of whether the feedback provided by the participants had been actually used to revise the framework, and if so, how.

Despite the efforts to establish seemingly scientific parameters to identify at risk-subjects, evaluating CVE projects is challenging. As a report from RAND argues:

> Evaluating CVE programs has been a challenge for many program staff. [...] The toolkit provides options for evaluating intermediate outcomes that, *in theory*, will reduce the risk of

terrorist attacks or the probability that a program's target audience will support violent extremism (RAND, 2017: 2, emphasis ours).

Remarkably then, the USAID-funded FORSATY programme "did not track the Program Goal of enabling youth to reject violent extremist messaging and actors with an indicator" (USAID, 2016b: 8). This stands out in a field of operations – international development – where the auditing culture is extremely developed. Evaluators contracted by the IOM report on the project:

> In terms of rendering local communities safer, 704 youth (689 males, 15 females) participated in Community Dynamics (CD), FORSATY's new initiative in collaboration with smaller neighbourhood associations. Among the participants were eight youth who were convinced not to join ISIL in Syria, as reported by the FORSATY CD manager, although the evaluation team could not corroborate this fact independently (p. v).

The only indications of the programme's impact on preventing radicalisation per se are anecdotal, and deemed unverifiable by the evaluators. The programme is not really assessed in terms of its capacity to avert terrorist incidents: it is deemed successful insofar as it reaches young people deemed "vulnerable." Whereas the risk frameworks that inform these programmes draw on research that explicitly fishes for corroborating evidence, the lack of evidence on whether the programmes actually counter extremism is irrelevant for CVE's expansion into the development domain.

Discussion

Making institutional sense of CVE

In both the UK and Morocco, we argue that security practices expand through CVE's chameleon-like infiltration of institutions that have established contact with "vulnerable" populations. Social services are repurposed explicitly for the prevention of the threat that the vulnerable supposedly pose to the rest. The "narrative of continuity" that presents Prevent as an extension of existing care obligations (Busher et al., 2017) opens the doors for its implementation in education, social work, and health services. The CVE imperative blends in, donning the colours of localised practices. In Morocco, CVE acts upon the state educational system, rather than through it. It works through International Organisations where CVE can be made to fit into existing structures of care provision. In both cases, implementers navigate CVE out of obligation, either for legal requirements or funding constraints. How they navigate implementation, however, depends on CVE's capacity to blend in with existing understandings of other obligations. Implementers make sense of, or at least make peace with, CVE as an extension of existing structures of social care. Rather than naively "buying into" a narrative of continuity, then, implementers employ the narrative of CVE as social care as a sense-making mechanism to reconcile exceptional security demands with existing practices.

CVE mobilises two strong sentiments to bolster its effectiveness in blending in: a sense of concern for the youth in question, and a commitment to, borrowing a term from Sara Ahmed (2012), institutional happiness.

The psychological language of vulnerabilities enables implementers' integration of the policy into their understandings of their care obligations towards the youth in question. Institutional actors tend to convince themselves that their implementation can go beyond a

policy's stated goals, and even overcome its shortcomings, to enable ethical objectives (Ahmed, 2012). CVE takes advantage of this habit. Even uneasy implementers of Prevent reconcile feeling like a surveillance "arm of the state" with the ethical imperative of "watching out" for the vulnerable. In Morocco, sentiments of concern and shrinking aid budgets encourage implementers to consider rejection of security funding as overly idealistic, and to see CVE as a non-issue insofar as it keeps projects running. As donors and their priorities are already inscribed into the public policy landscape, concern for sustaining funding encourages collaboration. The appeal of continuity delegitimises resistance to CVE: if there is nothing exceptional about CVE, resistance is undue.

Institutional happiness here functions as a grand narrative about the inherent goodness of the status quo. The belief that Prevent is not a matter of huge concern so long as it is implemented in a way that goes unnoticed only makes sense if one believes that the institution's normal practices are already unproblematic. Even respondents concerned that Prevent might streamline a culture of surveillance did not question whether its implementation is unremarkable precisely because such a culture may precede Prevent – especially in an institution where staff is used to watching (out for) students. In the case of Morocco, the belief that if the status quo hasn't changed, then there is no substantial problem, trivialises the development-security nexus. As Ahmed puts it, "a belief. . .that everyone is happy," or as happy as they can be, that is, belief in institutional happiness, "allows management to not hear the problems" (Ahmed, 2012: 146). Aid workers criticise the fact that the labels of youth-related projects frequently change. They, however, do not raise concerns about the underlying logic revealed by these labels: that Moroccan youth are re-presented as deserving of care only by virtue of their alleged dangerousness. Narratives of continuity, and the belief in the inherent goodness of the status quo, allow even those who feel ethically dubious about CVE to rationalise implementation so long as it does not threaten the ordinary.

Implementers therefore demarcate boundaries of acceptability through "narratives of continuity." The limits of CVE implementation lie within the limits of institutional acceptance: it can infiltrate so long as its implementation does not clash with implementers' understanding of their happy institution and "how we do things here." This commitment to continuity persists despite the fact that there is a clear lack of control by implementers in terms of the tasks they are obliged to perform, how they are obliged to spend their time, and what happens with the information they are obliged to provide. Reluctant implementers resist in mundane ways: they "drag their feet" (Spiller et al., 2018: 135) by trying to contain changes to paperwork, box-ticking, and changing labels. Still, petty bureaucracy too commits one to something (Ahmed, 2012) – in this case to a conception of care primarily concerned with maintaining the status quo.

Rationalising profiling

Parallel processes of rationalisation and de-rationalisation are also involved in transforming non-traditional security actors into implementers of a policy marked with widespread concerns about racism. On the one hand, implementers are called on to rationalise the targeting of "vulnerable Muslims" based on pseudo-scientific parameters that encourage acting on vague signs. On the other hand, policymakers dismiss the rational need to evaluate the effectiveness of CVE, since care undertaken with the purposes of countering radicalisation is presented as unambiguously good, whether it works or not.

Three sense-making strategies rationalise this profiling logic. The first leans on the psychologisation of radicalisation (Younis, 2021), mobilising a sentiment of care toward "vulnerable" populations. The Prevent duty guidance clearly sets up the young Muslim

student as the profile of someone psychologically vulnerable to extremism. CVE projects in Morocco are designed through similar discourse, drawing on literature on adolescent psychology and radicalisation to identify poor Moroccan youths as vulnerable.

The second relies on an epidemiological approach to radicalisation (Heath-Kelly, 2017), mobilising a sentiment of care for society at large and its vulnerability to the "virus" of radicalisation. Prevent rationalises the surveillance of Muslims by constructing the latter as inherently "foreign" and threatening to "British values." In Morocco, the need to extend the long arm of Western nation-states onto poor Moroccan youth is motivated by identifying Morocco as an origin country for foreign fighters in the Levant. Regions of origins are identified as likely to produce more outsiders within, and therefore need to be "immunised" to radicalisation.

The third presents risk frameworks as though they are derived from empirical data, appeasing concern for validity. But analysis of methodology disproves the "scientific" validity of such frameworks. Prevent draws on risk-factors identified in research on convicted "extremist offenders" – not people who are vulnerable to radicalisation, but that have *already been 'radicalised'*. In Morocco, the profile of at-risk subjects amongst Moroccan youths is determined by vulnerability frameworks created and disseminated by aid agencies through commissioned publications and workshops. In this case, such frameworks are not diffused through an obvious "top-down approach," but through "participatory" tools that give such frameworks an empirical appearance.

In both our case studies, external observers and implementers contest the discriminatory potential of such risk frameworks. In the Moroccan case, the critiques do not seem to result in a modification of CVE terms. In the UK case, critiques have had wider reaching impact. Yet, response to criticisms works through the same psychology discourse of vulnerability, which diverts accusations of discrimination by presenting Muslim identity as not risky in itself but only insofar as it can lead to "identity confusion" and a "misperception" of the political climate. Additionally, criticisms of counter-terrorism in the UK are repackaged through the same psychology discourse as "misperceptions" of the vulnerable.

The dubious metrics used for identifying vulnerable individuals are bolstered by the impossibility of evaluating CVE projects. In the case of Prevent, the very objective defies evaluation. The purpose is to catch those vulnerable so far "upstream" that it is hard to say how many of those who are referred and put through Channel were actually en route to radicalisation. The program's success is measured merely by virtue of the high number of referrals. In the case of Morocco, evaluators create self-validating indicators for evaluation. Where 'direct' evidence exists, it is deemed unverifiable by the evaluators of the USAID project. In both cases, implementers seem aware that evidence must be fished for. Still, implementers are able to reconcile themselves to the profiling duty they have been assigned by referring to their own institution's ethical framework and already existing duties to care for the youth in question, for society at large, and to avert risks to both.

Conclusion

This article has comparatively analysed the implementation of CVE projects in the field of education, in the UK and Morocco, paying particular attention to how implementing actors make sense of the policy and bring it to life. Our data leads to two conclusions for future research.

First, our findings indicate that the implementation of CVE in these two different educational contexts is similarly dependent on the mobilisation of narratives of continuity and care, which facilitate the transformation of those previously uninvolved with security work into hesitant security actors. Implementers are hardly the willing audience of a securitising

speech act that calls on them to partake in exceptional measures. They reluctantly concede that existing practices of care could *also* be used to counter extremism, so long as it does not disrupt institutional norms. Trapped within legal and funding constraints, they do not accept CVE measures as 'exceptional, but necessary'; rather, they concede to them as a reframing of the ordinary. Narratives about the continuity of care are so effective in justifying implementation and containing resistance that they ultimately render CVE's demands mundane.

Second, we find that the capacity of the counter-extremist state to transcend borders draws a global geography of outsiders within, where disadvantaged Muslim youth are produced as outsiders both in Muslim-majority countries, and in countries where they are considered as de facto non-citizens by a racist citizenship regime (Kapoor and Narkowicz, 2019). State and non-state actors operate according to logics that unambiguously profile young Muslims as potentially destabilising to the interconnected spaces of late liberal societies and their social reproduction.

Our contribution to the critical literature on CVE and everyday security is thus twofold. First, we highlight how the expansion of counter-extremism to non-security sectors overcomes expressions of dissent and discomfort by those in charge of implementation. CVE relies on an intense labour of sense-making by institutional actors with a heavy commitment to existing norms. This complicates existing accounts of the co-optation of non-traditional security actors as a willing vigilant public. It further highlights the unexpected alliances between institutional constraints, caregiving attitudes, and institutional cultures, which together allow for the care-streaming of security to continue. Second, the dependence of CVE's global operations on established mechanisms and understandings of care provision indicate that we must re-investigate the normal politics of social care institutions. While useful for pointing to the intensely fertile nexus between security and social care, the analysis of CVE agendas as further securitisation of various social fields can be misleading. It fails to problematize the continuity in the normal politics of care (Howell, 2018). If counter-extremism can so easily slip into routines of social care, it is because an understanding of care aligned with CVE is not exceptional in these spaces. We need not hesitate to raise alarms about a continuity in "how we do things here." Future scholarship then should not shy away from continuing to look beyond what is new or exceptional about CVE, and look closely at the old, eventless patterns of care institutions that accommodate new expressions of themselves.

Notes

1. For a notable exception, see Novelli (2017).
2. This University is selected because its de-centralised structure requires more staff to work on the implementation of the policy than at most institutions. Furthermore, the University's self- and popular perception is uniquely distant from Prevent's imagined target space – it is elite, wealthy, and overwhelmingly white. Given Prevent's history of targeting Muslims, its implementation here provides insight into the hoops of meaning-making that make Prevent appear mundane anywhere, however close or far from the "threat" that the policy constructs.
3. This data was collected by the two authors in the UK and Morocco as part of two discrete projects between 2016 and 2018. Interviews have been anonymised.
4. Last updated online, 10 April 2019: https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/prevent-duty-guidance/prevent-duty-guidance-for-higher-education-institutions-in-england-and-wales
5. The 2015 Guidance states that white supremacist ideology also inspires terrorist acts. It is beyond our scope to examine this rhetorical shift to targeting "all extremisms," but three points are worth mention. Firstly, the Guidance does not link white supremacist ideology to a specific identity. While Muslim identity is explicitly linked to "us and them thinking" and "need to redress injustice," actors involved in right-wing terrorist acts are referred to broadly as "people," – as if no one identity would draw some more than others to *white* supremacy. Second, in 2017–18, 18% of referrals concerned 'right-wing extremism' and a staggering 44% concerned 'Islamist extremism.' Thirdly, while officials explain such statistics away through the claim that they reflect the disparity in the "actual" scale of each threat, our findings suggest that Nadya Ali's (2020) opposing analysis is correct: the claim that Prevent targets "lone wolf" white supremacists and "Islamist extremism" equally merely facilitates the "unseeing" of Prevent's "racialised bordering" (580).
6. All translation of this text are from the second author.

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1. Dr. Peters, employee of an English university, UK, 30/01/18.
2. Dr. Atwood, employee of an English university, UK, 06/02/18.
3. Dr. Smith, employee of an English university, UK, 12/01/18.
4. Dr. Finch, employee of an English university, UK, 27/02/18.
5. Dr. Watson, employee of an English university, UK, 05/01/18.
6. Dr. Davis, employee of an English university, UK, 09/01/18.
7. Dr. Park, employee of an English university, UK,16/01/18.
8. Dr. Wesworth, employee of an English university, UK, 27/03/18.
9. Dr. Laine, employee of an English university, UK, 03/01/18.

Morocco fieldwork

10. Didier, NGO officer, Tangier, September 2017.
11. Rachid, development consultant, Skype, October 2016.
12. Angel, representative of the EU delegation in Morocco, Rabat, November 2016.
13. Maria, NGO officer, Morocco, April 2016.
14. Maria, NGO officer, Morocco, October 2016.
15. Sara, IOM officer, Tangier, September 2017.

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