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**Pre and Post 9/11: An Exploration into Societal and
Media Understandings of Extremist Organisations and
Counter-Terrorism Preventative Measures in the
United Kingdom**

Amelia Ann Twinkle Bell

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Amelia Ann Twinkle Bell

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Abstract

Terrorism is an ever-evolving concept and has been subject to significant advancements in recent history (Fussey and Richards, 2008.) Although these developments are well documented in academic literature, there is a clear lack of comparative evaluations between initial understandings and recent outlooks on terrorism. As a result of this, the following piece explores the recent history of extremism in the United Kingdom in relation to counter-terrorism measures, media representations and societal understandings. In order to further understand these aspects of terrorism discourse and how changes came into effect, this dissertation first highlights the importance of the terrorist attack that occurred on the 11th of September 2001 and how this in turn revolutionised global understandings of terrorism. This critical event has become an increasingly important element in academic literature discussing modern terrorism (Crenshaw, 2002) and this piece finds that these attacks have been a catalyst for the development of two distinctive eras of terrorism within the United Kingdom. The eras discussed within this piece are that of the era of the Prevention of Terrorism (temporary provisions) Act (1974) and the newfound era of the war on terror. This has allowed the piece to take a comparative approach in order to fully understand and compare the critical shifts in media representations, societal understandings and counter-terrorism preventative measures within each era. In further support of this, this dissertation has evaluated the different extremist threats within the UK and examines the two most prominent extremist groups evident in each era, the Irish Republican Army and ISIS.

Chapter One - An Introduction

1.1: Aim

The main aim of this dissertation is to critically explore and evaluate the different eras of extremism within the United Kingdom. The two separate eras discussed within this piece fall either side of a monumental terrorist attack, which will allow the dissertation to evaluate how this event has directly influenced key aspects of terrorism including media representations, societal understandings and the counter-terrorism measures adopted during both eras. In order to do this, the significance of the 9/11 terrorist attacks and the global impact these attacks had on modern terrorism will be discussed. The dissertation then aims to critically explore terrorism in the years prior to and post the 9/11 terrorist attacks. In each section, this piece will be examining the significance of the subsequent change in societal understandings and media responses. To do this, the most prominent terrorist organisations pre and post 9/11 and how they were represented within wider society and western media will be discussed. In addition to this, the dissertation will evaluate how media representations and societal understandings of terrorism at the time influenced political perceptions of terrorism which have ultimately impacted counter-terrorism legislation. Therefore, the foundation of this dissertation is to explore the key differences and similarities in societal understandings in relation to the counter-terrorism preventative measures previously and currently adopted.

1.2: Objectives

- Firstly, the dissertation will provide key historical context. To do this, discussions of the 9/11 terrorist attacks and why they are considered to have revolutionised modern terrorism will be explored.
- Next, the dissertation will introduce the two significant extremist organisations in the decades pre and post 9/11 and breakdown key aspects of terrorism in these time periods. The first group that will be explored is the Irish Republican Army who were prominent in the decades before the 9/11 terrorist attacks. The second organisation explored is Islamic state (ISIS) who have dominated international terrorism in the years following these attacks. This will identify the two separate eras of terrorism and allow the dissertation to explore further comparative discussions.
- Following this, the dissertation will explore the media representations of extremist organisations portrayed within western media. In addition to this, how these

portrayals influenced societal understandings and national perceptions of terrorist organisations and the communities most associated with extremism at the time will also be explored.

- Finally, the dissertation will evaluate key counter-terrorism preventative measures adopted in the United Kingdom both before and after 9/11 and the significant changes between these time periods.

1.3: Clarifications and Definitions

In the past two decades, society has witnessed a pivotal turning point in political and societal understandings of terrorism (Gordon, 2005.) On a global scale, theories and understandings surrounding modern day terrorism and extremist organisations have grown exponentially, with terrorism related topics being at the forefront of numerous international academic, political and community discussions. The national increase in awareness of the terrorism threat within the United Kingdom has resultantly led to the frequent use of the term *terrorism* itself. Locatelli (2014) suggest that this commonality of the term terrorism and terrorism discourse within society identifies an underlying need for clarity of what terrorism actually is. In addition to this, modern academia has highlighted the subjective nature of the foundations these understandings (Fischer et al., 2010.) Therefore, to combat potential confusion, it is important to highlight at this stage relevant clarifications and definitions of terms that will be constantly referred to throughout this dissertation.

Governmental and academic stances on the aspects, behaviours and offences that fall under the umbrella term of terrorism are constantly developing, yet evidently different. Although these ideologies are widely known and discussed concepts, terrorism still remains without a fixed definition (Schmid, 2016.) It is suggested that governments and academics alike struggle to define terrorism, Locatelli (2014) indicates that these continuous attempts to define terrorism face constant critique and suggests that academics are sharing a collective agreement that terrorism cannot be simply defined with one set definition. When building upon this, Locatelli (2014) suggests that this is primarily due to the complex and transient nature of extremist organisations and terrorist motivations. Despite this, many governments and academics continue to propose definitions that briefly cover key attributes of terrorism. Although these definitions do not highlight all the potential understandings of terrorism themselves, when combined they do provide a foundation that can be built upon throughout the advancement of the subject area.

The first definition of terrorism discussed, that will prove to be a key aspect of this dissertation, is that provided by the United Kingdom's Government. This definition is proposed within the governments counter-terrorism provision, the Terrorism Act (2000) and refers to terrorism as being events in which serious violence is used against a person or

property thus creating serious risk to public health and safety. However, the Terrorism Act (2000) then goes on to suggest that in order to be categorised as terrorism, these events must have been conducted with underlying political, religious, racial or ideological motivations. Although this definition appears to be inclusive of numerous aspects of terrorism, when analysing key research produced by academics within this field, it becomes clear that many academics dislike the simplicity of this definition and propose a variety of potential criticisms. One of the most discussed criticisms as stated by Stohl, Burchill and Englund, (2017) is the controversial nature of governmental definitions. The group highlight that the definitions provided have an underlying purpose to create and maintain societal order. Building upon this, other academics argue that another key criticism associated with the use of political definitions, such as the one provided by the UK Government above, is the western culture bias. The westernised bias evident within these definitions are heavily criticised for their tendency to demonise and target organisations that they as a society are opposed to. As well as this, these definitions primarily focus on non-state terrorist perpetrators and often lack reference to any state ran terrorist groups. This is particularly evident against groups whose ideologies aim to threaten western beliefs and attitudes.

To combat this, many academics like Jackson (2007b) and Silke (2010) define terrorism from different perspectives. One of the most influential definitions of terrorism has been proposed by Schmid and Jongman (1988, cited in Blackbourn and Davis and Taylor, 2012) The pair emphasise the broadness of terrorism throughout their definition and highlight the multitude of different potential factors that can lead to terrorism. In their definition, they propose that terrorism at its core is the use of repeated violent action carried out by individuals or groups, that can act on both behalf of state ran organisations as well as non-state groups, with underlying political, racial and religious reasons. Unlike other crimes, victims to these violent events can also be entirely random based only on opportunity, as well as selected groups that are seen to be symbolic targets. However, one of the key aspects of this definition is its regard to the perpetrator(s) use of threatening and violent communication and promotion of these events in order to create terror within the audience of their main target. Finally, Schmid and Jongman (1988) suggest that these organisations carry out these attacks with the sole aim to intimidate, coerce and spread propaganda on an international stage.

Therefore, when taking both of the above definition and understandings of terrorism into consideration, it becomes evident that terrorism is a complex ideology and can mean different things for different people, religions, societies and countries. Moreover, terrorism as an entire concept is proven to be subjective. This in turn, complicates the requirement for a universal definition and what can be defined as terrorism as this can vary between countries and societies. Bearing this in mind, this dissertation will be utilising aspects of multiple definitions of terrorism in order to get a well-rounded and balanced understanding of what terrorism actually is from both an academic and political perspective.

1.4: Methodology:

Global understandings and interest into the more modern, 'war on terror' era of terrorism within academic literature has seen a vast increase in the past 20 years. When examining the rise in academic interest into terrorism related topics, Hofmann (2012) found that literature within this field increased exponentially between the late 1990s and early 2000s. When exploring the reason for this increase, Hofmann (2012) further suggests that the cause was a direct result of the 9/11 terrorist attacks. When bearing the aims of this dissertation in mind, the increase in literature following 9/11 is beneficial to the comparative component of this piece as it highlights how understandings of terrorism have evolved. In addition to this, previous research into this area conducted by Woods (2011) found that 9/11 served as a turning point for substantial change in societal perceptions regarding terrorist organisations. Therefore, in a continuation of existing literature, this dissertation will benefit from analysing the opinions of academics due to the vast array of current literature that explores the impact of 9/11 on terrorism as a whole as well as counter-terrorism prevention techniques.

Due to the significant increase in relevant literature, multiple aspects of terrorism related research have become readily available. As a result of this, academic articles, papers and journals will play a large role in the research aspect of this dissertation. This is mainly due to the areas that this dissertation will be examining. As this piece will orientate around the political and academic stances on terrorism prior to and following 9/11 and the policies and preventative measures in place, primary research methods such as interviews and questionnaires would not be an appropriate fit. Therefore, this dissertation will be taking a narrative literature-review based approach by critically analysing existing understandings and research. A literature review at its core is the summarisation and evaluation of a variety of relevant literature to one specific topic, Knopf (2006.) By adopting a literature review-based research approach, this dissertation will be able to utilise the magnitude of understanding and relevant data within this field to create a deeper understanding of key issues (Nakano and Muniz Jr., 2018.)

When initially considering the potential research methods used to gather relevant data, it became evident that a narrative literature review-based approach is particularly beneficial for this dissertation due to the possible ethical concerns associated with the subject of terrorism. Silke (2001) suggests that terrorism is not an "easily researchable" topic. This is mainly due to the fact that extremist organisations are closed groups and it would be hard to ethically collect primary data from terrorist groups such as Islamic State. In addition to this, these organisations create a severe risk to society and primary data collection methods such as focus groups, interviews and questionnaires would be unsafe and unrealistic. Moreover, the ethical concerns associated with terrorism evidently pose a real risk to research within this area as many academics discuss it with regards to primary data collection methods. Mills, Massoumi and Miller (2019) state that as well as the potential

safety risks for the researcher, the individuals taking part in interviews and focus groups are put at significant risk.

Although a literature review was the best option for this research topic, there are still some possible limitations to carrying out literature-based research. One of these potential limitations, as discussed by Snyder (2019) is that when conducting a literature review there is the possibility that the piece may be unsuccessful at making a significant contribution to the academic field. In addition to this, there is also a risk of the piece becoming lost within other relevant literature in the subject area. Therefore, in order to try and combat this, the dissertation has identified that there is a gap in the research surrounding a comparative understanding of representations and how these have influenced current counter-terrorism measures.

Chapter Two: Understanding the Importance of the 9/11 Terrorist Attacks

With this dissertation being a comparative study into the influence of extremist representations and the counter-terrorism preventative measures adopted by the United Kingdom's Government, it is pivotal at this stage to provide an introduction to the event that will provide a key basis of understanding for the contents of this study. In order to do this, the following section will discuss the critical role key historical terrorist events have on academic literature and political discourse. Therefore, the historical background below will serve as the turning point in societal attitudes, academic literature and global understandings of terrorism.

On the 11th of September 2001, a string of well-organised plane hijackers intentionally targeted, crashed into and destroyed buildings of importance situated in New York City and Washington DC, America, in the largest non-state act of terrorism ever to occur. The magnitude of the 2001 terror attacks on the Pentagon and most famously the Two World Trade Centre buildings, often referred to as the Twin Towers, was unprecedented and claimed the lives of over 2,977 innocent people (The Independent, 2022.) Shortly after the attacks, Osama Bin Laden the founder of the pan-Islamic militant organisation 'Al-Qaeda,' claimed responsibility for the attacks and stated that the sole motive of these events had been to start a 'declaration of holy war' against the United States of America. As a result of the scale of these attacks and ultimately the fallout that was evidently felt across the world, societal understandings and representations of terrorism shifted.

Similar to this dissertation, many academics within this field use the 2001 terror attacks, as a turning point in modern understandings of terrorism. A vast array of social scientists have researched how the 9/11 terrorist attacks have directly influenced numerous aspects of everyday life. The majority of this research relates to the shock waves that were felt worldwide in relation to global economics and international affairs (Jackson and Towle, 2006.) However, some of the most notable academic explorations into the effects of the 9/11 terrorist attacks concern themselves with the personal and societal implications. One of the most significant pieces surrounding this was produced by Smith and Zeigler (2017) who state that 9/11 has been a catalyst for significant change in societal understandings, academic literature, government discussions of criminology as a whole.

In further support of the belief that the 9/11 terrorist attacks changed the course of terrorism understandings, Woods (2011) discusses the concept of the '9/11 effect' and how the increased sense of risk felt within western societies prompted this change. Although this shift is most evidently seen within media representations and public perceptions of terrorism when building upon this, Roach (2011) states that the 9/11 effect can also be identified through the immense political response to these attacks. It can be argued that America has been a significant leader in political concepts adopted globally, such as democracy, and therefore these attacks were not just an attack on America, but the free, democratic world as a whole. Moreover, many academics such as Baker, Gabrielatos and

McEnery (2013) state that these attacks also shifted the perceived threat of terrorism and extremist violence by bringing it closer to home as opposed to the previous out of sight, out of mind outlook adopted when these issues were only faced in the middle east. As a result, this prompted a multitude of countries to retaliate by implementing new terrorism laws and preventative measures. It is further suggested that this perceived increased risk of extremism revolutionised modern terrorism and led to a growing societal fascination with the topic, making terrorism an area of high priority in modern academia and politics.

The above shift in terrorism viewpoints and understandings as a direct result of 9/11 serve as the agitator between two separate eras of terrorism as it highlights the clear distinctions between policies, representations and public perceptions before 9/11 and in the years following the attack. The two significantly different eras of terrorism that will be explored and referred to throughout this dissertation are that of the Prevention of Terrorism Act (1974) and the current era of the 'War on Terror.' These two distinct understandings of terrorism are highly debated and discussed within both political and academic discourse and are key in the exploration of similarities and differences discussed in this dissertation.

However, the vast majority of research, opinions and theories that have been proposed within this academic field are mainly produced following 9/11 and all share the element of hindsight (Randall, 2014.) The dominance of post 9/11 literature has led to earlier understandings and representations, as well as the counter-terrorism methods at the time, being overshadowed by more current stereotypes. Therefore, it is beneficial to explore the societal and media understandings of terrorism in the decades prior to the 9/11 attacks within this dissertation as it will provide a solid foundation for comparison that can be built upon further.

Chapter Three: Media, Society and Terrorism Theories

The vast majority of this dissertation will be exploring the influence of British Media outlets and their impact on societal understandings of terrorism. This relationship is broadly discussed in academia which has led to key theories being proposed. This chapter will explore the key criminological theories surrounding the treatment of generalised populations most associated with significant extremist groups. This is of particular importance as it will allow for deeper academic connections to be made between extremist representations and the potential risks these have to wider society. Additionally, it is vital to understand the dominance of reinforced stereotypes, particularly concerning terrorism, which can be seen throughout history and have continuously been widely accepted by the British public and politicians.

Through the exploration of the critical relationship between media outlets in the United Kingdom and their fascination with terrorism, Eid (2014) argues that social understandings of extremism are built upon media representations. When adopting this outlook to terrorism discourse, such as the 9/11 terrorist attacks being ultimately responsible for revolutionising modern terrorism, many academics fail to acknowledge the importance of the relationship between western media and terrorist organisations and the influence it has on wider society. As Eid (2014) explores, many socially accepted understandings, not only of extremism, are built upon dominant media representations and the narratives media outlets present to society. Moreover, Wilkinson (1997) stresses the importance of this relationship from a different perspective due to the fact that extremist organisations, both previous and current, utilise the media to spread propaganda and create fear and unease within their targeted societies.

3.1: Cultivation Theory and Mean World Syndrome

By analysing the relationship between the media and wider society many sociological theories have been proposed. One of the most interesting theories analysing this relationship stems from the broader ideology of cultivation theory. Originally proposed by Gerbner and Gross (1976,) cultivation theory orientates around how the media influences cultures and societies. In addition to this, cultivation theory suggests that the more individuals and society interact with the media, the more likely they are to adopt the narratives being displayed to them. During their study, Gerbner and Gross analysed how individuals reacted to violent imagery shown in television and summarise that the repetition of violence within media not only promoted violence within the individuals themselves, but also created the belief that the world around them was a more violent and dangerous place. Based on this premise, Gerbner (1998) concluded that over time society's outlook on the world would begin to become increasingly negative. From this, Gerbner decided to build on this initial theory and proposed the ideology of 'Mean World Syndrome.'

In this ideology, the 'Mean World' Gerbner references throughout was that of the perceived violent and dangerous perspective adopted in modern societies. Many academics such as Shanahan and Morgan (1999) also took the principles of this theory and applied them to current affairs. Despite the initial foundation of this theory, which is derived from understanding the relationship between consumers and fiction-based television, it becomes evident that the consumerism of violent media and how mass media organisations such as television stations and print based media normalise violence. This adaption of the above theory into Gerbner's 'Mean World Syndrome' critically explores the foundations of cultivation theory from a mass media perspective and how societies have become accustomed to negative, violent imagery and language as a result of media representations. However, Gerbner (1998) also suggests that the phenomena of 'Mean World Syndrome' is not forced upon the public, but rather occurs naturally and thrives off societal fears and anxieties. This has been supported by a variety of academics in numerous pieces of academic literature, some of which being Romer, Jamieson and Aday (2003) who argue that mean world theory also stems from modern societies fascination with criminal behaviour and national incidents.

When taking these explorations of cultivation theory and mean world syndrome into an extremist context, it can be argued that acts of terrorism have such a global influence on communities as a direct result of technological advancements and the medias desire for a public enemy. Levi and Wall (2004) suggest that we now live in a post-9/11 society, with numerous statistical evidence inferring that the general societal understandings of crime and international terrorist threat has increased following the events of the 2001 terrorist attacks, even though trends and frequency of terrorist attacks and crime more generally have decreased (Dyson, 2011.)

3.2: Suspect Communities

It is evident that media representations and societal understandings have a significant impact on the individuals and communities typically associated with extremism. Hillyard (1993) has explored how these groups are influenced by being negatively associated with media representations of terrorists and as a result proposed one of the most relevant theories within this field, that of suspect communities. In this theory, Hillyard (1993) suggests that suspect communities are developed when the entirety of a specific group are demonised and associated with a specific crime. This is most commonly identified within terrorism discourse and representations. The increased sense of fear specifically surrounding terrorism is evident within public insecurities and often manifests itself as anger targeted at the group who are perceived to pose a significant threat. This concept of specifically targeted and demonised groups has been greatly discussed and referred to in terrorism academia, with academics such as Cherney and Murphy, (2016) applying this theory to modern understandings of extremism. Moreover, although the theory of suspect

communities is relatively new in academic discourse, yet it can be applied to both of the eras of terrorism explored within this piece.

When applying this outlook to examples of suspect communities, Nguyen (2019) argues that one of the key themes within this theory is the underlying element of racism. This can be identified through the treatment of both Irish and Muslim communities as a result of the mass Islamophobic and anti-Irish representations within societal and governmental outlooks. Hickman et al (2011) support this and state that in both eras of terrorism, these groups have both been constructed by the media and governments to be a social threat. We are able to understand how these suspect communities are treated poorly by exploring one of the most recent significant examples of 'people policing' and surveillance, operation champion. In 2010, West Midlands Police Force (WMPF) were found by The Guardian to have attempted to use 200 CCTV security cameras to supposedly spy on two Muslim communities in Birmingham. Originally WMPF deflected this accusation by claiming the cameras were for 'crime prevention.' However, it was soon revealed that counter-terrorism policing provided the funding for the operation. When exploring this operation and the societal ramifications it had, Iskajee and Allen (2013) state that the treatment of Muslim communities and the spying method adopted by the police reinforced the stereotype of present British Muslims as a threat to society, continuing to present them as a suspect community.

In addition to the above example, it is evident that this incident was not a one-off event. It is clear that the communities that are being viewed as 'suspect' face poor treatment from society however there is a vast amount of discrimination towards these communities from law enforcement. As part of the Terrorism Act 2000, section 44 gave police forces increased powers when carrying out a stop and search. This meant that officers could stop individuals without having any suspicion. This operation ran for 10 years before the European Court ruled against the use of these surveillance methods. However, during the years before the ruling came into place, nearly half a million individuals were stopped. When studying the increased provisions for terrorism related stop and search, Chowdhury and Fenwick (2011) found that none of the stop and searches carried about by police forces over the 10-year period resulted in a conviction. Building upon this, Parmar (2011) states that this normalised the stereotypical perception of Asian individuals in the United Kingdom as a danger to society.

As this dissertation begins to discuss the representations and treatment of Irish and Muslim communities the validity of this theory will become evident. When exploring how this theory impacts society on a broader scale, one of the most influential reviews of suspect communities was suggested by Breen-Smyth (2013.) When utilising Hillyard's (1993) theory Breen-Smyth (2013) explores how the concept of suspect communities is a product of larger societal issues. As explored in the above cultivation theory, modern societies have an overwhelming need for negative news and ultimately a public enemy. It can be suggested

that the concept of suspect communities satisfies both of these societal needs as wider societies often see themselves as the innocent, mundane collective that are the ones at risk of being targeted in these attacks. As a result of this, Breen-Smyth (2013) proposes a redefinition of the term suspect communities and rather suggests that these groups are created in the process of 'othering.' This occurs when the communities that are perceived to be the threat are isolated which further creates a sense of 'us versus them.'

Chapter Four: A critical Analysis into Terrorism pre- 9/11

This chapter of the dissertation will primarily focus on evaluating the societal understandings and media representations of extremist groups within the years prior to the 9/11 terrorist attacks. In order to do this, explorations into extremist organisations pre 9/11 and their portrayal in British media outlets will be discussed. It is widely accepted that there are two clear generations of terrorism that coincide with the eras of 'Traditional' and 'New' terrorism. These eras and generations are strongly suggested to be separated by the 9/11 terrorist attacks that are explored above. However, societal understandings and media representations are not the only identifiable differences separating these two time periods. One of the most evident changes to the terrorism threat within the United Kingdom between these two eras are the prominent extremist organisations at the time (McGoven, 2010.) Therefore, in order to understand and compare the array of responses to terrorism it is beneficial for this chapter to introduce the first era of terrorism and the extremist organisation that were most prominent during this time period.

4.1 Extremist Groups in the Decades Prior to 9/11

When exploring terrorism in the late 20th century, it becomes evident that the vast majority of extremism and political violence originated close to the United Kingdom's borders in the form of the Irish Republican Army. The Irish Republican Army, have a long and complicated history stretching over 100 years and is suggested to be one of the oldest extremist organisations in Europe (Alonso, 2006.) Officially formed in 1916 during the Easter Rising, where multiple Irish nationalist groups such as the Irish Volunteers and the Irish Citizen Army fought against the British army, the Irish Republican Army extremist organisation is built upon nationalistic views with the initial motivation to rise against the suppression of the British Monarchy. Despite the Easter Rising defeat, the Irish Republican Army, also known as the IRA, grew in support of the independence war between Ireland and Britain.

Over the next 50 years, the IRAs influence over the Irish public fluctuated as a result of many IRA leaders involving themselves with more left-wing orientated politics as opposed to the origin of the group concerning the freedom of Ireland. As a result of the shift in motivations and entanglement into politics, internal conflict between members of the IRA began to emerge. This led to a critical 're-brand' of the entire extremist group. In 1969, this re-emergence of the IRA began to make headway in the form of the 'Provisionals.' This evolution reidentified the Irish Republican Army and intensified their violent terrorist vendetta against the British and saw the beginning of three decades of terror, commonly referred to as 'the Irish troubles,' (English, 2008.)

The Irish troubles originated on the streets of Ireland when the IRA targeted Northern Ireland loyalists and the British Army. Key events that served as a catalyst for increased violence in both Ireland and England include 'Bloody Sunday' where the British Military opened fire on unarmed Irish civilians during a protest in Derry. The British Government's

desperate attempt to get a handle on the Irish rebels led to IRA members being imprisoned without trial leading to numerous hunger strikes, incentivising the IRA to increase their violent agenda. The events taking place in Northern Ireland fuelled the already hostile relationship between the Irish Nationalists and the British Government, the IRA wanted to avenge these actions and soon spread their violent agenda into the British mainland (Bell, 1994.)

1973 saw the beginning of a multitude of Irish car bomb attacks throughout the United Kingdom. Particularly targeted areas included London, Birmingham and Manchester, with some of the most significant attacks being that of the 1973 Old Bailey bombings in London which killed over 200 people and the Manchester Arndale Shopping Centre bombing in 1996. It is suggested that over 3,000 people were killed during the troubles through attacks both in Ireland and the United Kingdom (MI5, 2017.) It is this time period that this dissertation will focus on when discussing terrorism in the United Kingdom prior to the 9/11 terrorist attacks, due to the significant roles the British government and media had on public attitudes. This time period is also of significance due to the severe miscarriages of justice experienced by innocent Irish civilians due to the lack of evidence needed to be found guilty of extremist crimes. This is mainly due to the societal attitudes towards the Irish during this time period and can be identified through cases such as the Birmingham six which will be explored later in this piece.

Today, the Irish Republican Army pose less of a threat to the United Kingdom. On Good Friday, 1998, the IRA agreed to a ceasefire in what is known as the Good Friday Agreement. However, smaller branches of Irish nationalists still remain as a terrorist threat within Northern Ireland and are still actively carrying out politically motivated attacks targeting law enforcement and politicians although on a significantly smaller scale to previous decades.

4.2 Societal and Media understandings of terrorism pre- 9/11

As stated above, the Irish Republican Army were the dominant terrorist organisation posing the most significant threat to the United Kingdom in the decades prior to the 9/11 terrorist attacks. When exploring the representations of the Irish Republican Army and the Irish population in the decades prior to 9/11 it is evident that the relationship shared by the media, society and extremism as a whole greatly differs in comparison to what society is accustomed to today (Hillyard, 1994.) During this time period the ways in which the British public accessed news and information regarding extremism, relied solely on print newspapers and television. Even Margret Thatcher supported this outlook and stated that terrorist organisations and hijackers should be starved of the publicity they depend on (Condit and Cottle, 1997.) This reliance on the British media outlets meant that the portrayals of these events were key to societal understandings of extremism at the time (Doughty, 2019.) This in turn greatly affected the reality of extremism and its understandings within society, as well as how the organisations posing the largest threat to the United Kingdom were represented within national media.

As a result of the significant influence media outlets had on public perceptions of the Irish Republican Army and the Irish troubles, the decades of turmoil in Ireland are commonly referred to as the 'propaganda war,' (Clutterbuck, 1983; Curtis, 1984.) Doughty (2019) argues that the distorted societal understandings as a result of the bias representations of the Irish Republican Army in the media is closely associated with the narrative of the British Government. This outlook is also evident in Hayward and O'Donnell's (2010) research which suggests that the majority of media discourse concerning the IRA orientates around specific events and the underlying political influences both from Irish and British governments. One key example of the influence of Governments and implications the media had during the troubles is the broadcasting ban adopted by the RTE, the Irish national broadcasting service. Under the broadcasting act of 1960, content that was deemed to promote criminal behaviour or undermine the state's authority was banned from being broadcasted within Northern Ireland. These restrictions were strengthened in 1972 and included the ban of interviews with members of organisations that went against the regime in Northern Ireland such as the IRA, (Aughey and Morrow, 1999.) Alongside this, interviews that did take place during this time were silhouetted and dubbed by voice actors to mask the passion of the extremists.

In addition to the political influences evident throughout media representations, during this time period, it can also be suggested that the media narratives at the time played a significant and beneficial role during the troubles from the perspective of the Irish Republican Army themselves. Holt and McAuley (2022) state that the IRA utilised the media to spread awareness or 'warnings' indicating when they were going to carry out further attacks such as the Manchester bombings. Although this initially supports the violent stereotypes typically associated with the terrorist organisation as publicising these attacks is typically used to incite fear within the targeted society, Holt and McAuley (2022) further argue that it did the opposite. By publicising when these attacks were going to take place, this potentially flips the threatening and violent perception and highlights that the IRA's aim was not to cause as many casualties as possible and that making the public aware of these attacks would lessen the fear impact as people would know they needed to avoid they area. This portrays a different narrative to the one dominating the media and rather suggest that the outlook that they are not vicious murderers who kill without cause but rather a political group promoting their cause.

The lack of unbiased reporting and media representations, evident throughout a variety of British and Irish reporting methods during the Irish troubles, led to significant anti-Irish prejudice within England and Northern Ireland. These media representations were accepted by the British public and is believed to have led to the discrimination of the Irish community within the United Kingdom (Molloy, 2015.) When analysing which topics were most discussed within media portrayals of the Irish Republican Army, Vincent (1997) found that the vast majority of discourse orientated around violent perceptions and mainly covered events concerned with bomb attacks. These stereortypes paired with the most frequent

representations of the IRA labelled them as a threat to society as they centred around a calculated and vicious regime. In addition to this, Vincent (1997) found that less violent and negative topics associated with the IRA such as negotiations and solutions were less prominent in media discourse. Moreover, Vincent (1997) summarises this research by stating that the newspapers explored in his study may have been reflecting parallel viewpoints to the public perceptions at the time and criticises how this would have reinforced negative stereotypes.

In addition to above, Baker (2017) presents an overview of media representations during this time period and suggests that British media outlets utilised the long-standing stereotype of Irish communities being violent and unruly to not only demonise the Irish Republican Army but the entire Irish population. The media initially targeted these negative representations solely at the Irish Republican Army, however, as bomb attacks on English soil began, the negative stereotypes and representations previously adopted specifically in relation to the IRA began to be associated with Irish individuals and communities as a whole. Not only did these media representations influence societal understandings at the time, it can also be argued that these portrayals also influenced policing practices and counter-terrorism preventative measures at the time. This is mainly due to the consistent reinforcement of violent and negative stereotypes of the IRA, this in turn created a serious suspect community within the United Kingdom.

4.3 Counter Terrorism Preventative Measures pre- 9/11

When exploring counter-terrorism measures prior to the 9/11 attacks it is clear that policing powers and governmental influence impacted the ways in which the IRA were countered and controlled. Academics such as Hillyard (1994) found that the Irish community living in England at the time were subject to significantly harsher laws and punishments in comparison to the remainder of British Society. However, this was not uncommon. Since 1922, and the rise of the initial Irish Republican Army, Northern Ireland had been subject to a variety of emergency legislations and increased policing powers to manage the ongoing threat. However, as the fear surrounding the Irish population increased, alongside the scale and frequency of bomb attacks carried out by the Irish Republican Army in mainland Britain in the early 1970s, the legislations in place strengthened. During this time period three key pieces of legislation were introduced by the British Government to counter the terrorist threat in Northern Ireland; these being the Northern Ireland Emergency Provisions Act (1973,) the Prevention of Terrorism (Temporary Provisions) Act (1973) and the revised Prevention of Terrorism (Temporary Provisions) Act (1974.) The three legislations were specifically imposed by the British Government to combat the Irish Republican Army and did not go without scrutiny.

The above legislations are heavily criticised in academic discourse particularly when analysing the counter-terrorism measures outlined in these pieces from today's perspective. In addition to this, academics such as Scorer (1980) suggest that the counter-terrorism measures adopted during this time period serve as clear evidence of the significant progressions made in recent modern policing. Many academics such as Sim and Thomas (1983) suggest that the repressive and authoritative nature of these Acts incited more violence due to the increased sanctions placed on the Irish population. This is mainly due to the atrocious treatment of innocent Irish citizens and further civil unrest these measures ultimately caused. In addition to above, Scorer (1980) further evaluates how governments implemented these pieces of legislation in response to the public outcry for both harsher punishments to being imposed on the IRA and the hangings of convicted terrorists as well as the beginning of violent retaliation against the Irish population in England. When breaking down some of the most significant counter-terrorism measures outlined in these Acts, Ramraj (2006) suggests that the increase in policing powers seen through extended stop and search powers, warrantless searches and the ability to hold terrorist subjects for up to seven days targeted the Irish community and created a significant suspect community. In addition to this, arguably the most controversial counter-terrorism tactic adopted by the police was the ability to use interrogation techniques. These interrogation techniques were known to have the potential to lead to torture and many Irish individuals were forced into giving false statements and falsely incriminating friends and acquaintances.

Some of the most infamous examples of how the above measures and legislations failed and ultimately influenced how Irish individuals were treated in England by British police forces, the media and wider society during the Irish troubles are that of the Birmingham 6 and the Guildford 4. These two cases are labelled as some of the most significant examples of miscarriages of justice in the United Kingdom, which occurred in 1974 and saw 10 Irish individuals convicted of crimes they didn't commit. When summarising each case in greater detail, Gudjonsson and Mackeith (2002) explore the nature of the arrests and found that 8 of the 10 convicted had given statements whilst in police custody that falsely incriminated themselves and their peers. Nickels et al (2012) explore the impact of the Prevention of Terrorism (Temporary Provisions) Act (1974) in reference to both the Birmingham 6 and Guildford 4 by highlighting how a further 86.9% of Irish individuals that were detained in police custody on suspicion of terrorism were released without charges. As a result of the arrests and ultimate exonerations of Birmingham 6 and Guildford 4 there was a significant shift in media portrayals of Irish individuals to contrast the narratives and suspect community these organisations had previously helped build. Scaplehorn (1993) states that both cases were broadly discussed in the vast majority of print-based media outlets, however, reporting had gone from demonising and accusing the Irish community of the IRA's crimes to reporting on the 'criminal injustice' this community had experienced.

In the late 1990s tensions with the IRA began to subside. The wider societies desire for an end to the conflict and peace resulted in the Good Friday Agreement. In 1998, the Good

Friday Agreement represented the development of a peaceful relationship between Northern Ireland and the Irish Republican Army (Nagle, 2017.) However, as the conflict in Ireland began to subside on the back of this Good Friday Agreement, the emergency counter-terrorism legislation that was currently in place in the United Kingdom was due to expire. Walker (2000) states that the British Government has hastily introduced previous legislations during the crisis of ongoing terrorist threat and how this led to a significant struggle. However, unlike the emergency legislations previously imposed, the British Government now had time to evaluate these acts and edit them to fit the current terrorism climate. As a result of this, the Terrorism Act (2000) was proposed.

The Terrorism Act (2000) was introduced in the midst of a significant shift in current affairs. During this time period the terrorist threat from Northern Ireland had significantly decreased and threats from further afield international terrorist organisations were on the rise. Under the new Terrorism Act (2000) the ways in which terrorism was policed and countered had changed significantly. Chatterjee (2002) suggests that these changes were brought into effect to deal with the ever-evolving nature of terrorism and dealt with issues that hadn't previously been addresses such as domestic terrorist groups based in the United Kingdom. The Terrorism Act (2000) still plays a large role in the United Kingdom's current counter-terrorism preventative measures. However, although research and academic literature within this field concerning the counter-terrorism measures adopted during this period is readily accessible, it is clear that there are still limitations when researching terrorism prior to the 9/11 terrorist attacks

Chapter Five: An Exploration into Terrorism Post 9/11

Much like above, this chapter will analyse key aspects of terrorism following the 9/11 terrorist attacks, this will allow the dissertation to compare the two eras of terrorism. It is without doubt that the United Kingdom is still tasked with combatting the ongoing threat of terrorism and political violence. The evolution of modern terrorism is suggested to be a direct result of its transient nature and the wide variety of criminal acts associated with this form of political violence (Reid, 1997.) The significant developments made within political, academic and societal discourse surrounding extremism highlights the severe shift in understandings of what terrorism actually is and more evidently, the extremist groups most associated with terrorism during these time periods. The progression from 'old' terrorism ideologies to 'new' terrorism beliefs have been well documented within academic literature and has had an evident impact on the way terrorism is policed and sanctioned within the United Kingdom. Therefore, in addition to the above significant shifts within societal understandings, this section of the dissertation will also explore the significant advancements made in the United Kingdom's response to terrorism.

5.1 Extremist Groups in the Decades Post- 9/11

In the decades following 9/11, global terrorism and the terrorist threat within the United Kingdom evolved greatly from the extremist organisation explored above. In society today, there is a significant increase in the public's awareness of extremism which has ultimately led to an increase in stereotypes and prejudice (Jaspal and Cinnirella, 2010.) When looking at the extremist groups most prominent post 9/11, it is clear that there are two separate 'categories' of extremism; these being that of the far-right, evident through fascism and white supremacy, as well as radical Islam with key extremist organisations including ISIS. Although both of these separate terrorism threats are evident in the United Kingdom today, the vast majority of academic literature, societal attitudes and media representations focus on Islamic extremism.

Building upon this, Alsultany (2013,) states that the prominence of Islamic based understandings of extremism is solely due to the 9/11 terrorist attacks and how international responses to these attacks prompted prejudice behaviour towards Muslims, which has been argued to be a key factor in the development of new Islamic extremist groups such as ISIS. Much like the Irish Republican Army, the rise of Islamic extremist organisations has a complex history entangling Governments and religions. However, one of the key differences between these two time periods is the technological advancements that have helped assist radical Islamic groups radicalise individuals across the globe and spread fear, manifestos and violence on an international level. Since 9/11, Islamic extremism has dominated political, academic and societal discussions.

In the late 1980s, tensions between western governments and Muslim communities in the middle east began to emerge. In the midst of the Afghan war between the Soviet Union and

Afghanistan, the militant groups that opposed western ideologies came to the aid of smaller communities. However, after the Soviet Union left Afghanistan, new members were still being recruited into these organisations, the most prominent being Al Qaeda founded by Osama Bin Laden, and taught military techniques to fight against the Soviet Union. Although initially founded in order to train militant combaters and fund other radical Islam movements, Al Qaeda soon moved on to committing terrorist acts themselves, the most famous being 9/11. Riedel (2010,) states that the goal of the 2001 terrorist attacks was to prompt a 'holy war' in Afghanistan, similar to the war with the Soviet Union, in order to drain America and their allies' funds and weaponry.

Since 9/11, multiple new organisations have risen to power with similar motivations and beliefs to Al Qaeda. There are many manifestations of radical Islam spreading across multiple eastern countries including Iran, Iraq and Pakistan. Not only are these extremists based across a variety of countries, but there are also a range of key organisations including, Al Qaeda, the Taliban and more recently Islamic State. Many of these extremist organisations share similar values and are often branches of one another. The motivation for these groups is religion and believe that they are following the word of the Qur'an. However, it is suggested that these organisations are promoting a more extreme version of Islam known as 'Salafism.' Wagemakers (2016,) states that Salafism can be practiced in three key ways. The first of which is quietist, where individuals disagree with political motivations and has the sole aim in promoting the teachings of Islam in their purest form. The second is more politically orientated and views Islam as having a political responsibility. Finally, the most violent form of Salafism is known as 'Jihadi-Salafism.' These individuals aim to challenge, overthrow and target regimes that go against their beliefs through any means necessary. This was used by Osama Bin Laden as the motivation behind the 9/11 terrorist attacks.

These extremist organisations still remain prominent today and have greatly increased the scale of the terrorism threat these extremist organisations pose to western societies. Although the extremist organisation that constructed the 9/11 terrorist attacks has somewhat disbanded, there are a multitude of different branches and terrorist organisations associated with radical Islam and the motivations of Al-Qaeda. One of the most influential extremist organisations that has carried out multiple terrorist attacks across the globe in recent years is that of Islamic State (more commonly referred to as ISIS.) Since the 9/11 terrorist attacks, many academics have wanted to weigh in on terrorism related discussions, making researching tasks extremely broad and somewhat never-ending. Therefore, due to the vast amount of literature within this field, this dissertation will benefit from exploring the terrorist group ISIS, this will allow a deeper and more well-rounded understanding of Islamic extremism in the 21st century.

5.2 Societal and Media understandings of terrorism post- 9/11

Before evaluating terrorism and the extremist group ISIS in the decades following the 9/11 terrorist attacks, it is first critical to introduce the significant technological advancements made within the past two decades. The vast developments made within the media and policing industries have led to critical shifts in how society accesses and interacts with international current affairs as well as how extremist groups are countered. As explored above, societal understandings and media perceptions have the power to influence governmental counter-terrorism measures and societal understandings and attitudes. Understandings that were once built upon the information and representations produced in print and radio-based media are now influenced by a multitude of different media outlets such as online forums, chat rooms, social media accounts and news pages online.

The interactive nature of this modern media has made society accustomed to how easily accessible information now is, with social media being as on demand as one click away (Hayes, Carr and Wohn, 2016.) This has greatly influenced the relationship between the media, police and extremist organisations. Being on these poorly regulated but highly addictive sites and social media platforms allow individuals to have a public opinion on both international and national current affairs as well as the extremist organisation and counter-terrorism measures adopted. In addition to this Wiltenburg (2004) states that society's relationship with true crime and criminal behaviour has become sensationalised. This ideology can clearly be associated with Gerbner's (1998) Mean World Theory and becomes increasingly evident when analysing the impact social media has had on how extremist events are reported and discussed within wider society.

Following the 9/11 terrorist attacks the international terrorist threat had shifted. Many countries across the globe now feared that similar attacks from radical Islamic organisations such as ISIS would also happen to their communities. This international fear and the significant anti-Islam response from media outlets across the globe prompted decades of prejudice towards Muslim individuals and communities. Through media representations, governmental counter-terrorism measures, wider policing and societal attitudes, global islamophobia grew on a vast scale. As a direct result of this, Muslim communities have been subject to isolation and demonisation within society. This in turn has created one of the most significant and feared suspect communities of the 21st century (Cherney and Murphy, 2016.) It can be argued that the impact of anti-Islam representations in the media and the on-going islamophobia and poor treatment of Muslim communities within wider society can be deemed a key factor in the development of new extremist groups, such as Islamic State. The constant reinforcement of the negative stereotypes associated with Muslim communities portrayed within the media have ultimately been greatly affected wider societies understanding of terrorism as well as the counter-terrorism measures adopted in the United Kingdom.

However, when further exploring the impact modern media outlets have had on modern terrorism and how these have increased the difficulty when combatting terrorist groups, it is

clear that these outlets have partly benefitted extremist organisations themselves. This is because the user orientated format of media today has given extremist groups the power and potential to make their targeted society fear them even more. This can be seen through the extremist organisation ISIS utilising these platforms to share violent and distressing videos, such as the infamous beheading video of the journalist James Foley. However, social media sites are not just being used to send shockwaves through society by posting violent imagery, videos, messages and threats, but also through sharing the organisations extremist ideologies and motivations. In addition to this, Cinelli et al. (2021) propose the theory of viewing the internet as an echo-chamber as it provides an environment where one person's views and ideologies can be supported, echoed, adapted and influenced by others that share the same mind-set. This is a key element in terrorist organisations use of social media as it allows them to radicalise individuals across the globe, further cementing their international agenda.

Although the media can be used to benefit radical Islamic groups such as ISIS, the demonisation of the entire Muslim community is mainly due to the language most prominently used within western media outlets. This is due to the continually reinforced media association between the entirety of the Muslim population and terrorism, as opposed to the specific individuals and organisations with extremist beliefs. This can be identified throughout British media perceptions of Muslim communities following the 9/11 terrorist attacks. Alongside this, there is a vast amount of academic literature that explores how the media use blanket terms such as Islam to negatively portray the entirety of the Muslim population (Alsultany, 2020.) The use of Islam and Muslim in media discourse, specifically in western countries, connects the religion and its members to societal fear which further reinforces anti-Islam prejudice. Jackson (2007a) has conducted significant research within this area and suggests that media outlets have constructed narratives that support Muslim individuals being national enemies. Jackson's (2007a, p.401) research suggests that these narratives are reliant upon the critical use of labels within the British media, with terms such as 'jihadists' 'Islamists' 'radicalism' being crucial in promoting a national vendetta against Muslims.

As explored above, since 2001, societal awareness and media discourse surrounding terrorism has increased. When exploring the increase in media discussions, Moore, Mason and Lewis (2008) examined the specific themes and narratives surrounding Muslim communities in the British media. The three academics found that 36% of media discourse concerning Muslims directly referred to terrorism and extremist attacks as well as roughly 27% of articles published often orientate around separating Islam and Muslims from British values and cultures. However, it was concluded that over two thirds of articles published stereotyped the Muslim community as a threat. Building upon this belief, Miller (1993) suggests that Islamists and the violent Islam are terms forged by western society to sensationalise the extremists within the wider religion further reinforcing the Muslim community as a threat to British society. This supports the above ideologies that British

media outlets promote Muslim individuals and communities as a threat to the British way of life and British communities which has been widely discussed within academic literature (Sian, Law and Sayyid, 2012, Nguyen, 2019.)

5.3 Counter Terrorism Preventative Measures post- 9/11

Much like the above shift in societal understandings, following the 9/11 terrorist attacks the development of counter-terrorism measures and national security has been at the forefront of many governmental agendas. The early 2000s saw the beginning of a new era of counter-terrorism policing and legislation as governments across the globe united in the War against Terror. This evolution from the era of the Terrorism Act (2000), explored above, to the era of the War on Terror has had a significant influence on how terrorism is combatted within the United Kingdom today. The overall shift within global and national terrorism narratives and organisations have ultimately influenced governmental outlooks on counter terrorism (Ragazzi (2016.)) In addition to this, following the 2005, 7/7 London bombings, theories and academic understandings surrounding home-grown terrorism and the threat of terrorists existing within British communities became centralised in the governments counter-terrorism efforts. As explored above, social media has globalised radicalisation and has the ability to spread extremist manifestos internationally which has indirectly influenced how governments tackle counterespionage and terrorist attacks. Irwin (2015) states that the increased risk of home-grown terrorism within the United Kingdom concerns individuals who have lived within the country for the majority of their lives and go on to act on behalf of an extremist organisation that often opposes British values and cultures.

The above belief identifies how modern terrorism has developed from being an issue occurring overseas to tackling the threat of home-grown extremism and terrorists already residing in the United Kingdom. As a result of this, counter-terrorism measures now orientate around radicalisation and combatting the increase in domestic terrorism. In order to do this, the measures adopted post 9/11 by the United Kingdom in the fight against the ongoing threat of terrorism, is proposed through the CONTEST approach. Officially adopted under Blair's government in 2006, the underpinnings of the CONTEST approach are still being developed by governments and security services today. When exploring modern counter-terrorism measures within the United Kingdom it is evident that CONTEST plays a critical role. The CONTEST legislation covers a variety of different areas within counter-terrorism policing including radicalisation, international threat and home-grown terrorism. This is due to the four key branches of this legislation; *Peruse, Prevent, Protect and Prepare*, (Home Office, 2009.) However, when further evaluating how CONTEST is imposed within the United Kingdom, academic research suggests that *PREVENT* is the key piece of legislation. Initially introduced following the 2005 London bombings, *PREVENT* was introduced to combat the developing issue of home-grown terrorism and radicalisation (Mythen, Walklate

and Peatfield, 2016.) Unlike other aspects of CONTEST, PREVENT and the Prevent duty guidance is evident within everyday life.

During the development of PREVENT, the British government adopted a collaborative approach and worked alongside local organisations, education sectors and the Muslim community. The PREVENT strategy has undergone intense development within recent years with the revised PREVENT guidance for England and Wales (2021) suggests that its purpose is the use of early intervention techniques in order to prevent individuals becoming terrorists and to deal with a variety of manifestations of extremism. The above preventative measures have put the United Kingdom at the forefront of the new age of counter-terrorism policies and have been extremely beneficial in assisting police and security services in tackling the extremist threat. Despite this, the PREVENT strategy and Prevent duty guidance has been heavily criticised within academic literature. As briefly introduced above, the development stages of PREVENT included taking advice from Muslim community groups and orientated around preventing young, vulnerable Muslim individuals. When exploring the impact of choosing to associate counter-terrorism legislation specifically with Muslim communities, Awan (2012) states that this in effect isolated Muslim communities from wider society and further cemented their representation as a suspect community.

In addition to the above anti-Islam focus of the PREVENT counter-terrorism legislation, the domination of Muslim orientated counter-terrorism measures has been widely discussed within academic literature. This can be identified through how the shift from the era of the 'Prevention of Terrorism Act' to the 'war on terror' era, has been a catalyst for racial profiling and discrimination. Spalek and Lambert (2008) state that much like in the decades prior to the 9/11 terrorist attacks, counter-terrorism legislation is hastily introduced to deal with terrorist attacks at the time. Moreover, Spalek and Lambert (2008) go on to further suggest that as a result of this, there has been little empirical research into evaluating the usefulness of counter-terrorism measures previously and currently adopted. In addition to this, there has been little consideration into how these counter-terrorism measures impact the communities most affected and demonised.

Although the twenty-first century has witnessed great progressions in counter-terrorism measures and how extremist organisations are dealt with there are still many areas that can be improved upon. As understandings and research into extremism continue to develop it is pivotal that counter-terrorism measures imposed by the government consider academic perspectives. Many academics such as Basu (2021,) ex chief of counter-terrorism, propose areas that need to be improved upon as well as new ideas and measures that could be adopted to deal with the challenges associated with the current measures such as stigmatisations, stereotypes and suspect communities. Despite the fact that modern terrorism and prominence of extremist organisations is dominated by radical Islam, one of the most discussed improvements within academic discourse is the need for further exploration into other extremist views and organisations such as right-wing terrorism and

the British National Party as opposed to the on-going concentration on Muslim communities.

Chapter Six: Conclusion

6.1: Summary and Suggestions for Future Research

Terrorism is a highly discussed topic within academic literature, political discourse and wider everyday societal life. Upon initial research, this dissertation identified a lack of comparative literature surrounding the different eras of extremism. In response to this, the purpose of this piece has been to delve into the transient nature of terrorism and further explore the different eras of terrorism. To satisfy the main comparative component of this research task, the dissertation has highlighted the areas that differ the most between these two generations of terrorism and identified the cause of the monumental shift within terrorism discourse. The dissertation has found that the shift in political, societal and media discourse concerning terrorism was a direct result of the 2001, 9/11 terrorist attacks. Many academics discussed within this piece such as Woods (2011) and Smith and Zeigler (2017) highlight how these attacks had international repercussions on societies and government across the globe. Discussing the turning point in terrorism has then allowed this dissertation to critically evaluate terrorism in the years prior to and following the 9/11 terrorist attacks. As a result of this, the following conclusions are able to be made.

This dissertation has found that one of the most significant differences between the two eras of terrorism is the extremist organisations themselves. The shift from the disorganised violence of the Irish Republican Army to the more structured and intricate terrorist attacks carried out by ISIS has ultimately increased the perceived threat of terrorist violence within the United Kingdom (Sjöberg, 2005.) A key finding of this dissertation is that the narrative present in the British media is that radical Islam poses an increased risk to society in comparison to that previously posed by the IRA is continuously reinforced within British media. Additionally, the dissertation can conclude that the domination of Islamic based terrorist discourse is also evident in academic literature. It is clear that the academic concept of terrorism remains fairly new in comparison to other fields of criminological research (Jackson and Breen-Smyth, 2008.) However, the increased academic and societal fascination associated with terrorism in the decades following the 9/11 terrorist attacks have led to a significant amount of literature concerning radical Islam to be published. Although there is still a vast array of literature concerning the IRA and terrorism understandings of the time, the majority approach the subject in hindsight.

When evaluating all of the information explored within this dissertation from the media and social understandings perspective, it can be proposed that the British media have had a key role in influencing societal understandings of terrorism and its perceived threat. The dissertation found that this is mainly due to the constant reinforcement of negative stereotypes associated with the many, as opposed to the few which in turn has created a significant suspect community within each time period. However, it was also found that the negative treatment of Muslim communities and international islamophobia outweighs the poor treatment of Irish individuals. Holt and McAuley (2022) state that this may be a result

of representations essentially sympathising with the IRA as they had a campaign as opposed to ISIS who are presented to only act to create terror.

By exploring counter-terrorism measures both pre and post 9/11 the dissertation has concluded that the measures adopted in the United Kingdom have always been and still remain reactive, as opposed to proactive towards the issue of terrorism. Moreover, academic discourse surrounding the different legislations and counter-terrorism measures in place, the vast majority appears to be very critical and negative of the methods previously and currently imposed. In addition to this, when evaluating British counter-terrorism measures, it is clear that they mainly orientate around one extremist organisation. The dissertation has found that was accepted by scholars and politicians in the years prior to the 9/11 terrorist attacks, whereas in society today the focus on Muslim based counter-terrorism methods raises a variety of ethical questions. Furthermore, unless dealt with, the orientation around one organisation poses an even larger threat to society as it allows other extremist groups such as right-wing extremists to develop undetected.

Finally, Basu (2021) states that there are still lessons to be learnt from the handling of previous terrorist attacks. When considering the gaps in existing knowledge and potential areas for future research this dissertation highlights the evolving and transient nature of terrorism and on-going need for continual exploration into terrorism related topics. Despite many areas such as radicalisation and Muslim orientated extremism being highly saturated with academic viewpoints and research, this dissertation concludes that there is a need for further comparative exploration into the two eras of British extremism. However, there are many ethical considerations that need to be considered when researching terrorism (Conway, 2021.) Therefore, by using a narrative, literature-based approach this dissertation has gained a well-rounded insight into the ways in which terrorism was constructed both prior to and following the 9/11 terrorist attacks.

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