Counterterrorism:
Accounting for the role of Prejudiced Violence in Policy Response

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Countries such as Canada and the UK are facing a growing problem of hate crime, as visible minorities increasingly find themselves vulnerable to incidents of prejudice-motivated violence. Statistics Canada data demonstrates that police reported 1,409 hate crimes in Canada in 2016.[1] According to Canadian police intelligence, hate crimes specifically targeting Muslims saw a 253 per cent increase between 2012 and 2015, reflecting a rise from 45 incidents to 159 incidents of hate crime.[2] Meanwhile, the British Home Office has itself reported that police nationally recorded 80,393 offences during 2016 and 2017 where one or more hate crime strands were believed to be a probable factor.[3] Additionally, Tel MAMA, a British national project measuring anti-Muslim incidents, indicated a 200 per cent rise in offline related hate crime.[4] As a result of these numbers, counterterrorism agencies in Canadian and British governments are now increasingly being called to answer critical questions concerning how social structures such as systemic racism and Islamophobia can contribute to hate crime, of whether a connection between hate crime and terrorism exists, and of what government agencies engaged in counterterrorism are doing to prevent hate crime. Such questions notably fall under an overarching umbrella of even broader questions of why violence conducted with hateful intentions is not universally perceived as constituting 'terrorism', and how counterterrorism policy and discussion should evolve in order to improve its effectiveness.

Hate Crime and Terrorism

Where the role of prejudice-motivated violence comes into play in the context of security analysis is that a significant proportion of incidences of hate crime are reported to occur in the aftermath of terrorist attacks. This is evident with the most recent mass-scale terrorist incident to occur in the UK, where a total of 273 hate crime incidents were reported within two days of the bombing of Manchester Arena on May 22, 2017.[5] On a similarly disturbing level, in the aftermath of the Quebec Mosque shooting, numbers of reported hate crime rose, doubling within the Quebec City area. Significantly, as was raised in the Standing Committee on Canadian Heritage's most recent study on systemic racism and Islamophobia and race equality think tank Runnymede Trust's twentieth anniversary report on Islamophobia in the UK, under-reporting of prejudice-motivated violence remains an issue in both countries, as does under-reporting specifically associated with terrorism-related blowback. In both Canada and the UK, continued public mistrust in systems of law and order regarding the effectual addressing of hate crime, and an overreliance on institutions whose hate crime statistics rely predominately on numbers reported to police, as is the case with over-dependence on Statistics Canada data, has allowed a consistent misunderstanding of the true prevalence of hate crime targeting minorities to prevail at the highest levels of government. It is thus important to ask how counterterrorism policymakers should be held accountable for addressing matters of hate crime alongside terrorist attacks.

This question involves more than an empathetic acknowledgement by counterterrorism agencies of the existence of 'right wing violence'. Most recently, in its 2017 *Public Report On The Terrorist Threat To Canada*, the Department of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness acknowledges the existing threat of what it entitles 'right wing extremism'. Nonetheless, this is emphasised in a short two paragraphs and a brief highlight nearing the document's conclusion, making up less than a half of a sheet of its overall 21-page report. Additionally, the problematic manner in which it is written in this report, that "the extreme right-wing is not an ideologically coherent group and historically, extreme right-wing violence in Canada has been sporadic and opportunistic", displays a deep denial by Public Safety Canada officials of the history of white supremacist violence in Canada, and of its historic connection to government institutions, including Canada's former white migration policy. While maybe not always coherent, extremism labelled as 'far right' in the Canadian context has consistently been connected to historically prevalent and often populist narratives of a formerly exclusively white Canada and the existence of 'old stock' Canadians that are again phenotypically white, juxtaposing more mainstream discourses of multiculturalism. And while labelled as 'far-right', and often associated with ideas of extreme conservatism, or conservatism altogether, the same narratives perpetuated by the 'right wing' have, at different points in Canadian history, had the liberal left and union-associated party support as well.[6]

The UK and Counterterrorism

This problem is again transatlantic, as accusations of right-wing extremism being associated with extreme-conservatism and populism in the UK persist, despite both the Labour and Tory governments having historically publically stated and promoted racialized understandings of (white) British identity that, while inaccurate, continue to contribute to prejudice-motivated violence. [7] Nevertheless, former UK Independent Reviewer of Terrorism Legislation, David Anderson, and his radio programme, "Understanding Prevent", publicized in July 2017, also emphasises the significance of combatting 'right wing' violence, yet also misses the mark. Through interviews conducted predominantly

with former 'right wing' extremists who had been referred to Channel, a confidential, voluntary multi-agency British programme that supports people perceived as being vulnerable to radicalisation, in this programme Anderson and his team attempt to provide clarity on how the Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015's Prevent Strategy operates. Here, Anderson sets out to address popular accusations of Prevent being a "spying programme". [8] Nonetheless, the programme's efforts to demonstrate that the Prevent Strategy is not solely focused on "Islamic Jihadists", experiences severe shortcomings due to Anderson's unwillingness to address existing evidence of the disproportionate referrals of visible minorities to Channel, let alone to address the subject of race at all. This occurs despite the fact that the former British 'right wing extremist' interviewees presented in the radio programme reference racism in their reasons for participating in extremist violence, such as making explosives and planning assaults on visible minorities. In this programme, there is again no acknowledgement of a connection between ongoing accusations of institutional racism in the British government and 'far-right' extremism. This is so despite the recent occurrence of incidents such as the murder of pro-immigrant Minister of Parliament Jo Cox by Thomas Mair, who has inspired other extremist followers who allege the existence of an ongoing 'race war' in the UK.[9]

Race in Counterterrorism

Efforts to counter terror on both sides of the Atlantic appear to be part of an unconscious endeavour where a strict rule of avoiding the factor of prejudice or race-relations remains in place. Nonetheless, if, as Anderson notes in his broadcast, preventing terrorism is about winning the "war for hearts and minds", then addressing factors of prejudice, hate crime, and racial/religious tension is critical to this endeavour. While it is true, particularly within the academic realm of counterterrorism studies, that motivators of terrorism are complex, broad, and diverse, a common denominator that has been repeatedly noted by counterterrorism experts internationally is the role of disenfranchised peoples being pushed to the margins of society. Historic and current systems of racial ordering within society intersect matters of economics, gender, religion, and

class, in ways that those responsible for security cannot and should no longer overlook. Counterterrorism

> "Racialization is an ideological process utilized to justify or explain social stratification, inclusion or exclusion. Through this process, social groups are characterized as embodying proclivities toward certain ascribed attributes and behaviours. Derived from fiction or fragmented 'fact', but always deemed innate, these operate on multifarious grounds including phenotype, ethnicity and/or religious identity. Different facets of the racialized being may be refracted through gender, class or sexuality; but there remains a core racialized identity."
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> *Carr, J., & Haynes, A. (2015). A clash of racializations: The policing of 'race' and of anti-Muslim racism in Ireland. Critical Sociology, 41(1), 21-40.*

policymakers need to more regularly consider the role of prejudice and racialization in preventing terrorism.

The word 'regularly' is emphasized here, because it is recognised that steps are being taken to do this in both the UK and Canada that have yet to receive the elevation that they deserve. For instance, in the UK, Baroness Sayeeda Warsi, known for her involvement in the national security council, the government task force established in the aftermath the murder of Lee Rigby, and for addressing issues facing British Muslims, demonstrates a model figure of a policymaker aiming to account for racialization in the context of counterterrorism. Warsi and her colleagues of the All Party Parliamentary Group (APPG) on Counter-extremism and the APPG on British Muslims continue to meet regularly with senior counterterrorism experts, academics, the Crown Prosecution Service, and British race equality think-tanks. This is to not only account for matters of national security regarding Daesh and domestic terrorism, but to emphasise the continued presence of 'perceived to be Muslim' violence in British society. This last point refers to a report presented at the British House of Commons in October 2017, describing how non-Muslim identifying British citizens are increasingly becoming victims of hate crimes on the basis of public terrorist accusations (i.e. being called ISIS), and Islamophobic abuse, due to said victims 'looking Muslim'

as a result of their skin colour or fashion choices. [10] Meanwhile in Canada, it is important to emphasize the positive significance of Ritu Banerjee, Senior Director of the Canada Centre for Community Engagement and Prevention of Violence, and her presence at the Canadian Heritage Committee's study of the issue of systemic racism and religious discrimination in September 2017, alongside that of Gilles Michaud, Deputy Commissioner of Federal Policing within the Royal Canadian Mounted Police and former Canadian Security Intelligence Service officer and counterterrorism expert Michel Juneau-Katsuya.

The very presence of those with the power to conduct, inform, and improve counterterrorism policymaking in the UK and Canada at the table of public discussions of systemic discrimination, racism, and Islamophobia, let alone partnerships with those organisations with platforms focused on attaining racial equity, is an important preliminary step in what is likely to be a long term endeavour to ensure the security of all citizens within both of these multicultural democracies. Nonetheless, the following recommendations illuminate key areas in which counterterrorism policymaking at the government level must be improved so as to better account for the issue of prejudiced violence:

- Politicians, analysts, and civil servants need to avoid establishing and/or reinforcing popular political binaries, such as that of 'left' versus 'right,' in how they access data on counterterrorism/terrorism. This is important because such binaries prevent proper evaluation of voices, opinions, articles, and documents, in the privileging of some forms of information over others. This also prevents proper engagement by policymakers with a prevalence of analytical research that is generally deemed to be too far down a certain political trajectory.

- Discussions on the topics of white privilege, white supremacy, race, racism, and particularly that of systemic racism, need to be welcomed in policy circles. Such topics are indeed sensitive yet remain of vital importance to numerous diverse communities within the UK and Canada. Lack of engagement by those involved in counterterrorism with such topics continues to come across as either inexperience with

or disinterest in these issues, when in fact many involved in counterterrorism policy have significant academic, professional, or personal credentials that would likely aid proper engagement with hate crime, if these topics could be approached more purposefully.

- Differences between academic definitions of the aforementioned terms (e.g. white supremacy, which refers to structural conditions upholding the differential treatment and socio-political advantages accrued to phenotypically white/European persons due to their assumed competence) need to be distinguished from those in popular culture (e.g. white supremacy as neo-Nazism), as confusion over how to conduct dialogue on prejudicial violence often serves as a barrier to understanding claims and evidence of hate crime.

- Further engagement with civil society and non-partisan organisations involved in community engagement on the bases of social justice, race equality, feminist, LGBTQ, and religious platforms needs to occur. Said groups need to be invited to participate in policymaking circles on terms that are appropriate for these groups and/or proposed by these groups. Continued public distrust of policymaking officials needs to be further considered in efforts to engage with marginalised communities and the organisations that are said to represent their interests. Only through further government humility can equitable communication between counterterrorism actors and these organisations occur.

- It should be noted by counterterrorism actors that, within those communities unequally affected by counterterrorism policy, the intersection of race and religious discrimination is playing an important role in how groups respond to and contest counterterrorism policies. Counterterrorism experts should note that allegations of anti-Muslim racism (in the UK) and state-sponsored Islamophobia (in Canada) are a direct response to counterterrorism policy, public perceptions of counterterrorism, and overarching government security endeavours. These claims are important and should be listened to, as all claims of 'terror' should be treated equally, whether afflictions are of a direct physical nature or are of continuous non-physical forms of trauma such as the unpremeditated degradation of marginalized groups.

Endnotes

[1] Minister of Industry (2016). *Police-reported hate crime, 2016,* The Daily: 1.

[2] Minister of Industry (2014). *Police-reported hate crime in Canada, 2*012. Ottawa: Statistics Canada, p.18; Minister of Industry (2017). *Police-reported hate crime, 2015,* The Daily: 1.

[3] Home Office (2018*). Hate Crime, England and Wales, 2016/17*. London: Home Office: 4.

[4] Arnold, J., Anwer, R., Begum, R. and Abou-Atta, I. (2018). *The geography of anti-Muslim hatred Tell MAMA Annual Report 2015*. London: Faith Matters: 10.

[5] ITV News. (2017, August 10). *Racist hate crime surged after terror attacks, police figures show.* Online.

[6] Kelley, N. & Trebilcock, M. (2000) *The Making of the Mosaic: A History of Canadian Immigration Policy*. Toronto: Toronto University Press.

[7] Paul, K. (1997). *Whitewashing Britain: Race and citizenship in the postwar era*. USA: Cornell University Press.

[8] BBC Radio 4 (2017). *Analysis.* [podcast] Understanding Prevent.

[9] BBC News. (2016, November 14). *MP Jo Cox 'murdered for political cause'.* Online; BBC News. (2017, February 13).Rehab order for neo-Nazi pipe bomb teen. Online.

[10] Osborne, S. (2017, October 18). British men suffering Islamophobic abuse because they 'look Muslim', reveals research. *INDEPENDENT.* Online.