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***Radicalisation Risk Factors Revisited: Shifting the Paradigm of  
Validated Measures***

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I declare that the intellectual content contained in this dissertation is original work performed by me under the guidance and advice of my supervisor, Dr Catherine Lido. Furthermore, I certify that this dissertation has not been submitted or used for any degree or other purposes.

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### **Abstract**

Terror management research has identified a range of psychological consequences of living with a salient threat of terrorism, including ingroup bias, stereotyping of outgroups and changes in political attitudes (Dunkel, 2002). Additionally, analyses of Western state discourses of terrorism have suggested that they are driven by power relations and vested interests, and identify Muslims as a risky, suspect community (e.g. Coppock & McGovern, 2014). This critical discourse analysis (Van Dijk, 2001) explores the construction of radicalisation risk in the British discourse of terrorism. Three strands of discourse were analysed: political speeches, government documents and academic research underpinning the mandatory assessment of radicalisation risk by all public sector workers. Six themes emerged from the analysis, which were interpreted using terror management theory (TMT; Pyszczynski, 2004) as a theoretical framework, and yielded a triangulated picture of assumptions, beliefs and attitudes underlying the assessment of radicalisation risk in the UK. The findings of the current paper support previous analyses of the discourse of terrorism, and extend research by revealing a lack of criticality in the development of the psychological measure used in the assessment of risk, the ERG 22+. The present study suggests political and policy discourse may exploit the psychological effects of terrorism to maintain and enhance power, while academic research has failed to critically account for power relations and the vested interests of the state. The implications of findings are discussed, as are limitations and strengths.

*Keywords:* terrorism, radicalisation, terror management theory, critical discourse analysis

## Introduction

Since 2005, political, media and public discourses of terrorism in the UK have become increasingly concerned with ‘radicalisation’ (Heath-Kelly, 2013), an ill-defined process that is assumed to lead individuals to terrorism (Mattsson, Hammarén, & Odenbring, 2016). The field of terrorism studies is interdisciplinary and marked by a dearth of empirical research and the recycling of data (Horgan, 2014). Psychologists are increasingly contributing to the field, and psychological theories have proved useful in researching terrorism. For instance, terror management theory (TMT) has provided an account of the psychological structures central to the causes and effects of terrorism and radicalisation, and research has suggested a range of possible consequences on the social psychology of individuals living with a salient threat of terrorism (e.g., Dunkel, 2002). Chief among these are ingroup bias, increased stereotyping of outgroups, and increased support for political leaders who appear strong against the terrorist threat (e.g., Cohen, Soenke, Solomon, & Greenberg, 2013). Previous discourse analyses have suggested that political discourses of terrorism are manipulative, and facilitate the maintenance of power through exploiting the psychological consequences of terrorism (Jackson, 2005). Therefore, this dissertation will explore whether the British political discourse of terrorism has impacted the conceptualisation and assessment of radicalisation risk.

Prevailing themes previously found in discourses of western states include the ‘out-casting’ of terrorists, the construction of Muslims as a risky suspect community, and no discussion of macro-issues that may be contributing factors (e.g., Githens-Mazer & Lambert, 2010). British public sector workers have a statutory duty to assess radicalisation risk in individuals they come into contact with, using a framework based on the Extremism Risk Guidance 22+ (ERG 22+), a measure developed by two psychologists working for the



Government's National Offender Management Service (NOMS; Lloyd & Dean, 2015). In order to be effective, the assessment of people at risk must be unprejudiced and not influenced by political rhetoric or biased research. Amid criticisms of psychology for a lack of criticality and the ongoing replication crisis, this study employs critical discourse analysis (CDA) to examine the portrayal of radicalisation risk in the discourse of terrorism, and to unearth the relationship between academic research, political speech and government documents on assessing risk of radicalisation. Analysis of these three strands of discourse revealed six prevailing themes, which are discussed at length below.

### **Key Terms**

Many of the key terms in the discourse of terrorism are controversial and ill-defined, and 'terrorism' itself has no fixed definition (Chomsky, 2003; Jackson, 2005; Orr, 2013). 'Terrorism' generally refers to the use of violence by non-state actors as a means to achieve social, ideological or political change (Blain, 2015; Horgan, 2014, 2017; Silke, 2011). However, the term has been criticised for resonating with moral opprobrium, and allowing states to selectively delegitimise and discredit the actions, motives and intentions of non-state groups (Hadis, 2007; Toomey & Singleton, 2014), while failing to apply the same moral standards to themselves (Chomsky, 2002, 2003; Horgan, 2017). Similarly, although the term 'radicalisation' has become a ubiquitous component of the discourse of terrorism, there is a lack of consensus on its meaning (Heath-Kelly, 2013; Neumann, 2013; Sedgwick, 2010). Broadly speaking, radicalisation is a process by which individuals or groups adopt increasingly extreme political, religious or social ideals that may culminate in acts of terrorism (Koomen & Van Der Pligt, 2016). Additionally, there are clusters of interrelated terms that are used interchangeably to refer to acts of terrorism and the people who perpetrate them, such as 'extremism', 'radicalism', 'Salafism', 'fundamentalism', 'jihadism', and

‘Islamism’ (Herbst, 2003; Horgan, 2014). The result of this profusion of terms is that all are attended by ambiguity and charged with ‘common-sense’ connotations and denotations that can be deployed strategically (Herbst, 2003; Schmid, 2011). Although critical analysis of the use of such terms should be integral to terrorism research, many authors fail to assess the language used to talk about terrorism.

### **The Psychology of Terrorism**

Terrorism research is a multidisciplinary field that is marked by a dearth of ethnographic data, which has resulted in widespread recycling of data (Crone, 2016; Horgan, 2014; Jackson, 2005; Silke, 2011). Until recently, the contribution of psychology to the field was limited (Horgan, 2017). Although psychologists are increasingly contributing to understanding terrorism, criticisms levelled at research include the uncritical use of contested terms, ideological bias, lack of methodological rigour, and a focus on the interests of Western states (Herbst, 2011). Psychological research on terrorism largely concerns either the individual terrorist or the effects of terrorist action (Horgan, 2014). Despite popular perceptions to the contrary, research has been unable to find evidence of a ‘terrorist personality’ or abnormal psychopathology associated with terrorism (Borum, 2011; Coppock & McGovern, 2014; Gill & Corner, 2017; Horgan, 2014; Monahan, 2012, 2015).

There are several theories that are used as the epistemological foundation of explorations of the psychology of terrorism, including terror management theory (Pyszczynski, 2004), prospect theory (e.g., Huq, 2013), uncertainty-identity theory (e.g., Hogg, Meehan & Farquharson, 2010), Smelser’s (1962) theory of collective behaviour, and social identity theory (e.g., Al Raffie, 2013). Tajfel and Turner’s (1979) influential social identity theory (SIT) posits that group membership is an important component in an

individual's identity, and a source of self-esteem. SIT postulates a three-step process behind inter-group relations: *social categorisation* (by which the self and others are categorised into groups), *social identification* (during which an individual adopts the identity of their group), and *social comparison* (whereby individuals derogate or discriminate against outgroups in order to bolster their self-image) (Tajfel & Turner, 1979). Social identities can drive ethnocentrism, intergroup differentiation, ingroup favouritism, and stereotyping (Tajfel & Turner, 1979). Stereotypes are overgeneralised beliefs about people's characteristics based on their group membership, and can assist in organising, understanding and predicting the world (Koomen & Van Der Pligt, 2016). Research has suggested that when individuals feel threatened they tend to stereotype and denigrate outgroups more negatively (Tajfel & Turner, 1979). Indeed, experimental research using terror management theory as a theoretical framework has found social identities and inter-group perceptions are affected by the threat of terrorism.

### **Terror Management Theory**

Terror management theory (TMT; Pyszczynski, 2004) is arguably the most utilised psychological theory in terrorism research. TMT postulates that the clash between humans' desire for life and their awareness of the inevitability of death provokes terror (Arndt, Greenberg, Pyszczynski, & Solomon, 1997; Pyszczynski, 2004). Individuals then manage their terror through *cultural worldviews* – individualised conceptions of reality that provide comfort, meaning and order (Pyszczynski, 2004; Pyszczynski, Rothschild, & Abdollahi, 2008). The most commonly-tested element of TMT is the *mortality salience* (MS) hypothesis: that reminders of mortality induce changes in preferences and normative judgements that defend worldviews, bolstering self-esteem and reducing death-related anxieties (Huq, 2013; Pyszczynski, et al., 2008). TMT is empirically supported, and in a meta-analysis of MS

research Burke, Martens and Faucher (2010) evaluated the results of 277 experiments, finding a robust effect size ( $r = .35$ ) and no evidence of publication bias. However, the prototypical experiment participant was a 22-year-old American college student, which challenges the generalisability of results (Burke et al., 2010).

Previous research has associated MS with a range of behavioural and attitudinal changes. For example, in three experiments Arndt et al. (1997) found that American participants in an MS condition who were presented with a subliminal death-related stimuli (the word “death”) onscreen for 42.83 ms displayed pro-American bias when rating pro- and anti-American essays, while those in the control condition did not. This suggests that death-reminders can exert unconscious influence on individuals’ behaviour, such as ingroup bias. This is supported by a series of studies conducted by Fritsche, Jonas and Fankhänel (2008). German participants who completed an MS task of answering two questions about their death showed increased gender- and nationality-based ingroup bias on questionnaires and assessments of essays (Fritsche et al., 2008). TMT associates ingroup bias with defence of cultural worldviews that provide meaning during times of threat (Pyszczynski et al., 2004).

Due to the extensive public attention and media coverage terrorist attacks receive (Fisher, 2015), some TMT researchers have substituted mortality salience for terrorism salience (TS; i.e., reminders of terrorism). For example, Dunkel (2002) found that participants who viewed a vignette about terrorist attacks (a TS condition) displayed higher anxiety than those who completed an MS prime of reading a description of dealing with one’s own death. However, it should be noted that this study was conducted with American college students in the immediate aftermath of the 2001 terrorist attacks in the US. At this point the attacks may still have had a particularly strong affective impact, eliciting stronger reactions from

participants. Research since has suggested that the impact of TS is moderated by how psychologically close the event is to participants.

In a study by Luke and Hartwig (2014), American participants ( $n = 122$ ,  $M$  age = 33.26) took part in an assessment of how MS and TS affected their judgements of the treatment of military prisoners. Participants who completed an MS prime of answering two questions about their own death showed increased support for the inhumane treatment of military prisoners when rating interview techniques that included torture (e.g., waterboarding). Participants in the TS condition answered two questions about the 2001 US attacks. However, the TS condition did not produce a significant effect. Luke and Hartwig used the 2001 attacks as a terrorism reminder inline with early research that found TS to be equivalent to MS (e.g., Pyszczynski et al., 2006). However, by 2014 the threat induced by reminders of the 2001 attacks had likely diminished. The assumption that reminders of the 2001 attacks would induce anxiety and mortality salience may reflect the researchers' uncritical acceptance of the US political discourse that emphasises the exceptional tragedy suffered by the US (Jackson, 2005). However, Luke and Hartwig's (2014) study did find support for the TMT hypothesis that MS can increase support for punitive action against outgroups that are perceived as threatening.

Research on TMT and terrorism has also found an effect on people's political attitudes (e.g., Cohen, Ogilvie, Solomon, Greenberg and Pyszczynski, 2005). In a study by Nail and McGregor (2009), 239 American adults evaluated eight items that assessed political attitudes across two samples: the first in 2000 and the second shortly after the 2001 US attacks, which provided a naturally-occurring independent variable. Nail and McGregor (2009) claimed to find a 'conservative shift' in both liberal and conservative participants, challenging TMT's

proposition that people embrace their worldview more strongly under threat (Nail & McGregor, 2009). However, the ‘conservative shift’ was observed only on items relating to President Bush and increasing military spending, while none of the other items measured, such as socialised medicine, showed significant change. TMT posits that perceived threat will increase support for punitive measures against outgroups, and influence people’s leadership preferences (Burke et al., 2010). It is therefore expected that individuals would support both an increase in military spending and a leader who is seen as strong and emphasises the superiority of the ingroup (Gillath & Hart, 2010; Merolla & Zechmeister, 2009). Indeed, there was a large increase in support for President Bush in the aftermath of the 2001 attacks (Huq, 2013; Kam & Ramos, 2008; Kim, 2016), and experimental studies associated TS with increased support for Bush and his counter-terrorism policies (e.g., Cohen et al., 2005; Landau et al., 2004).

Terrorism research has associated terror management with increased prejudice and discrimination against outgroups, especially Muslims (e.g., Ben-Ezra, Hamama-Raz, & Mahat-Shamir, 2017). Researchers have also found evidence of stereotyping of Muslims as terrorists in American and European participants (e.g., Brown, Ali, Stone, & Jewell, 2017; Calfano, Djupe, Cox, & Jones, 2016; North et al., 2014). Stereotyping can dehumanise perceived enemies in times of conflict, fulfilling a terror management function by maintaining stable perceptions of others, making the world appear more predictable and meaningful (Miller & Landau, 2005). Cohen et al. (2013) conducted a series of experiments to test how MS affected American college students’ ( $n = 298$ ) attitudes towards symbols of Islam. Participants who completed an MS prime of answering questions about their own death showed decreased support for a mosque being built near the site of the 2001 US attacks, and increased death thought accessibility (DTA) after thinking about building a mosque. Cohen et

al. (2013) also found that reading about Qur'an desecration decreased DTA that had been induced by MS. DTA did not increase in response to thinking about building a church or synagogue, suggesting an association of death with Islam specifically. However, it should be noted that participants in this study were fairly homogenous, and the results may not be generalisable.

In another study, Das, Bushman, Bezemer, Kerkhof and Vermeulen (2009) found that white Dutch participants who viewed news content about Islamic terrorist attacks as a TS prime displayed increased DTA. This in turn led to increased prejudice against Arabs, assessed by a measure of prejudicial attitudes and an Implicit Association Test (IAT; Das et al., 2009). This suggests that news reports of terrorism may increase DTA, leading to prejudicial attitudes against outgroups. There is a substantial public, political and media discourse of terrorism. Therefore, Das et al.'s (2009) study suggests that the discourse of terrorism may instigate defensive terror management functions such as stereotyping and prejudice.

### **Discourses of Terrorism and Radicalisation**

The current British discourse of terrorism grew out of that established by the US government after the 2001 US attacks (e.g., Chomsky, 2002, 2003; Dunmire, 2009; Jackson, 2005). In Britain, this discourse has evolved to account for how 'homegrown' terrorists – British people – come to commit acts of terrorism, primarily through the inclusion of a 'radicalisation' process (Heath-Kelly, 2013). Though a pervasive concept, 'radicalisation' remains undefined and has been criticised by analysts. Some researchers consider the concept of radicalisation a convenient means by which to explain how members of the national ingroup become part of the outgroup (Githens-Mazer, 2012; Githens-Mazer & Lambert,

2010). In an extensive analysis of political speeches and empirical research, Crone (2016) questions common-sense assumptions about radicalisation, identifying an ‘intellectualist bias’ that propagates an image of the individual as a “mainly cognitive, intellectual and disembodied being who translates intellectual ideas directly into violent practice” (p. 604). In a review of analyses of the British discourse of terrorism, Heath-Kelly (2013) suggests that the construction of a linear narrative of radicalisation facilitates problem-solving approaches and governance and allows the performance of security. Due to the dearth of ethnographic data in terrorism studies, however, there is a lack of empirical evidence that a radicalisation process actually exists (Mattsson et al., 2016; Spalek, 2011).

Analyses of the British discourse of terrorism have primarily utilised political speeches and government documents. Findings suggest the discourse denies the political agency of people at risk of radicalisation (Coppock & McGovern, 2014; Crone, 2016); individualises radicalisation and overlooks the influence of macro-issues (Githens-Mazer & Lambert, 2010; Matteson et al., 2016); constructs an image of Muslims as a ‘risky’, suspect community (Coppock & McGovern, 2014; Heath-Kelly, 2013; Kundnani, 2012); utilises a ‘conventional wisdom’ of Islamic difference, characterising terrorism risk in terms of a ‘clash of civilisations’ (Githens-Mazer & Lambert, 2010; Ide, 2017; Silva, 2017); and emphasises foreign, external factors, such as ‘Islamist’ ideologies (Połńska-Kimunguyi & Gillespie, 2016). Analyses have suggested that negative views of Muslims have been sustained by elite discourse (Calfano et al., 2016; Jackson, 2007b; Połńska-Kimunguyi & Gillespie 2016; Poynting & Mason, 2006). Some researchers suggest the concept of radicalisation has become a tool of power employed by the state and non-Muslim communities to differentiate between ‘good’ and ‘bad’ Muslims, pathologising Muslim dissent (Githens-Mazer & Lambert, 2010; Heath-Kelly, 2013).



### **Radicalisation Risk Factor Research**

The conceptualisation of radicalisation risk factors is a young, largely theoretical, field (Horgan, 2017). Due to the lack of empirical evidence of a radicalisation process, some psychologists have hypothesised models of radicalisation (e.g., McCauley & Moskaleiko, 2017). In a book dedicated to the psychology of radicalisation and terrorism, Koomen and Van Der Pligt (2016) acknowledge themselves that “the picture we sketch of radicalization and terrorism, as well as their nature and their background, is built upon foundations that are not as firm as we might wish” (p. 6). Consequently, the authors have developed a model of determinants that shape the path of radicalisation through a synthesis of secondary data. Koomen and Van Der Pligt (2016) consulted published surveys discussing the causes of radicalisation, inter-disciplinary research data, and social scientific and social psychological publications. The resulting theory characterises radicalisation in terms of prominent themes in social psychology, including: stereotypes, prejudice and discrimination; perceived threat; cultural determinants; economic and social climate; personality traits; social identity processes and ideology; social identity and emotions; religion and ideology; and individual and group processes. However, given the lack of empiricism behind their model, and the problem of data recycling in the field of terrorism studies, it is unclear what external validity their model has. Additionally, at times the authors appear to display bias, making broad statements such as “Many Muslims, for example, have an image of the West as immoral, decadent and lacking human warmth and solidarity” (Koomen & Van Der Pligt, 2016, p. 42) without providing evidence. In order to contribute fully to the field of terrorism studies, psychologists must critically assess their own positions and biases in relation to their research (Burr & Dick, 2017).

## **The Present Study**

This dissertation makes a unique contribution to terrorism research by synthesising the findings of discourse analyses of terrorism with those of the social psychology of terrorism. Additionally, no study reviewed here has critically assessed the relationship between academic research and state discourse. A longstanding critique of psychology has been the failure to acknowledge power relations and the critical issue of who sets the agenda behind the questions we ask (Burr & Dick, 2017). Two crises, in particular, have emphasised the need for psychology to be critically aware, methodologically rigorous, ethically defensible and independent from the vested interests of power elites. It was recently revealed that officials from the American Psychological Association (APA) colluded with the US government from 2005 to develop a programme of torture for use on detainees with links to terrorism (Hoffman et al., 2015). Additionally, the ongoing replication crisis in psychology has drawn attention to low rates of replication, fraud and ‘Questionable Research Practices’ (Rodgers & ShROUT, 2018). The Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015 introduced a statutory duty for all public sector workers in England and Wales to report clients or service users they assess to be at risk of radicalisation using a framework based on the ERG 22+. Given its widespread, statutory use, it is vital that the science and methodology underlying the assessment framework is critically analysed.

Much of the research conducted on terrorism and radicalisation focusses on Islamist, terrorism, usually Al-Qaeda. However, terrorist threats are constantly evolving. At the time of writing, the self-proclaimed ‘Islamic State in Iraq and the land of Syria’ (also known as Daesh) is considered the biggest threat to UK security; however, there is also a growing threat from far right terrorism (Busby, 2018). Considering the accusations of anti-Islam bias that are

levelled at the discourse of terrorism (Coppock & McGovern, 2014), analysing whether the discourse links terrorism and radicalisation with Islam is of fundamental importance.

Additionally, no study identified in this review has utilised psychological theory as a framework to interpret the results of a discourse analysis. Furthermore, while a small number of psychologists have theorised about possible risk factors for radicalisation, no discourse analysis has identified what risk factors are present in the discourse. As these risk factors impact who is considered vulnerable to radicalisation and therefore in need of state intervention, analysing their roots is essential. Therefore, the research questions are:

- 1) What risk factors emerge in the discourse of radicalisation?
- 2) To what extent does the discursive construction of ‘radicalisation’ conceptualise Muslims as of particular risk to British society, and do measures of risk of radicalisation associate radicalisation with Islam?
- 3) How does the discourse of radicalisation affect the measurement of risk of radicalisation?

## **Methodology**

### **Design**

The present paper explores how the state-led discourse of terrorism has impacted the conceptualisation and assessment of radicalisation risk in the UK. Additionally, this is also an exploration of the relationship between psychology and political discourse, critically analysing whether psychologists reproduced and maintained power during the development of a measure of radicalisation risk. Consequently, the following analysis used three strands of

discourse. The first strand of discourse is political speeches, where the discourse of radicalisation is constructed. The second strand is the academic research underpinning the government's guidance on the assessment of risk. The third, government documents, is where the government sets out guidance for public sector workers to assess radicalisation risk. The three strands provide an overview of the transformation of 'radicalisation' from a discursive construct to concrete practice. While media reports are another strand of discourse that it may be valuable to assess, this study is concerned with gauging how discourse is used to shape and portray the aims of the state, rather than understanding public opinion of terrorism and radicalisation. Therefore, this study did not analyse any media reports of terrorism.

As the focus of analysis was elite discourse, critical discourse analysis (CDA) was selected as the most appropriate method of analysis. The current study utilised Van Dijk's (2013) triangulation framework that explicitly links discourse, cognition and society, theorising that power and dominance are enacted through discourse and influence individuals' cognitions.

### **Critical Discourse Analysis**

Discourse analysis is based on the assumption that social texts (including speech, written texts, and interviews) do not simply reflect or describe things, but actively construct a version of those things (Potter & Wetherell, 1987; Wetherell, 2001). Fundamental to discourse analysis is the assumption that language is a central and constitutive element of social life (Wood & Kroger, 2000). The focus of discourse analysis is, therefore, not on language as an abstract entity such as lexicon, but as the medium for interaction (Potter, 1997).

Discourse analysis is multi- and trans-disciplinary and has developed concurrently in a number of different fields that utilise a diverse assortment of theoretical perspectives, including psychology, sociology, linguistics, cultural studies and literary theory (Fairclough, 2013; Parker, 2013; Potter, 2004; Potter & Wetherell, 1987; Wood & Kroger, 2000). Consequently, there are numerous traditions of discourse analysis, including conversation analysis, interactional sociolinguistics, ethnomethodology, Foucauldian discourse analysis, and critical discourse analysis (Parker, 2013; Wetherell, Taylor & Yates, 2001; Wood & Kroger, 2000). Additionally, the term ‘discourse’ has itself been used in a panoply of different ways (Potter & Wetherell, 1987) from a broad umbrella-term for all forms of talking and writing, to a way to refer to structured systems of metaphors, figures of speech and terms (Wood & Kroger, 2000). As this study utilises CDA, the term ‘text(s)’ will refer to written texts and transcripts of spoken interaction, while the term ‘discourse(s)’ will be used to refer to the total process of social interaction, of which text is merely one element (Titscher et al., 2000).

CDA is a macro-analytic discourse tradition that moves between close analysis of texts and an assortment of social analyses, with the objective of deconstructing the sociopolitical and historical contexts within which discourses are entrenched (Bartolucci & Gallo, 2013; Van Dijk, 2001). CDA draws influence from a variety of traditions and theorists, including the Enlightenment philosophers, Western Marxism, the Frankfurt School, Gramsci, Althusser, Foucault, Pêcheux, and feminist scholarship (Fairclough, 2001; Titscher, Meyer, Wodak & Vetter, 2000; Van Dijk, 2001). CDA emphasises uncovering the relationship between discourse and various social variables, such as power and dominance, ideologies, institutions, and social identities (Fairclough, 2013; Wood & Kroger, 2000). Within the CDA tradition, there are multiple theoretical perspectives. Of particular interest here is Van Dijk’s

psychological form of CDA, which includes an analysis of the relations between society, discourse and social cognition (Van Dijk, 2001). According to Van Dijk, “in order to relate discourse and society, and hence discourse and the reproduction of dominance and inequality, we need to examine in detail the role of social representations in the minds of social actors.” (Van Dijk, 2001, p. 301).

CDA works on the neo-Marxist assumption that cultural dimensions are significant in the creation and maintenance of social power relations (Titscher et al., 2000). Social power in this instance denotes privileged access to valued resources, such as wealth, position, status, education, knowledge or group membership, and involves control by members of one social group over another. While power and dominance may be exerted through physical means, a more modern form of dominance uses persuasion, manipulation and dissimulation to change others’ social cognitions to fit one’s own interests (Van Dijk, 2001). The Gramscian concept of hegemony, an ‘internal’ control whereby powerful elites influence the social cognitions of the dominated so that they act in the interest of the powerful (Rachar, 2016), is an important influence in CDA. Uncovering how insidious persuasive messages affect social cognitions until they become a ‘common sense’ buttress to the status quo is at the heart of CDA.

The focus of this analysis was the state-led discursive construction of terrorism and radicalisation, and how it has affected the measurement of radicalisation risk. The ‘state’ incorporates cultural and political forms, representations, discourses and organisations of power that “help define public interest, establish meaning, and define and naturalise available social identities.” (Nagengast, 1994, p. 116). This is an examination of how the power elite, those people and institutions at the head of the hierarchy of power (Mils, 1959), have constructed suspect communities inhabiting a ‘pre-crime’ space. Although terrorism

continues to pose a genuine security risk to the UK, as evinced by the four major terror attacks of 2017, “the ways that we understand and represent such risks in discourse and practice is not predetermined, entails particular consequences, and thus remains open to critical analysis” (Fisher, 2015, p. 4). It is of vital importance, therefore, to consider how power and dominance have impacted the discourse of ‘radicalisation’, and whether academic research facilitates the maintenance of these power relations. Using ‘critical’ discourse analysis engenders an exploration of how discourses of terrorism and radicalisation are used to portray oppositional groups and buttress state policies (Gunning, 2007). Other types of discourse analysis may be better suited for analyses of different types of material; for example, Potter and Wetherell’s discourse analysis for social psychology would be valuable for analysing whether media reports of terrorism and discourses and patterns of explanation among people outside of the power elite sustain prejudicial attitudes towards specific minority groups (e.g., Potter & Wetherell, 1987; Wetherell & Potter, 1992).

### **Positionality**

Van Dijk (1993) considers it of vital importance that critical discourse analysts explicitly state their socio-political stance. Additionally, the need for reflexivity in qualitative research in general has long been acknowledged (Berger, 2013; Mruck & Breuer, 2003). Certainly, my positionality as a life-long British subject who has been thoroughly indoctrinated in dominant public discourses since birth is worth noting. Additionally, I am politically aligned with left-wing and socialist parties. The majority of the texts analysed in this dissertation relay the voice(s) of the Government, which has been right-wing (Conservative) since 2010. However, the aim of this dissertation is not to undermine one political party in particular, but to explore the ways that power and domination influence the conception of radicalisation risk in the UK. Unfortunately parties not in government are

underrepresented in archives of political speeches, and consequently the majority of speeches I have analysed are from the Conservative party.

Additionally, I have tried to avoid allowing my own analysis to reinforce or normalise the dominant discourse of terrorism, such as through the use of popular shorthand rhetorical devices such as ‘9-11’ or ‘7-7’, which effectively expunge the history and context of events and represent them as cultural icons whose meaning is assumed and open to manipulation.

### **Secondary Data Gathering**

The search for data began with the selection of political speeches for analysis. There is currently no government archive of political speeches. However, two online archives contain speeches by figures from all political parties: ‘British Political Speech’ and ‘UKPOL’. Searches of key words and phrases relating to terrorism and radicalisation were conducted on both archives. The search capability of British Political Speech was superior to that of UKPOL, although UKPOL had several speeches that were not available on British Political Speech. Given the noted rise in radicalisation discourse in 2005, searches on British Political Speech were restricted to 2005-2017 (the most recent year possible). UKPOL offered no such opportunity to limit search criteria. Therefore, UKPOL returned hundreds of speeches for each search, the overwhelming majority of which were not relevant and pre-dated 2005. There was considerable overlap between the archives and search terms. Table 1 gives an overview of the terms searched and the results yielded for each search. In order to generate a more appropriate sample, some inclusion criteria were applied. Speeches selected had terrorism or radicalisation as their main, or a significant, focus. In some cases this was obvious from the title of the speech, while others required a cursory content analysis. Some exceptions were made for speeches at conference, which are vehicles by which political



parties set out their position on important issues. Additionally, speeches that solely concerned ‘overseas’ terrorism were excluded from the data pool. Of the final selection of speeches ( $n = 21$ ), the vast majority ( $n = 18$ ) were from the political party in Government, largely due to the amount of Ministerial speeches made. However, relevant speeches from the party in Opposition were included ( $n = 3$ ). Unfortunately, political parties not in Government or Opposition have little opportunity to make official speeches, and are therefore not represented in the sample. A list of the speeches analysed can be found in Table 2, Appendix A.

**Table 1**

*Overview of search terms and number of results returned from archives of political speeches*

Search Term	Number of results	
	UKPOL	British Political Speech
Terrorism	367	80
Terrorist	283	24
Radicalisation	31	2
Extremism	140	13
Extremist	118	7
Ideology	136	12
Extremist ideology	29	2
Islamist	47	4
Islamist ideology	17	2
Radical Islam	40	4

Gathering government documents for analysis was comparatively simple. *Prevent* and *Channel*, the government’s statutory anti-radicalisation programmes, are intended to be

consumed by all public sector workers. Therefore, the strategy, duty guidance and vulnerability assessment framework are freely available on the government website ( $n = 4$ ), and easily found by searching for “Prevent” and “Channel”. The government documents included for analysis are: ‘Prevent Strategy’ (HM Government, 2011); ‘Channel: Vulnerability assessment framework’ (HM Government, 2012); ‘Revised Prevent Duty Guidance for England and Wales’ (HM Government, 2015a); ‘Channel Duty Guidance’ (HM Government, 2015b).

The ERG 22+, the psychometric tool underpinning the Prevent and Channel programmes, is not accessible due to national security concerns. However, a journal article on the development of the measure was published in 2015 in the *Journal of Threat Assessment and Management* (Lloyd & Dean, 2015). Therefore, this report will be used for analysis of academic research. Consequently, the academic research analysed in the current report should be considered a case study. While case studies have limited generalisability due to their ideographic nature, they provide a detailed picture of important facets of individual cases (Mills, Durepos, & Wiebe, 2010). As the ERG 22+ is the only publicly-acknowledged influence on the assessment of radicalisation risk in the UK, a case study is appropriate here.

### **Data Analysis**

There is no unitary set of methods for conducting CDA (Van Dijk, 2001). However, Mullet (2018) integrated approaches described by leading CDA scholars in order to establish a generic framework for CDA that is flexible and appropriate across various disciplines, including psychology. Analysis was conducted using an adaption of Mullet’s framework, the steps of which are outlined in Figure 1. The analysis was not always a linear, unidirectional

process, but rather involved working flexibly and thoroughly with each text, moving between the steps of analysis and rereading it until no new themes emerged.

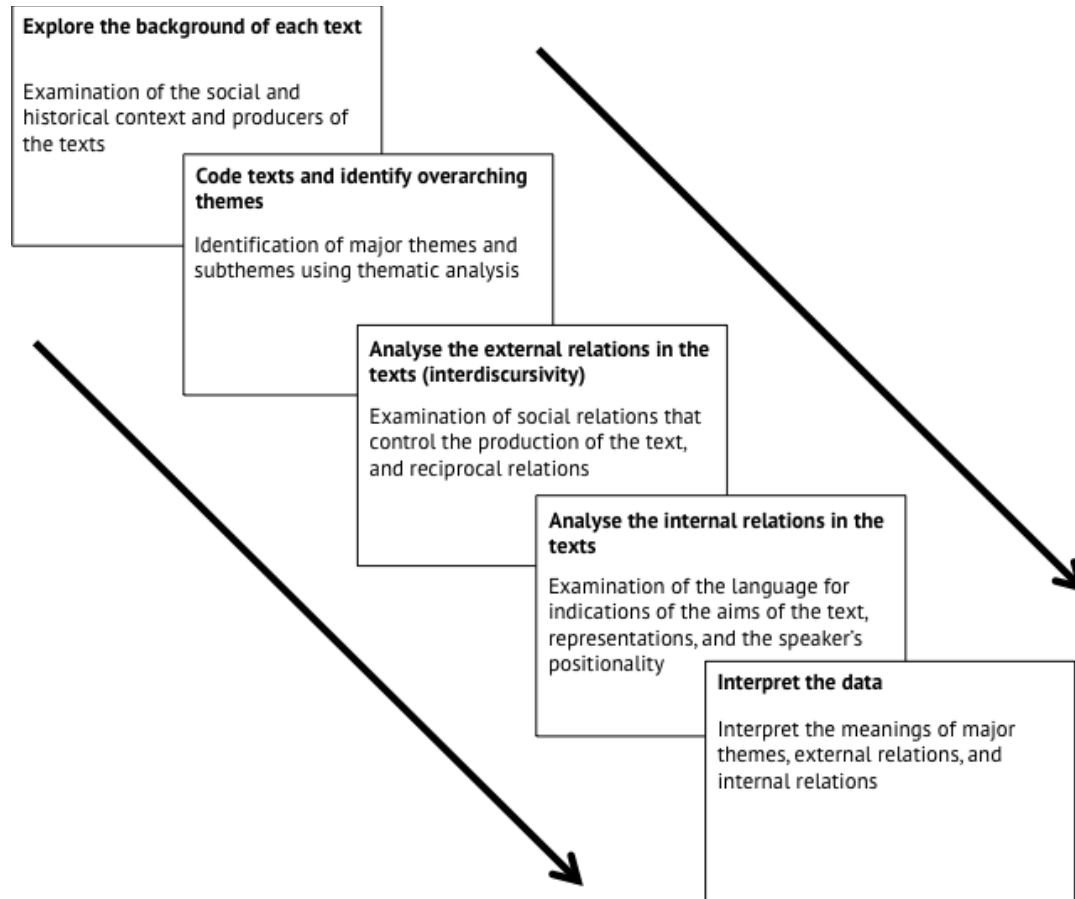


Figure 1. The steps of analysis. Adapted from Mullet (2018, p. 122).

Analysis for each of the three strands of discourse was completed in separate blocks. Each block began with a thematic analysis of all the texts in the strand (Braun & Clarke, 2006). After familiarisation with the data, codes were applied throughout the texts (see Appendix B). Themes were identified and quotes were extracted for each strand. The extracted text was then analysed in terms of external and internal relations, drawing on analytical concepts such as interpretative repertoires, ideological dilemmas and subject positions and identity. The findings of the research were then synthesised and organised into six themes.

### **Ethical Approval**

As no participants were involved in this research, many ethical principles, such as informed consent and debriefing, were not applicable. The study received ethical approval from the University of Glasgow School of Education (see Appendix C).

### **Analysis**

During the analysis of political speeches, government documents and academic research, six major themes emerged: ‘Clash of civilisations’, ‘The salience of Islam’, ‘Passive vulnerability to radicalisation’, ‘Politicisation’, ‘Individualisation’ and ‘Uncritical psychology’. Four of the themes appear across two different types of text. Refer to Figure 2 for a map of the themes. The ‘Clash of civilisations’ and ‘The salience of Islam’ themes are heavily interrelated, and ‘The salience of Islam’ could be considered a subtheme in a broader ‘Clash of civilisations’ discourse. However, the emphasis on Islam was so prevalent that it warranted separate discussion. All speakers and texts accepted the existence of a ‘radicalisation process’.

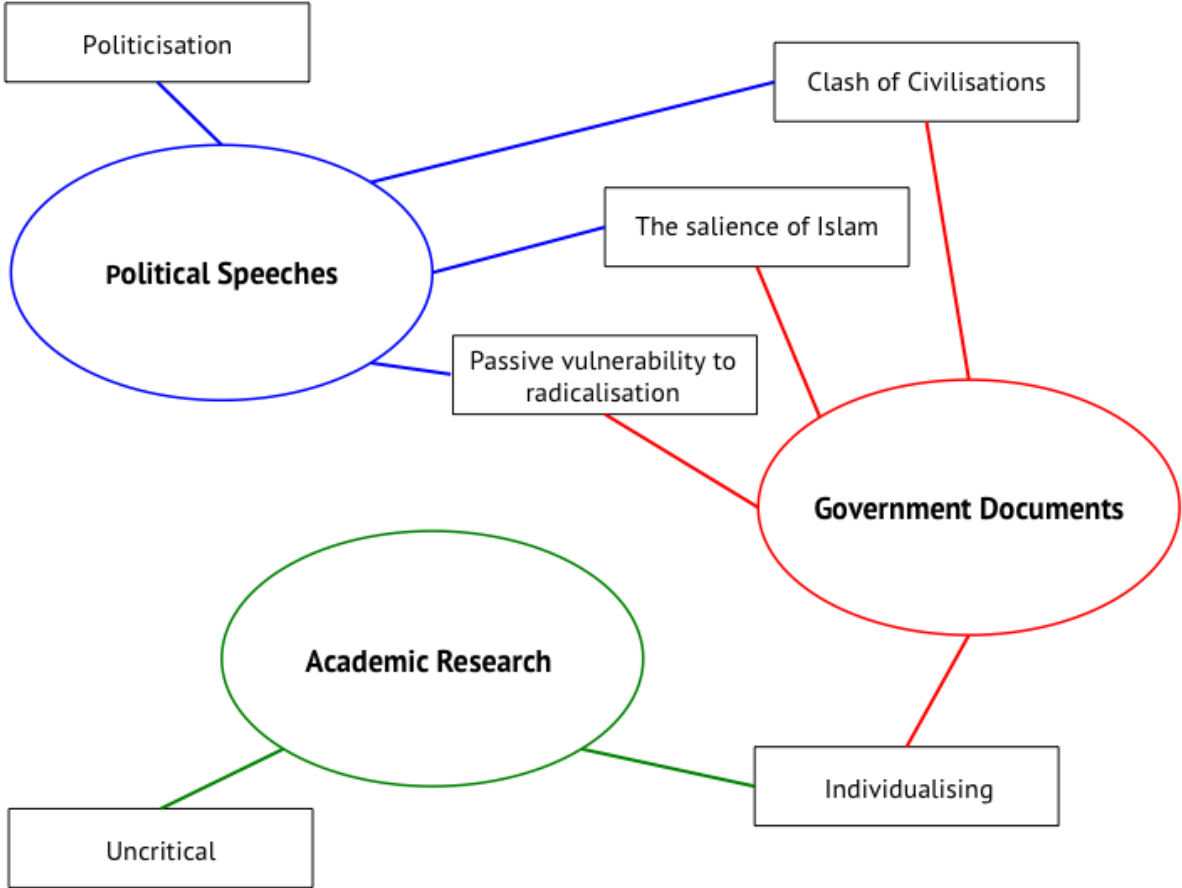


Figure 2. Theme map showing themes across the three strands of discourse analysed.

**Political Speeches**

In the political speeches analysed, speakers delineated between their party’s and competing parties’ conceptualisation of terrorism and radicalisation, utilised the discourse of terrorism to derogate their opponents, externalised the root causes of terrorism and radicalisation, constructed group identities of an ingroup and an outgroup, and justified state interventions in civilians’ lives. Political speeches rarely offered opportunities for immediate replies, and speakers were therefore free to make claims without fear of dispute. The themes ‘Clash of civilisations’, ‘The salience of Islam’, ‘Passive vulnerability to radicalisation’ and ‘Politicisation’ were present in political speeches.

**Clash of civilisations.** Throughout the political speeches, speakers construct identities of a good ingroup ('Us') versus an evil outgroup ('Them'), employing a strategy of positive self-presentation and negative other-presentation:

But what we remember most from the **cowardly** attack on the Manchester Arena is the response of the Spirit of Manchester. **People throwing open their doors to strangers, giving them a place to shelter. Taxi drivers helping people get home safely, accepting no fare in return. Ordinary people rushing to the scene of destruction. Putting themselves in harm's way. The incredible men and women of the emergency services running towards the carnage, while others dropped what they were doing and went back to work to help.**

(May, 2017c, para. 89)

With this statement, the Prime Minister denigrates and delegitimises the suicide bomber who perpetrated the attack with the negative adjective "cowardly", and simultaneously establishes the moral superiority of British citizens through their selfless actions and spirit of unity. May's description of people giving shelter to others is suggestive of the Biblical story of the nativity of Jesus. In fact, May has acknowledged that her Christian faith helps frame her thinking (Chakelin, 2017). Juxtaposing acts of Christian-like kindness with the actions of a Muslim suicide-bomber draws on an established interpretative repertoire of a 'clash of civilisations' between the West and the 'Muslim world'.

The clash of civilisations narrative has been accused of creating a dichotomy of antagonistic difference between Western and Muslim-majority countries, presuming Western superiority and associating Islam with authoritarianism and hostility to modern, democratic

governments (Richardson, 2013; Said, 1978). Indeed, terrorist attacks are often characterised as attacks on democracy and Western values. For example:

“I believe that it is essential to preserve our democratic way of life, our right to freedom of thought and expression and our commitment to the rule of law; the liberties which have been hard won over centuries and which we hold dear. **These are the very liberties and values which the terrorists seek to destroy...**”

(Goldsmith, 2006, para. 8)

“The terrorists sought to strike at the heart of Europe. **They seek to attack our values and they want to destroy our way of life.** But they will not succeed.”

(May, 2016b, para. 35)

“...we will defeat those who seek to **attack our way of life.**”

(Rudd, 2016a, para. 14)

“Mr Speaker, yesterday an act of terrorism **tried to silence our democracy.**”

(May, 2017a, para. 1)

Such statements effectively project motives on to perpetrators of terrorist attacks and remove any agency they may have in explaining their motivations. All of the examples above use language that implies a unitary truth – that terrorists attack the West because they oppose democracy and liberty. Fallon (2015, paras. 33-34) utilises a widely-criticised neologism that perpetuates the clash of civilisations narrative:

“The use of force must be part of this total government response. There can be no compromise, no deal with **Islamofascists**”

The use of the term ‘Islamofascism’ has been criticised as misleading, suggesting an ideological overlap between Islam and fascism (Ferguson, 2006). ‘Fascism’ intertextually evokes World War II, and buttresses the power of the state to deal with threats punitively.

**The salience of Islam.** Political speeches featured frequent references to Muslims and Islam. An ideological dilemma emerges with regards to the association of Islam with terrorism. Politicians frequently make attempts to differentiate between peaceful Muslims and those who commit terrorist attacks:

“There are extremists out there who suggest that these attacks can somehow be justified by some **twisted interpretation of Islam**. They cannot.”

(Smith, 2008, para. 10)

“...we should acknowledge that this threat comes in Europe **overwhelmingly** from young men who follow a **completely perverse, warped interpretation of Islam...**”

(Cameron, 2011, para. 3)

“People of all faiths condemn the violence and **British Muslims and indeed Muslims worldwide have said very clearly these events are abhorrent**. The attacks have **nothing to do with Islam** which is followed peacefully by millions of people around the world.”

(May, 2015, para. 30)



The three speakers homogenise Islam and disregard its cultural, political, racial and religious diversity (e.g., Aslan, 2005). While the attackers are said to subscribe to a “*perverse*”, “*warped*”, and “*twisted*” interpretation of Islam, they are still implicitly linked to Islam. Cameron’s use of “*overwhelmingly*” stresses the magnitude of the threat from the young Muslim attackers.

Despite attempts to separate Islam and terrorism, speakers often discuss terrorism purely in terms of an “*Islamist ideology*”. For example:

“We have to get to the root of the problem, and we need to be **absolutely clear on the origins of where these terrorist attacks lie**. That is the existence of **an ideology, Islamist extremism**... I would argue an important reason **so many young Muslims are drawn to it** comes down to a question of identity.”

(Cameron, 2011, paras. 4-7)

“Now of course, there are many huge challenges facing our world that we could discuss today... But one of the biggest challenges of all is how we tackle **the rise of Islamist extremism**.”

(Cameron, 2012, para. 4)

“So we need to expose that **Islamist ideology for the perversion** it is. And we can't **deny this** [radicalisation] **process has anything to do with Islam**.”

(Fallon, 2015, paras. 15-16)

“...our working assumption is that the attacker was **inspired by Islamist ideology**”

(May, 2017a, para. 34)

An “*Islamist ideology*” at the root of terrorism and radicalisation has become a recognisable interpretative repertoire since the 2003 invasion of Iraq, and quashes debate about the culpability of the government due to foreign policy. Cameron’s claim that “*so many Muslims are drawn to it*” makes the threat particularly salient, implying that a sizeable portion of the Muslim population is at risk. Fallon explicitly links the Islamist ideology to Islam, without any attempt to differentiate between terrorists and peaceful Muslims.

The salience of Islam in the political discourse of terrorism extends to instances where the speakers are discussing far right terrorism:

**As you know**, the **most significant** terrorist threat we face comes from **Al Qa’ida, its affiliates and like-minded terrorists**. That’s the **ideology most likely to inspire a terrorist attack in Britain today**. But we know from recent events that **although the far-right threat may not be on the same scale as Al Qa’ida**, their divisive and racist ideology **can** still have deadly consequences.

(Brokenshire, 2013, paras. 8-10)

While addressing a conference on the far right threat, Brokenshire emphasises the magnitude of the threat of Islamic terrorism. Brokenshire’s use of “*As you know*” implies a common-sense, unitary truth. Additionally, while Al-Qaeda is discussed with a high degree of certainty (e.g., “*That’s the ideology most likely to inspire a terrorist attack*”), certainty is reduced when discussing the far right through the use of the auxiliary modal “*can*”. This continues the

implicit association of Islam with terrorism, depicting far right terrorism as a subordinate threat.

**Passive vulnerability to radicalisation.** In political discourse, radicalisation is presented as something that happens to passive individuals who possess undefined vulnerabilities:

“This scheme identifies individuals that may be **vulnerable** to getting **swept up** in violent extremism.”

(Smith, 2008, para. 31)

“Our challenge is to support reforming voices in the Muslim community ... stopping the **slide into extremism.**”

(Fallon, 2015, para. 24)

“Through our existing Prevent intervention programmes we identify people **at risk** and work to **help them turn their lives around.** Our Channel process in particular engages **vulnerable people** in conversations to prevent them being **drawn further** into extremism or violent acts.”

(May, 2015, para. 22)

The phrases “*swept up in*” and “*slide into*” imply a total lack of control. The government is positioned as an authority that can intervene in a fast-moving process that transforms vulnerable people into terrorists. This repertoire of vulnerability contrasts with descriptions of terrorists, which are characterised by negative overlexicalisation with words

such as “*barbaric*”, “*cold-blooded*”, “*brutal*”, “*cowardly*”, “*nauseating*”, and “*murderers*”.

Although people at risk of radicalisation are vulnerable, the terrorists they (may) become are represented as evil.

While vulnerable individuals are supposedly passive, the radicalisation process is characterised in terms of poison and predation:

“That is why we have to work particularly hard at a local level to make sure that we are tackling violent extremism before it can take root – before the ideologies of fear and hatred can **infiltrate and poison** our society.”

(Smith, 2008, para. 23)

“It is clear Daesh will continue to try and **poison** minds...”

(May, 2016a, para. 15)

“Because left unchecked those that seek to destroy our way of life start to do so by... **putting poison in the minds and hatred in the hearts of impressionable young people.**”

(Morgan, 2016, para. 12)

Radicalisation is presented as an active process that contaminates and infiltrates the minds of young, vulnerable people. However, poison can be countered through the government taking strong action – “*tackling*” it. Smith suggests that in order to provide this protection the government needs to “*work particularly hard at a local level*”, suggesting the government must embed itself in local communities.

In addition to the characterisation of radicalisation as poisonous, speakers use language that links it to predation and paedophilia. For example:

“We know that radicalisers use the internet to **prey** on vulnerable individuals... extremists that set out to **groom** vulnerable individuals.”

(Smith, 2008, paras. 40-41)

“But I do know this, they didn’t take that decision alone – instead they were systematically **targeted and groomed**... They **prey on and exploit** young people’s vulnerabilities.”

(Morgan, 2016, paras. 14-16)

The use of words such as “*prey*” and “*groom*” discursively links radicalisation with an established discourse of paedophilia, and portrays people at risk of radicalisation as targets for predators. The characterisation of people at risk of radicalisation as passively vulnerable not only makes state intervention seem necessary, but also denies them any political agency, infantilising them and delegitimising their motivations.

**Politicisation.** The discourse of terrorism is highly politicised. For example:

“On the one hand, those on the hard right ignore this distinction between Islam and Islamist extremism, and just say that Islam and the West are irreconcilable – that there is a clash of civilisations... On the other hand, there are those on the soft left who also ignore this distinction. They lump all Muslims together, compiling a list of grievances,

and argue that if only governments addressed these grievances, the terrorism would stop.”

(Cameron, 2011, paras. 5-6)

Here, Cameron simultaneously undermines other political parties’ understandings of radicalisation, defensively addresses and rejects competing explanations, and positions the Conservatives as the only party that truly understands radicalisation – and therefore how to prevent it. It is worth noting that the things he accuses his opponents of doing also emerge in the Conservative-led discourse of terrorism.

The Conservative government has used the discourse of terrorism to attack the Leader of the Opposition, Jeremy Corbyn. Analysis has shown that the British press have vilified Corbyn through associating him with terrorism (Cammaerts, DeCillia, Magalhães, Jimenez-Martinez, 2016). High-ranking members of the Government have utilised this interpretative repertoire in order to undermine the Opposition. For example:

**“Let us be in no doubt:** the responsibility for such an outrage lies with no one other than those who planned it, and those who saw it through. And this party, **which knows the terrible toll of terrorism all too well,** will **never seek to justify or excuse such acts of terror.** We will **stand strong** in the face of terrorism and ensure our values always prevail.”

(May, 2017, para. 89)

“He [Corbyn] wants to slash defence spending. He wouldn’t authorise drone strikes on terrorists. We must never put the security of our country in the hands of **a man whose**

**warped worldview puts him on the side of those who threaten us.** We are backing up our ambition with the fifth biggest defence budget in the world.”

(Fallon, 2017, paras. 34-36)

May alludes to Corbyn without naming him, utilising a recognisable line of attack. “*Let us be in no doubt*” implies certainty and authority, which is reinforced by a reminder that the Conservative party “*knows the terrible toll of terrorism all too well*” and will continue to “*stand strong*”. The phrase “*seek to justify or excuse such acts of terror*” brands any competing narrative of radicalisation incorrect. Fallon explicitly links Corbyn to terrorism. The “*warped views*” that put Corbyn on the side of the terrorists are a desire to slash defence spending and reluctance to authorise drone strikes, the controversy of which Fallon does not mention (e.g., Human Rights Watch, 2013). Corbyn’s treachery is juxtaposed with the Conservatives’ commitment to punitive action, embodied in the “*fifth biggest defence budget in the world.*”

The Opposition uses the discourse of terrorism to criticise the Government. For example:

“We’ve been through too much suffering, too much horror, and too much loss. The terrorist attack on Westminster – the heart of our democracy. The attack on innocent people enjoying a night out in London Bridge and Borough Market. **The horrific fire at Grenfell Tower.** The attack on innocent people near Finsbury Park Mosque during Ramadan. And the attack at Parsons Green station on Londoners, as they travelled into work and school.”

(Khan, 2017, para. 8)

In a list of terrorist attacks that occurred in London in 2017, Khan inserts the fire at Grenfell Tower in which at least 72 people died. The fire sparked fierce criticism of Conservative policies. Discursively associating the fire with terrorist incidents elevates it to the same level, intimating state terrorism. The Opposition has also criticised *Prevent*:

“The Home Secretary mentioned the Prevent programme. I have to say that I do not share her **complacent** view of what it is achieving. In fact, some would say that it is counter-productive, creating a climate of suspicion and mistrust and, far from tackling extremism, creating the very conditions for it to flourish... Will the Home Secretary accept Labour’s call for a cross-party review of how the statutory Prevent duty is working?”

(Burnham, 2016, para. 5)

Burnham undermines the Government narrative of the necessity and success of Prevent, suggests the Home Secretary is “*complacent*”, highlights popular criticisms of the programme, and positions Labour as the party that will improve the process of intervention.

### **Academic Research**

The report on the development of the ERG 22+ was published in 2015, although the research it details was conducted in 2009 when the researchers were employed by NOMS (Lloyd & Dean, 2015) and it has been an integral part of offender management and *Prevent* since 2011. The release of the 2015 report in the Journal of Threat Assessment and Management failed to quash controversy over the opaque nature the development of the ERG 22+. In 2016, 144 prominent academics signed an open letter criticising the lack of scientific



scrutiny of the measure (Armstrong, 2016). The report itself is not structured as a typical psychology report, does not report any ethical approval for the study, and does not give enough details for the study to be replicable. The themes ‘Uncritical psychology’ and ‘Individualisation’ emerged from the academic research.

**Uncritical psychology.** The report on the development of a methodology to assess radicalisation risk lacks critical analysis of the external and internal contexts that affected the measure’s development, and fails to acknowledge ideological dilemmas over the researchers’ and government’s positions on critical factors. For example:

“Our position is that in the U.K. society individuals are **free to hold any beliefs and to express dissent**, but where there are democratic means to accommodate this they should not resort to breaking the law or to the use of violence.”

(p. 41)

“Those convicted under terrorist legislation are mostly convicted for offenses that fall short of an act of violent terrorism. Some have a clear intent to offend that can be deduced from their actions; others are clearly engaged with a group, cause, or ideology but **do not intend to contribute to or perform an act of terrorism.**”

(p. 42)

The United Kingdom Terrorism Act 2006 expanded the list of offenses related to terrorism to include crimes such as ‘encouragement’ and ‘glorification’ – a move that was criticised as jeopardising free speech and civil liberties. Although Lloyd and Dean provide parameters of acceptable behaviour that include freedom to “*hold any beliefs and express dissent*”, they fail

to critically acknowledge the government's imprisonment of people who "*do not intend to contribute to or perform an act of terrorism.*"

The researchers discuss their position as employees of the government once:

"The **offenders** we worked with took strong exception to being labelled "terrorists", and we had to be very sensitive in our use of language and to our role as government officials given that they had offended against the state."

(p. 41)

They do not address debates about terms such as 'terrorist' and 'extremist'. Additionally, they do not consider how asymmetrical power relations may have influenced the interviews they conducted. The possibility of hierarchical power relations in qualitative research, including interviews, has been noted elsewhere (e.g., Karnieli-Miller, Strier, & Pessach, 2009).

Furthermore, throughout the report Lloyd and Dean refer to their participants as "*offenders*", reinforcing the unequal power relations between the state and transgressors against the state.

Participants in the study expressed motivations that contradict those established in political discourse:

"In the United Kingdom, none of the British AQ-influenced offenders we spoke to wanted to establish Islamic government in the United Kingdom. On the whole, they retained an affection for their country and for the freedoms and respect they were afforded here. Their goals were to **alleviate the suffering of Muslims elsewhere** and

**to express their antagonism to British and American foreign policy in Muslim countries.”**

(p. 45)

Lloyd and Dean do not discuss this further, or acknowledge their position as employees of a state that is basing beliefs about the nature of terrorism and radicalisation on motivations that are, according to their research, incorrect.

The report is uncritical of serious flaws in the methodology of the study, such as a lack of replicability and an ‘in-house’ peer review process. The authors report the “lack of demonstrated reliability and validity” as the main limitation of the measure, although they report face and content validity. In response to the lack of validity, the authors wrote:

**“On the plus side**, the individual factors have been derived from the engagement pathways of the true positives and to that extent are empirically grounded.”

(p. 50)

This statement displays uncertainty with the validity of the measure, particularly through the use of the phrase “*On the plus side*.” It also neglects to mention flaws in the methodology that undermine claims of empiricism.

The study appears to be based on a very small ( $n =$  approx. 40), homogenous sample comprising people convicted of offenses relating to Al-Qaeda, yet Lloyd and Dean do not discuss the application of their results in the statutory assessment of radicalisation risk in the general population. Moreover, the researchers themselves claim:

“The ERG is **only completed by qualified forensic psychologists or probation officers** who are experienced in complex risk assessment and who have completed ERG specific training...”

(p. 48)

“It remains essentially a qualitative tool that requires a level of **professional judgement and experience to be effectively used.**”

(p. 50)

These statements raise serious concerns about the statutory use of an assessment framework based on the ERG 22+ by public sector workers who are not forensic psychologists. These concerns, however, are absent from Lloyd and Dean’s report.

**Individualisation.** Lloyd and Dean do not include macro-issues such as perception of foreign policy in the final measure, despite reporting that the participants in their study mentioned foreign policy as their motivation. Throughout the report, the authors pathologise and individualise terrorism and radicalisation, presenting it in terms of cognitive abnormality:

“...for an individual to positively contemplate carrying out an act of terrorism a major shift in subjective norm **seems necessary** to change a **normative belief that terrorism is abhorrent** to an **extremist belief that it is legitimate or even necessary**, promising not only personal award but social approval.”

(p. 43)

The use of the phrase “*seems necessary*” implies uncertainty and assumption. Lloyd and Dean do not acknowledge that their own viewpoint corresponds with the dominant discourse of terrorism. To assume that terrorism is never legitimate or necessary disregards the complex global history of terrorism. It pathologises terrorism and radicalisation as a distortion of cognitive processes, divorced from an individual’s external context. In fact, the authors describe what they term “*extremist thinking*” at some length:

“Therefore we distinguish the features of extremist thinking from nonextremist thinking in relation to the concept of **cognitive integrative complexity**. Extremist views or ideologies are characterized by simplistic, reductionist, bipolar thinking (them and us, persecutors and persecuted, worthy and unworthy) that preempts argument, is emotionally charged, and appeals to the part of our brains that mediates fight or flight in response to threat. They are characterized by low integrative complexity in that they do not accommodate or integrate multiple perspectives, a mindset that analysis suggests is more likely to lead to conflict and violence in state and nonstate actors.”

(p. 41)

Lloyd and Dean present a view of terrorism and radicalisation that places heavy emphasis on individual internal processes, and neglects socio-political motivating factors.

Despite receiving advice to include political context as a factor from the advisory group for the study, Lloyd and Dean do not. In their own words, this “*was perhaps an omission*” (p. 43). They include “*political/moral motivation*” as a dimension in the measure in order to distinguish between individuals who have an ideological commitment to terrorism

and those who have a history of criminality and whose engagement is “*opportunistic*”.

However, this is still presented in the context of abnormal cognition, and comes from within the individual. Where they do discuss political context, it merely provides the “*vehicle*” and “*opportunity*” for committing a terrorist act after a cognitive shift has occurred:

“For an individual to arrive at this position, he or she not only has to overcome their inhibitions against terrorist offending and accomplish a major attitude shift but (also) has to **encounter the political and social circumstances that provide the vehicle and the opportunity for this to be accomplished.**”

(p. 43)

This statement portrays radicalisation as an individual process that combines with political and social circumstances to come to fruition. The dimensions and factors of the ERG 22+ reflect this focus on individual factors, and only three items (“*Family or friends support extremist offending*”, “*Transitional periods*” and “*Group influence and control*”) consider the external environment – albeit the individual’s immediate environment.

### **Government Documents**

Government documents appeared to combine elements of the political discourse of terrorism and academic research. The themes ‘Clash of civilisations’, ‘The salience of Islam’, ‘Passive vulnerability to radicalisation’ and ‘Individualisation’ were present in the government documents.

**Clash of civilisations.** Government guidance continues the clash of civilisations theme established in political speech. Terrorism is associated with opposition to ‘British values’ and democracy:

“Challenging ideology is also about **being confident in our own values** – the values of democracy, rule of law, equality and opportunity, freedom of speech and the rights of all men and women to live free from persecution of any kind. Challenge must be accompanied by advocacy of the very systems and values which terrorists in this country and elsewhere **set out to destroy.**”

(Prevent Strategy, 2011, p. 44)

“We define 'extremism' as vocal or active opposition to **fundamental British values**, including democracy, rule of law, individual liberty and mutual respect and tolerance of different faiths and beliefs. We also include in our definition of extremism calls for death of members of our armed forces, whether in this country or overseas.”

(Channel Duty Guidance, 2015, p. 3)

The Government controls the representation of the motivations of terrorism, suggesting that the terrorists hate Britain for what it is, not what it does. This directly contradicts the findings reported by Lloyd and Dean (2015, p. 45). Including calls for the deaths of members of the armed forces in the definition of extremism increases the group membership of extremists to include people who may have a legitimate reason to feel antagonistic towards the British armed forces. The Government’s definition of ‘extremism’ effectively delegitimises people with grievances against the armed forces, and removes the power of people around the world to hold the UK government to account for its military actions.

Government documents on preventing radicalisation also emphasise the ‘outsider’ elements associated with terrorism. For example through directly linking radicalisation with the “*Muslim-majority world*” and emphasising the foreign elements of terrorism and radicalisation:

“There are important overseas aspects to the radicalisation process in this country. A large number of people who have engaged in terrorism in this country have come here from overseas, notably from countries in the **Muslim-majority world** which have **been affected by conflict and instability**: most of those convicted here between 1999 and 2009 were British nationals, but **fewer than half were born in this country.**”

(Prevent Strategy, 2011, p. 19)

“Many people radicalised here have been influenced by **ideology developed overseas** and by **messages broadcast into this country from abroad.**”

(Prevent Strategy, 2011, p. 37)

The phrase “*have been affected by conflict and instability*” removes any trace of the UK from this complex history. The Government essentially ‘disowns’ people convicted of terrorist offences, relegating them to the outgroup, emphasising that the majority of them were born outside the UK. Additionally, the ideology driving terrorism is developed abroad and is broadcast “*into*” the UK, invading and corrupting vulnerable people.



**The salience of Islam.** In descriptions of terrorism, ‘Islamic terrorism’ dominates the discussion, while far right terrorism is discursively relegated to the background. The government describes the two types of terrorism in the following way:

“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 the Muslims living here should not participate in our democracy. Islamist extremists specifically attack the principles of civic participation and social cohesion. These extremists purport to identify grievances to which terrorist organisations then claim to have a solution.”

(Revised Prevent Duty Guidance, 2015, p. 3)

“The white supremacist ideology of extreme right-wing groups has also provided both the inspiration and justification for people who have committed extreme right-wing terrorist attacks.”

(Revised Prevent Duty Guidance, 2015, p. 3)

Islamic terrorism is described in far more detail than right wing terrorism, and is therefore a much more salient threat. Additionally, while Islamic terrorists are described in group terms as “*Islamist extremists*” and “*terrorist offenders*” in government documents, here right wing terrorists are described as individual “*people*”. Presenting Islamist extremists purely in group terms makes group membership, such as Muslim and non-Muslim, a significant factor.

Government documents consistently present right wing terrorism in comparison to Islamist, Al-Qaeda, terrorism. For example, the two paragraphs in the Prevent Strategy (2011) devoted to the context of right wing terrorism both mention Al-Qaeda:

“Extreme right-wing terrorism in the UK has **been much less widespread, systematic or organised** than terrorism associated with Al Qa’ida.”

(Prevent Strategy, 2011, p. 15)

“People involved in extreme right-wing terrorism **have not received the same training, guidance or support as many of those who have engaged** with Al Qa’ida or Al Qa’ida-influenced organisations. Nor have they ever aspired or planned to conduct operations on the scale of those planned by their Al Qa’ida counterparts.”

(Prevent Strategy, 2011, p. 15)

This constructs Al-Qaeda as a far more dangerous and widespread threat than right wing terrorism. Although Prevent purports to be aimed at addressing all forms of terrorism, it constantly prioritises Islamic terrorism over other forms. Government guidance is written for an audience that includes the public sector workers who have a statutory duty to report people who they believe are at risk of radicalisation. The salience of Islam in the discourse may affect their judgements of who is at risk.

**Passive vulnerability to radicalisation.** The language used across Government guidance is more standardised than that in political speeches. Rather than using a mixture of phrases such as “*swept up in*” and “*slide into*”, Government documents regularly refer to individuals being “*drawn in*” to terrorism. For example:

“Channel is about safeguarding children and adults from being **drawn into** committing terrorist-related activity. It is about **early intervention** to **protect and divert** people away from the risk they face before illegality occurs.”

(Channel Vulnerability assessment framework, 2012, p. 2)

“Being **drawn into** terrorism includes not just violent extremism but also non-violent extremism, which can create an atmosphere conducive to terrorism and can popularise views which terrorists exploit.”

(Revised Prevent Duty Guidance, 2015, pp. 10-11)

The phrase “*drawn in*” implies helplessness and passive vulnerability. Such rhetorical strategies assist in the construction of social identities of individuals who need saving and a benevolent, paternalistic state that will save them. The people at risk are not portrayed as driving any action; “*illegality occurs*” rather than individuals committing illegal acts. The use of passive voice emphasises that this is something that happens *to* people, denies them agency and delegitimises their opinions. Again, there is an ideological dilemma concerning how people who are at risk of radicalisation are portrayed and how terrorists are described.

Government documents also reference ‘common-sense’ opinions to demonstrate the abnormality of people who deviate from the hegemonic discourse terrorism:

“The great majority of people in this country find terrorism **repugnant** and will **never support it**... Our purpose is to reach the much **smaller number of people who are vulnerable**.”

(Prevent Strategy, 2011, p. 51)

This undermines and delegitimises anyone who doesn't agree that terrorism is always "*repugnant*" and that they will "*never support it*". The government does not recognise nuances in debates about terrorism and terrorists. Perception of terrorism is subjective and affected by a multitude of factors – for example, people disagree whether prominent historical figures such as Nelson Mandela or Ernesto "Che" Guevara should be labelled terrorists or freedom fighters. Rather than acknowledge the subjectivity of the perception of terrorism, government documents pathologise those who hold views of terrorism that go against the dominant discourse as a minority of people who are simply vulnerable and require state intervention.

**Individualisation.** The Channel Vulnerability assessment framework (2015) comprises 22 factors, split into three categories, that are very closely based on the ERG 22+. Consequently, the risk factors individualise and pathologise terrorism and radicalisation. These factors are broad and generally non-specific, for example:

"Feelings of grievance and injustice"

"A need for identity, meaning and belonging"

"A desire for political or moral change"

"'Them' and 'Us' thinking"

"Criminal Capability"

(pp. 2-3)

In accordance with the ERG 22+, political context is not included. One item (“*Family or friends involvement in extremism*”) does take into account the individual’s immediate environment. However, given Lloyd and Dean’s admission that not having a factor for political context was “*perhaps an omission*” it is worth noting here that government documents also fail to take macro-factors into account, instead presenting radicalisation as an individual pathway, largely divorced from socio-political context. While the measurement of risk necessarily focusses on the individual, not including a factor that has been identified as a motivation to commit terrorist acts is an oversight that could negatively impact the assessment of risk. Discounting the political and social context also delegitimises grievances individuals may have with the government’s policies and actions.

### **Discussion**

Psychologists have theorised a range of behaviours that fulfil a terror management function for people who live under the threat of terrorism, and discourse analysts have criticised political leaders for capitalising on fears of terrorism in order to maintain or increase the power and dominance of the state. The aim of this study was to synthesise these two branches of terrorism research through a critical discourse analysis of the portrayal of radicalisation risk factors in British political speeches, government documents, and academic research. Analysis highlighted six themes in the three strands of discourse: ‘Clash of civilisations’, ‘The salience of Islam’, ‘Passive vulnerability to radicalisation’, ‘Politicisation’, ‘Individualisation’, and ‘Uncritical psychology’.

One of the aims of this dissertation was to uncover the risk factors for radicalisation that are present in the discourse of terrorism. Across the three strands of discourse, there was no clear explication of the risk factors of radicalisation. The factors for assessment that were

provided in the academic research and the government documents were broad, and almost all were not specifically related to radicalisation. Given that psychological research on radicalisation risk factors has been largely theoretical (e.g., Koomen & Van Der Pligt, 2016), this is perhaps not surprising. However, four themes that emerged suggest that the discourse contains implicit risk factors that may impact the assessment of radicalisation risk: the theme ‘Individualisation’ (in academic research and government documents), and the themes ‘Passive vulnerability to radicalisation’, ‘Clash of civilisations’, and ‘The salience of Islam’ (in government documents and political speeches).

The theme ‘Individualisation’ supports the findings of Githens-Mazer and Lambert (2010) and Matteson and colleagues (2016) that elite discourse individualises radicalisation. In their CDA of a sample of texts concerning radicalisation and schooling by European governments, Matteson et al. (2016) found that radicalisation was individualised and decontextualised. They concluded that the discourse appears to be more concerned with control than equipping people with the skills to analyse complex societal conflicts (Matteson et al., 2016). The results of this analysis suggest that this may also be the case for the British discourse of terrorism. In the texts analysed, radicalisation is represented as a corruption that occurs within an individual that causes them to adopt worldviews that contradict the normative beliefs and attitudes of the ingroup. Consequently, dissent from the hegemonic status quo may be assessed as a sign of radicalisation risk. This supports the idea of what Heath-Kelly (2013) terms “the pathologisation of dissent” (p. 404) in her discourse analysis of Prevent. The benefits of the pathologisation of dissent may include undermining legitimate criticisms of the state and its policies, thereby diverting negative attention from the state towards the person who questions it.

The texts analysed in the present study frequently mention vulnerabilities to radicalisation, without clearly defining specific vulnerabilities. ‘Vulnerability’ may be a latent, undefined risk factor that is open to subjective interpretation. Heath-Kelly (2013) also noted the importance of ‘vulnerability’ in the discourse of Prevent, and links it exclusively to the portrayal of Muslims as a community that is simultaneously at risk and risky. The findings of the present study support this, and extend it through noting the language of passivity associated with vulnerability to radicalisation within the ‘Passive vulnerability to radicalisation’ theme. The rhetoric of passive individuals at risk of being “*poisoned*” by a dangerous foreign ideology produces vulnerable, infantilised figures who are ripe for state surveillance and intervention, expanding the power of the state and undermining concerns over threats to civil liberties. It also serves to deny political agency to people at risk, something that has been found in previous analyses of the British discourse of terrorism (Coppock & McGovern, 2014; Crone, 2016). In his extensive discourse analysis of American political speeches and government documents, Jackson (2005) concluded that the Bush administration strategically omitted any discussion of American foreign policy as a motivating factor in order to deny any culpability in the loss of American life and to justify aggressive attacks on foreign enemies. The present analysis also found evidence that the British discourse of terrorism depoliticises the motivations of radicalisation and terrorism, and excludes meaningful discussion of macro-issues such as foreign policy.

Previous discourse analyses have noted the prominence of Islam in Western discourses of terrorism (Coppock & McGovern, 2014; Heath-Kelly, 2013; Kundnani, 2012; Połńska-Kimunguyi & Gillespie, 2016), as well as a ‘clash of civilisations’ narrative (Githens-Mazer & Lambert, 2010; Ide, 2017; Silva, 2017). Consequently, another aim of the current study was to assess whether the British discourse of terrorism identifies Muslims as a

particular risk, and whether measures of radicalisation risk associate radicalisation with Islam. In accordance with previous findings, the themes ‘Clash of civilisations’ and ‘The salience of Islam’ confirmed that both political speeches and government documents construct an image of a homogenous Islamic threat to the West. This particular portrayal of the Muslim-majority world has been the subject of much discussion, and is detailed extensively by Said (1978) in his seminal book *Orientalism*. Consequently, it would appear that political speeches and government documents continue to propagate an established interpretative repertoire of dangerous Islamic difference. The present study extends previous research by finding that the salience of Islam was apparent even when texts or speakers were addressing far right terrorism, suggesting that far right terrorism is considered a subordinate threat. This has implications for the assessment of who is at risk of radicalisation

The results of the present analysis suggest that the focus on a large Islamic threat may serve to implicitly construct ‘Islam’ as a risk factor. Additionally, the subordinate position of right wing terrorism in the discourse may cause assessors to overlook signs of right wing terrorism, creating an echo chamber in which far right terrorism can flourish. Previous research has found extensive evidence of negative stereotyping of Muslims as terrorists in Western participants (e.g., Brown et al., 2017; Calfano et al., 2016; North et al., 2014). Harbouring stereotypes of Muslims as terrorists could severely inflate public servants’ likelihood of incorrectly assessing radicalisation risk in Muslims. Additionally, even where people do not intentionally discriminate, their judgements can be affected by implicit biases. In brief, implicit biases are associations that have been stored in people’s memories and operate outside of conscious awareness but still influence judgements and behaviours (Holroyd, 2015). British political and policy discourse propagates the association of Islam with terrorism and radicalisation, which may result in implicit biases affecting statutory



judgements of radicalisation risk by public sector workers. Investigating implicit bias in people with a duty to assess radicalisation risk could be a valuable line of future research.

The themes ‘The salience of Islam’ and ‘Clash of civilisations’ were both integral to constructing group identities of an innocent ingroup (‘Us’) and an evil, Islamic outgroup (‘Them’). The outgroup was compared unfavourably with the ingroup, via the juxtaposition of positive descriptions of the morality and liberty of the ingroup against the negative overlexicalisation of the outgroup. Research by Arndt et al. (1997) and Fritsche et al. (2008) demonstrated that MS increased ingroup bias among participants. Additionally, Das et al. (2009) found that inducing TS through news reports of Islamic terrorism increased DTA, which in turn increased prejudice against Arabs among white participants. This holds implications for understanding the present study’s results. It is possible that political leaders are aware of the psychological consequences of terrorism, such as ingroup bias and outgroup derogation, and exploit them in order to maintain power and the status quo. Previous discourse analyses have accused governments of doing so (e.g., Jackson, 2005, 2007), and this analysis found extensive evidence that the discourse of terrorism is highly politicised. However, it is worth noting that politicians and policy-makers may themselves be vulnerable to the effects of MS and TS, and British MPs have been accused of Islamophobia (e.g., Kentish, 2018).

The final aim of the current study was to assess how the discourse of terrorism affects the measurement of radicalisation risk. Two themes emerged from the analysis that suggest that the assessment of radicalisation risk is influenced by the discourse: ‘Politicisation’ and ‘Uncritical psychology’. The majority of analyses of the discourse of terrorism have focussed on that of the US government, and have suggested that the Bush administration manipulated

the US electorate in order to drive its own agenda and increase support for the President (Chomsky, 2002, 2003; Dunmire, 2009; Jackson, 2005). The ‘Politicisation’ theme in this analysis extends these studies by finding a highly politicised discourse of terrorism in British politics. TMT research has shown that MS and TS increased support for President Bush (Cohen et al., 2005; Landau et al., 2004). This indicates that the discourse of terrorism has the potential to be an effective tool in the maintenance, or expansion, of state power through the exploitation of the psychological processes of terror management in response to a salient threat. Speakers from the Government and the Opposition both used the discourse of terrorism to construct an image of strength and legitimacy, and undermine their opponents. TMT posits that perceived threat increases support for punitive measures against outgroups (Burke et al., 2010), and experimental research from Nail and McGregor (2009) showed that MS prompted support for increased military spending. In the present analysis, politicians from the Conservative party highlighted the size of the British defence budget, and undermined the leader of the Opposition for wanting to slash defence spending. This suggests that speakers had an awareness of the potential benefits of appearing defensively strong and willing to take punitive action against threatening outgroups. The discourse of terrorism may be driven by a desire for power and control, which jeopardises the objectivity of the actions taken to prevent radicalisation.

The discourse of terrorism was also politicised through the exclusion of macro-factors such as foreign policy. Interestingly, Lloyd and Dean (2015) reported that their interviewees – people in prison for terror-related offences – identified British foreign policy and the suffering of Muslims around the world as their motivation to commit terrorist acts. This finding was an important part of the ‘Uncritical psychology’ theme, with which the current analysis extends previous research by demonstrating a lack of criticality in the academic development of a tool

for assessing radicalisation risk. Political and policy discourse utilises the ‘Clash of civilisations’ theme to project motivations of terrorist attackers, namely a hatred of Western democracy and liberty. Lloyd and Dean’s (2015) interviewees largely expressed affection for Britain, which directly contradicts the government discourse of terrorism. Terrorism research is marked by a severe dearth of ethnographic data, which means there is little opportunity to analyse motivations for terrorism from terrorists themselves. Lloyd and Dean (2015) collected ethnographic data that contradicted the discourse propagated by the government that employs them, and disregarded it in the development of the ERG 22+ by leaving out political context. This suggests they were driven, at least in part, by the discourse and interests of their employers rather than the data. The collection of more ethnographic data on terrorism and radicalisation is a key concern for future research.

The academic research analysed was uncritical in other ways. For example, the need for reflexivity in qualitative research has long been acknowledged (Berger, 2013; Mruck & Breuer, 2003), yet Lloyd and Dean failed to acknowledge the complexities of employees of the state interviewing transgressors against that state – other than mentioning difficulty with using the word ‘terrorist’. The authors also fail to acknowledge power relations, and accept the standards, norms and assumptions set by the government as objective truths. Thus they pathologise the people they interviewed, and view a belief that terrorism is a legitimate or necessary tactic as “*extremist*”. According to social constructionists such as Burr and Dick (2017), the claims of mainstream psychology to be apolitical and free from the vested interests and power relations have proved questionable. Unfortunately, Lloyd and Dean failed to demonstrate that their research was apolitical and divested from state power. Additionally, the authors did not address the use of their framework – developed for use by forensic psychologists on “*extremist offenders*” – by all public sector workers on people inhabiting a

'pre-crime' space. They themselves refer to the ERG 22+ as "*essentially a qualitative tool that requires a level of professional judgement and experience to be effectively used*" (Lloyd & Dean, 2015, p.50). To have non-psychologists use an assessment tool that was developed specifically for psychologists may lead to improper use. The findings of the current study suggest it is vitally important that the ERG 22+ and related assessment frameworks are subjected to replication and further testing.

The present study is not without limitations. There is no one method to conducting CDA. Therefore, another researcher from a different discipline or socio-political background may have used a vastly different framework for analysis and subsequently achieved different results. I attempted to reduce the impact of a lack of a unitary set of methods by utilising Mullet's (2018) recent framework developed through integrating leading CDA scholars' approaches. However, CDA remains an open methodology that can be employed in a multitude of different ways, by researchers in different fields, with different agendas. Additionally, discourse analysts are faced with a unique challenge whereby they argue that people's language use is constructed through accounts that are themselves constructions (Potter & Wetherell, 1987). I have attempted to reduce this by explicitly stating my own positionality, and by acknowledging that this account is not immune from the social psychological processes studied.

The sample of political speeches analysed was fairly homogenous, with the majority of speakers being Conservative ministers. While texts representing different views have been analysed where possible, there is a lack of archival representation for parties not in government. An interesting way of circumventing this would be to analyse the discourse

within parliament, such as debates or the weekly Prime Minister's Questions during which the Prime Minister answers questions from Members of Parliament (MPs).

Despite these limitations, the present study has several strengths and holds important implications for the conceptualisation and assessment of radicalisation risk. While the concept of validity is difficult to apply in qualitative research, Potter (1998) suggested considerations on which to judge discourse analysis, including '*openness to evaluation*', '*deviant instances*', and '*coherence with previous discourse studies*'. The present study is open to evaluation, and the texts analysed are publicly available. According to Potter (1998), qualitative research should analyse what is 'deviant' about data that bucks the trend. This has occurred in the present study. For example, political speeches from the Opposition presented a different view of terrorism and radicalisation than the Government. It subsequently became clear that this was due to the politicisation of terrorism. Finally, the present study concurs with previous discourse analyses of Western discourses of terrorism, fulfilling Potter's (1998) '*coherence with previous discourse studies*' consideration.

CDA requires in-depth knowledge of socio-historical context (Van Dijk, 1993). As a member of British society, I had in-depth knowledge of the language and socio-historical context of the texts I was analysing. Additionally, the analytical framework applied to the texts was a systematic and meticulous process that involved multiple readings of each text. Consequently, each of the themes identified is the result of extensive analysis. The study also has significant relevance for current political events and social concerns. The assessment of radicalisation risk is ongoing. Prevent and Channel remain controversial (e.g., James, 2018), and face accusations of anti-Muslim bias (e.g., Busher, Choudhury, Thomas, & Harris, 2017). Therefore, the present study contributes to an area in need of critical analysis.

The present study illuminated some potential avenues for future research. Researchers in the field of terrorism studies have noted the dearth of ethnographic data and criticised the recycling of what little data exists (Horgan, 2014). Since Lloyd and Dean's (2015) interviewees reported motivations for terrorism that directly contradict those depicted in political and policy discourse, there is an urgent need for more ethnographic data on both pathways to terrorism and motivating factors. Similarly, the present study necessarily focussed on the voices of the power elites in the discourse of terrorism. Future research could consider the discourse from non-power elites using different qualitative methods, such as interpretative phenomenological analysis or conversation analysis. This may assist in elucidating the complex relationship between the psychological effects of terrorism and the dominant discourse of terrorism. Additionally, analysing the media discourse of terrorism has proved useful in previous research (e.g., DeFoster, 2015; Roy & Ross, 2011; Silva, 2017), although no study identified in this review included British media in its analysis. Therefore an analysis of British media discourse of terrorism could offer further insights, for example on the position of British Muslims in the discourse. Also of value would be experimental research into the effects of British political discourse on attitudes and behaviours identified in TMT, such as leadership preferences and prejudice and stereotyping.

### **Conclusion**

The results of the current study support those of previous discourse analyses in finding that the discourse of terrorism is politicised, associates terrorism with Islam and a 'clash of civilisations', and constructs an image of vulnerable communities who are in need of state intervention. These factors appear to reflect or exploit terror management functions such as ingroup bias, outgroup stereotyping and preferences for political leaders who appear strong

and take punitive action against outgroups. In line with previous research, the current analysis also found that the discourse of terrorism individualises radicalisation and suppresses discussion of macro-issues. The current study extends previous research by finding that the academic research that underpins the statutory assessment of radicalisation risk is flawed and uncritical of power relations. Consequently, the present study holds implications for the validity of the statutory assessment of radicalisation risk by all public sector workers, and argues that the deployment of an assessment framework based on the ERG 22+ is inappropriate and open to influence from factors such as stereotyping and implicit bias. The results of this study indicate a clear and present need for further critical analysis of the ERG 22+ and its development, and the collection of independent ethnographic data on terrorism and radicalisation.

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**Appendix A**  
**Table of Speeches Analysed**

**Table 1.***Overview of political speeches analysed*

Speaker	Year	Position (Party)	Title of Speech
Lord Goldsmith	2006	Attorney General for England and Wales (Labour)	UK Terrorism in an International Context
Jacqui Smith	2008	Home Secretary (Labour)	Speech on Preventing Violent Extremism
David Cameron	2011	Prime Minister (Conservative)	Speech at Munich Security Conference
David Cameron	2012	Prime Minister (Conservative)	Speech at the University of Nottingham, Malaysia
James Brokenshire	2013	Minister for Security (Conservative)	Speech for the Far Right Special Interest Group Conference
Theresa May	2015	Home Secretary (Conservative)	Statement on Paris Terrorist Attacks
Michael Fallon	2015	Secretary of State for Defence (Conservative)	Speech on Stronger Defence
Theresa May	2016a	Home Secretary (Conservative)	Statement on Counter-Terrorism
Nicky Morgan	2016	Secretary of State for Education (Conservative)	Speech on Extremism
Theresa May	2016b	Home Secretary (Conservative)	Statement on Brussels Attacks
Amber Rudd	2016	Home Secretary (Conservative)	Speech on Nice Terror Attack
Andy Burnham	2016	Shadow Home Secretary (Labour)	Speech on Nice Terror Attack
Theresa May	2017a	Prime Minister (Conservative)	Statement on Westminster Terror Attack
Theresa May	2017b	Prime Minister (Conservative)	Statement on London Bridge Terrorist Attack
Amber Rudd	2017	Home Secretary (Conservative)	Statement on Terrorist Attacks
Jeremy Corbyn	2017	Leader of the Opposition (Labour)	Leader's Speech
Sadiq Khan	2017	Mayor of London (Labour)	Speech to Labour Party Conference
Theresa May	2017c	Prime Minister (Conservative)	Leader's Speech
Michael Fallon	2017	Secretary of State for Defence (Conservative)	Speech at Conservative Part Conference
Theresa May	2017d	Prime Minister (Conservative)	Speech at Lord Mayor's Banquet
Theresa May	2018	Prime Minister (Conservative)	Speech at Munich Security Conference

*n* = 21

Appendix B

Example of Thematic Analysis


British Political Speech | Speech Archive http://www.britishpoliticalspeech.org/speech-archive.htm?speech=329

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BritishPoliticalSpeech

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International security conference  
- over 20 countries



Speech Archive  
Speech at Munich Security Conference, Munich 2011  
David Cameron (Conservative) *PM - Conservative*  
Location: Munich

1 Today I want to focus my remarks on terrorism, but first let me address one point. Some have suggested that by holding a strategic defence and security review, Britain is somehow retreating from an activist role in the world. That is the opposite of the truth. Yes, we are dealing with our budget deficit, but we are also making sure our defences are strong. Britain will continue to meet the NATO 2% target for defence spending. We will still have the fourth largest military defence budget in the world. At the same time, we are putting that money to better use, focusing on conflict prevention and building a much more flexible army. That is not retreat; it is hard headed. *① defence*

2 Every decision we take has three aims in mind. First, to continue to support the NATO mission in Afghanistan. Second, to reinforce our actual military capability. As Chancellor Merkel's government is showing right here in Germany, what matters is not bureaucracy, which frankly Europe needs a lot less of, but the political will to build military capability that we need as nations and allies, that we can deliver in the field. Third, we want to make sure that Britain is protected from the new and various threats that we face. That is why we are investing in a national cyber security programme that I know William Hague talked about yesterday, and we are sharpening our readiness to act on counter-proliferation. *② politics*

3 But the biggest threat that we face comes from terrorist attacks, some of which are, sadly, carried out by our own citizens. It is important to stress that terrorism is not linked exclusively to any one religion or ethnic group. My country, the United Kingdom, still faces threats from dissident republicans in Northern Ireland. Anarchist attacks have occurred recently in Greece and in Italy, and of course, yourselves in Germany were long scarred by terrorism from the Red Army Faction. Nevertheless, we should acknowledge that this threat comes in Europe overwhelmingly from young men who follow a completely perverse, warped interpretation of Islam, and who are prepared to blow themselves up and kill their fellow citizens. Last week at Davos I rang the alarm bell for the urgent need for Europe to recover its economic dynamism, and today, though the subject is complex, my message on security is equally stark. We will not defeat terrorism simply by the action we take outside our borders. Europe needs to wake up to what is happening in our own countries. Of course, that means strengthening, as Angela has said, the security aspects of our response, on tracing plots, on stopping them, on counter-surveillance and intelligence gathering. *③ Islam*

4 But this is just part of the answer. We have got to get to the root of the problem, and we need to be absolutely clear on where the origins of where these terrorist attacks lie. That is the existence of an ideology, Islamist extremism. We should be equally clear what we mean by this term, and we must distinguish it from Islam. Islam is a religion observed peacefully and devoutly by over a billion people. Islamist extremism is a political ideology supported by a minority. At the furthest end are those who back terrorism to promote their ultimate goal: an entire Islamist realm, governed by an interpretation of Sharia. Move along the spectrum, and you find people who may reject violence, but who accept various parts of the extremist worldview, including real hostility towards Western democracy and liberal values. It is vital that we make this distinction between religion on the one hand and political ideology on the other. *④ authority*

5 One and again, people equate the two. They think whether someone is an extremist is dependent on how much they observe their religion. So, they talk about moderate Muslims as if all devout Muslims must be extremist. This is profoundly wrong. Someone can be a devout Muslim and not be an extremist. We need to be clear: Islamist extremism and Islam are not the same thing. *⑤ ideology*

6 This highlights, I think, a significant problem when discussing the terrorist threat that we face. There is so much muddled thinking about this whole issue. On the one hand, those on the hard right ignore this distinction between Islam and Islamist *⑥ political*

1 of 3 18/07/2018, 17:15

extremism, and just say that Islam and the West are irreconcilable – that there is a clash of civilizations. So, it follows: we should cut ourselves off from this religion, whether that is through forced repatriation, favoured by some fascists, or the banning of new mosques, as is suggested in some parts of Europe. These people fuel Islamophobia, and I completely reject their argument. If they want an example of how Western values and Islam can be entirely compatible, they should look at what's happened in the past few weeks on the streets of Tunis and Cairo: hundreds of thousands of people demanding the universal right to free elections and democracy.

4

The point is this: the ideology of extremism is the problem; Islam emphatically is not. Picking a fight with the latter will do nothing to help us to confront the former. On the other hand, there are those on the soft left who also ignore this distinction. They lump all Muslims together, compiling a list of grievances, and argue that if only governments addressed these grievances, the terrorism would stop. So, they point to the poverty that so many Muslims live in and say, 'Get rid of this injustice and the terrorism will end.' But this ignores the fact that many of those found guilty of terrorist offences in the UK and elsewhere have been graduates and often middle class. They point to grievances about Western foreign policy and say, 'Stop riding roughshod over Muslim countries and the terrorism will end.' But there are many people, Muslim and non-Muslim alike, who are angry about Western foreign policy, but who don't resort to acts of terrorism. They also point to the profusion of unelected leaders across the Middle East and say, 'Stop propping these people up and you will stop creating the conditions for extremism to flourish.' But this raises the question: if it's the lack of democracy that is the problem, why are there so many extremists in free and open societies?

5

Now, I'm not saying that these issues of poverty and grievance about foreign policy are not important. Yes, of course we must tackle them. Of course we must tackle poverty. Yes, we must resolve the sources of tension, not least in Palestine, and yes, we should be on the side of openness and political reform in the Middle East. On Egypt, our position should be clear. We want to see the transition to a more broadly-based government, with the proper building blocks of a free and democratic society. I simply don't accept that there is somehow a dead end choice between a security state on the one hand, and an Islamist one on the other. But let us not fool ourselves. These are just contributory factors. Even if we sorted out all of the problems that I have mentioned, there would still be this terrorism. I believe the root lies in the existence of this extremist ideology. I would argue an important reason so many young Muslims are drawn to it comes down to a question of identity.

silent break

What I am about to say is drawn from the British experience, but I believe there are general lessons for us all. In the UK, some young men find it hard to identify with the traditional Islam practiced at home by their parents, whose customs can seem staid when transplanted to modern Western countries. But these young men also find it hard to identify with Britain too, because we have allowed the weakening of our collective identity. Under the doctrine of state multiculturalism, we have encouraged different cultures to live separate lives, apart from each other and apart from the mainstream. We've failed to provide a vision of society to which they feel they want to belong. We've even tolerated these segregated communities behaving in ways that run completely counter to our values.

6

So, when a white person holds objectionable views, racist views for instance, we rightly condemn them. But when equally unacceptable views or practices come from someone who isn't white, we've been too cautious frankly – frankly, even fearful – to stand up to them. The failure, for instance, of some to confront the horrors of forced marriage, the practice where some young girls are bullied and sometimes taken abroad to marry someone when they don't want to, is a case in point. This hands-off tolerance has only served to reinforce the sense that not enough is shared. And this all leaves some young Muslims feeling rootless. And the search for something to belong to and something to believe in can lead them to this extremist ideology. Now for sure, they don't turn into terrorists overnight, but what we see – and what we see in so many European countries – is a process of radicalisation.

2

Internet chatrooms are virtual meeting places where attitudes are shared, strengthened and validated. In some mosques, preachers of hate can sow misinformation about the plight of Muslims elsewhere. In our communities, groups and organisations led by young, dynamic leaders promote separatism by encouraging Muslims to define themselves solely in terms of their religion. All these interactions can engender a sense of community, a substitute for what the wider society has failed to supply. Now, you might say, as long as they're not hurting anyone, what is the problem with all this?

2

Well, I'll tell you why. As evidence emerges about the backgrounds of those convicted of terrorist offences, it is clear that many of them were initially influenced by what some have called 'non-violent extremists', and they then took those radical beliefs to the next level by embracing violence. And I say this is an indictment of our approach to these issues in the past. And if we are to defeat this threat, I believe it is time to turn the page on the failed policies of the past. First, instead of ignoring this extremist ideology, we – as governments and as societies – have got to confront it, in all its forms. And second, instead of encouraging people to live apart, we need a clear sense of shared national identity that is open to everyone.

2

Let me briefly take each in turn. First, confronting and undermining this ideology. Whether they are violent in their means or not, we must make it impossible for the extremists to succeed. Now, for governments, there are some obvious ways we can do this. We must ban preachers of hate from coming to our countries. We must also proscribe organisations that incite terrorism against people at home and abroad. Governments must also be shrewder in dealing with those that, while not violent, are in some cases part of the problem. We need to think much harder about who it's in the public interest to work with. Some organisations that seek to present themselves as a gateway to the Muslim community are showered with public money despite doing little to combat extremism. As others have observed, this is like turning to a right-wing fascist party to fight a violent white supremacist movement. So we should properly judge these organisations: do they believe in universal human rights – including for women and people of other faiths? Do they believe in equality of all before the law? Do they believe in democracy and the right of people to elect their own government? Do they encourage integration or separation? These are the sorts of questions we need to ask. Fail

"Preachers of hate" strategy

Arguing for position

Defensive

not always. CoC / integration / immigration

"reverse racism"?

assumes its misinformation.

process authority.

CoC

New PM -> establishing position.

these tests and the presumption should be not to engage with organisations – so, no public money, no sharing of platforms with ministers at home.

At the same time, we must stop these groups from reaching people in publicly-funded institutions like universities or even, in the British case, prisons. Now, some say, this is not compatible with free speech and intellectual inquiry. Well, I say, would you take the same view if these were right-wing extremists recruiting on our campuses? Would you advocate inaction if Christian fundamentalists who believed that Muslims are the enemy were leading prayer groups in our prisons? And to those who say these non-violent extremists are actually helping to keep young, vulnerable men away from violence, I say nonsense. Would you allow the far right groups a share of public funds if they promise to help you lure young white men away from fascist terrorism? Of course not. But, at root, challenging this ideology means exposing its ideas for what they are, and that is completely unjustifiable. We need to argue that terrorism is wrong in all circumstances. We need to argue that prophecies of a global war of religion pitting Muslims against the rest of the world are nonsense.

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Now, governments cannot do this alone. The extremism we face is a distortion of Islam. So these arguments, in part, must be made by those within Islam. Let us give voice to those followers of Islam in our own countries – the vast, often unheard majority – who despise the extremists and their worldview. Let us engage groups that share our aspirations.

Now, second, we must build stronger societies and stronger identities at home. Frankly, we need a lot less of the passive tolerance of recent years and a much more active, muscular liberalism. A passively tolerant society says to its citizens, as long as you obey the law we will just leave you alone. It stands neutral between different values. But I believe a genuinely liberal country does much more; it believes in certain values and actively promotes them. Freedom of speech, freedom of worship, democracy, the rule of law, equal rights regardless of race, sex or sexuality. It says to its citizens, this is what defines us as a society: to belong here is to believe in these things. Now, each of us in our own countries, I believe, must be unambiguous and hard-nosed about this defence of our liberty.

There are practical things that we can do as well. That includes making sure that immigrants speak the language of their new home and ensuring that people are educated in the elements of a common culture and curriculum. Back home, we're introducing National Citizen Service: a two-month programme for sixteen-year-olds from different backgrounds to live and work together. I also believe we should encourage meaningful and active participation in society, by shifting the balance of power away from the state and towards the people. That way, common purpose can be formed as people come together and work together in their neighbourhoods. It will also help build stronger pride in local identity, so people feel free to say, 'Yes, I am a Muslim, I am a Hindu, I am Christian, but I am also a Londoner or a Berliner too'. It's that identity, that feeling of belonging in our countries, that I believe is the key to achieving true cohesion.

So, let me end with this. This terrorism is completely indiscriminate and has been thrust upon us. It cannot be ignored or contained; we have to confront it with confidence – confront the ideology that drives it by defeating the ideas that warp so many young minds at their root, and confront the issues of identity that sustain it by standing for a much broader and generous vision of citizenship in our countries. Now, none of this will be easy. We will need stamina, patience and endurance, and it won't happen at all if we act alone. This ideology crosses not just our continent but all continents, and we are all in this together. At stake are not just lives, it is our way of life. That is why this is a challenge we cannot avoid; it is one we must rise to and overcome. Thank you.

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Case to prevent.

reverse racism!

Brixton Sebbs.

Definitions of terrorism

subjectivity

Immigration/Integration. No culpability

July.

## Appendix C Ethical Approval Form



University  
of Glasgow

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College of Social  
Sciences

### Ethics Committee for Non-Clinical Research Involving Human Subjects Notification of Ethics Application Outcome – UG and PGT Applications

#### **Application Details**

Application Type:	PGT low risk	Application Number:
Applicant's Name:	Lani MCGuiness	Project Title: Radicalisation risk factors
revisited		

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#### **Application Status**

Approved – Pending Permissions (please see below)

Approved – No Permissions Required X

Not approved – Minor Recommendations only (please see overleaf)

Not approved – Full Resubmission Required (please see overleaf)

**Note: Start and End Dates of Approval will only be given when ethical approval has been granted and when all the relevant permissions have been received.**

Start Date: 1/4/18

End Date: 31/12/18

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#### **Permissions**

Please find below the list of permissions that you **MUST** obtain and submit to the Ethics Administrator before commencing with data collection. You can either provide a scanned copy of the permission letters to: [education-ethics@glasgow.ac.uk](mailto:education-ethics@glasgow.ac.uk), or send a hard copy to: C. Paterson PGT Office St Andrew's Building 11 Eldon Street Glasgow G3 6NH

**Permission required from:**

**Received in Admin Office:**

**Recommendations** (where Changes are Required)

- **Where changes are required all applicants must respond** in the relevant boxes to the recommendations of the Committee and return to the Ethics Office to explain the changes you have made to the application.
- **(If application is Rejected a full new application must be submitted by returning to the Ethics Office. Where recommendations are provided, they should be responded to and this document provided as part of the new application.**

(Shaded areas will expand as text is added)

**MAJOR RECOMMENDATION OF THE COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATIONS****APPLICANT RESPONSE TO MAJOR**

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**MINOR RECOMMENDATION OF THE COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATIONS****APPLICANT RESPONSE TO MINOR**

<p>Q7.1 outlines a very ambitious menu of possible secondary data sources for a PGT dissertation. Suggest you reconsider scope.</p> <p>Q7.1 You mention 'unpublished manuscripts' but answer to Q11 suggests all data to be collected from published sources. Suggest unpublished manuscripts be deleted given not yet validated through peer review process.</p>	
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**REVIEWER COMMENTS COMMENTS****APPLICANT RESPONSE TO REVIEWER**

**(OTHER THAN SPECIFIC RECOMMENDATIONS)**

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Please retain this notification for future reference. If you have any queries please do not hesitate to contact the School of Education ethics administrative contact for UG and PGT Applications: [education-ethics@glasgow.ac.uk](mailto:education-ethics@glasgow.ac.uk)

End of Notification.