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Community and Citizenship in the Age of Security: British Policy Discourse on Diversity and Counter-terrorism since 9/11

Communauté et citoyenneté dans l'ère de la sécurité : le discours britannique sur les politiques publiques en lien avec la diversité et le contre-terrorisme depuis le 11 septembre

Romain Garbaye and Vincent Latour

This article is based on research conducted as part of the SoMI project (Securitisation of Migrant Integration, Lessons from the US and the UK, AAP 2012 Idex Sorbonne Paris Cité).

Introduction

- ¹ According to an influential definition of “securitisation” by the Copenhagen school, we can talk of securitisation when the security imperative is used in political discourse and decision-making to justify an expansion of state powers, often at the expense of human rights.¹ “Security” itself is a contested notion, originally meant to designate the security of the state in an international relations perspective. It has been gradually broadened in scope to encompass other dimensions. “Societal security” designates the security of a society, understood as physical security against threats of violent attacks, but also as social cohesion and collective well-being.² Human Security is generally meant to highlight the potential conflict between state or societal security and the well-being of individuals, in the context of mounting concerns over the extensive use of security by a variety of political actors as a justification for a growing list of policies with often dubious implications.³

- 2 The security-integration nexus is apparent in the ways in which the ability of the state to control migration flows – border control, asylum restrictions, deportation orders, criteria for citizenship acquisition – are conceptualised and justified with reference to both state and societal security. While issues related to immigration already prompted concerns in the last decades of the 20th century, after 9/11 these concerns intensified and turned into fears.⁴ This development is the prolongation of a long-term shift from comparatively liberal immigration regimes in the post-war decades to the construction of immigration as a problem and a risk, as suggested by Christopher Rudolph.⁵
- 3 Dominant approaches to migrant “integration” – understood as state strategies to facilitate the settlement of migrants and their descendants in their host societies – have undergone a parallel trajectory, from a differentialist, multiculturalist phase in the 1960s, 1970s and 1980s, to a “neo-assimilationist” phase since the late 1990s. In this phase of “backlash” against multiculturalism or “retreat” from it, European political discourses suggest that too much has been done to allow ethnic minorities to express their cultural singularities, and not enough to ask them to adjust to the values of their host society, as underlined by Vertovec and Wessendorf as well as by Joppke.⁶ Their incapacity or unwillingness to abide by shared national values, usually defined with reference to the rule of law, democracy, tolerance, human rights, is now presented as a threat to social cohesion and as the source of an identity malaise in Western national communities. This often results in the “illiberal” tightening of criteria for inclusion in the national community, for example through restrictive reforms of settlement and naturalisation.⁷
- 4 The parallel between the securitisation of migration and border control, on the one hand, and migrant integration, on the other, can be captured by analogy with the notion of a “continuum of threats”, an expression coined by Didier Bigo to designate the expansion of the remit of police cooperation in Europe to terrorism, drugs, organised crime, mafias, human trafficking, and asylum seekers, presented as closely related problems.⁸ It draws attention to the social and political construction of “threats”, the product of professional strategies of police organisations that have had an interest in seizing new issues and incorporating them in their policy remit. So, while there is no denying the reality of threats like terrorism or various types of criminality, the ways in which they are defined, analysed, and which types of solutions are proposed and at what level of policy-making these solutions should be implemented, take different shapes according to the interests of a variety of actors. They may be international organisations, governments, political parties, as well as experts, academics, consultative panels or representatives of professional organisations.
- 5 In the policy areas touching on “integration” – State-church relations, local community partnerships, naturalisation, citizenship – the shift to increasingly securitised understandings of ethnic diversity has been driven by the desire to maintain the legitimacy of governments in the context of economic globalisation, continuing migration flows, and welfare cuts. In the UK, this is vividly illustrated for example by the white paper *Secure Borders, Safe Haven* (2002), which spelled out the rationale for the Nationality, Immigration and Asylum Act adopted the same year. The white paper sought explicitly to balance the inevitability of future migration to the UK (and in fact the deliberate strategy of opening UK borders to specific types of migrations, as underlined by Somerville⁹ and Lassalle¹⁰), with the anti-immigration sentiments of large sections of the press and of the Conservative party. Hence the bill contained the proposal, which was

groundbreaking at the time in the UK, of a citizenship ceremony including an oath of allegiance for naturalisation applicants.¹¹

- 6 The shift is also justified and theorised by a variety of sub-political actors, such as civil servants, academics and experts, who can be viewed as intermediary actors (neither frontline deliverers of public services nor political actors) or as agents of “*institutional reflexivity*”.¹² They contribute powerfully to shaping dominant discourse and approaches, both reflecting and reinforcing government strategies. This is particularly the case in the United Kingdom where the last decade has seen a flurry of new concepts, vocabulary and approaches launched into the public debates by ministerial reports. It is this type of discourse that this paper analyses, focusing on two policy areas: (a) the discourse on social cohesion and community, which has become the official guideline for a wide range of policy areas touching on immigrant integration since 2001, (b) and the preventive dimension of the CONTEST counter-terrorism strategy, the PREVENT programme.
- 7 In both domains, the shift to securitisation was prompted or accelerated after tragic events with a strong impact on the news cycle and triggered changes in major policy areas.
- 8 The first was the spate of urban rioting of the spring and summer of 2001, just before 9/11, in the north of England, involving predominantly young males of “*South Asian*” origin (Pakistanis, largely). After these events “*multiculturalism*” and “*multicultural policies*” were denounced, and Asian minorities accused of “*self-segregating*” and of not doing enough to foster the acceptance of “*shared*” British values within their communities. A new official discourse appeared, centred on “*community cohesion*”, integration and shared values. The second is the London bombings of 2005, which heralded the rise of PREVENT as the main arena for interaction between local authorities and Muslim communities on the basis of common efforts to counter extremist discourse in local Muslims communities. Paradoxically, the critical review that we undertake below reveals an unintended effect of these policies, which is the ethnicisation of the populations targeted. While these approaches have turned away from the attempts to give recognition to ethnic diversity, and to redress inequalities related to cultural difference and discrimination, which justified the multiculturalist dimension of previous policies, they still result in the construction of culture, ethnicity or religion as a problem and a “*threat*”. However some aspects of the Coalition’s intention to revise the PREVENT strategy seemed to correspond to a partial desecuritisation of Muslim communities, largely, it seems, in response to widespread criticisms of the programme among practitioners, community leaders and academics. This seems to suggest that securitisation is not ineluctable because it can be at least to some extent countered through participation in public debates by the targeted communities and their allies.

Securitised communities: “citizenship”, “shared values” and “community”

- 9 Both the Labour governments of the 1997-2010 period and the Liberal Democrat-Conservative coalition that replaced them sought to move away from the multiculturalist approach by emphasising citizenship, organised around shared values and social cohesion. Although the specific language and some of the policies differ, the central tenets of the integration policies for both regimes are predicated on the same ideological

premises. At the core lies the idea of community. This was evident when the term was used by Tony Blair and his allies to coin new concepts such as “*community cohesion*”. The assumption of the communitarian vision of society is also discernible in the various pro-religion strands of the Big Society and localism, which both inspired the coalition’s approach. The contradictory impulses of community – the inclusion of individuals into a group, and the simultaneous exclusion of others through the very process of delineating the contours of the group – therefore lie at the heart of much British policy-making in fields pertaining to immigrant integration. This can be traced back to the common roots of both New Labour and coalition approaches: New Right ideas and the “*New Public Management*”. Their influence has been a constant in British politics since the 1970s and has been closely correlated to the transition to a managerial state.¹³ The idea of reimagining local government as a coordinator and participant in partnerships with local communities originated in New Right thinking about “*a minimalist role for local government which would create the conditions for others to engage in service provision*”.¹⁴ As they either re-organise or directly dismantle the welfare state, governments are compelled to provide new narratives to paint a coherent picture of early 21st century society at a time of challenge for one of its traditional backbones, state redistribution. Discourses on community and cohesion justify the transition of state-society relations from a model of hierarchical and direct linkage between policies and citizens to a model of triangular relation between policies, individuals, and “*communities*”, which are both recipients of and participants in the implementation of the policies in the context of “*partnerships*” between government organisations and “*the third sector*” or “*civil society*”. Some authors have written about government through communities as a technology of citizenship which, applied to community empowerment programmes, encourages active citizenship in the provision of social services in order to reduce the public’s dependence on services once these are rolled back.¹⁵

- 10 Here we retrace the history of the various policies in which the logic of community has been evident since 1997 in policy areas related to immigrant integration, as shown in the writings of Anthony Giddens who argued in 1998 that though “*entirely laudable*” multiculturalist policies and their aim (“*to counter the exploitation of oppressed groups*”) could not be fruitful without “*the support of the broad national community*” and had to “*stretch beyond the claims and grievances of any specific group*”.¹⁶ Likewise, the identification of “*institutional racism*” following the MacPherson inquiry (1999) has sometimes been interpreted as having signalled the end of “*identity politics*”¹⁷ that is, favouring the recognition of ethnic minority cultures over binding national community ties, at a time when Lord Parekh still positively defined Britain as “*a community of communities*”.¹⁸
- 11 From 2001 onward, new forms of unrest in inner-city areas in the North and the Midlands and Islamist terrorism (across the Atlantic first, then in Spain and the UK) led to the sudden and dramatic rhetorical discarding of multiculturalism and, simultaneously, to the framing of “*cohesion*” policies (although arguably such changes had been underlying since 1997, or indeed since the Major years). The riots (in Bradford or Oldham, e.g.) therefore shook the multicultural settlement to its very roots, just like the ensuing reports, both local¹⁹ and national²⁰ and the frontal criticisms expressed for the first time by Labour figureheads (e.g. David Blunkett, Jack Straw). In Bradford, the Ouseley report emphasised residential and school segregation and an overall sense of “*separateness*” resulting both from the flight of middle class people (whites, Hindus and Sikhs) out of

certain areas and from a neat tendency towards self-segregation amongst certain Muslim communities.

- 12 Although the “community cohesion” concept was to be presented for the first time in the Cantle report five months later, certain values praised by the Ouseley commission were already consistent with it, as shown in the following passage: “*What is now desperately needed is a powerful unifying vision [...] social harmony, rejection of racial hatred, civic pride, a single common identity.*”²¹ The Cantle review team, commissioned by the Home Office after the disturbances of summer 2001, gave no ready made definition of community cohesion, although what it had meant in Canada since 1996 under the name of “social cohesion” was made clear.²² The report insisted on “common values and a civic culture”, “common aims and objectives”, “common moral principles and codes of behaviour”, “inter-group co-operation” etc. Although community cohesion could apply to economic considerations (e.g. “Social solidarity and reductions in wealth disparities”), it especially meant encouraging commonality, shared values and interaction, which, it was implied, had been overlooked by “multi-cultural” (sic) policies.
- 13 Among the report’s seventy recommendations, citizenship occupied a central position. In particular, the idea of citizenship ceremonies, inspired by those in existence in Australia or Canada under the same name, came to the fore. Another key recommendation was citizenship education, which was introduced in the national curriculum as early as 2002 so as “to stress integration rather than separation”, as underlined by Tony Blair in December 2006. Community cohesion, though loosely-defined, quickly became a buzz word. That sudden promotion, which perplexed many Britons, should be contrasted with the timid or indeed, non-existent promotion of “multiculturalism” in its prescriptive acceptance in the 1980s and 1990s, although it had become Britain’s *de facto* policy since the inner-city riots of the early and mid-1980s. The rejection of multiculturalism was reinvigorated by the materialisation of the terrorist threat in Britain (“7/7” attacks in London) and was articulated by the Conservative opposition as well as by the Labour majority. More surprising still, were the criticisms formulated by members of the ethnic minority intelligentsia.²³
- 14 With the change of government in 2010, and the replacement of Gordon Brown’s Labour government by the Conservative-Liberal Democrat coalition led by David Cameron and Nick Clegg, the concept of “community cohesion” lost currency and some changes were introduced. Significantly, it was replaced by “Integration and Race Equality”, when Liberal-Democrat Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State Andrew Stunell left the government in 2012. But the central tenets of shared values and citizenship were not challenged, and actually were reinforced, to such an extent that the accusations of unreconstructed assimilationism by stealth have become increasingly convincing. Some aspects of the new policies proposed, at least at the level of stated intentions, have also propelled the Church of England to the centre-stage of local partnerships with community organisations, reinventing an older pattern of religious management of British inter-racial relations (one example being the *National Committee for Commonwealth Immigrants*, headed by the Archbishop of Canterbury in the mid-1960s). The trend towards deepening neo-assimilationism has also been evident in the moves by Theresa May, the Conservative Home Secretary of the coalition and of the current Conservative government, to harden the requirements for the acquisition of citizenship, building on or indeed extending David Blunkett’s 2002 initiative. The “Life in the UK” test, which, after much debating in the early years of the millennium, had remained pointedly devoid of any material on British

culture and history, now contains a whole section on key aspects of British history. Generally, the term integration has been given an increased prominence. In 2012, the coalition published a document entitled *Creating the Conditions for Integration*, which has pushed further the move away from multiculturalism that had been started by Labour, at least at the level of discourse.²⁴ The overall objective was to enhance five factors contributing to integration: tackling extremism and intolerance; social mobility; participation; responsibility and “*common ground*”. In its preamble, the document denied any social or racial dimension to the 2011 riots, blaming instead “*criminality*” and “*lack of social responsibility*”. It criticised past government interventionism along racial or faith lines, adding that other factors such as location or socio-economic status also shape local societies. It criticised anti-discrimination policy, which so far had remained unchallenged by the critics of multiculturalism:

In the past, integration challenges have been met in part with legal rights and obligations around equalities, discrimination and hate crime. This has not solved the problem and, where it has encouraged a focus on single issues and specific groups, may in some cases have exacerbated it.²⁵

- 15 It then went on: “*Today, integration requires changes to society, not to the law*”, reinforcing a trend already perceptible under New Labour. Accordingly, the governmental action programme that is proposed in the rest of the document is strikingly unambitious and consists of a ramshackle list of minor projects to fund youth programmes. It also cites the Localism Act of 2011 as a means of empowering local communities.

- 16 Elements of continuity with New Labour can also be found in this idea of “*localism*” and in the Big Society agenda that inspired Cameron’s approach to local government and community partnerships in the first years of his government. The Big Society – meaning the encouragement of civic engagement by all citizens in the delivery of public services and community activities – is often derided for its conceptual shallowness, but it does refer to some of the most fundamental tenets of British policy-making in the last twenty years. First, it is obvious that it serves to justify the disengagement of the state from local public services and the drastic reduction of the remit of local government action. In this respect, it is distinct from New Labour, which had deeply reconceptualised and reorganised the modalities of state interventionism, including by introducing Public-Private Partnerships (PPPs), but had not sought to shrink its perimeter. However, the proposal to replace public services with the voluntary work of civic-minded residents builds on the ever-present notion of community, which as shown above was already a central plank of New Labour’s thinking. In his landmark speech on the Big Society delivered at Milton Keynes on 23 May 2011, Cameron declared:

Tradition, community, family, faith, the space between the market and the state – this is the ground where our philosophy is planted. The things I’ve spoken about today – modernising public services, rebuilding responsibility, strengthening family and community, all this represents a massive cultural change.²⁶

- 17 In another speech delivered later the same year, on the occasion of the 400th anniversary of the King James Bible, he asserted the willingness of the coalition to place Christianity back at the heart of government policy, declaring that “*the values we draw from the Bible go to the heart of what it means to belong in this country*”²⁷. In concrete terms, this translated for instance into the “*Near Neighbours*” programme which made local Anglican parishes key actors in the funding of local partnerships with community organisations, including ethnic minority ones. Typically this meant that local groups and projects, whether Christian, secular, or of other faiths, were now required to obtain the counter-signature

of the local vicar to benefit from this programme.²⁸ Paradoxically enough, this has not prevented leading Church of England figures from accusing the UK government of fostering “*aggressive secularism*” over certain issues, such as same sex marriage.²⁹

- 18 This policy displays elements of continuity with Labour, which, despite Alastair Campbell’s famous assertion (“*We don’t do God*”), had displayed a clear pro-religion bias in many aspects of its integration policies. In the area of local community partnerships, New Labour had already emphasised the role of the Church after the 2005 London bombings. The novelty after 2010 was that the coalition promoted the role of the Church of England only, thus dispensing with the pluralism that was evident in New Labour’s attitude to religion: dialogue with a broad array of Muslim organisations, legislation against incitement to religious hatred (a long-standing claim of Muslim organisations), or extension of public funding to minority schools in 1998. The relationship between community and citizenship is ambiguous. On one level, communities are presented as inclusive. They respond to a security imperative: “*Community offers people what neither society nor the state can offer, namely a sense of belonging in an insecure world*”.³⁰ Thus, the community is both an antidote to the destabilising forces of the globalised economy that threaten the social compact and an ideal goal of policies. It refers to an elusive golden age, which is usually the first half of the twentieth century, when the working class was supposed to be organised harmoniously around trade unions and networks of solidarity at the local level.³¹ As a remedy to destabilisation, communities are meant to replace the bureaucratic welfare state by new patterns of neighbourhood organisations, based on reconstructed understandings of British values –however defined.
- 19 The convergence with governmental approaches to international migration is clear. The globalising forces that shape today’s world have been relocated beyond national borders, which threatens the state’s legitimacy and seems to make social decay uncontrollable, threatening traditional forms of social cohesion. In Britain, this has been explicitly put forward as the backbone of the ideological refoundation of the Labour party by Lord Glassman as part of the *Blue Labour* agenda supported by Ed Milliband in 2010-2011. Blue Labour was meant to encapsulate both a nostalgia for the golden age of the working class and an anti-immigration stance in the name of the stability of communities. Yet at the same time, the notion of community is often used to designate “*troubled*” populations.³² The reasons why traditional forms of organisation longed after by the nostalgics of trade unions, Parish Churches and working-class political parties is that they have given way to the individualisation of society, which in turn brings personalised anxiety and scapegoating.³³ Hence, the relation between the onslaught against the welfare state and the rise of backlash against women, racial and sexual minorities, as well as migrants.
- 20 Crucially, this was evident in the community cohesion discourse that evolved out of the 2001 reports on the Bradford and Oldham riots, which as shown above tended to construe South Asian communities as self-segregating and closed to the values of the wider national community. In this aspect of the community discourse, there are two types of communities pitted against each other: the minority community, deemed divisive and antagonistic to British values, and the majority, national community, which promotes inclusive values of human rights, tolerance and democracy. In this way, and although this is denied by the architects of this discourse³⁴ the 2001 reports constructed minority communities of migrant origins as part of the “*continuum of threats*”.
- 21 The essential pathology of the community discourse is that a society based on community cannot escape the question of the boundary of the community, and that this leads to

increasing polarisation between the “ins” and the “outs”.³⁵ As Bauman points out, we miss community because we miss security.³⁶ The solution proposed, the creations of new communities such as reconstructed Britishness or the local communities of the Big Society, is flawed, because the criteria for inclusion or exclusion into these communities create new insecurities for outsiders.

Securitised Muslims: the PREVENT programme

- 22 The attitude of New Labour governments to Muslims certainly was ambivalent. Muslims clearly became a closely-watched group after the inner city riots of 2001 and of course even more so, after 9/11 and 7/7. That suspicion was however accompanied by the will to mediate with them through representative mainstream councils, such as the Muslim Council of Britain, but also through more radical groups.
- 23 The reliance on the mediation of Muslim groups also formed the basis of the Preventing Violent Extremism (PVE) programme, also known as PREVENT (launched in April 2007), whose key approaches were “*promoting shared values, supporting local solutions, building civic capacity and leadership, and strengthening the role of faith institutions and leaders.*” By 2008, the central Government created two public service agreements based on the recommendations of the CIC, PSA21 and PSA26. The former was perfectly consistent with the core ideas behind cohesion, i.e. “*to build cohesive, empowered and active communities.*” Three national indicators were to assess the efficiency of PSA21, notably by evaluating the relationship of different groups living in a given community (NI1), the sense of belonging of people living in a local community (NI2) and residents’ perception of whether they can influence decisions in their locality (NI3).
- 24 As for the objective of PSA26, it was to reduce risks related to international terrorism in the UK and in UK overseas interests, three national indicators measuring the efficiency of the Public Service Agreement:
 - NI35-building resilience to violent extremism
 - NI36-protection against terrorist attack (crowded places)
 - NI37- public awareness of civil contingency measures
- 25 Muslims advocating non-participation in UK elections, calling for the creation of a caliphate, promoting Sharia or rejecting homosexuality would be considered “extremist”. Muslim community organisations willing to co-operate, on the other hand, would receive subsidies. Many Muslim groups, notably in the North, refused to co-operate, and many of those that did co-operate did it undercover. Another major bone of contention stemmed from the fact that the impact of British foreign policy options in Iraq and Afghanistan on the radicalisation of certain British Muslims was ignored by the programme. Given widespread opposition to PVE, both within and without the “*Muslim community*”, the scheme was reviewed by the Coalition in 2011 but both its name and concept were actually upheld.
- 26 PREVENT is therefore a key area of immigrant integration policy, in which the tensions and contradictions of government approaches have played out spectacularly. The programme has been subjected to an intense barrage of grassroots and academic criticisms. Their main thrust was that through PREVENT the government had explicitly constructed Islamic culture and religion as a major security threat, building on and amplifying a climate of prejudice against Muslims. This debate created a context in which

successive governments, but particularly the Conservative-Liberal Democrat coalition after 2010, sought to re-evaluate and reformulate the programme to make it less inflammatory. This suggests that mobilisation by both Muslim and non-Muslim critics of the programme have resulted in its partial desecuritisation.

- 27 Actors of the public debate engaged in the criticism of PREVENT are varied and represent a broad cross-section of the British intellectual and professional world concerned with anti-Muslim discrimination, inter-cultural relations in policy-making, policing, and foreign policy, as well as grassroots Muslim organisations. Some of the local authorities required to implement the policy also disapproved of it to the extent that they refused to do so or did it under different names.³⁷ In one of the first sources of funding available as part of PREVENT, some local Muslim community organisations who could have been expected to apply decided to boycott the programme (although they later changed their mind).³⁸ Even though they represent a wide array of political standpoints, these criticisms and initial refusals to participate in PREVENT are strikingly convergent around a few central points.
- 28 As noted earlier, the programme was first mooted in the early part of the 2000s, at a time when the new language of community cohesion was omnipresent in government thinking on ethnic minorities, and its initial ambition was to apply the community cohesion approach to the prevention of terrorism. However, this is a contradiction in terms, as Charles Husband and Yunis Alam have shown.³⁹ Attempts to use a concept designed to promote inter-cultural or inter-religious dialogue and encourage interactions between people of different backgrounds became problematic when it appeared that such attempts were essentially directed at just one community, namely Muslims. In 2008, the funding for most of the programme was allocated authoritatively by central government to local authorities on the basis of the percentage of Muslims in their total population. The correlation between the amount of funding and Muslims was tight and showed that this was by far the predominant factor in the allocation of funds.⁴⁰ This is all the more problematic as the focalisation on Muslims springs from a cultural and religious reading of the determinants of extremism which seems to proceed from culturalist prejudices against that particular religious minority. Many attacks against PREVENT have related it to the wider context of anti-Muslim prejudice that pervaded public discourse on Islam and Muslims in the post-9/11 context, which PREVENT has built on and reinforced. In so doing, the programme has triggered a series of negative feedback effects. Muslim community organisers or activists refuse the funds for fear of participating in a stigmatising system and losing credibility and respect within their community.⁴¹ PREVENT has also been accused of using social work and local partnerships with community projects and organisations to enhance police surveillance of these communities, with the negative, unintended effect of reinforcing the suspicion of local communities towards social workers or local organisers who are viewed as potential police collaborators. Arun Kundnani's report *Spooked!*, one of the first full-fledged works on PREVENT, insisted on that particular point. The contradiction in terms between cohesion and anti-terrorism is again apparent here, because the trust between the social worker and the community, which forms the basis of social work, is eroded by the suspicion among the community that he or she is in fact participating in the collection of sensitive information for the police.⁴² The focalisation on Muslims also has lent credence to the suspicion among other communities that Muslims end up being somehow privileged as recipients of public funds. This is particularly problematic in the context of

the “*white backlash*”⁴³ and the politics of resentment of the white working-class in the face of perceived preferential treatment of minorities by the British state.⁴⁴ In its extreme form, this line of reasoning produces the resentful belief that it is useful to be a problematic, dangerous community in order to attract public support.⁴⁵ The broader assumptions that inform PREVENT have also come under heavy criticism. Behind the focalisation on Muslims lies the idea in particular that cultural/religious alienation is a key factor in leading would-be terrorists down a pathway of radicalisation. This culturalist or theological approach to radicalisation makes light of its political dimension, assuming Islamic terrorism to be largely driven by purely religious motivations. Yet much evidence in the UK suggests that there is considerable anger directed at British foreign policy (invasion of Iraq, conflicts in the Middle-East) among Muslims and that this constitutes a favourable context for the violent radicalisation of some individuals. The refusal to address this point, which has been a mainstay of British government policy, has weakened the relevance of PREVENT and has only served to further reinforce the sense of estrangement of disaffected Muslims from the democratic process.⁴⁶ Finally, radicalisation is a rather loose concept that obscures the variety of factors that may contribute to driving an individual to violence, and the complexity of the process that leads to terrorism. It obscures the fact that these processes are largely individual – explaining why some members of one given Islamic network may gravitate towards violence, while others will not.⁴⁷ This is related to the fact that radicalisation is used to designate the trajectory towards both “*extremism*” and “*violent extremism*”. The distinction between the two justified the allocation of PREVENT funds to organisations viewed as “*extreme*” but that do not advocate violence. The dialogue between mainstream society and these organisations that PREVENT sought to organise was meant to bring them into the fold of mainstream society, thereby undercutting and isolating violent Islamism. But this has exposed PREVENT to accusations of religious engineering, with the British state attempting to create authoritatively its own acceptable version of Islam instead of engaging in a political dialogue over issues such as foreign policy.

Towards a partial desecuritisation of Muslims?

- 29 When the coalition government was formed in 2010, it was determined to continue PREVENT but was also keen to differentiate itself from its Labour predecessor. The first indications of the government’s intentions on PREVENT came in David Cameron’s February 2011 speech at the Munich security conference. This speech was an unambiguous attack on multiculturalism and was once again couched in terms reminiscent of New Labour’s denunciations of segregation, ghettoisation and refusal of Western values supposedly encouraged by multiculturalist ideology and policies. This time, however, the denunciation was more radical, and New Labour’s policies of partnerships with a wide array of Muslim groups was deemed excessive. The distinction between violent and non-violent extremism was likewise rejected, and groups which did not advocate violence, but whose ideology was antagonistic to “*British values*”, were now to be excluded from PREVENT.
- 30 Arguably, this represents a greater “*securitisation*” of Muslim groups, which then became viewed with greater suspicion. The government was widely criticised for wasting an opportunity to improve the programme by taking into account the liberal criticisms outlined above. The decision to exclude from the programme some Islamist and Salafist

groups, such as the STREET project in Brixton that had previously been used as a means of reaching disaffected Muslim youths exposed to violent Islamist ideology, was viewed by some practitioners of Prevent as particularly counter-productive and as a direct result of neo-conservative bias.⁴⁸ Others pointed out its contradictory and unclear logic.⁴⁹ However, some aspects of the New Prevent strategy that was unveiled later in 2011 displayed a willingness to hear at least some of the earlier criticisms outlined above.⁵⁰ As noted by O'Toole *et al.*, two points stand out. The first one was the proposal to distance the prevention of terrorism from the community cohesion agenda, and, more broadly, from the issue of immigrant integration. As a result the New PREVENT was less directly associated, at least in its official framing, with Muslim communities as a whole. The funds were now targeted to areas defined not essentially in terms of the size of their Muslim populations, but according to more precise information on the potential for violent extremism.

- 31 In relation to this, there was also a new willingness to counter extremism as such, including from far right groups which have also emerged as a possible vector of radicalisation in British society. Interestingly, one of the most visible such groups in British media and politics is the English Defence League (EDL), which has defined itself largely as an anti-Muslim organisation determined to combat the “*islamisation*” of the United Kingdom. In 2011, David Cameron’s Munich Speech was deemed insensitive by vast swathes of the Liberal Democrats, including by the then Deputy Prime Minister Nick Clegg, as the speech, which mostly dealt with the question of Islamism, was delivered simultaneously with an EDL march in Luton.⁵¹
- 32 As pointed out by O'Toole *et al.*, the motivations for these changes were not just to accept the arguments of a mostly left-of-centre milieu of academics, social workers and local community leaders and activists, but also and perhaps most importantly to suit the Conservatives’ programme of budget cuts and traditional hostility to social work.⁵² In particular, the idea of “*community cohesion*”, so dear to New Labour governments, was dropped. It is also this context that may explain the new dissociation between counter-terrorism and social work. Yet the lively policy debate around PREVENT in the UK has led to at least a partial attempt to tone down some of its most controversial aspects.

Conclusion

- 33 In the United Kingdom, the changing policy discourse on immigrant integration has been driven by a securitised vision of populations of immigrant origin, which has bred changing forms of ethnicisation. This paper has illustrated this trend in relation both to the development of the “*community cohesion*” and “*shared values*” guidelines that followed the urban riots of 2001 and to PREVENT, the counter-terrorism programme put in place after 7/7. While the older equal opportunities and multiculturalist agenda was still given a nod in the post-riot reports of 2001, it was now deemed to have encouraged segregation or indeed “*self-segregation*”. The ethnic leadership in particular (mainly Muslim leaders in cities like Bradford) were accused of using the support of local authorities to impose traditional, illiberal values within their communities. Community cohesion became an omnipresent guideline in a wide array of policies, from education to housing, youth work, social care, and all types of community partnerships. Essentially, this meant a new emphasis on a “*common vision*” for all communities and the “*strong and positive relationships*” between “*people from different backgrounds*”. It implied the rejection of ethnic minority

cultures as potentially separatist and self-segregating, unable or unwilling to share the values of the majority. After 7/7, the mood hardened towards Muslims, with Blair and his key ministers delivering a series of speeches enjoining Muslims to embrace British values and to accept their “*duty to integrate*”, as one of the then Prime Minister’s speeches was entitled. In that context, the main goal of the PREVENT programme, inspired by the community cohesion agenda, was to channel funding towards local communities which may harbour potential terrorists in order to promote community cohesion, challenge extremist ideas and prevent the “*radicalisation*” of individuals. The programme came under heavy criticism from diverse sections of the academic world and from the targeted communities themselves. Despite its avowed objective of promoting community cohesion, it was widely criticised for stigmatising at the outset Muslim communities by authoritatively allocating funds to local authorities on the basis of the percentage of Muslims in their total population. It was derided for mixing uneasily social work and police work and was suspected of facilitating the surveillance of communities under the cover of innocuous activities for young people or women. Its intellectual premises – that there was a process (or “*pathway*”) of radicalisation, and that cultural or religious factors were crucial in this process – were also criticised for reflecting prejudices against Muslims, and for ignoring other, obvious factors of anger and extremism among Muslim communities, such as British foreign policy. In both the community cohesion discourse after the 2001 riots, and in the PREVENT programme after the London bombings, a stated will to engage in dialogue with ethnic minority communities on the basis of common values resulted in the paradoxical reinforcement of ethnic stereotypes. This is because in both cases the ideological building block of the new policies has been the notion of “*community*” – explicitly in the case of “*community cohesion*”, and through the construction of radical Islamism (however defined) as a central factor in the radicalisation process. The omnipresence of the paradigm of community, culture or religion in British approaches to diversity suggests at least some level of continuity with the previously dominant multiculturalist approach. In the British context, the extension of the “*continuum of threats*” to populations of migrant origins has resulted in a situation in which the attempts to recognise diversity as a positive value, or to redress disadvantages linked to origins or language, that originally motivated the multiculturalist project, have been de-emphasised. Only the essentialising and exclusionary dimension of ethnicised policy-making remains.

34 A silver lining may have been discernible, however, in the coalition’s attempts to take into account the chorus of criticisms that has rained down on PREVENT. In its revised version of 2011, PREVENT was aimed at extremism in general and moved away from the confusion between social work and counter-terrorism. Likewise, it is noteworthy that certain religious or cultural demands accommodated in the later part of the Blair/Brown years, notably in state schools (e.g. single-sex prayer rooms for Muslims in certain state schools) have not been questioned ever since. Whether this can ultimately lead to a complete change of policy that would finally stop associating the terrorist threat with Muslim populations remains to be assessed in the longer term, although recent developments and their consequences, notably in France and Belgium, indicate that it is still far from being the case.

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ABSTRACTS

Since 2001, successive British governments have rolled back the multiculturalist policies of the previous decades, at least in theory, at the level of policy discourse. In the context of the 9/11 terror attacks, followed by the London bombings of 7 July 2005, and of the riots of the north of England of 2001, the discourse on the incorporation of migrants and minorities, both from the government and the media, has become securitised. Multiculturalism has been criticised for encouraging ethnic communities to foster illiberal values, leading to segregation, and for encouraging separatism or even violent extremism among some individuals. New policy discourses have emphasised common values, a reconstructed British national identity, and intercultural dialogue. Yet within this universalistic turn it is possible to discern the persistence of an understanding of migrant incorporation, which is still framed in terms of cultural or ethnic community. This can be observed in the concepts of "community cohesion" or "Britishness", which more or less explicitly require migrants and minorities to accept dominant values, thereby implicitly ethnicising them. The same logic is at work in the assumptions underlying the PREVENT programme, which aims at preventing violent extremism in Muslim communities.

Depuis le 11 septembre 2001, les gouvernements britanniques sont revenus sur les politiques multiculturalistes des décennies précédentes, au niveau du discours politique, du moins. Dans un contexte marqué par des attentats aux Etats-Unis puis à Londres, ainsi que par les graves émeutes du nord de l'Angleterre en 2001, on a assisté à ce que l'on peut appeler la « *sécuritisation* » des discours sur l'intégration des migrants et des minorités. Le multiculturalisme a été critiqué pour avoir concouru à l'expression de valeurs incompatibles avec la démocratie et le respect des droits de l'Homme, et, *in fine*, d'avoir mené à la ségrégation, au séparatisme, voire à l'extrémisme violent chez certains individus. De nouvelles approches de politique publique ont mis l'accent sur les valeurs communes, une identité nationale reconstruite et le dialogue interculturel. Cependant, il est possible de discerner dans ce tournant universaliste la persistance d'une approche de l'incorporation des migrants se fondant sur les communautés ethniques ou culturelles. C'est le cas dans les discours sur la « britannicité » (*Britishness*) ou sur la *community cohesion*, qui demandent aux migrants et minorités d'accepter les valeurs communes, les ethnicisant ainsi plus ou moins explicitement. C'est aussi le cas dans les présupposés du programme PREVENT, qui vise à prévenir l'extrémisme violent au sein des communautés musulmanes.

INDEX

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