Re-Defining Terrorism

Re-Defining Terrorism delivers an elegant, penetrating, and highly illuminating deconstruction of the dominant social imaginaries of terrorism and counter-terrorism in our society today. In a trenchant analysis of the contemporary terrorism *dispositif*, the author expertly uncovers the ways in which the evolving security discourse is profoundly reshaping knowledge, power, and subjectivity in our world. Powerfully argued, wide-ranging, knowledgeable, and prescient, I can't recommend this book highly enough.

—***Professor Richard Jackson***, **Leading Thinker Chair in Peace Studies at the National Centre for Peace and Conflict Studies, University of Otago, Dunedin, New Zealand**

Dr Rodrigo Jusué has written a unique and intriguing study of the radicalisation paradigm – exploring how it has permeated British culture, the media, and enrolled citizens to report others as potential terrorist threats. No longer just a component within terrorism laws, the author shows us how 'radicalisation' affects our daily movements and judgements, through its replacement of previous *dispositifs* about political violence. As the first book-length study of radicalisation from a Cultural Studies perspective, this book will benefit all students of British Culture, Politics, and Sociology.

—***Professor Charlotte Heath-Kelly***, **Politics and International Studies (PAIS), University of Warwick, Coventry, UK**

A required reading for anyone concerned about how terrorism became the dominant political discourse of our times. What is the thing itself, who are its true subjects and practitioners, how did it get constituted into the paradigmatic *dispositif* of current counterterrorism? *Re-Defining Terrorism* provides unique perspectives on such critical issues.

—***Professor Emeritus Joseba Zulaika***, **Center for Basque Studies, University of Nevada, Reno, USA**

Re-Defining Terrorism argues, persuasively, that the contemporary focus on counter-radicalisation policies and practices has transformed the social imaginaries of political violence. Rodrigo Jusué contributes to a now substantial and established critique of counterterrorism policy and practice that points to the counterproductivity of incursions into human rights and freedom of thought and expression by the wide variety of measures aimed at countering radicalisation. Her critique is relevant not only to scholars of political violence and terror and states' responses in the form of counterterrorism but also to policy makers and those charged with responsibility for the security of our communities. In a world where there are strong popular tendencies towards demonisation of difference, this book is part of a crucial reminder of the dangers of over-reaction in the form of invasive and restrictive measures.

—***Professor Marie Breen-Smyth***, **Senior Fellow, Center for Peace, Democracy and Development, University of Massachusetts, Boston, USA**

Re-Defining Terrorism: Imaginaries of Radicalisation and Counter-Radicalisation

BY

ITOIZ RODRIGO JUSUÉ
Loughborough University, UK

United Kingdom – North America – Japan – India – Malaysia – China

Emerald Publishing Limited
Emerald Publishing, Floor 5, Northspring, 21-23 Wellington Street, Leeds LS1 4DL.

First edition 2025

British Library Cataloguing in Publication Data
A catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library

ISBN: 978-1-83549-647-3 (Print)
ISBN: 978-1-83549-646-6 (Online)
ISBN: 978-1-83549-648-0 (Epub)

This book is dedicated to Dolores Vidorreta, for always being an inspiration to me.

This page intentionally left blank

Contents

About the Author *xi*

Acknowledgements *xiii*

Introduction *1*

Re-Defining Terrorism *1*
Theory: A Cultural Studies and a Governmentality Studies Approach *4*
Researching (Counter)Radicalisation as a *dispositif* or Governing Technology *5*
Aims *7*
Methods: A Discourse Analysis Approach *9*
Chapter Outline *10*

Chapter 1 The Emergence of the (Counter)Radicalisation *Dispositif*: Elements, Transformations, and Popular Imaginaries *13*

Introduction *13*
(Counter)Radicalisation as a *dispositif* *16*
Formation of Expertise and Institutions *17*
Proliferation of Discourses and Theories *19*
Enforcement of Laws and Policies *20*
Diffusion of Philosophical and Moral Statements *22*
Lines of Force: Patterns and Transformations *23*
From the 'Muslim Community' to the Whole Population *24*
From 'Violent Extremism' to 'Extremism' *26*
From Security to Care *27*
(Counter)Radicalisation as a Cultural Imaginary *29*
Conclusion *32*

Chapter 2 Imaginaries of (Counter)Radicalisation: The Vulnerable Individual, the Radicalised Subject, and the Radicaliser *33*

Introduction *34*
Social Imaginaries *35*
(Counter)Terrorism and the Media: Imagination and Pre-emption *36*
Shifting Imaginaries of Terrorism *39*
The Homegrown Terrorist *40*
Suspicious Communities *41*
Monsters and *Abnormals:* Old and New Imaginaries of Terror *44*
The Vulnerable Subject *45*
The Radicalised Individual *48*
The Radicaliser *49*
Conclusion *52*

Chapter 3 (Counter)Terrorism and Gender: The Construction of Radicalised Women and Female Counter-Terrorists *53*

Introduction *53*
The Path from 'Feminist Terrorists' to a 'Feminist Counter-Terrorism' *54*
Feminist Terrorists: The Representation of Terrorism as an Excess of Freedom *54*
The 'War on Terror' and the Salvation of Women *56*
Terrorists and Heroes *56*
Saving and Liberating Women from Terrorists *58*
Feminist Counter-Terrorism: Empowerment as a Counter-Radicalisation Strategy *60*
Women as Objects and Agents of Counter-Terrorism *60*
Muslim Women's Empowerment as a Counter-Radicalisation Strategy *61*
Idealised Imaginaries of Counter-Terrorist Women *63*
The Construction of Female Terrorists and Radicalised Women *65*
Myths of Female Terrorists and Women's Involvement in Political Violence *65*
The Portrayal of 'Radicalised' Women *68*
Conclusion *71*

Chapter 4 (Self)Radicalisation and the Media: Contemporary Theories of Contagion *73*

Introduction *73*
The Media, Terrorism, and Audience: Contagion Theories *74*
A Historical Overview: Counter-Terrorism and Media Control *76*
The 'Oxygen of Publicity', the 1988 Broadcasting Ban, and the Contagion Hypothesis *76*
Counter-Terrorism and Media Control: From the Troubles to Post-7/7 *78*

(Self)Radicalisation: A (New) Contagion Theory *80*
Self-radicalisation Theories in Academic Research and the Media *83*
Opposing Views and Criticism *85*
The Counter-Terrorism and Border Security Act (2019) *86*
Contagion Theories and the Counter-Terrorism and Border Security Act (2019) *88*
Conclusion *90*

Chapter 5 Everyday Counter-radicalisation: The Promotion of 'CT Citizens' and Illiberalism *93*

Introduction *93*
Governmentality: The 'Conduct of Conduct' *95*
Public Responsibilisation: 'We All Have the Responsibility' *96*
Muslims, Teachers, Parents, and the General Public: 'Play Your Part' *97*
Discourses of Care and Safeguarding: 'Keep Them Safe' *99*
Empowerment, Awareness, and Action: Counter-terrorism as a 'Programme for the Reform of Conduct' *101*
Empowerment: 'Have the Confidence to ACT' *102*
Awareness: 'Please, Be Vigilant' *103*
Action: 'Deny, Detect, and Deter' *105*
Counter-Terrorism and Illiberal Governmentality *106*
Conclusion *109*

Conclusion *111*

Key Arguments and Findings *111*
Contributions, Limitations, and Future Research *115*

Notes *121*

References *129*

Index *151*

This page intentionally left blank

About the Author

Itoiz Rodrigo Jusué. After studying Political Science, Feminist and Gender Studies, and Cultural Studies, she completed her PhD at the University of Roehampton (London) in 2021. Since then, Itoiz has held several positions in higher education including an ESRC Postdoctoral Fellowship and her current role as a Vice-chancellor Independent Research Fellow at Loughborough University. She has taught in modules on Communication, Media, and Culture at the University of Roehampton and at Loughborough University. Her research is broadly focused on violence and processes of inclusion and exclusion, with a particular interest in the media, identities, (in)security, and social change. Her current research focuses on online hate and on the commemoration of political violence in the Basque Country. Itoiz's work has been published in journals across the social sciences and humanities, including the *European Journal of Cultural Studies*, *British Politics*, *Critical Studies on Terrorism,* and the *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies.*

This page intentionally left blank

Acknowledgements

First of all, I would like to express my gratefulness to Anita Biressi and Carrie Hamilton, who supported and encouraged me during my doctoral research. I would also like to thank Caroline Bainbridge and Charlotte Heath-Kelly for accepting the invitation to review and help me improve my work. I am especially grateful to John Downey and to Alena Pfoser for being excellent mentors. I would also like to say thank you to my colleagues at the Department of Communication and Media at Loughborough University for creating such an inspiring and supporting working place. A big thank you to TECHNE and the Arts and Humanities Research Council, whose financial support enabled me to carry out this research, to the Economic and Social Research Council, for providing me with extra time and resources to disseminate my research during my ESRC Postdoctoral Fellowship, and to Loughborough University, for giving me the opportunity to convert my work into a manuscript during my Vice-Chancellor Independent Research Fellowship. I would also like to thank my former lecturers and colleagues at the University of the Basque Country – where everything began. Thank you to the team at Emerald Publishing for their support and commitment to this project. I am especially grateful to my parents, Eva Jusué and Daniel Rodrigo, and to my brother, Urtzi Rodrigo. I cannot thank you enough for accompanying me on this journey. Also, to my grandmother, Dolores Vidorreta, to whom this book is dedicated and to my family, for all their visits that helped me to keep going. To my friends, also those who are far away, thank you for your support and for all the great moments we shared while I was immersed in my research. Finally, I am extremely grateful to my partner, Aga Wajrak, for all her support and love since my academic journey started and to Elton who made my writing days warmer and more fun.

This page intentionally left blank

Introduction

Re-Defining Terrorism

Since the onset of the so-called 'war on terror' following 9/11, terrorism has received continuous media coverage, sparked extensive debate, occupied a significant place in the public imagination, and remained a priority on national and international political agendas.[1] Over the last twenty years or so, the terrorism label has been applied to various actors and used to justify draconian laws, pervasive security measures, extreme force, and the political and social persecution, as well as the physical elimination (and debilitation, see Puar, 2017) of individuals and groups around the world. However, despite its powerful implications (see Baele et al., 2017; Dexter, 2012; Jackson, 2005), there is no consensus over the meaning of terrorism. Regardless of arduous and endless discussions on the definition of 'terrorism', the fact is that, since its conceptual invention at the end of the eighteenth century, terrorism has been characterised by transformations in its meaning (Erlenbusch-Anderson, 2018). Acts and individuals labelled as 'terrorist' have differed to a great extent according to historical contexts and geographical settings. Terrorism is, in other words, an 'inherently unstable concept whose meaning shifts and varies over time and place' (Staun, 2010, pp. 403–420).

Beyond partisan and strategic uses of the term, it is possible to identify significant shifts in the conceptualisation and general understanding of 'terrorism' from a historical perspective. One key moment in the re-defining terrorism occurred in 1970s, when the previous discourse of counterinsurgency (prevalent in the 1960s) was replaced by a 'new discourse of terrorism' (Stampnitzky, 2013; Zulaika & Douglas, 1996). Some scholars have pointed to this period as the emergence of the 'terrorism industry' – a constellation of public and private institutions, such as government agencies, think tanks, research institutes, and intelligence and security organisations, that manufactures and distributes information, analysis, and opinion on 'terrorism' in the West (Herman & O'Sullivan, 1989; see also Third, 2014). The establishment of the new discourse of terrorism in the 1970s carried important consequences for the conceptualisation of political violence and terrorism, the comprehension of its causes, and the elaboration of responses and strategies (Herman & O'Sullivan, 1989; Stampnitzky, 2013). While counterinsurgency literature characterised individuals involved in political violence as rational players with political motivations and goals who employ terrorism as a tactic or a tool which can also be employed by the state, according to Lisa Stampnitzky (2013), the new terrorism discourse questioned the very existence

Re-Defining Terrorism: Imaginaries of Radicalisation and Counter-Radicalisation, 1–12

doi:10.1108/978-1-83549-646-620251001

of political goals in terrorism and re-defined terrorists as non-rational evil actors. While the first approach did not rule out the possibility of resolving political violence by addressing the grievances that caused it, the highly moralised terrorism discourse, consolidated during the late 1970s, actively excluded this approach by casting terrorism as a psychopathology (Ibid.).

During the 1970s, 'the question about why terrorism happens translated regularly into a question about what is wrong with those involved in it' (Malkki, 2023, p. 21). While any focus on state terrorism vanished, during 1970s, 1980s, and 1990s, a view took shape that understood terrorism as an 'identity' rather than as a 'tactic' that might be employed by a group or the state (Stampnitzky, 2013). During this period, studies researching the 'terrorist personality' emerged and some studies focused on identifying 'personality traits' and/or mental illnesses (psychopathy) that make an individual become a terrorist (Gill & Corner, 2017; Malkki, 2023). Terrorists began to be largely comprehended as absolute evil and irrational actors who are driven by their terroristic 'nature' (or pathology) rather than by particular interests or political motives (Stampnitzky, 2013). Participation in terrorism started to be understood to be 'driven by the psychological needs and qualities of those involved rather than by their socio-political objectives and rational thinking' (Malkki, 2023, p. 21). This formulation of terrorism became notorious in national and international reactions to 9/11 and representations of the terrorists as racialised evil monsters in the media and popular culture (see Puar & Raj, 2002; Steuter & Wills, 2008). Many academics and journalists denounced the atmosphere of censorship at this time where any attempt to explain or analyse the events and any voice that criticised the newly mounted 'war on terror' were regarded as relativistic and even considered accomplices to terrorism (Butler, 2002; Faludi, 2007; Nacos et al., 2011).

But from the mid-2000s everything changed. In a context marked by terrorist attacks in European cities, such as Madrid (2004) and London (2005), aggressive military campaigns and political discourses, and the spread of new security measures, the conceptualisation of terrorism and political violence began to change. Another important period in the re-definition of terrorism started in the UK and other countries including the Netherlands, Germany, France, and the USA. Terrorists started to be comprehended as individuals who had adopted extreme views (extremists) and had been 'radicalised' rather than people who were essentially evil or had 'terrorist personalities'. From 2005 onwards, terrorism started to be seen as the result of an individual process of radicalisation. 'Radicalisation' emerged as the new key word to explain the causes of terrorism and political violence and also as a theory that provided the measures and strategies to confront and prevent it (Kundnani, 2012). In the UK, for instance, the concept of radicalisation became central to counter-terrorism with the development of CONTEST (UK's counter-terrorism strategy) and its Prevent Strategy (which aims to stop people becoming terrorists or supporting terrorism). Despite being initially closely related to policy-making, the (counter)radicalisation discourse became infamous throughout academic scholarship and widespread in the media in the years following the 2005 attacks in London (Hoskins & O'Loughlin, 2009; Jarvis et al., 2024).

It is not an overstatement to say that for the last two decades, ideas about what constitutes a terrorism threat and who terrorists are have undergone significant changes (Busher et al., 2023). Since the late 2000s and throughout the 2010s, (counter)radicalisation became the new discourse for explaining terrorism and political violence, not only by (counter)terrorism experts, but also by the media and lay citizens (Rodrigo-Jusué, 2024b). Despite internal disputes and disagreements among experts, (counter)radicalisation emerged as a new paradigm to understand political violence and terrorism (Malthaner, 2017) and design counter-terrorism measures. Scholars have referred to this historical period in which political violence has acquired new meanings and terrorism is understood to be the consequence of individual vulnerabilities as the 'era of radicalisation' (Baker-Beall et al., 2014). Through new terminology, narratives, and imaginaries, (counter)radicalisation theories have replaced previous research that sought to explain political violence by focusing on socio-historical background and complex political cultural and psychological elements and dynamics (such as Crenshaw, 1981; Della Porta, 1995) and have led to unprecedented practices that centre on the mass prevention of radicalisation and de-radicalisation interventions (Elshimi, 2017; Gunaratna & Hussin, 2020).

Over the last two decades, counter-radicalisation, de-radicalisation, and preventing and countering violent extremism strategies (also known as P/CVE) have flourished all over the world (Ambrozik, 2019; Busher et al., 2023; el-Ojeili and Taylor, 2020; Kundnani & Hayes, 2018). This book examines how (counter)radicalisation focused counter-terrorism marks an exceptional moment in the long history of counter-terrorism, particularly British counter-terrorism that reaches back to 1880s (De Graaf, 2015; Hewitt, 2011). To study radicalisation, borrowing Professor Bethami A. Dobkin's (1992) words, is to examine 'the limits of the ways we come to understand the terrorist threat and our responses to it' (p. x). Located in the fields of cultural studies and governmentality studies, this book should be understood as part of a 'diagnostic of the present' (Dean, 2010) that critically examines how certain assumptions on political violence have come to be so natural, and what their role might be in directing specific practices and conducts. *Re-Defining Terrorism* investigates the development and dissemination of (counter)radicalisation theories, their normalisation and naturalisation, not only in policy-making and official discourses, but particularly in the media and social imaginaries. Rather than adding to the academic and governmental efforts that seek to further constitute the (counter)radicalisation apparatus, drawing on the work of Joseba Zulaika and William A. Douglas (1996), this book's strategy is 'to dissolve the phenomenon into its ritual and imaginative bases' (p. xi).

Re-Defining Terrorism argues that (counter)radicalisation (as a theory, a new paradigm, and an apparatus) has not only transformed British and international counter-terrorism and national security, but it has also shaped the social imaginaries of political violence. Influenced by literature on governmentality and cultural studies, this book examines the social imaginaries that (re)produce (counter)radicalisation theories and practices. *Re-Defining Terrorism* is preoccupied exploring the effects that these new imaginaries of terrorism have on different aspects of our social and political reality. For example, the book argues that

the (counter)radicalisation apparatus reproduces new imaginaries of risk and terror(ism) (Chapter 2), understandings of women who get involved in political violence (Chapter 3), the regulation of the media (Chapter 4), and the promotion of particular roles among the general population (Chapter 5). In other words, *Re-Defining Terrorism* examines the effects that the recently developed (counter) radicalisation *dispositif* has on different aspects of everyday life.

Theory: A Cultural Studies and a Governmentality Studies Approach

It may still be surprising that research on security and counter-terrorism, particularly on the discourses and practices of counter-radicalisation, is situated within the field of cultural studies. However, cultural studies' focus on culture and the media as key sites for analysing political, economic, and social phenomena—along with its distinctive attention to everyday life and its critical stance towards objective knowledge—offers relevant and original perspectives for investigating the emergence of (counter)radicalisation theories and practices. The field of cultural studies is also pertinent to the study of (counter)radicalisation strategies because it questions social norms and declares a commitment to fighting social inequalities and making possible new ways of perceiving the world.

This book's approach, research object, questions, and methods have been equally informed by Michel Foucault's (1980, 1991) concept of *dispositif* or governing technology and, more generally, by studies on governmentality. Foucault (1991) defined governmentality as the type of power that works through the 'conduct of conduct' and has 'mentality' as a feature of power. The *conduct of conduct* means that 'governmental rationality' aims 'to shape, guide or affect the conduct of some person or persons' (Gordon, 1991, p. 2). Challenging conventional theories of the state that identify the state as the site where power concentrates and is applied top-down, governmentality studies propose a new approach to rethink politics, the social, and power according to which a different relationship between governance and the subject is made explicit (Bratich et al., 2003). From a governmentality studies perspective, government is 'undertaken by a multiplicity of authorities and agencies, employing a variety of techniques and forms of knowledge, that seeks to shape conduct by working through the desires, aspirations, interests and beliefs of various actors […]' (Dean, 2010, p. 18). As a result, the governor-governed relationship is reformulated and, rather than situating governance in 'administrative machines, juridical institutions or other apparatuses that usually get grouped under the rubric of the State […] the conduct of conduct takes place at innumerable sites, through an array of techniques and programmes that are usually defined as cultural' (Bratich et al., 2003, p. 4).

Governmentality provides the frame to look at government not simply as a means to order or punish people, but rather as an attempt to deliberate on and to direct human conduct (Dean, 2010). From this perspective, it can be argued that governmentality redefines the very conception of 'culture' since formulations that in other contexts would be treated as cultural, now are included in

the definition of government (Bennet, 2003, p. 48). In other words, apparatuses or products that would have been otherwise relegated to the field of culture are now understood as governing technologies. Rather than being conceived merely as legitimating power, from this perspective, cultural practices are comprehended as being 'immanently tangled up' in the exercise of power (Bennet, 2003). This re-conceptualisation of culture, power, and government introduces new objects of study for cultural analysis that emphasise the importance of studying 'technologies of governing through subjectification' (Bratich et al., 2003, p. 10). This will be a key entry point into this books' attention to the emergence of the (counter) radicalisation *dispositif*. Cultural formations that once were 'outside the purview of cultural studies' can now be subjected to investigation with an emphasis on governmental practices (Bratich et al., 2003, p. 10) and hence this book's proposal to examine (counter)radicalisation as a technology of government and an object of cultural analysis.

Researching (Counter)radicalisation as a *dispositif* or Governing Technology

Re-Defining Terrorism studies (counter)radicalisation as a 'technology of government', an 'assemblage', an 'apparatus', and/or a 'regime of practices' of government. Drawing on cultural studies and governmentality scholarship, (counter)radicalisation is investigated throughout the book as a *dispositif* for 'the conduct of conduct' (Rose, 2004) or as a 'programme of the reform of conduct' (Dean, 2010). (Counter)radicalisation is analysed as an apparatus that exercises power and intervenes in particular societal problems, and as a technology of government that is 'imbued with aspirations for the shaping of conduct in the hope of producing certain desired effects and averting certain undesired events' (Rose, 2004, p. 52). In general terms, the problems that the *dispositif* of (counter) radicalisation seeks to intervene in (i.e. terrorism and the radicalisation of citizens) are made visible within and according to particular knowledges or regimes of truth (counter-terrorism and counter-radicalisation expertise and theories). These regimes establish particular categories, divisions, classifications, relations, and identities (e.g. the vulnerable subject, the radicalised individual, the radicaliser, extremist ideology, the counter-terrorist citizen) as well as particular techniques, practices, and modes of proceeding (such as de-radicalisation interventions, a whole-society-approach, and mass-reporting processes) that establish particular goals and modes of thought (e.g. the good and responsible citizen, the moderate subject, and British values).

This book proposes that, as a governing technology, (counter)radicalisation is:

> […] an assemblage of forms of practical knowledge, with modes of perception, practices of calculation, vocabularies, types of authority, forms of judgement, architectural forms, human capacities, non-human objects and devices, inscription techniques and so forth, traversed and transected by aspirations to achieve certain

> outcomes in terms of the conduct of the governed (which also requires certain forms of conduct on the part of those who would govern) (Rose, 2004, p. 52).

In Foucault's (1980) words, a *dispositif* consists of 'discourses, institutions, architectural forms, regulatory decisions, laws, administrative measures, scientific statements, philosophical, moral and philanthropic propositions' (p. 194). In this manner, it can be said that to analyse (counter)radicalisation as an assemblage or regime of practices 'includes an unlimited and heterogeneous range of things' that seem impossible to cover and contain within any single research project. However, to carry out an 'analytic of government' is not to list a description of all the empirical routines of government, but rather it is an attempt to understand how all the practices and routines that are part of the assemblage 'have to be "thought"', how they are 'formed in relation to specific forms of knowledge and expertise from a variety of authorities' (Dean, 2010, p. 39). This is what Rose (2004) calls 'diagnostic', rather than descriptive, since the analytics of government 'seek to establish the singularity of particular strategies within a field of relations of truth, power and subjectivity by means of a work on symptoms' (p. 58). This attempt, Rose argues, involves a certain creativity, and he compares it to the role that Friedrich Nietzsche ascribed to artists and philosophers as 'physiologists or physicians of culture' for whom phenomena are signs or symptoms that reflect a certain State of forces' (Ibid.).

Investigating (counter)radicalisation as a technique of governance, *Re-Defining Terrorism* seeks to participate in the elaboration of an 'ontology of the present' or 'a critical ontology of ourselves' according to which 'the critique of what we are is at one and the same time the historical analysis of the limits that are imposed on us and an experiment with the possibility of going beyond them' (Foucault, 1984, p. 50). An analytic of government seeks 'to disturb that which forms the very groundwork of our present, to make the given once more strange and to cause us to wonder at how it came to appear so natural' (Rose, 2004, p. 58). Together with cultural studies, and analytic of government seeks to explode the category of 'the natural' and is interested in revealing 'the history behind those social relations (and identities) we see as the products of a neutral evolutionary process' (Turner, 2005, pp. 5–6). Governmentality studies also coincide with cultural studies' 'self-conscious political approach' to research (Kagan, 2016) when proposing that 'to diagnose the historicity of our contemporary ways for thinking and acting is to enhance their contestability, to point to the need for new experiments in thought which can imagine new ways on which we can be and can act' (Rose, 2004, p. 59). Or, as Foucault (1984) poetically puts it, the critical task 'requires work on our limits, that is, a patient labour giving form to our impatience for liberty' (p. 50).

Drawing on research on governmentality and cultural studies (see King, 2003), this book conceptualises (counter)radicalisation as a mechanism of governance that helps to shape identities (for instance, the vulnerable subject and the radicalised individual), cultivate political subjects (e.g. the CT citizen, the moderate Muslim, the good mother, the British-valued citizen, the responsible teacher, etc.), and produce

knowledges and truths about affairs (such as political violence and terrorism) and how they might be best responded to (e.g., through de-radicalisation interventions, early detection, and a whole community approach). Overall, *Re-Defining Terrorism* pays attention to and explores questions that address the particular relationship between knowledge, power, and subjectification in the realm of counter-terrorism and, particularly, of counter-radicalisation.

Aims

Re-Defining Terrorism contends that counter-terrorism discourses and practices should be analysed more deeply as a governance technique that heterogeneously affects society as a whole, rather than merely as a regulatory measure targeting suspect individuals and/or communities. From a governmentality studies perspective, (counter)radicalisation is conceptualised as a *dispositif* or a 'programme of the reform of conduct' (Dean, 2010) that sets the frames through which we experience reality and engage with it. Thus, one of the main goals of this book is to examine how new rationalities and imaginaries of (counter)radicalisation have the power to govern individuals and many aspects of our social life, including ideas on violence, gender, conflict, religion, citizenship, the media, and democracy. Since the emergence of (counter)radicalisation discourses and representations, new imaginaries of risk and danger have emerged that draw new normative lines between the self and the other; normality and pathology; moderate and extremist individuals and ideologies. This book argues that (counter)radicalisation imaginaries are not just psychological elements, but have a crucial role in shaping and understanding social reality and mediating collective life (see Taylor, 2004). New embodiments of abnormality and imaginaries of risk not only have discriminatory effects on certain bodies but can also be linked to broader processes of identity formation (Rodrigo-Jusué, 2022). Rather than comprehending counter-terrorism as a strategy or practice that only affects those (to be) charged with terrorist offences, this book departs from the idea that security apparatuses, such as counter-radicalisation, are productive technologies that contribute to the constitution of particular mentalities, conducts, and subjectivities. As a result, the main goal of this book is to analyse the logics, behaviours, identities, and imaginaries that the (counter)radicalisation *dispositif* produces and cultivates and to understand some of their consequences. *Re-Defining Terrorism* seeks to answer the following questions:

How does (counter)radicalisation, as a governing technology, encourage individuals to see, to perceive, to think, to question, to act, and to intervene in particular ways?

Which identities and political subjects does it help to shape, which knowledges and truths produces and, also, which solutions and practices does it offer?

Although this book mainly focuses on the British context, over the last two decades, there has been a globalisation of counter-extremism and counter-radicalisation strategies highly influenced by the British model (see Ambrozik, 2019; Busher et al., 2023; Kundnani & Hayes, 2018). The global development of counter-extremism and radicalisation prevention policies is one of the reasons

why examining the complex dynamics and effects produced by (counter)radicalisation focused counter-terrorism is a crucial task. When I started this investigation, certain aspects of (counter)radicalisation strategies, especially the Prevent Strategy in the UK, were being problematised not only by academics, but also by educators and student unions (see Adams, 2016; NUS, 2015), as well as by organisations concerned with civil and human rights. During the past 20 years, there has been a focus on the negative consequences that this new security approach entails for the suspect communities, namely Muslim communities and individuals (see Abbas, 2018; Elshimi, 2017; Hickman et al., 2011; Mythen et al., 2009; Walker, 2021; see the work of Prevent Watch, n.d.). As vital as the elaboration of that work is, this book seeks to contribute to the fields of (critical) terrorism and (critical) security studies by examining (counter)radicalisation as a governing technology that (heterogeneously) affects the whole population and that is embedded in processes of identity formation that go beyond the production of 'moderate Muslims' (Abbas, 2021; Elshimi, 2017).

While most of the existing research focuses on the analysis of counter-terrorism legislation, counter-radicalisation strategies, interviews with suspect individuals and communities, counter-terrorism experts and practitioners, and more lately, with individuals subjected to counter-terrorism duties (including NHS staff and education professionals), literature that focuses on social imaginaries of (counter)radicalisation and that 'explores the participation of the (counter)radicalisation apparatus in general processes of identity formation and in the "conduct of conduct" is scarce' (Rodrigo-Jusué, 2022, p. 291). Similarly, research on qualitative (textual and visual) media and popular culture analysis of radicalisation representations is relatively uncommon since most research has focused on analysing expert discourses, policies, and strategies. Media and popular culture are often referenced as illustrative, but they have not been given a crucial role in setting and elaborating social imaginaries of (counter)radicalisation. This is an urgent task, especially now that lay citizens are being increasingly called on to participate in countering terrorism (Rodrigo-Jusué, 2022, 2024b) and considering that the media serve as their primary source of information on (counter)terrorism and (counter)radicalisation.

One of the main purposes of *Re-Defining Terrorism* is also to examine the gendered effects of (counter)radicalisation discourses, for instance, in representing women involved in non-state political violence and those who participate in (national) security practices. Although (feminist) research on the representation of women terrorists is increasing, there is a lack of research investigating the effects of (counter)radicalisation imaginaries and practices from a gender perspective (see Brown, 2013 as an exception). Despite growing literature on the consequences of Prevent initiatives have in education and in health-care (see Busher et al., 2024; Jerome et al., 2019; MedAct, 2020; Walker, 2021; Younis & Jadhav, 2019), there is also a gap in the analysis of the most recent terrorism and radicalisation prevention campaigns aimed at the whole population (such as *Action Counters Terrorism* and *Let's Talk About It*). Investigating these initiatives is vital to understand not only the constitution of new subjects and models of conducts, but also to comprehend the contemporary frames through which conflict and violence are approached.