

**The struggle of expert authority: An analysis of
radicalisation expertise in the UK**

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The candidate confirms that the work submitted is her own and that appropriate credit has been given where reference has been made to the work of others.

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Abstract

Radicalisation theory has emerged as the dominant explanatory framework for terrorism and underpins contemporary preventive counter-terrorism policy efforts in the UK. Its literature suggests, however, a conceptually, empirically and theoretically weak evidence base, underpinned by fundamental uncertainties associated with modelling and anticipating terrorism and embedded with controversy over interpretations of the available evidence. This thesis examines how credible expertise is established in this context. Drawing on data generated from interviews with radicalisation experts and document analysis, it first examines conceptualisations of radicalisation expertise. It identifies and explains the markers that are used to delineate expertise on the topic, including the role played by experiential knowledge. The second focus is on the constitution of the expert community. The analysis draws out the diverse forms of knowledge represented and traces the contributions of experts to public debates on the issue. The thesis finds that radicalisation is a topic area characterised by diverse forms of authoritative knowledge and conflicting perspectives as to what constitutes a 'radicalisation expert'. This contestation within the expert community emerges in diverse public commentary on radicalisation, and the thesis identifies the presence of four expert 'perspectives' that are articulated in policy debates. This empirical account of the radicalisation expert community is considered in terms of the wider dynamics of contemporary expertise and the struggles inherent in identifying experts in a context of diverse knowledge claims.

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List of Acronyms

ERG 22+	Extremism Risk Guidance 22+
DCLG	Department for Communities and Local Government
ENER	European Network of Experts on Radicalisation
ESRC	Economic and Social Research Council
FOSIS	Federation of Student Islamic Societies
ICSR	The International Centre for the Study of Radicalisation and Political Violence
ISIS	The Islamic State of Iraq and Syria
OSCT	Office for Security and Counter-Terrorism
RUSI	Royal United Services Institute

Chapter 1: Introduction

This thesis explains the nature of expertise on radicalisation, a topic area with an uncertain and highly contested evidence base. It pairs an analysis of conceptualisations of credible expertise amongst radicalisation experts with an examination of how these internal dynamics emerge in the policy process. The account of radicalisation expertise that results is one that emphasises the diversity of ways by which experts defend, confer and deny expertise, and traces the pluralist nature of the expert community, expressed in a fragmented constitution and embedded substantive contestation. While the thesis proposes an examination of evidence and experts in this particular area of public policy, the case of radicalisation demonstrates both the opportunities and challenges that experts face in claiming authority in a contemporary context.

The present chapter begins with three short illustrations of radicalisation expertise in practice that indicate the core themes of the thesis. These briefly recount expert debate regarding the nature of radicalisation in terms of: the 2013 attack in the London town of Woolwich, British foreign fighters in Syria and Iraq, and the controversy surrounding the 'Extremism Risk Guidance 22+' (ERG 22+). The second section provides background on the development of a radicalisation expert community in the UK and the uncertain and contested nature of the knowledge underpinning it. This is followed by an explication of the research questions. The final section outlines the structure of the thesis.

1.1 Illustrations of radicalisation expertise in practice

1.1.1 *The Woolwich attack*

On 22 May 2013 in Woolwich, London, British soldier Lee Rigby was murdered by Michael Adebolajo and Michael Adebawale¹. The murder was framed as an 'act of terrorism' by the Prime Minister and Home Secretary (Government Digital Service 2013a, b). The cause was identified as ideological extremism: a Task Force on Tackling Radicalisation and Extremism was set up and the long term importance of preventing extreme views from being aired and adopted was emphasised (Cameron 2013).

In the public debate that followed, a multitude of theories of radicalisation were articulated by a diversity of experts. Figure 1.1 lists an illustrative selection of online article headlines in this regard. Some experts

¹ This case study was compiled during June and July 2014.

mirrored the policy pronouncements on ideological extremism (e.g. Stuart, in BBC 2013a; Hussain, in BBC 2013b; Hasan 2013; Sky News 2013). For example, a researcher at think tank Centri argued that 'The answer to things like Woolwich is not attacking the symptoms. No amount of extra surveillance will be able to nip every terror plot in the bud. It is tackling the causes, draining the swamp in which hateful views grow' (Rafiq, in Gilligan 2013a). For some, the proscribed organisation al-Muhajiroun (Home Office 2016: 6, 16) had motivated the killers' actions (Stuart, in BBC 2013a; Murray, in Channel 4 News 2013a; Rafiq, in Doward 2013; Simcox, in Voice of America 2013). Other commentators explained the attack through 'lone wolf' theory; rather than being conducted by a formal, organised group, the attackers were said to have acted alone and been 'self-radicalised', primarily through extremist material online (Neumann, in Channel 4 News 2013b; News Limited 2013; Pantucci 2013). The explanation relating to the acquisition of extreme beliefs was then particularly comprehensive: extremist ideas are at the root of terrorist violence, and these are spread through social networks both offline and online.

Figure 1.1: Headlines from online news and discussion sources regarding the causes of radicalisation in the case of the Woolwich attack

Woolwich: Why Do Britons Become Radicalised?	(Sky News 2013)
Men who killed Lee Rigby in Woolwich are murderers, not ‘soldiers of Allah’	(Francis 2013a)
Woolwich attack: of course British foreign policy had a role	(Glenton 2013)
Woolwich attack: caution urged over crackdown on extremist websites	(Quinn 2013)
Woolwich attack: Al Muhajiroun linked to one in five terrorist convictions	(Whitehead 2013)
The Woolwich Murder: Initial Assessments of Another Lone Actor Attack	(Pantucci 2013)

While this focus on extremism was strong, there were a range of alternative explanations given by a myriad of experts. The Director of the International Centre for the Study of Radicalisation and Political Violence (ICSR) sought to downplay beliefs and focus specifically on violence (Channel 4 News 2013b). Others including think tanks the Royal United Services Institute (RUSI) and Demos, in opposition to the apparently clear link between extremism and violence articulated by others, highlighted the range of experiences of radicalisation and therefore possible explanations (Bartlett 2013; Pantucci, in BBC 2013b). Discrimination, disadvantage, and a set of immutable core beliefs were proposed by the academic founder of the RadicalisationResearch.org website, who downplayed the role of religion and ideology (Francis 2013a). The importance of locality was

highlighted by an explanation of the murder in terms of gang culture in South East London (Githens-Mazer 2013). Foreign policy was proposed as a motivating factor by a former soldier writing in the Guardian newspaper (Glenton 2013). The attackers themselves explicitly justified their actions by reference to international politics, with Adebolajo stating on camera during the attack that ‘the only reason we have killed this man today is because Muslims are dying daily by British soldiers’ (The Telegraph 2013a). None of these explanations were particularly prominent in the public analysis but were instead given limited exposure by a disparate range of experts.

1.1.2 Foreign Fighters in Syria and Iraq

British citizens’ involvement in the Syrian conflict has been an ongoing topic of media debate and policy statements since it began in 2011². The Government estimates that between January 2011 and September 2015, about 700 individuals travelled to fight in Syria or Iraq (Boutin et al. 2016: 40). The motivation of these fighters and the nature of their participation is multifaceted; the public’s focus, however, has largely been on Britons involved with hard-line and violent groups like Islamic State and their gruesome claims to full involvement in the violence (Owen 2014). All fighters are regarded as potential terrorists by the UK Government, and there is particular concern that ideologically extreme and militarily trained fighters may return to the UK and carry out attacks here (e.g. May 2015). While the policy perspective has been rooted in the Government’s wider concern with ideology as discussed in Chapter 3.2, the expert discussion has been more diverse.

One line of analysis focuses on the process of adopting particular views that legitimate violence. According to research by the ICSR in particular, this is often through the mechanism of social networks, with social media used by both fighters and sympathisers to disseminate information and multimedia, and to engage potential fighters in conversation (Carter, Maher and Neumann 2014; Chatham House 2014; Home Affairs Committee 2014a: Q487). The role of the internet is regarded as pivotal by experts as diverse as think tank researchers (Frenett, in BBC 2014a), ex-extremists (Hasan and Swan 2014) and former counter-terrorism practitioners (Barrett 2014), as a platform for users to consume self-tailored and one-sided information, get actively involved in sharing such information, and potentially move towards participation in violence. In

² This vignette was constructed largely during August 2014.

terms of offline social networks, researchers at think tanks Quilliam and RUSI have voiced concerns about the intervention of ‘charismatic figures’ who facilitate others’ radicalisation (Garvelli 2014), with Al-Muhajiroun again singled out for creating an extremist discourse in the UK that provides encouragement and legitimation to foreign fighters (Pantucci 2014). Experts have then frequently pointed to the communication of ideas through social networks and social media as constitutive of foreign fighters’ radicalisation.

At the same time, a diversity of alternative explanations has been proposed by experts. The prevalence of Islamism in British Muslim communities has been highlighted (e.g. Quilliam, in CNN 2014; ITV News 2014), with one academic arguing that ‘Islamist extremist ideologies have been able to be spread with relative ease in our country under the cover of ‘religion’, ‘free speech’ and ‘multiculturalism’ [...] A small number of British Muslims have been brainwashed by so-called preachers’ (Glees, in Owen 2014). Critics of this argument however emphasise fighters’ agency and argue that recruitment is not as straightforward as terms like ‘brainwashing’ suggest (Francis 2014). A second position focuses on the radicalising potential of a search for identity, belonging, excitement and adventure, or even youthful posturing. This argument was given, for example, on the basis of PhD research (Lakhani 2014), from an intelligence and security perspective (Chatham House 2014: 4), and from a Syrian journalist based in the UK (Longman 2012). Indeed a researcher at the think tank Demos, referencing his previous research into radicalisation, argues that most foreign fighters aren’t particularly devout or knowledgeable about Islam and instead ‘many British jihadis are narcissistic, self-obsessed thrill-seekers’ (Bartlett 2014). There were also those that criticised the framing of debate in terms of radicalisation: a sociologist dismissed the ideas of vulnerability and grooming and emphasised cultural alienation as a cause (Furedi 2015), while CAGE, an advocate of human rights in counter-terrorism operations, argued that many fighters are motivated by moral and humanitarian reasons and do not necessarily pose a threat to the UK (Channel 4 News 2014). Such arguments essentially posed alternative conceptualisations of radicalisation that challenged the dominant focus on ideology.

1.1.3 The Extremism Risk Guidance 22+ (ERG 22+)

In late 2016, there was an animated debate regarding the psychological evidence behind the Government’s radicalisation theory. On 29th

September, a letter (see Figure 1.2) was printed in the Guardian, with 151 signatories (Letters 2016). It focused on the ERG 22+, a set of twenty two factors that form a core pillar of the UK Government’s radicalisation theory. The letter was released alongside a report entitled ‘The Science of Pre-Crime’ (Qureshi 2016), the latter term referring to the efforts of counter-radicalisation programmes to anticipate and pre-empt potential future crime (Goldberg, Jadhav and Younis 2016; McCulloch and Pickering 2009; Zedner 2007). The report was published by CAGE, an organisation that has been vocal in opposing counter-terrorism activities in the UK.

Figure 1.2: Letter to The Guardian, September 2016, regarding the ERG 22+

Anti-radicalisation strategy lacks evidence base in science

We are concerned with the implementation of “radicalisation” policies within the UK [Prevent strategy](#), internationally referred to as countering violence extremism. Tools that purport to have a psychology evidence base are being developed and placed under statutory duty while their “science” has not been subjected to proper scientific scrutiny or public critique.

Of particular concern is the Extremism Risk Guidance 22+ (ERG22+) framework that is being used as the basis for assessing risk of “radicalisation” and referral to the Channel programme. More than 500,000 public servants have been placed under a duty to implement the tool and several dozen children have been directly affected, through the courts, based on assessments using the tool. The impact is significant and cannot be emphasised enough.

We endorse the recent statement by the Royal College of Psychiatrists calling for publication of the ERG22+ study. We call on the Home Office to do so and further to invite debate by experts.

All those engaged in academic study should continue to serve the interests of society by remaining faithful to the ethical standards and science of their traditions. Where we play a role cooperatively with government policy, we should hold ourselves to the highest possible standards to ensure that we maintain the independence and transparency of our professions.

The report articulated various lines of criticism. With the original study and its datasets remaining unpublished, the transparency of the research underpinning the ERG 22+ and the rigour of its peer review processes were questioned. Weaknesses were identified in the methods and sampling and doubts articulated as to the validity and reliability of the tool. The lack of indicators relating to political context was highlighted, mirroring core debates in radicalisation theory on the causes of terrorism and the appropriate level of analysis. Finally, attention was drawn to the ethical implications of generalising tentative findings based on individuals convicted of terrorism offences, and using them to assess radicalisation in the wider population. The analysis was bolstered by a statement from the Royal College of Psychiatrists earlier in the month that called for the evidence behind the ERG 22+ to be published, and there was support and favourable coverage from a number of alternative media sources (including Aked 2016; Bakir 2016; Hooper 2016; Hussain 2016). Such accounts questioned the quality of the science behind the UK's counter-radicalisation strategy, known as Prevent. They articulated broader values relating to academic independence and scientific rigour and called for transparency in the evidence base and accountability with regards to the decisions made as a result. They drew on a range of widely articulated concerns about Prevent regarding the nature of radicalisation and the impact of counter-radicalisation policy, but were rooted in a condemnation of the evidence underpinning Prevent and ultimately presented a critical analysis of the dominant model of radicalisation in the UK.

On the other side of the debate, analysts sought to defend the ERG 22+. One of the original authors referred to the scientific credentials of the research, saying that it was 'done to the highest standard it could be done' (Lloyd, in Ross 2016). The Home Office similarly stated that its indicators of radicalisation are: 'based on a peer-reviewed study, carried out to meticulous academic guidelines and published in two publicly available academic journals' (Ross 2016). Others were more actively critical of the Guardian letter and CAGE's research; in particular, this involved two think tanks, the Henry Jackson Society and the Quilliam Foundation, both of whom have been active contributors to radicalisation debates. One commentator (Sutton 2016) accused CAGE's report of containing 'false claims and disingenuous tactics', and sought to claim the scientific upper hand, suggest that the weight of evidence is behind Prevent, and indeed dismiss the contribution of CAGE to evidence-based policy making. The

academic credentials of CAGE and their allies were questioned by reference to the letter's signatories as a 'group of activists' (Sutton 2016) and the 'lowest-grade occupants of fourth-rate universities' (Murray 2016). There were accusations of ideological bias: one particular academic signatory was accused of anti-Semitism, and two activists of Islamism, and more generally, most signatories were said to be supportive of extremists and would not be likely to support any policy to prevent radicalisation (Murray 2016). Similarly, three days after the release of the letter and report (LBC 2016), the founding Chairman of the Quilliam Foundation referred to those that criticise Prevent as a 'motley crew of dogmatists' that includes 'Islamist sympathisers' and 'far left agitators' with 'nefarious intentions'. These commentators question then the credibility of CAGE and the signatories of the letter not only for the evidence they present but also their academic credentials, normative values and ideological baggage.

These three cases, individually and collectively, anticipate key themes addressed by the thesis. They are suggestive of the extensive, and often public, debates on the nature of radicalisation and policy priorities in this topic area, and they illustrate the highly contested status of the Government's theory of radicalisation and its counter-radicalisation strategy. This is a topic area marked by a plethora of knowledge claims, suggesting a heterogeneous and competitive expert community. Illustrated in particular by the debates around Woolwich and foreign fighters, experts propose a range of often-conflicting ideas as to the nature of radicalisation and approaches to understanding it. Further, experts make statements on the basis of different knowledge types; in these cases, we saw those speaking from research as well as experience. This deep-seated diversity and contestation manifested itself in explicit challenges to expert credibility in the case of the ERG 22+, where, in addition to the substantive controversy, the social scientific evidence on radicalisation came under scrutiny as each side claimed to have the more reliable evidence base. Such statements then contributed to claims regarding authoritative knowledge and the credibility of opponents. These vignettes illustrate then the pluralist nature of expert discussions on radicalisation. That is, they are marked by a plethora of actors that propose divergent theories of what the policy problem is and how to solve it (Haas 1992: 26-28). The thesis builds on these initial observations to develop a framework through which such debates can be interpreted and understood.

1.2 Background

The term 'radicalisation' entered popular discourse in the early 2000s and has grown in influence ever since. One study suggested that its use in English-language print media increased from around 100 articles per year in 1999 to 1,600 per year in 2009 (Sedgwick 2010: 480). At a policy level, the attacks on Madrid in 2004 and London in 2005, alongside the murders of Dutch politician Pim Fortuyn (2002) and filmmaker Theo van Gogh (2004), have been seen as a turning point in terms of EU interest in the causes of terrorism and its prevention (Bossong 2013: 68-70; Coolsaet 2010: 860, 866; De Goede and Simon 2013: 318-320). With this preventive focus, radicalisation came to be defined by the UK Government as 'the process by which a person comes to support terrorism and forms of extremism leading to terrorism' (Home Office 2011a: 108). The UK developed a counter-radicalisation strategy, 'Prevent', which works in anticipation of attacks, seeking to challenge and censor the ideology that is purported to motivate terrorism and to identify and intervene with potential terrorists or supporters of terrorism. While it has been a particularly controversial strategy, and there has been extensive criticism of its aims and outcomes both from researchers (e.g. Kundnani 2009; Martin 2014; Thomas 2010) and from the primarily Muslim communities that it impacts upon (e.g. Taylor 2015), radicalisation theory in general has achieved great reach in UK policy.

Alongside this rise in the language and policy of radicalisation has been the development of a radicalisation expert community. A review of the academic literature displays a sharp rise in academic work using the term 'radicalisation' from 2004 (Kundnani 2012: 7): one researcher writes that 'a torrent of research on the issue has been unleashed' (Coolsaet 2010: 869). The UK has a dedicated radicalisation research centre at Kings College London and there are many other think tanks and academics that publish periodically on the subject. Research programmes have been established, including the Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC)'s Radicalisation and Violence initiative and think tank Demos' on Radicalisation and Extremism. In an effort to map and consolidate the burgeoning literature, various bibliographies (e.g. Hofmann 2012; Homeland Security Institute 2006; Schmid and Price 2011) as well as a number of literature reviews (e.g. Dalgaard-Nielsen 2010; Schmid 2013) have been produced. Not all of the literature analyses radicalisation per se:

there are those that Neumann (2013: 873-4) calls 'radicalization deniers', or academics who question the existence of radicalisation as an identifiable process that is amenable to intervention. Mirroring policy concerns however, current radicalisation research tends to focus on contemporary Islamic radicalisation in the West, analysing factors that encourage radicalisation, processes of radicalisation and radicalising settings including mosques and prisons (Della Porta and LaFree 2012: 6; Schmid 2013: 1-2). The field has identified many factors that may be involved (e.g. Gill, Horgan and Deckert 2014; Silke 2008) and developed numerous models of the process (e.g. Gill 2008; Wiktorowicz 2004), with the overall aim of explaining how individuals progress towards supporting and adopting terrorist violence. In general, a range of expert activity has developed relatively quickly around the concept.

A review of statements from experts working on the topic suggests however three problematic features of knowledge on radicalisation. First, it is characterised by fundamental uncertainty. Acts of terror can never be fully anticipated and indeed it is rarely argued that terrorism studies can be predictive; instead, 'it is the case that today's complex global asymmetric milieu necessitates increasingly to expect the unexpected' (Ranstorp 2007: 10). As part of wider approaches to risk management that seek to anticipate and pre-empt threats, Prevent involves early intervention with those believed to be 'at risk of' or 'vulnerable to' radicalisation according to various indicators (Coppock and McGovern 2014; Mythen and Walklate 2016: 5-8), based on the ERG 22+ as discussed in Section 1.1.3. Researchers however face challenges in modelling processes of radicalisation, defining risk factors and recognising individuals and groups who are likely to turn to violent tactics. An MI5 report (Travis 2008a) for example concluded that there is no standard radicalisation process: this was the admission that no matter how much research is conducted, it is impossible to predict who will become radicalised. The implications of these analytical difficulties for implementing anticipatory policy interventions was expressed by Richard Barrett, who has worked in counter-terrorism for MI6 and the UN, referring to the 2013 Woolwich murder as an issue of identifying a tipping point: 'When does a person who expresses radical views, who joins a radical group, flip over to over to be a violent extremist, somebody who is going to commit a crime like this? To find the signals, the red flags as it were, I think is enormously hard' (BBC 2013c; 01:11). Given such difficulties, attempts to develop and apply models of radicalisation have been subject to criticism (e.g. Coppock and McGovern 2014; Qureshi

2016) and indeed labelled 'quasi-scientific' (De Goede and Simon 2013: 319). Such comments indicate a concern with the fundamental analytical problems associated with radicalisation.

A second issue is a weak evidence base. Pointing to the analytical failure of their own field is commonplace amongst terrorism experts (Stampnitzky 2011) and is apparent in the radicalisation literature too. A lack of conceptual clarity has been raised by Sedgwick (2010) and Richards (2011), who argue that the term 'radicalisation' has no agreed-upon meaning: it is unclear whether it is thought or action that is the threat, where the lines are drawn between 'radical' and 'moderate', and along exactly what continuum. The associated term 'extremism' continues to elude definition amongst policy makers (BBC 2016a). Literature reviews highlight the sparse and methodologically problematic nature of the evidence base (Bouhana and Wikstrom 2011; King and Taylor 2011). There is a lack of data on violent radicalisation, and specifically little research into the multitude of radicalisation theories (Schmid 2013: 2-5; Vidino and Brandon 2012: 169-171). Instead, much work is conceptual (Borum 2011a: 15) and reviews must concentrate on a minority of papers that actually contain data (e.g. Dalgaard-Nielsen 2010: 809-810). For example, a systematic review by McGilloway, Ghosh and Bhui (2015: 40) retained only 17 out of a possible 4160 documents. Further, there are methodological problems in data that does exist: one review for example concluded that 'the evidence-base on the causes of al Qa'ida-influenced radicalisation is scientifically weak' (Bouhana and Wikstrom 2011: 69). This relates to, for example, a reliance on small numbers of cases and a lack of comparative analysis with those who hold extreme views but are not violent (King and Taylor 2011: 615-8; Kundhani 2015: 19-21). The pattern of such commentary points to a conceptually, empirically and theoretically weak evidence base available to the expert community.

A third issue concerns contestation and controversy within the expert community. Terrorism is an essentially contested subject: it joins many other foci of public policy as a 'wicked problem', in which analytical complexity and the difficulty of directly applying knowledge without judgement is coupled with the existence of many stakeholders and no agreement on what exactly the problem is and how to deal with it (Hayden 2007; Rittel and Webber 1973). Echoing use of the term 'terrorism' (Butko 2009; Staun 2010), one researcher has pointed out that application of the

label 'radicalised' is applied in accordance with political agendas and only usually to non-state actors (Schmid 2013: 17-19). While radicalisation is the core theory driving Prevent, agreement has not been reached on the relevant factors and mechanisms. As Vidino and Brandon (2012: 169) note:

Few issues have proven more divisive and controversial among experts, both within and outside government, than trying to identify the reasons that drive people to embrace radical views and then to act on them in violent ways.

A vast range of possible causes are discussed in the literature, including: alienation, lack of integration, identity crisis, the availability of resources, inequality, injustice, underemployment, racism, discrimination, criminality, a lack of religious knowledge, and experience of war, political violence, and repression (European Commission's Expert Group on Violent Radicalisation 2008: 10-11; Schmid 2013: 2-5; Travis 2008a, b). Many debates on the nature of radicalisation take place on a public stage: radicalisation experts are visible in parliamentary inquiries on radicalisation and counter-radicalisation (Communities and Local Government Committee 2010; Home Affairs Committee 2012; 2016), sit on advisory panels like the European Network of Experts on Radicalisation, and take part in the frequent media and public discussion on the issue. The tension produced by the close policy interest in terrorism has however led to accusations regarding the close relationships between elite terrorism researchers and the state, and a subsequent lack of objective expertise on the topic (e.g. George 1991; Miller and Mills 2009). Mirroring this, Kundnani (2012: 5-6) has led accusations that radicalisation studies is orientated towards addressing policy concerns rather than freely investigating the causes of terrorism. These dynamics were evident in the much-discussed case of the 2006 ESRC and Foreign and Commonwealth Office funding call on 'Combating terrorism by countering radicalisation', which was withdrawn following academic protest regarding the invitation of only selected experts, the call's apparent design around the needs of intelligence agencies and policy makers, and its inclusion of various non-evidenced assumptions (Breen Smyth 2009: 205-9). Mirroring terrorism studies more broadly, radicalisation research is an applied topic, with experts' contestation not solely focused on the generation and interpretation of data but spilling into normative debates.

1.3 The research problem

Many commentators maintain therefore that radicalisation research has produced a conceptually, empirically and theoretically weak evidence base, while interpretations of the available evidence are highly disputed and closely interact with the politics of the issue. These issues occur in a context of the unknowns that are integral to security strategies that attempt to anticipate and address potential future crimes. There have indeed been calls to rethink the focus on radical beliefs that is integral to radicalisation theory: one researcher proposed that 'it is time to end our preoccupation with radicalization so that we can effectively regain a focus on terrorist behavior' (Horgan 2012). The idea however retains power in media and policy, and indeed appears to have become common parlance. Of course, research has generated accepted knowledge and a degree of agreement, and the issues of uncertain knowledge and contestation can be regarded as a part of the process of knowledge production. However, in a context where evidence is generally regarded as a sound basis for policy making (Nutley, Walter and Davies 2007: 10-20), and given the profusion and authority of experts on the topic, the three issues highlighted raise fundamental questions about the foundations upon which radicalisation expertise lies.

Overall, the thesis examines how credible expertise is established in radicalisation, where the topic is fundamentally contested and the evidence uncertain. The specific research questions are as follows:

1. How do radicalisation experts conceptualise their expertise? Why do these traits convey authority on the topic? How are these conceptions of expertise used to deny the expertise of others and delineate the expert community?
2. What role does experiential knowledge play in conceptions of radicalisation expertise? On what grounds is it either regarded or dismissed as a credible source of knowledge?
3. What is the constitution of the radicalisation expert community in practice?
 - a. What is its structure, in terms of the types of knowledge that are present and actors that claim expertise?
 - b. How is the contestation inherent in the subject matter expressed in practice? What are the main perspectives on radicalisation theory held by experts, and on what points do these converge and diverge?

- c. How do the findings from the research apply to public debates on radicalisation?

Research Questions 1 and 2 seek to explore and explain the nature of expertise in this particular topic area. They examine the features of knowledge that are seen as credible and able to support authoritative arguments. This is done through an empirical focus on how expertise is expressed or demonstrated by those who could potentially possess, and usually claim or are conferred, expertise on the issue. Together the questions consider both how expertise is claimed as well as how it is denied, and look both at how markers relating to research evidence are adapted to this particular context as well as the alternative notions of expertise that have developed. The second research question focuses on the epistemology of radicalisation expertise, seeking to examine the contribution of experiential knowledge to the evidence base. Rather than attempting to arrive at any fixed notion of a radicalisation expert, the aim instead is to map constructions of expertise by those with knowledge claims on the topic and examine both their contested nature and their potential for collaboration. It should also be noted that the concern is not with criticising or 'exposing' social scientific claims. Instead, the aim is to examine the social components of expert knowledge; how and why it is assigned particular attributes. To use the language of Gieryn (1999), the thesis examines how the boundaries of expertise are constructed and contested; the basis of credibility assigned to a diversity of experts and the processes by which alternative forms of expertise are able to claim authoritative knowledge in this topic area.

The third research question seeks to build on the findings regarding the nature of radicalisation expertise, discussing the contours of the radicalisation expert community that shape the conceptualisations of expertise held within and in turn are shaped by them. It was hypothesised that a pluralist framework would be most appropriate to this analysis. The first sub-question then seeks to investigate the heterogeneity of knowledge and actors that characterise the expert community. The second objective is to map the expert community in terms of its core perspectives on the issue, identifying the commonalities and contradictions between them. Mapping the perspectives amongst experts provides a new conceptualisation of the scope of the field, including those that have the potential to increase in influence as policy debates change. Finally, the thesis tests the resultant

interpretation of the expert community by returning to the three case studies of radicalisation expertise in practice.

1.4 Structure of the thesis

Following this Introduction, Chapter 2 discusses research and theory on expertise. The focus is on sociological accounts that draw out the contextual and attributed nature of expertise and the authority that the label of 'expert' can carry. The chapter explores the declining authority of science and the rise in alternative forms of expertise. It also discusses how expert credibility is established and the role of experts in wider political struggles. Finally, the chapter reviews previous research on terrorism experts.

Chapter 3 explains the policy background to the case. It introduces counter-radicalisation activities in the UK, highlighting their complicated design and controversial implementation. It analyses the official theory of radicalisation, detailing its individual-level focus on ideology but also indicating the ruptures in this dominant interpretation. The chapter contextualises the UK Government's concern with radicalisation through literatures on securitisation and anticipatory policy making.

Chapter 4 turns to the uncertain and contested nature of knowledge on radicalisation. It first situates the thesis within previous discussions of expertise on risk issues. Next, the chapter reviews the extensive discussions on the status of radicalisation knowledge amongst those that study the topic. The fundamental uncertainty associated with terrorism and specific issues in constructing an evidence base are addressed. The final section discusses the fragmented nature of radicalisation research and its contested concepts and theories.

Chapter 5 explains the methodology of the thesis. First, it discusses the strategic issues of defining the meaning of 'expert' for the purposes of the research, identifying the differing perspectives within the expert community, and research positionality. This is followed by a description of the methods used, including document analysis and elite interviews with radicalisation experts. The ethical issues raised by the research and the methods of analysis are also discussed.

Chapter 6 is the first of four to address the research questions. It focuses on how radicalisation experts explain the nature of radicalisation expertise, examining seven traits that convey expert credibility on this topic. The complex nature of these traits is drawn out, particularly in terms of

demonstrating that they are used both to defend and deny expert status. Chapter 7 continues this work, concentrating on experiential knowledge. The contested nature of experiential expertise is analysed, detailing the reasons that it is valued as well as how it is denigrated. The tendency of interviewees to value the amalgamation of different types of knowledge is also examined. Overall, these two chapters examine how the boundaries of expertise are drawn by those with knowledge claims on the topic.

Chapters 8 and 9 shift the focus to describe and explain the constitution of the radicalisation expert community in the UK. Chapter 8 analyses the pluralist nature of the radicalisation expert community, examining the diversity of expertise that is present and the implications of this for identifying 'radicalisation experts' in practice. Chapter 9 focuses on contestation in the expert community. It first illustrates this through interviewees' reflections on the politicised nature of expert debates. It then examines the core lines of contestation on the topic. The epistemic communities model (Haas 1992) is applied to radicalisation expertise through the identification of four expert perspectives on radicalisation. Finally, the thesis returns to the three vignettes presented in Chapter 1.1 to demonstrate the diverse and contested nature of radicalisation expertise in practice.

The thesis concludes with a Chapter 10 that brings together the findings of the study to tentatively explain the constitution and operation of radicalisation expertise, with particular reference to wider lessons on the nature and operation of expertise in conditions of uncertain and contested knowledge.

Counter-radicalisation is a well-funded and much-discussed strand of counter-terrorism efforts in the UK and beyond. The ideas behind it, while powerful in terms of their impact on policy, practice and communities, are highly controversial. Through a focus on expertise, the thesis deconstructs this controversy and examines the basis of authoritative knowledge claims on the topic. With radicalisation expertise introduced and the research focus explained, the next chapter examines the theories of expertise pertinent to the thesis.

Chapter 2: The nature of expertise

This chapter contextualises the thesis through a discussion of existing literatures on expertise and terrorism expertise. It first discusses the theoretical orientations of the thesis in terms of the nature of expertise, concentrating particularly on literature relating to the evolving meaning of expertise and the nature of expert contestation. It thus interrogates 'expert' and 'expertise' as the core concepts of the thesis, providing the sociological background as to their meaning. The second task of the chapter is to discuss previous research on terrorism expertise. This places the study's focus on radicalisation expertise within a tradition of examining the social conditions of the production of knowledge on terrorism. Thus, the first two sections consider theoretical and non-discipline specific accounts, and the third focuses on theory and research pertaining directly to the thesis' focus on radicalisation.

2.1 The meaning and authority of expertise

The discussion begins with foundational questions regarding the meaning of expertise. The first sub-section considers individualistic definitions and models, before turning to the findings of sociological research into the operation of expertise in practice. The review then examines work in the sociology of knowledge that has sought to extend the boundaries of expertise, expanding notions of the types of knowledge that are regarded as relevant to expert discussions (Section 2.1.2). Section 2.1.3 considers a realist account, this time from a sociological perspective, which seeks to re-establish the boundaries of expert knowledge and provide an inclusive but non-relativistic typology of expertise.

2.1.1 Defining and explaining expertise

We begin with the body of work, largely in cognitive science, that studies expertise as a property of excellent individuals. In this tradition, expertise is analysed as a tangible good: it is 'the characteristics, skills and knowledge that distinguish experts from novices and less experienced people' (Ericsson 2006: 3). Experts are identified by their actual ability rather than social markers such as credentials or attribution (Salthouse 1991: 286-7). In practice however, researchers in this tradition have identified experts by particular measures, as summarised by Shanteau et al. (2002): number of years' experience; formal recognition of skills through certification; behaviours e.g. confidence, perception, communication skills; abilities e.g.

to tell the difference between similar cases within their field of knowledge or to make judgments in a consistent manner; and knowledge within a particular topic area. Despite such divergent approaches, the defining feature of all is the assumption that expertise can be identified as an individual trait.

Researchers who work with this assumption have sought to explain how individuals achieve expertise. Early research focused on natural ability or personality traits, for example motivation and intelligence: these factors, however, were generally unsuccessful in explaining individual success (Ericsson and Smith 1991: 3-7). Research since the 1970s has disregarded transferrable skills as potential explanatory factors in favour of the domain-specific knowledge held by individuals (Holyoak 1991: 301-3). Investigation of this entailed laboratory research on skill acquisition, much of which examined chess players, and which by the 1990s had largely concluded that expertise was the result of experience, gained through long term practice (about ten years was regarded as adequate), which resulted in improved knowledge and its organisation in memory (Ericsson and Smith 1991: 7-12, 25-32; Glaser and Chi 1988: xvii-xx; Posner 1988). Within their particular domain of expertise then, psychological research tells us that, after a period of learning, experts are able to draw on an extensive stock of knowledge and, with their more conceptual and meaningful understanding, are able to recognise patterns, reason, prioritise and generally make more accurate decisions (Bereiter and Scardamalia 1993: 26-31). However, experimental research with skills-based tasks has not always been conclusive: experts do not always perform better than non-experts, nor find them easier, display a better knowledge, or improve with practice (Holyoak 1991: 303-310). Such inconsistencies in findings begin to point to complexities in the nature of expertise that this approach has struggled to address.

A bridge between individualistic and sociological accounts can be found in work that seeks to integrate real world complexities into skills-based models. Examining situations including driving a car and student learning, Dreyfus and Dreyfus (2005) for example propose a five stage model of skill acquisition. In contrast to conclusions from the laboratory work, they argue that the developmental process involves not building knowledge of rules or procedures through experience, but instead learning to apply abstract knowledge to particular cases in an intuitive way. As

Kotzee argues (2014: 163-166), this account is emphatically not explaining expertise as theoretical knowledge, but as mastery of a practical task so that it can be completed without thought. The application of knowledge is also central to Bereiter and Scardamalia's analysis (1993: 9-16, 43-75, 78-82). They argue that factors like personality, natural talent and social conditions are secondary to the possession of a large stock of knowledge and the ability to apply this creatively to solve challenging problems. This knowledge may be of various types, ranging from formal or taught knowledge, through informal or domain-specific common sense, to impressionistic knowledge that is similar to intuition. In these two theories then, while the focus remains on individual learning and practice, the diverse nature of knowledge is analysed, and the focus is less on abstract situations and more on how the knowledge is applied under social conditions. As with the psychological approaches however, these analyses attempt to understand expertise as a substantive good possessed by particular actors, and through their exclusive focus on individuals they have a limited appreciation of the role of social factors in creating and conferring expertise. This suggests that a different approach is necessary to explain the nature and function of policy-relevant expertise in practice.

In contrast to definitions of expertise as a property acquired by individuals, sociological accounts study the social basis of expertise. In this tradition, the first important trait of expertise is relationality: experts are not studied as isolated entities but in relation to non-experts, and expertise is styled as a continuum rather than an apparently straightforward dichotomy between 'expert' and 'layperson'. In turn, these relationships imply the operation of power and hierarchies (Evetts, Mieg and Felt 2006; Mieg 2006: 746-7). An example of a relational analysis is found in Eyal's network conception of expertise: for Eyal (2013), expertise is not an individual or a group trait, but instead is formed of a network of conditions or resources including institutional context, actors, and equipment. Building on this relationality, sociological accounts tend to regard expertise as contextual and attributed in particular situations. Criteria and standards of expertise are relative and the attribution of expert status is variable, depending particularly on the audience (Mieg 2006: 745-6; Nowotny, Scott and Gibbons 2001: 215-6): an expert is someone who is 'regarded or addressed as such by someone else' (Mieg 2006: 743). Expertise becomes then less of a measurable attribute of individuals and more about the display of knowledge and authority in a particular context (Meuser and

Nagel 2009). Jasanoff for example emphasises the role of social factors in determining whose knowledge is deemed legitimate and relevant and is therefore attributed the label of expertise:

I have always insisted that expertise is not merely something that is in the heads and hands of skilled persons, constituted through their deep familiarity with the problem in question, but rather that it is something acquired, and deployed, within particular historical, political, and cultural contexts (2003: 393).

A further characteristic of expertise that is emphasised in this literature is its applied nature. Nowotny, Scott and Gibbons (2001: 222-223) argue that expertise is pragmatic: experts use their knowledge to provide advice and are called on to help answer particular questions. Thus it involves not just the possession of a specialised knowledge, but the professionalisation of this through its application to a social problem (Meuser and Nagel 2009). As well as the quality of the knowledge then, its social relevance is important (Bogner and Menz 2009). In these accounts, expertise is taken out of the laboratory and its nature in society is examined.

Running through sociological accounts is a concern with the authority that is held by those who are attributed expert status. Modernity and its processes of urbanisation and industrialisation has been characterised as the golden era of expertise (Boyne 2003: 82-4). There was the growth of both the civil service as expert administrators and the professions, and science was respected as a progressive and authoritative source of knowledge (Nowotny, Scott and Gibbons 2001: 216-220). A core aspect of expert authority is the ability to make authoritative statements. For Bourdieu (1975: 19-26), the nature of scientific authority encompassed both 'technical capacity and social power' and could be summed up as '*scientific competence* [...] socially recognised capacity to speak and act legitimately (i.e. in an authorised and authoritative way) in scientific matters' (19, original emphasis). In this definition, authority is drawn from control over the resources of scientific knowledge and skills and their nature as a social good; a form of social capital. Professions similarly achieve the right to define and conduct work based on their ability to claim jurisdiction over particular issues, claiming that cases are within their remit given their stock of theoretical knowledge and skills (Abbott 1988: 8-9; 59-60). For Elias (1982: 39-45), scientific authority is twofold: in addition to factors similar to Bourdieu's 'technical capacity', there is a control over the 'means of

orientation', or the symbols and concepts that we use to understand the world. Similarly, Gieryn (1999: 1) defines epistemic authority as 'the legitimate power to define, describe, and explain bounded domains of reality'. An example of this second sense of authority can be found in Starr's (1982) study of the rise of authoritative medical expertise, where he describes the role of cultural authority, or the ability to impose values and define reality; in medicine involving the tasks of, for example, interpreting symptoms and diagnosing illness. In these conceptions then, attention is drawn to the natural authority embedded in labels of expertise, and scientific expertise in particular, within particular domains. Experts are able to construct social problems through their claims to authoritative specialist knowledge.

In the political sphere, expertise carries a particular type of authority. Evidence-based policy making aims to place expertise at the heart of decision making: one of the core Cabinet Office publications on the matter highlighted the potential for evidence to lead a more strategic and effective policy process, minimising the role of values and other pressures that constrain analytical input (Performance and Innovation Unit 2000: 12-13). The demand for expert knowledge in public decision making means that the authority of experts becomes a commodity that is sought by others (Starr 1982: 9-16). The use of expertise in this way was explored by Nelkin (1987: 288-90), who argued that in the context of controversial policy areas, scientific expertise is commonly associated with neutral data, rational thought, and community vetting through peer review processes. Scientific knowledge is seen as an arbiter, able to provide answers and resolve disputes and therefore to give policy making the appearance of rationality and legitimacy. In a contemporary context, claiming that an idea is 'evidence-based' for example can bestow credibility regardless of how the evidence is compiled; it is a rhetorical device used to signify impartial and rational decision making (Jacobs and Manzi 2013). Authority in this sense is then based on independence from politics (Cozzens and Woodhouse 1995: 540-541). As actors in the policy process, this idealistic image of value-free knowledge can provide a particularly persuasive basis for expert authority.

Different types of expertise however commonly have hierarchical relationships. From Foucault (2004: 10) we learn that scientific knowledge is exclusive: the label of 'science' has a particular authority that excludes

other types of knowledge and seeks to disqualify or delegitimise them. Jordan (2014) similarly discusses how some 'ways of knowing' become accepted as legitimate and useful while others are dismissed and devalued. Particular methods, concepts and theories become the 'true' account, and this process determines which knowledge is regarded as important and relevant: she states that 'authoritative knowledge is persuasive because it seems natural, reasonable and consensually constructed' (2014: 97). In terms of policy processes, Jasanoff (2003: 395-7) argues that only some types of knowledge are regarded as relevant and thus some forms of expertise are able to achieve authority and influence, depending on the political dynamics of the situation. Suryanarayanan and Kleinman (2012) provide an example of this in their study of the role of authoritative expertise around 'colony collapse disorder' in honey bees. They argue that the informal, localised knowledge of beekeepers has been deprioritised in regulatory systems in favour of the abstracted, formal statistics of toxicologists. This is explained by the historical development of knowledge in that field, where only specific forms of evidence have become acceptable, in turn determining the relevancy of different forms of expertise. While the label of expertise may carry a particular authority then, it seems that the type of knowledge drawn on by that expertise may lead to gradients of legitimacy.

2.1.2 Widening notions of expertise

Expert authority and the place of expertise in public policy processes do not however go unchallenged. Turner (2003) has argued that experts occupy a problematic place in liberal democracies, where their elite discussions are not characterised by equal access or participation. Experts' cognitive authority, formed of specialist training and knowledge, cannot be redistributed and in fact brings privilege; experts are differentiated from ordinary citizens and their opinions favoured by the state. Turner argues that the main problem is that the nature of their knowledge is not neutral but ideological, and their contribution is unaccountable in that non-experts are unable to judge their contributions. The evidence-based policy movement has faced similar criticisms as a technocratic model that undermines democratic decision making (Parsons 2002). In summary, science faces a 'problem of legitimacy' (Collins and Evans 2002), and in such accounts, expertise is less of a social good and more of a social problem.

In this context, 'what counts' as evidence and expertise is scrutinised. The wider context of these changes has been theorised by Foucault (2004: 7) as a post-1960s struggle between local and scientific or scholarly knowledges, or the 'insurrection' of knowledge that had been

disqualified as nonconceptual knowledges, as insufficiently elaborated knowledges: naïve knowledges, hierarchically inferior knowledges, knowledges that are below the required level of erudition or scientificity [...] unqualified or even disqualified knowledges.

This concern with emancipation forms a central motivation for a move away from exclusive notions of expertise. These are challenges to the operation of Becker's (1967) hierarchy of credibility, at the top of which are the beliefs of those in positions of power, with the views of those less powerful towards the bottom and carrying little authority. Within the sociology of science, analyses of scientists' 'boundary work', originally conceptualised by Gieryn (1983) as the active efforts by scientists to differentiate their work from non-science in order to establish authority, question the distinction between science and non-science, problematise scientific evidence and argue against its characterisation as a unique or special source of knowledge, in opposition to non-science and possessive of values like falsifiability and disinterestedness (Gieryn 1995). These efforts mirror debates in evidence-based policy on the relative merits of different methodologies. Hierarchies of evidence were originally conceptualised and used in evidence-based medicine, with systematic reviews and randomised controlled trials tending to be at the top, surveys, action research and qualitative analysis around the middle, and professional, expert and user opinion at the bottom (Monaghan 2011: 105-6). As in the sociology of science, such hierarchies have been challenged and there has been a move within evidence-based policy and practice to valuing evidence more widely, particularly to include experiential knowledge from practitioners and service users (Davies 2000; Nutley, Powell and Davies 2013; Rycroft-Malone et al. 2004; Sanderson 2002). These accounts challenge scientific authority and seek to widen the forms of knowledge that are regarded as relevant to expert discussions.

The value of different types of knowledge to addressing social problems is highlighted in these accounts. Rather than being 'anti-science', they seek to recognise the potential contributory value of forms of knowledge, particularly uncredentialed, informal or experiential, that lie

outwith academic and professional sources (Cozzens and Woodhouse 1995: 545-8). Nowotny (2003) argues that there has been a 'pluralisation of expertise', with experience becoming a valid and relevant source of authoritative knowledge that can usefully complement scientific knowledge. With colleagues, she has stated that 'we are all experts now' (Nowotny, Scott and Gibbons 2001: 221), arguing that expertise is widely distributed and context-specific as individuals use their knowledge and experience to make localised decisions. These 'private' expertises may combine to form a public expertise, for example a social movement, but the basic nature of expertise remains privatised and local. This also speaks to a diversity of types of experiential knowledge, held by a range of people with different experiences (Corburn 2005: 62-4). Boundary breaking work is perhaps most famously represented by Wynne's study of Cumbrian sheep farmers (1996), where he characterised expert knowledge as shaped by culture and local practices, for example particular methodologies, and thus difficult to differentiate from lay knowledge, the potential value of which is emphasised. The value of these sources of knowledge is often seen in terms of complementarity to science: thus Gibbons et al. (1994: 1-11, 147) argue that contemporary expert communities involve collaboration between people with a range of skills and backgrounds, necessitated by the increased focus of research efforts on 'real world' issues. A study on preparing for avalanches in Norway for example detailed the contributory value of both local (practical) and scientific (e.g. forecasting) knowledge collaborating in a 'knowledge assemblage' (Solli and Ryghaug 2014: 22). Such assemblages can help to legitimate policy making processes: a case study of biotechnology by Jones (2004: 235-6) suggests that while policy is still legitimised through claims to objectivity, the meaning of objective knowledge in the policy process has changed. That is, while claims to scientific objectivity have been weakened, 'pluralist objectivity' is claimed through the involvement of a range of viewpoints, including, for example, activists and practitioners alongside the traditional experts of science and industry. In this characterisation then, the boundary between expert and non-expert is questioned and begins to collapse, and we are leagues away from laboratory studies of excellent individuals.

Applications of the widening inclusivity of the label of 'expertise' are found in many domains. Participatory policy making, in the form of, for example, citizen juries and user input to inspections of public services, attributes relevance to different types of knowledge and has proliferated

across many areas of policy (Beresford 2001: 266-7). Prior (2003) emphasises however that experience-based contributions are often understood as lay knowledge on a parallel to traditional experts, rather than simply beliefs or reports of experiences. This has opened the door to contributions not only to policy making but to knowledge generation. Science and technology studies has examined a range of controversies where citizens have acquired and used expertise, developing a knowledge that claims to be more accurate and relevant to the situation than abstract scientific knowledge, and where the struggle for recognition makes knowledge a political issue centering on whose voices 'count' (Cozzens and Woodhouse 1995: 545-8). A case in point is AIDS. Weeks (2010: 113-117) has documented the movement away from 'gay plague' discourses of the 1980s towards a more evidence-based approach to sexual health, partly due to local activism. Epstein's research on AIDS activists in the US links this to expertise. He states that 'inside of a large and often floodlit arena with a diffuse and porous perimeter, an eclectic assortment of actors have all sought to assert and assess claims' (1995: 408), documenting how particular groups of activists were able to expand ideas of relevant and credible knowledge and contribute to the construction of knowledge. For Epstein, their credibility was built upon both claims to representativeness and an ability to engage with clinical knowledge, the latter developed through an immersion in the relevant scientific culture. Similarities can be seen with Corburn's (2005: 3-12) concept of 'street science', developed in a context of environmental health policy, where local residents use professional research techniques. More recently there has been discussion of 'evidence-based activism' in healthcare, where activists are seen to apply experiential knowledge to theoretical knowledge, thereby analysing problems and proposing solutions, potentially forming epistemic communities (Haas 1992) alongside credentialed experts and therefore successfully expanding notions of relevant knowledge in their field (Rabeharisoa, Moreira and Akrich 2013). In such cases, the knowledge offered is not only experiential but has developed close links with academic, scientific or professional knowledge and enables actors to engage and claim authority as experts.

Changes to how expertise is understood and attributed in practice of course are not clear cut. While experiential evidence may be an increasingly influential form of expertise, Nowotny (2003) cautions that this does not entail a complete democratisation and that different forms of

expertise are rarely incorporated into decision making on an equal footing. At the same time, the cognitive authority of science has changed rather than simply declined. Nowotny, Scott and Gibbons (2001: 179-200) argue that in a situation where scientific knowledge is produced and used by a variety of actors in a multitude of settings, new sources of authority are found in relevance and application to technical and social problems. This mirrors research on the role of evidence in policy making and the many different ways by which research can be used (Weiss 1979), and recent models of evidence-based policy in particular correspond with this view. In general, there has been a move from linear notions of the research-policy relationship to more complex and contextualised models (Nutley, Walter and Davies 2007: 92-120). Stevens (2007a: 27-29) for example proposes an 'evolutionary' model, in which evidence is accepted and promoted by powerful social groups if it is aligned with their interests. Monaghan's processual model (2011: 148-152) conceptualises the evidence and policy relationship in politicised policy areas as less deterministic and more dynamic and changeable. While these models are used by the authors to demonstrate the unequal application of expertise in drug policy, they could be applied more widely and indeed correspond with wider developments in the field of evidence-based policy and practice.

At the same time, concerns have been raised about the implications of widening the boundaries of expertise. In general, the project has been criticised as moralistic with little critical discussion of the nature of lay knowledge, whether lay accounts are any more 'authentic' or representative, and what knowledge has been or should be included within expert discussions (McKevitt 2013). Others have argued that despite claims to legitimacy on the basis of relevance and representativeness, experiential knowledge tends to be selective, speculative and used for advocacy (Shortall 2012). Similarly, it is said to be comprised of narrow and shallow personal experience, without reference to broader knowledge of any type, and potentially very wrong in terms of scientific proof (Prior 2003). Durodie (2003: 83), referring to a phrase originally used by Wynne, states that 'the democratic possibilities of science' are pretty close to zero': in his view, questions of science should be left to scientific experts who are able to provide authoritative evidence; lay opinions are not relevant or valuable and the charade of public participation should be dropped in favour of seeking approximations of truth through science. Weinel (2007) provides a case study of such problems, focusing on the public health disaster that resulted

from President Thabo Mbeki's intervention in the HIV/AIDS debate in South Africa. Weinel's argument is that Mbeki did not have any expertise on these matters: he had no specialist knowledge, either formal or informal, and his assessment was based on selective reading and no interaction with experts in the field. For Weinel, these events highlight the limits of public participation in science and the importance of specialist expert knowledge. A similar case can be seen in the management of the BSE crisis in 1990s Britain by the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food; through its prioritisation of economic industries over public health, it was slow to take action, despite the limited evidence supporting this stance and mounting evidence to the contrary (Monaghan, Pawson and Wicker 2012: 181-4). Finally, perhaps the most fundamental problem with the new notions of expertise from science and technology studies has been raised by Collins and Evans (2002) and termed the 'problem of extension': analyses of boundary work appear to have led to the idea that experts are no longer a distinct group, and that therefore anyone can be considered an expert. Clearly, however, there must be some method of identifying those with credible and relevant knowledge for policy making. It is responses to this problem to which the review now turns.

2.1.3 A realist conception of expertise from the sociology of science

A body of work has recently been developed, led by Collins and Evans (2007; Evans and Collins 2007; Evans 2008), that seeks to re-establish a divide between ordinary peoples' expertise and specialists' expertise. It builds on social constructionist accounts of expertise from the sociology of scientific knowledge that examined the social nature of expert knowledge and authority (2002: 239-40). Rather than refuting this work, the authors attempt to reconcile it with the types of questions familiar from research in cognitive science that seek differentiation between experts and non-experts. While expertise is regarded as attributed as in constructionist accounts, a realist account of expertise 'requires seeing the expert as someone with some relatively specialised knowledge that enables them to do something concrete in the world that others cannot' (Kotzee 2014: 172).

Taking a sociological perspective, this approach is markedly different from the individualist accounts discussed in Section 2.1.1. Expertise is performative and social, involving the use of tacit knowledge to claim or display membership of an expert community. Essentially, it involves a process of socialisation: expertise is 'social fluency within a form-

of-life' (Evans 2008: 283). In this account however, expertise is a real property rather than an attribution, and it is possible to define a boundary between experts and laypeople. In this vein of realism, expertise can be seen as morphogenetic (Archer 1995). Here, social reality is regarded as the outcome of cyclical interaction between individual nature and society; expertise shapes and is shaped by society and evolves in this continual manner. Collins and Evans accept the partiality and limits, cultural bias and political authority of expertise, and recognise the research that has documented multiple possible sources of expertise. Aiming to be inclusive of the particular types of knowledge held by different social groups, experience is taken as the best indicator of expertise. There is a role for everyone: while scientific expertise is useful, alternative forms of expertise can, for example, help to decide how science can be applied locally. As in Pawson's (2006) account of systematic reviews for evidence-based policy, different forms of evidence should be judged on their merits as and when they are relevant to the problem at hand. Collins and Evans therefore shift the focus from the attribution of expertise, as in the wider approach of the sociology of knowledge, to developing a substantive theory of what expertise actually is.

To this end, they propose a typology of expertise that allows relativism to be avoided, and specialist experts to be differentiated from everyone else. In their model (see Appendix A), there are two basic types of expertise: ubiquitous, which includes common skills like language proficiency, and specialist. Specialist expertise in turn has five levels, from low to high: beer-mat knowledge, popular understanding, primary source knowledge, interactional expertise and contributory expertise. The latter two involve specialist tacit knowledge, the development of which, in a morphogenetic (Archer 1995) process that involves the development of expertise as well as the changing constitution of the expert community, requires not just study but interaction with the relevant expert community. While beer-mat knowledge is gleaned from a very basic introduction to a topic (such as might be found on a beer mat), the possession of contributory expertise enables actors to contribute original and useful knowledge. In addition to these levels of actual expertise, there are five levels of meta-expertise that describe the variable types of non-expert knowledge. The inclusion of meta-expertise ensures that the public are not excluded from decision making but instead have the potential to contribute, on account of their lack of specialist expertise, in terms of adjudicating

between experts and making decisions for action. Through this detailed differentiation, the model acknowledges that individuals will have different levels of expertise on different subjects. While it retains a hierarchical approach, it is not dominated by science; other types of knowledge are integrated and scientific authority is subject to wider scrutiny.

This approach has however been subject to criticism. One line of attack is that it is ill-founded: that constructionist accounts do not actually suffer from the 'problem of extension'. Instead, it is argued that they seek only to recognise the potential value of alternative knowledge sources, all of which, like academic expertise, should be judged on their quality (Rip 2003). In fact the complementarity of expertises is highlighted, with local knowledge for example potentially useful to policy implementation (Fischer 2011). Thus instead of the boundary between expert and lay knowledge being broken, as argued by Collins and Evans, it is interrogated (Jasanoff 2003). An extension of this perspective is raised by Eyal (2013), who argues that creating typologies involves deciding who is and isn't an expert, a task that he questions the ability (i.e. the expertise) of sociologists to do. It could be argued however that these criticisms have little impact on the typology itself: Collins and Evans have accepted much of the constructionists' boundary-critical work but have raised a remaining question of how expertise can be identified in that context. The aim is not to return to unaccountable and elitist expertise, but to build on contemporary sociological notions of expertise by seeking forward-looking lessons for solving practical problems.

A second criticism of the realist approach however states that while it may be useful to have an abstract typology of expertise, the theory does not adequately take into account the contextual politics of expertise in practice. As Rip (2003) argues, Collins and Evans retain a hierarchical approach, entailing that those from outside the 'contributory' community must argue for their place and depend on established experts for acceptance. Clearly power relations inherent in the attribution and influence of expertise remain, and while the model acknowledges non-scholarly expertise, in practice this type of knowledge is often marginalised (Suryanarayanan and Kleinman 2012). Others argue that the model fails to give due weight to the plethora of useful knowledge available to policy: Plaisance and Kennedy (2014) argue that the net of contributory expertise should be widened to potentially include even more different types,

motivations and skills. Collins and Evans' insistence that politics should be separate from technical expert advice in the democratic policy making process is particularly problematic for Epstein (2011), who argues that this maintains an elite and unequal role for experts and is an unrealistic separation of politics and expertise. Collins' and Evans' analysis is underpinned however by an acknowledgement of the integral relation of facts and values, and their distinction between stages in the policy process seems again to be part of the drive to put the conceptual lessons from their model of expertises to use in identifying knowledge for policy. This practical entanglement of knowledge and politics, as Rip (2003) and Forsyth (2011) argue, confers a responsibility to be critical of how knowledge is produced in any community and not trust in experts (of any background) as providers of the best possible knowledge. These authors demonstrate then the importance of politics in accounts of expertise and in considerations of how expertise works in practice, away from both laboratories and necessarily abstract typologies.

The core contention of the realist view is then that we need to be 'able to distinguish between true and false experts' (Kotzee 2014: 169). Collins and Evans' theory is normative, in that their aim is to be able to determine who should be counted as an expert. This approach is relevant to terrorism studies given the concerns regarding 'charlatans' in the field, as well as the relative exclusion of critical approaches from policy discussions as discussed in Section 2.3, both of which indicate a core practical question of how to identify relevant and legitimate knowledge. However, the thesis seeks to avoid making its own normative judgements. Instead, it examines the basis on which such judgements are made in practice in one particular area of knowledge, focusing on how distinctions are made by the expert community itself and its struggles in doing so. While not aiming to provide a definitive judgement on radicalisation expertise, it does seek to identify the relevant markers, not taking these as a given but investigating how they act to confer and deny credibility. Through its focus on the case of radicalisation expertise, it examines then the practical operation of the label and seeks a contextualised explanation of how expertise is constructed in this particular domain.

2.2 Competition, politicisation and contested credibility in expert communities

Expertise is, then, bound up with social processes and political context; as a result, the boundaries of expertise are flexible. The review now turns to the processes involved in claiming, conferring and denying expertise. For Bourdieu (1993: 29-73), competition for authority exists within particular 'fields'. A field constitutes the social relations and distribution of power in a particular time and place. It is relatively autonomous from wider social, economic and political relations. Abbott's view of professions as 'exclusive occupational groups' that seek to control the skills and knowledge associated with a particular area of activity (1988: 8) resonates with this. In this sense, Bourdieu (1975) views social science as a competitive network with hierarchical relations. Dolby (1982) similarly points to the boundaries within science, between different disciplines or specialisms, which create hierarchies of expertise and allocate authority on the basis of claims to professionalism and forms of accreditation. Such authors conceptualise expert communities as places of struggle for authority.

Claiming expertise is then a competitive process. Of course, science is regarded by many as a competitive but rational process of knowledge-building, in which researchers propose observations, defend theories, and judge each others' work (Callon 1995). In this sense, competition is an unremarkable attribute of expert communities: experts frequently disagree and reach different conclusions (Weinel 2008). Bourdieu (1975) however extends this analysis, characterising competition as not necessarily a rational march towards an approximation of truth, but instead centred on the achievement of personal authority. As in Gieryn's analysis (1999), 'science' becomes a marker of authority that researchers are keen to define in terms of their own aims, methods and theories. Similar ideas are found in Elias's work (1982). Elias argues that scientific institutions, and their research staff, typically compete for prestige and authority, which would entail having their knowledge recognised and accepted. In this context, disciplines are compared to nation states that specialise and compete, developing different values or identities, levels of power and a sense of superiority over others. To achieve or maintain authority, professions too are involved in competitive struggles to control the knowledge and skills involved in particular areas of activity (Abbott 1988: 86-102): such experts need to establish 'cognitive exclusivity', or boundaries to ensure that other professions and the unqualified cannot encroach (MacDonald 1995: 184). Think tanks too can be defined by their desire to influence policy agendas and newer think tanks in particular have

been seen as highly competitive in this regard (Stone 1996: 23-4; 105-151). Weingart (1982) relates controversy in scientific communities to the changing nature of knowledge production, pointing to the existence of 'hybrid communities' of experts that include a range of knowledge types and tend to factionalise based on political positions, especially where the topic under debate is particularly value-driven. In this context, competition for authority may occur particularly between established scientific expertise and that from newly acknowledged sources (Meuser and Nagel 2009). For Corburn (2005: 64-5), for example, local knowledge is 'oppositional' to science: it is a challenge to scientists' jurisdiction as experts. Rather than highlighting the complementarity of different types of knowledge then, these analyses point to the sectarian nature of expertise, with expert communities characterised as sites of struggle between competing, authority-seeking interests.

Expert competition is not limited to internal debates amongst peers: instead, it spills into the political arena and expertise becomes embroiled in political controversies. These dynamics are particularly relevant to highly politicised topic areas. Politicised can be defined widely to include anything that is a part of public debate (Buzan, Wæver and de Wilde 1998: 23-24). For Monaghan (2011: 6), core components of politicised policy areas are 'a lack of consensus on its direction [*and*] prolonged conflict between competing interest groups'. Collins (2014: 83-91) meanwhile seeks to differentiate between the complex theory-building discussions amongst core-sets of scientists and the polarised, simplified debates outside of this highly specialised group. However, other authors have argued that this distinction is not so clear cut and that experts are frequently participants, in some sense, in those wider debates. Weingart (1982, 1999) has termed the close relationship between science and politics the 'scientification of politics' and the 'politicisation of science'. In other words, while there is a demand for science to underpin decision making, experts represent neither objective knowledge nor certain truth but instead are intimately involved in political debates and policy making. This involvement could take many forms including, for example, providing advice, offering media comment, or having papers referenced in policy documents or by proponents of particular positions. From the agenda setting literature, we learn how groups compete to influence definitions of policy problems (Cobb, Ross and Ross 1976). Stone (1989) for example looks in detail at how groups seek to defend 'causal stories', or interpretations of problems and solutions, as well as

attack alternative conceptualisations. More recent literature has conceptualised these groups as, for example, epistemic communities (Haas 1992), discourse coalitions (Hajer 1997), advocacy coalitions (Jenkins-Smith and Sabatier 1994) and knowledge networks (Stone 2013) and detailed their participation in policy processes.

Such theories point then to expertise as closely connected to value positions: rather than independent and objective, experts are integral to political debates. Pielke (2007: 116-134) argues that the politicisation of science involves scientists using knowledge in value conflicts, with scientific findings becoming attached to particular policy positions: in many cases, science effectively masks advocacy. Here, scientific disputes are intimately connected to political and ethical issues, and experts frequently work with different data and theories, as well as values and ideologies (Engelhardt and Caplan 1987). Nelkin (1987, 1995) argues that controversies have arisen especially since the 1970s with expertise used as a resource by actors to legitimate value-driven positions: she states that 'the use of scientific rationality to mask basic social choices is a pervasive theme' (Nelkin 1987: 293). In particularly controversial areas like environmental disputes for example, science can be used as a 'shield' in policy processes, to make a case or to justify controversial decisions (Ozawa 1996: 224-5). Scholten and Verbeek's (2014) work on migrant integration as an 'intractable policy controversy' suggested a link between conditions of politicisation and the use of expertise as a method of legitimating preconceived policy positions, as well as more generally enhanced contestation between scholars whose arguments became more divergent. Analysts argue that a close relationship between politics and science has led to conflict over whose knowledge is relevant as well as revealed the partial and biased nature of expert knowledge, resulting in reduced trust and less authority in policy making (Nelkin 1987; Weingart 1999). The main point, however, is that some issues can produce a situation where no straightforward analysis of problems or solutions is possible and knowledge, closely tied to values and politics, becomes hotly contested. On politicised issues then, expertise becomes embroiled in political processes and experts are central players in the contested political sphere.

Here then are struggles for expert authority taking place on a political stage. The difficulty of judging expertise becomes apparent in this situation: as Parsons (1995: 158) states, 'knowledge has become more pluralistic: for every expert who says A, there are experts who can say B

with equal claim to professional or expert authority'. While some controversies may be fairly simple to resolve with the production of further data, the more problematic ones involve competing theories or are based on philosophical divisions and often the 'winner' is decided not by the argument itself but by non-epistemic factors like events, politics and personalities (McMullin 1987). Stone (1989: 295-9) makes a similar point: the strength of coalitions is often more important than the strength of evidence in determining which 'causal story' comes to dominate discussions. Evans (2015: 20-21) argues that not only are social factors apparent in how scientific knowledge is produced and expertise attributed, but in how data and theories become seen as authoritative, with skills like communication and judgements of ability or reputation relevant for example. Collins and Pinch for example analyse the scientific dispute between Pasteur and Pouchet: in this case, the evidence was not conclusive, and instead the social consensus of the scientific community led to an acceptance of Pasteur's thesis (Collins and Pinch 1998, in David 2005: 56-58).

In such a situation, expert status has to be fought for (Evans 2015: 21-3). The 'boundary work' of scientists is practical (Gieryn 1983). Fisher (1990) for example documents the efforts involved in setting up the Social Science Research Council in the US, where activists sought to unite the disciplines of social research, identify them as science and highlight their applied nature and ability to address social problems. Wynne's (1996) case study of the impact of nuclear fallout on sheep farming documents the tendency of scientific experts to downplay the potential contributions of the latter. The concept of 'credibility' is particularly relevant here. For Epstein (1996: 3), credibility is 'the believability of claims and claims-makers', achieved when experts get support and trust from an audience. Experts engage in what Epstein terms 'credibility struggles' (1996: 3). Gieryn (1999: 1; 12-15) says that: "Credibility contests" are a chronic feature of the social scene: bearers of discrepant truths push their wares wrapped in assertions of objectivity, efficacy, precision, reliability, authenticity, predictability, sincerity, desirability, tradition'. Such concepts are used to claim and judge expertise. In this context, some knowledge claims 'win', or are believed and achieve authority, and others do not. As the quote from Gieryn suggests, there is no fixed, universal set of credibility factors. Research suggests that credibility is multidimensional and relative, in that different situations entail different credibility factors (Horton et al. 2016). Credibility contests may be

particularly pronounced in the social sciences: Shapin (1995: 266-8) argues that in these subjects, credibility depends on the extent to which an experts' concepts become accepted and used. This means that experts in the social sciences have less control over their credibility than experts in the physical sciences, only a small number of whom have direct access, through highly specialised methods and equipment, to the phenomenon that is being studied.

The audience is an important consideration in the analysis of credibility claims. Research suggests that credibility claims are constructed differently for each 'social world' according to what is necessary to gain rewards (Packer and Webster 1996). Much research relates to the public assessment of experts (e.g. Thon and Jucks 2016). For Cozzens (1990), scientific power (defined as autonomy, influence and competitive edge) is gained through 'enrolment', with public support a major part of this alongside successfully gaining resources. Experts may seek public support through, for example, recounting anecdotes involving famous academics, or telling personal stories to build a connection with the audience (Penders 2014). Actors in the policy process are another arbiter of expertise. To gain access to elite levels of decision making, experts are involved in attempts to claim territory and insist on the relevance of their skills and credentials (Evetts, Mieg and Felt 2006: 117-120). Thus achieving credibility is politically significant: it is used by policy-makers to legitimise and garner support for decisions (Lorenc et al. 2014: 1045). A further aspect of research in this vein is the credibility of expert witnesses: recent research for example suggests women face a 'higher benchmark of credibility' (T. L. O'Brien 2016: 12) in this context in that, for example, without advanced level qualifications, they are much less likely to be admitted into court than men with the same level of qualifications. The arbiter of expertise of most relevance to the thesis however is peer communities. This involves the notion of 'competing expertises'; that experts challenge each others' credibility to claim jurisdiction over the topic area (van Rijswoud 2014: 535). For scientific audiences for example, peer reviewed publications and methodological quality are important sources of credibility (Lach et al. 2003: 175; Penders and Nelis 2011: 493-6). Shapin (1995: 269-271) argues that in a small, close-knit expert community, credibility is often assumed and based on 'familiarity'; between expert groups it is the ability to demonstrate disinterestedness and control that lends credibility to knowledge claims. Gaining credibility within the academic community has been seen as

essential for maintaining a scientific career: Latour and Woolgar's laboratory study found that credibility acts like 'a cycle of capital investment' (1986: 198), where scientists work to gain credibility, primarily through peer-reviewed publications, and then invest it (for example in particular collaborations or research projects) where there are the most returns to be gained, achieving success where there is interest and believability in their work (194-198, 206-7). In general then, research suggests a plethora of possible credibility factors, shaped partly by the intended audience.

The nature of the topic area also shapes the nature of credibility contests. Of particular relevance here are topics that are complex, uncertain and controversial, where science is contested and politicised. Research has suggested that it can be difficult to establish credibility in particularly controversial areas (Yamamoto 2012: 101-2). Scientists may articulate multiple sources of credibility in such contexts, including: scientific and technical capabilities and accuracy; academic credentials, especially peer reviewed publications and qualifications; autonomy, but not detachment; relevance; personal experience or moral values; and transparency of organisational practice as well as research practice (Bauer, Pregernig and Reinecke 2016; Lennon and Scott 2015). Further, research has shown that experts may seek to frame the issue in particular ways, for example to focus on macro issues, to make their own form of scientific knowledge, for example big data, seem particularly relevant, and indeed devalue others, including local knowledge (Lennon and Scott 2015). At the same time however, Epstein's research showed that on politicised topics, the boundaries of what is regarded as credible expertise may be extended, allowing a wider range of actors to claim credible knowledge and contribute to expert discussions (1995: 411-12). The relative importance of credibility markers can of course differ by topic: different sub-fields within a discipline may for example place differential importance on relevance as a source of credibility (Hessels and van Lente 2011), while more public-facing experts like industry scientists may be more likely to seek credibility with multiple audiences, including the public and policy makers alongside scientific peers (Penders and Nelis 2011). In general then, the topic of debate, the nature of its evidence base and the extent of its controversy are all important factors in shaping credibility contests.

Certain markers of expertise are used then to construct and confer authority, but rarely are these markers accepted by all parties in the debate. Indeed research suggests that stakeholders with different backgrounds and

values make different assessments of the credibility of knowledge claims (Yamamoto 2012) and that people are more likely to trust experts that they agree with (Berdahl et al. 2016: 385-7). Finally, while the preceding discussion suggests that credibility is actively constructed in response to threats or to some specific end, for example achieving research funding, other research has suggested that boundary work can also become a regular part of an experts' practice and thus part of their professional identity (van Rijswoud 2014: 535-6), or indeed part of the everyday, 'routine' work of the field (Kinchy and Kleinman 2003: 878-80, 891). In essence however, such factors become ways of supporting or denying the credibility of experts and their opponents, with their use flexible and negotiated in particular circumstances. The thesis presents radicalisation as a diverse expert community characterised by politicised debate and divergent interpretations of a much-maligned evidence base and examines how credibility is established and contested in that context.

2.3 Previous research on terrorism experts and expertise

2.3.1 The terrorism expert community

Previous research has studied the constitution of the terrorism expert community. Reid and colleagues have been particularly active in this regard (e.g. Reid 1993; Reid 1997; Reid and Chen 2007; Reid and Chen 2008). They have undertaken mapping analyses of terrorism studies actors and activities using a range of quantitative data on publications, citations and social networks. A central finding from this research is the existence, since the 1970s, of an 'invisible college' of terrorism researchers that developed around conferences, research projects, government inquiries and other networking opportunities. This small group of terrorism researchers is said to have led the field in terms of theoretical and methodological development. Similarly, Stampnitzky's (2013: 27-38) network analysis of conference presentations in the 1970s showed an increasing complexity of connections between a minority of presenters. Indeed it has been argued (Toivanen 2010: 285) that the essence of terrorism expertise is not training or education, but gaining membership of that community. However, this situation developed gradually. Stampnitzky (2013: 39-48) found that initially there were no terrorism experts; instead, early terrorism studies was a 'veritable hodgepodge' (44) of potentially relevant or useful knowledge, with many experts making only a small number of conference appearances.

Only later did experts who had actually studied 'terrorism' emerge, a small group of which by the late 1970s constituted a 'terrorism mafia'.

The characterisation of early terrorism expertise as 'hodgepodge' is a recurring theme. Terrorism studies is a field that has historically been open to outside contributions: Stampnitzky (2011) found concern amongst terrorism experts over the ease with which unqualified individuals are able to present themselves as authoritative, often researching terrorism only briefly before moving on, and contributing little to the development of knowledge. One of her central theses is that terrorism studies is not an established discipline: 'New "self-proclaimed" experts constantly emerge, no licensing body exists to certify "proper" expertise, and there is no agreement among terrorism experts about what constitutes useful knowledge' (2013: 12-13). Indeed Gordon (2010) problematises the high number of researchers and publications that contribute to the topic and calls for stricter boundaries to be placed around the subject. Terrorism studies is also a field that draws on a variety of forms of knowledge: Ranstorp (2007: 10-11) argues that a partnership between academic theory and state practice is necessary since both types of knowledge can make useful contributions. The role of the private sector in analysing terrorism has been a particular focus of research (e.g. Amoore and de Goede 2005; Salter 2008), with work conducted on the role of private military and security companies and consulting firms in advising on and providing solutions for risk management. On radicalisation specifically, the research field has been labelled a 'mini-industry' by Kundnani (2012: 7), inclusive of national security think tanks, terrorism studies departments, police counter-terrorism units and intelligence agencies, a list to which Monaghan and Molnar (2016: 3-5) add private sector companies and community groups. In addition, a novel type of expert has emerged: former extremists are treated as 'public experts-cum-celebrities' and used by European governments to promote and deliver counter-radicalisation programmes (Fekete 2015). The transformation of former terrorists who no longer identify with their movement into terrorism experts in the media has also been noted in the wider field (Horgan 2008: 76-7). Such observations point to the differentiated and fragmented nature of knowledge generation in this area.

These dynamics are mirrored in security expertise more widely. Security knowledge is described by Eriksen (2011: 1175) as 'composite'; originating in a multitude of professions and disciplines. Indeed he argues

that there are no 'security experts' per se, but instead experts on particular, specialised sub-topics. Reppy (2015) similarly labels security expertise a 'mosaic' of knowledge (138), arguing that rather than being a developed profession, it contains experts from a range of backgrounds, disciplines and topic areas with a lack of standard accreditation processes, interaction or collaboration. Eyal and Pok (2015: 37-44), applying their network conception of expertise to security, also note that knowledge production in this area usually involves a variety of professions and disciplines with a subsequent range of claims to expertise and exists in the open, flexible and non-professionalised spaces between these fields, where they crossover, rather than in the highly defined communities. Evans (2015: 24-33) has applied both the concept of post-normal science (Funtowicz and Ravetz 1993) and his table of expertises to security, arguing that conceptualising expertise as experience highlights the potential contributions of a variety of actors including those with local knowledge, for example in scrutinising and applying abstract security knowledge. Empirical evidence comes from a study of the NATO Defense College, where Berling (2016) found that both academic and practical knowledge were valued. In addition, Klauser (2009) has demonstrated how expertise in airport security is provided by the police, airport management and CCTV suppliers, variously contributing legal, practical, financial and technical knowledge. A recent case study of intelligence expertise meanwhile (McQuade 2016) concluded that it is heterogeneous, existing across and between various professional fields and facing struggles for jurisdiction in terms of how intelligence is understood and approached. In this situation, the different forms of expertise interact in a complementary manner, and authority is fragmented. The vying knowledge claims of experts in general can be felt then in both security and terrorism.

At the same time, such a situation is ripe with potential conflict. McGann (2015) documents conflict between the military, the traditional site for security expertise, and experts who increasingly from the 1950s focused on 'non-traditional security', with a diversity of research foci and interactions with policy. The stakes are of course high, given the authority that security analysts have to 'define what is risky and what a threat is, what should be dealt with as a security issue and what not' (Berling and Bueger 2015: 1). The outcomes of contestation shape therefore how we think about security problems and conceptualise solutions (Halfon 2015: 141). This is an example of the morphogenetic (Archer 1995) nature of expertise,

constituting society in terms of how we view and respond to issues, as well as itself being defined by social factors. In this sense, experts and security are in a somewhat circular relationship: while experts define security, how we define security shapes what is regarded as relevant expertise (Ish-Shalom 2015: 229). This situation leads to questions over the types of expertise that are present in discussions of particular issues, and how their credibility is established.

2.3.2 Problematizing terrorism expertise

The majority of analysis on terrorism experts has been critical. First, their status as 'experts' has been challenged. The issue of trust in terrorism experts occasionally comes to a head in the public spotlight, for example in 2015 when Steven Emerson, tagged as a 'terrorism analyst', was widely criticised for claiming that there were areas of the UK that were violently controlled by Muslims (Dearden 2015). More widely, it has been argued that terrorism analysts can be eager to present themselves as 'experts' despite the inherent and empirical uncertainties associated with terrorism:

No matter how apparent it is that we do not – and most probably cannot – actually know very much about al Qaeda does not prevent a range of experts pontificating and presenting highly dubious conjecture as truth. (Burnett and Whyte 2005: 1)

Connors (2006: 154-7) asserts that many of those in the field have 'commentary-promiscuity', in that their willingness to weigh in on every terrorist threat or event leads to frequent mistakes of fact and interpretation. Such concerns about the veracity of terrorism expertise are not new: a book review by an eminent terrorism expert in the 1970s similarly noted that in response to calls for policy solutions to the problem of terrorism, 'those who can supply swift, dramatic, and popular accounts always stand ready at hand' (Bowyer Bell 1977: 982). They come not only from critical commentators but from those inside the field: Sageman (2014: 566) criticises the levels of expertise displayed by many of those who research and debate on the issue post-9/11. In an articulation of the boundaries of expertise and pertinent credibility markers in the field, he states that many 'are not truly scholars, are not versed in the scientific method, and often pursue a political agenda'. In fact, Eriksen (2011: 1184) questions whether scientific or objective knowledge can ever exist on security issues, an area fraught with values, politics and interests and lacking in 'hard facts'. Despite this, Toivanen (2010: 283-6) argues that security expertise often goes

unquestioned, with assumptions that the nature of an expert is that they have expertise. These analyses characterise the typical terrorism expert then as over-confident in diagnoses and prescriptions, on the basis of little proven knowledge.

A second line of criticism against terror experts is accusations of bias. The value-laden subject matter has long been said to prevent any objective analysis:

the academic perspective on terrorism is conditioned by the nature of individual philosophy. No matter what tools of analysis the scholar carries into the terrorism thicket, rarely is the venture begun or ended disinterestedly. Outraged indignation and profound conviction abound. (Bowyer Bell 1977: 487)

In particular, however, a pro-state approach has been discerned by commentators. Such observations can be found in public debate (e.g. Democracy Now! 2015; Doherty 2011; Toolis 2004). In academic publications too, some writers have pointed to the myopic nature of terrorism studies. George (1991: 91) argues that terrorology is fundamentally biased, focusing on non-state terrorism and ignoring the violence perpetrated by Western states, and that it is, 'in general, little more than selective compilations of facts, pseudo-facts, and unfounded opinions'. In practice then the discipline is accused of serving policy interests. In a post-9/11 context, such criticisms persist: Jackson (2008) finds that researchers avoid discussing state terror and that those that do work on it are generally 'on the periphery' of the field, being not publically recognised as experts, not present in the literature, and not working in the central disciplines of politics and international relations. Miller and Mills (2009) argue that those regarded as terrorism experts are mainly ideologically conservative, and Hamilton-Hart (2005: 310-16) discusses an inherent analytical bias towards religious rather than political extremism amongst analysts of terrorism in South-East Asia. Contemporary biases are explained by Connors (2006: 154-7) as the product of a politicised context that pressures academic conformity with state interests and makes demands on elite analysts to provide legitimacy to government actions. These debates mirror those in criminology more widely, where a critical community has developed to challenge mainstream approaches and in particular a perceived tendency to work within problems defined by the state, instead orientating itself by an aspiration to social justice (Stubbs

2008: 7-9). Clearly terrorism studies does harbour diversity, disagreement and criticism of state policy (Jackson et al. 2011: 12-14). Critical interpretations however speak to tendencies in the field and more generally problematise the interests that expert knowledge serves in the policy-relevant and highly controversial topic area of terrorism.

The limitations of these critical approaches to terrorism expertise have however been raised by Stampnitzky (2013: 10-11, 201-4). She disputes the idea of a core group of dominant and stable experts, producing knowledge that supports the state and excludes other forms of knowledge. Instead, she points to frequent disagreement between experts and with state policy as well as changes over time in how terrorism is understood and which experts are elite. Thus, she argues, the field of knowledge and experts is more variable and nuanced, and experts in fact have limited authority, with contemporary discourses of evil and irrational terrorists in particular serving to deny the possibility of knowledge on the subject. This alternative characterisation, where the status of experts is more unpredictable and flexible, is echoed in Wæver's (2010: 651-3) analysis of security expertise: the example he gives is the post-1940s widening of interest from the military to security more generally, which changed the status of expertise from different sources. These perspectives suggest then that an empirical analysis of the field's expert community will be beneficial for investigating the ruptures and discord in the operation of terrorism expertise.

2.3.3 Terrorism expertise in policy and practice

Wæver (2010: 653-5; 2015) claims that security experts can draw authority from both academic valuation and policy relevance, and that providing policy advice is a core function of the field. Alongside expert communities themselves then, researchers have analysed terrorism experts' relationship with the counter-terrorism policy process. As with experts in general, clearly security specialists can take on different policy roles, including, according to Rasmussen (2015), as critical commentators, collaborative networkers or idea-providers. Suggesting a pluralist analysis, Crenshaw (2001) conceptualises experts as one type of actor competing with interest groups, victims and other lobbyists to set policy agendas in terrorism. Within the context of the war on terror however, it has been argued that terror experts have taken on a key role in explaining risks and guiding policy decisions (Toivanen 2010: 283-6). In contrast, others (Ezekiel and Post 1988; Merari

1991) lament the lack of impact that expertise has made on counter-terrorism policy and argue that relations need to be improved: research could be more relevant to policy concerns, for example, or more direct contact could be sought between researchers and policy makers. The amount of influence that terrorism experts have is therefore contested.

However, most analysts on this topic have argued that there is a politically problematic relationship between terrorism experts and the state. Much attention has been given to the role of interpersonal ties between some experts and political elites. Herman and O'Sullivan (1991), in the US, argued for the existence of a closely networked 'terrorism industry' of experts who work within government definitions of terrorism and develop the concepts and models that support government policy. Several researchers have investigated such interpersonal ties in the UK (Burnett and Whyte 2005; Jackson 2007a: 398-401; Miller and Mills 2009, 2010). Such analysts argue that much terrorism research takes place in institutes and by researchers with close ties to political, military, intelligence, police, media and business elites, and that alongside biases in formal consulting mechanisms this results in not only a tightly knit community of experts that has an important influence on policy discourses, but one that functions alongside and supports political power structures. In particular, Conservative-linked think tanks, for example Policy Exchange and the Henry Jackson Society, have been identified as promoting influential yet ideological and fearful interpretations of post-9/11 political violence (Griffin et al. 2015; Kundnani 2008; Mills, Griffin and Miller 2011). And on radicalisation, experts have been seen to assume key roles at the European level, for example through the European Network of Experts on Radicalisation, expertise that is then filtered down to civil society to be put into practice in recognising and resisting radicalisation (De Goede and Simon 2013: 6-7). There are those with more positive views of the evidence-policy relationship in this area: Ranstorp (2007: 10-11) for example argues that terrorism studies has usefully provided an independent, critical voice and contextualised perspective. Most analysis on terrorism expertise however points to experts that are not fully independent but act as an extension of the state apparatus.

These approaches point to a wider issue concerning the function that terrorism experts serve. There is the impression that in practice, experts are used to justify state approaches to those labelled 'terrorists';

this includes helping state security in countries with human rights concerns (Gorriti 1991: 106-7). In a contemporary context, Toivanen (2010: 281-6) argues that how expert advisors are used to serve the state's interests is problematic: narratives of terrorist risk, for example, create an 'other' that helps to justify counter-terrorist actions that often violate human rights. Similarly, Mueller (2006) argues that a 'terrorism industry' of actors including the government, media and experts, serve to exaggerate the threat of terrorism, framing the problem in terms of worst case scenarios. More generally, Goldsmith (2008) characterises counter-terrorism policy making after the violence of September 11th as executive-led and non-deliberative. He argues that while experts in parliamentary democracies continue to have a role through formal consulting mechanisms, debate parameters tend to be defined by the executive and intelligence agencies and are reinforced by the media and public fear. On radicalisation specifically, Kundnani (2012: 4-8) argues that experts from academia and think tanks have willingly narrowed down their field to a state-led focus on extremism, thus constricting their lines of inquiry and providing the knowledge that supports the security state's action on Islamic extremism. An example of the political nature of terrorism expert advice is given by Boukalas (2012) on the colour-coded Homeland Security Advisory System: he argues that this initiative was problematic by virtue both of its expert-controlled, anti-democratic nature, and its apparent rationality masking the political nature of its aims and methods of data generation and analysis. While the power of experts may be limited by the necessarily normative nature of decision making in security policy (Eriksen 2011), the ideological biases of the discipline are nevertheless suggested by these analyses to fit neatly into state counter-terrorism efforts.

Finally, the exclusionary nature of state engagement with terrorism expertise is an area of concern. The variable levels of access to policy between different types of expertise have been noted: Valverde (2001) argues that in Canadian counter-terrorism policy there has been a bias in interest towards security and intelligence expertise. Thus the relative 'usefulness' of experts' evidence and perspectives will dictate which are included in advisory processes (Toivanen 2010: 283-6). Again this issue is echoed in wider security policy: commentators on contemporary EU processes have argued that it tends to be exclusive, involving security professionals, the defence industry and a limited number of academics (Eriksen 2011: 1179-81; Schroder 2006: 474-6). A related issue is a lack of

accountability: the importance of security experts in guiding policy on complex and uncertain issues in the EU is matched by the secrecy surrounding their appointment, evidence and deliberation (Schroder 2006: 484-7). This has been termed the problem of 'secret experts' as discussed by Toivanen (2010: 283-6) in relation to those on expert counter-terrorism advisory groups. For some commentators, these concerns have led to calls for more hesitant engagement between researchers and government in order to maintain independence and produce quality research (Gorriti 1991). The nature of terrorism expertise suggests however difficulties in attempts at separation: terrorism studies has been described as existing 'between the realms of politics and science', as an interdisciplinary field with contributions from the state as well as academia (Stampnitzky 2011: 7). Similarly, the constitution of intelligence expertise has been described as heavily influenced by politics and the state (McQuade 2016). Such analyses suggest that the nature of the topic area as highly policy relevant presents specific conditions that shape the nature of expertise held within.

A prominent defence to many of these criticisms comes from Horgan and Boyle (2008). One way by which they defend the field is to draw a boundary between true scholars and charlatans, for example:

We also acknowledge that the unfortunate popularity of the study of terrorism has drawn a lot of opportunists who do not do serious work, and that many commentators have suddenly discovered their 'terrorism expertise' and try to capitalise on the public interest in the subject (58-9).

Thus it is said that many 'serious scholars' share the values of critical terrorism studies (53-5) while many of the criticisms apply really to 'popular literature', which lacks any real contribution to data or theory, rather than actual terrorism research. Such comments seek to define a boundary between experts and non-experts. This thesis contributes a detailed analysis of how, in such ways, experts seek to establish credibility in a topic area often portrayed as biased and lacking in evidence.

2.4 Conclusion

This chapter has covered two substantive background literatures. The first considered largely theoretical accounts of the nature of expertise. It argued that expertise is socially conditioned. By nature it is relational, contextual, political and applied. Experts have differential authority to define and

explain social problems. Conceptions of expertise have changed as the authority of science has been challenged and the value and collaborative potential of different types of knowledge recognised. In addition to work that seeks to question boundaries, there are those that have sought to re-establish them, seeking the means of identifying experts amongst those that claim knowledge on a topic. In effect then, expertise is a trait that must be achieved and defended, and topical controversy amplifies these struggles where experts are integral to wider political battles for authority. The thesis offers an empirical account of how, in these conditions of pluralisation, experts seek to distinguish themselves and the contestation that such claims face.

Secondly, the chapter provided an overview of previous work on terrorism experts and expertise. In particular, there has been some indication of the pluralist nature of knowledge claims on terrorism as well as on security more widely. In this sense, terrorism studies is not a tightly defined or autonomous academic or professional field but instead crosses over disciplines and professions and interacts closely with political context (Stampnitzky 2011). It was argued however that the majority of previous studies have orientated themselves by a critical reading of terrorism experts and their links with state power. Many accounts of terrorism expertise present then a challenge to theories of expertise more broadly; they point to an overall picture of elite, closed communities of experts rather than the eroded trust and diversification suggested in Section 2.1.2. The thesis however demonstrates the relevance of literature on the pluralisation of expertise to a newly developed strain of terrorism research and examines its implications in terms of how authority is claimed and conferred in the topic area. The next chapter provides background to the case, depicting counter-radicalisation efforts in the UK as a context ripe for questions as to the nature of expertise.

Chapter 3: Radicalisation theory in UK policy and practice

This chapter focuses on the UK Government's understanding and use of radicalisation theory. Radicalisation is a concept that originated in policy and to which policy makers have given much attention. Conversely, radicalisation research is typically concerned with practical problems and addresses policy concerns. Indeed it has been characterised as tailoring itself to contemporary policy priorities regarding non-state Islamist terrorism in the West (Kundnani 2012: 5-6). This is an area of knowledge then that intersects closely with the policy process.

The first section (3.1) considers the development of the UK's counter-radicalisation strategy, known as Prevent, as well as its aims, objectives, and practice. Next, the chapter turns to the theory of radicalisation that underpins Prevent (Section 3.2). The emergence and popularity of the concept is noted, and its meaning in UK policy is examined. In Section 3.3, the rise of radicalisation theory and policy is situated within a wider landscape of anticipatory governance and the securitisation of the state's relationship with Muslim communities. Overall, the chapter delineates the characteristics of this area of policy making that justify a study of its associated expertise.

3.1 The policy context

3.1.1 The UK approach to countering radicalisation

CONTEST is the UK's counter-terrorism strategy. It contains a series of interlinked policies designed to 'reduce the risk to the UK and its interests overseas from terrorism, so that people can go about their lives freely and with confidence' (Home Office 2011b: 9). It was initially developed internally in 2003, and first published in 2006. It has been updated twice, in 2009 and then in 2011 following a Coalition Government review, which concluded that some of the existing counter-terrorist powers were 'neither proportionate nor necessary' (HM Government 2011: 5). This review also committed the Government to producing annual reports on CONTEST, with the latest one highlighting 'Daesh', or the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS), as a current priority (HM Government 2016).

Within CONTEST (Home Office 2011b) there are four strands of activity. 'Prepare' involves planning to deal with the consequences of a terrorist attack, while 'Protect' is concerned with the protection of civilians and infrastructure. 'Pursue' focuses on identifying, disrupting and convicting terrorists based on intelligence and international cooperation. Many of the

more controversial police, security and intelligence powers, including stop and search, control orders, pre-charge detention and deportation, are justified within this strand. Finally, 'Prevent' aims 'to stop people becoming terrorists or supporting terrorism' (Home Office 2011a: 23). More specifically, it aims to prevent 'radicalisation' by countering and reducing support for extremist ideologies, targeting people who are 'at risk' of, or 'vulnerable' to, becoming or supporting terrorists.

Prevent then is the UK's counter-radicalisation strategy and forms one of the four strategic areas of work within CONTEST. It was introduced in the first CONTEST strategy in 2003 (HM Government 2006: 1; Thomas 2010: 444). However, it received increased funding following the 2005 London bombings and the resultant interest in 'homegrown' terrorism, and indeed Thomas (2014: 476) states that Prevent was 'entirely undeveloped until the visceral shock of the 7/7 bombings'. As such, the first standalone Prevent document was released in 2007 (Communities and Local Government 2007). At the time of the London attacks, the UK Government had been managing community relations and social diversity through a 'community cohesion' agenda since the 2001 riots in English cities. With its focus on building 'better relationships between people from different backgrounds' (Communities and Local Government 2008: 10), this agenda predated many of the themes of Prevent (Thomas 2010: 442-443). Lambert and Githens-Mazer (2011) for example argue that both 9/11 and the 2001 riots instigated the idea that Muslims were a social group with deviant values that harboured a potential for radicalisation, and that Prevent sought to address not only security concerns but also promote community cohesion. A key contradiction between Prevent and community cohesion emerged however, and highlighted issues that Prevent has been repeatedly criticised for, in that the latter sought to create common ground across neighbourhoods, while Prevent focused on, and problematised, particular identities, with a focus largely on Muslim communities (Thomas 2014).

Immediately following the 2005 attacks, the Government established informal Preventing Extremism Together Working Groups, with a membership of Muslim civil society actors, to discuss the causes of and potential responses to the violence (Home Office 2005). While defence policy has historically remained relatively closed to such participatory approaches (Head 2007: 446), the overlap with communities policy ensured a degree of engagement with the affected communities. Indeed this early inclusion of the targeted communities themselves follows a wider pattern in

counter-radicalisation policies across Europe, a strategy argued by Lindekilde (2012: 337-8) to be an attempt to increase policy credibility. In 2006 a Pathfinder Fund was established to trial interventions that would address violent extremism. The pioneering nature of counter-radicalisation efforts at this stage was highlighted by Hazel Blears, former Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government. Reflecting on the initial years of Prevent in a Parliamentary debate, she said: 'I entirely accept that, although some of the measures in the Prevent programme were successful, some were less successful, but what we were doing in that area was innovative and, in many ways, experimental' (Hansard 2011: Column 10WH). Initially the Home Office took the lead in this work, with Prevent passed to the Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) when it was created in 2006 (House of Commons 2010: 6). Following these developments, Prevent grew in significance under CONTEST 2 (House of Commons 2010: 6). A select committee inquiry into the effectiveness of Prevent was published in 2010 (Communities and Local Government Committee 2010). This largely negative review criticised Prevent on a number of grounds, including its conflict with the community cohesion agenda, its focus on Muslims, its reputation as a 'spying' programme, and its focus on ideology as the primary cause of radicalisation, as well as more generally its lack of an evidence base.

An official review of Prevent was published in 2011 by the Coalition government along with a new strategy (Home Office 2011a). One of the central innovations of the updated strategy, and a key area of controversy, is that it no longer focuses only on violent extremism but seeks to target the extremist ideology that it regards as underlying terrorist acts (Home Office 2011a: 1-2). The review also brought Prevent under the remit of the Office for Security and Counter-Terrorism (OSCT) in the Home Office, aiming to separate it from community cohesion and integration efforts while stating the contribution of this work to addressing radicalisation. In addition, although the new strategy is theoretically concerned with any type of extremism, in practice most focus remains on Al Qaeda-related terrorism (Home Office 2011a: 6). Following this recalibration, periodic policy work continues: after the murder of Lee Rigby³ for example, the government convened a Taskforce on Tackling Radicalisation and Extremism, which

³ In May 2013 Rigby, a British army soldier, was killed in London by two men who claimed that the attack was a response to British foreign policy and were subsequently convicted of murder.

was comprised of Government ministers and re-emphasised the current priorities of extremism and integration (HM Government 2013). A further important development was the publication of a Counter-Extremism Strategy in 2015. This identified extremism, in the form of Islamism and the far right, as both socially divisive and the primary cause of terrorism, and set out a plan to counter and censor extremists. Legislating for this strategy has encountered problems in defining 'extremism' (Travis 2016), familiar since the early days of Prevent (House of Commons 2010: 33). Prevent has then received continued attention, emerging and developing rapidly as a key strand of counter-terrorism work. This brief account of its development suggests the themes of urgency, controversy and a fair amount of political wrangling over its aims, means and impacts.

3.1.2 Aims and objectives of Prevent

The central idea driving Prevent is that, in order to address the terrorist threat fully, policy must work in anticipation of attacks. As the Home Secretary stated in 2011: 'To tackle [*the*] threat [...] we must not only arrest and prosecute those who breach the law, but we must also stop people being drawn into terrorist related activity in the first place' (May 2011a). The current strategy aims then to halt a progression from extremism to terrorism (Home Office 2011a: 6). As indicated in the strategy document however, the relationship between extremism and terrorism is not straightforward:

But the line between extremism and terrorism is not always precise. As we have said in the first part of this document, terrorist groups very often draw on extremist ideas developed by extremist organisations. Some people who become members of terrorist groups have previously been members of extremist organisations and have been radicalised by them. Others (though not all) pass through an extremist phase. (Home Office 2011a: 24)

In essence however, and explained further in Section 3.2, Prevent draws on a model of radicalisation that has ideology as the central causal factor and theorises a linear development from non-violent extremism to terrorism.

Prevent has three objectives. The first is to challenge the ideologies of terrorists and restrict their communication. The new Prevent strategy extends the reach of this work to non-violent extremism (Home Office 2011a: 43-53). Activities in this area include strategic government communications, the provision of funding to projects that focus on religious

community groups, and excluding speakers perceived as 'extremist' from institutions like universities and mosques. Removing 'terrorist propaganda' from the web is a further focus, with over 18,000 'items' removed under the Coalition government (HM Government 2013: 1). Legislation in this area has, for example, banned the 'encouragement' or 'glorification' of terrorism and proscribed particular organisations that are judged to carry out or support political violence (Home Office 2011a: 26).

The second objective of Prevent is to intervene with people who are potential terrorists or supporters of terrorism. This is based on the notion that the process of radicalisation can be subjected to early intervention, similar to other crime prevention programmes (Home Office 2011a: 8). It involves identifying people who are potential terrorists and pre-empting their transition. Most of the work is done through *Channel*, a localised multi-agency risk-management process (Home Office 2011a: 55-62), the number of referrals to which has risen year on year, with 4117 in 2015/16 (National Police Chiefs' Council 2016).

The third line of work involves supporting a range of public, private and third sector services and organisations to fulfil these objectives. The Government enlists the help of a range of service providers to identify and prevent radicalisation, supported by central government guidance and training (Home Office 2011a: 63-95). An important development here has been the Prevent Duty, introduced in the 2015 Counter-terrorism and Security Act. This requires various public services including schools, universities and prisons to 'have due regard to the need to prevent people from being drawn into terrorism' (HM Government 2015). As indicated by these three workstreams, Prevent is characterised by a range of aims, target audiences and intervention types (Romaniuk 2015: 7-14).

In this way, the UK approach is reflective of the two types of counter-radicalisation activity in Europe (Vidino and Brandon 2012: 164-171). The first involves general activities to prevent radicalisation in at-risk areas, particularly interventions that promote integration and address extremist ideologies. The second type of activity involves targeted and tailored interventions with individuals displaying signs of radicalisation. The EU itself has a role in guiding these activities, with a counter-radicalisation strategy first developed in 2005 and a resolution in 2015 that was motivated by the rise of ISIS and foreign fighters travelling from member states (European Parliament 2015). The majority of action on counter-

radicalisation however remains within the remit of member states: EU activity has been limited to sharing best practice and providing funding, including on research (Bossong 2014). In practice then counter-radicalisation policies vary across member states given their diverse situations and interests (Coolsaet 2010: 870), although in general the idea of countering radicalisation has found great policy reach in Europe.

The range of activities associated with Prevent entails the involvement of a diversity of actors (Home Office 2011a: 95-106). While led by the OSCT, Prevent teams are also active in other relevant Government departments and the police. Delivery involves a host of actors including Home Office-funded Prevent Coordinators, based in selected local authorities, and Prevent Engagement Officers and Channel Coordinators within the police. At a local level, a wide range of services including 'social services, policing, children's services, youth services, UKBA [*UK Border Agency*], representatives from further and higher education, probation services, schools, local prisons, health and others as required by local need' (Home Office 2011a: 97) are involved. Across Europe, public sector professionals and civil society organisations are trained and expected to recognise and report signs of radicalisation (De Goede and Simon 2013: 324-8). On Channel specifically, research has described a variety of interventions and providers (Elshimi 2015: 207-8). In general, the number of actors involved across various policy areas and levels of state and non-state bodies makes for complex decision making and implementation structures (Dawson, Edwards and Jeffray 2014: 33-4; Romaniuk and Fink 2012: 5-6). The Communities and Local Government Select Committee inquiry reported a lack of effective co-working and agreement on aims and objectives among the multiple departments involved (Communities and Local Government Committee 2010: 44). This distributed governance is echoed in CONTEST: in line with the governance of security more widely (Kearns and Gude 2008), counter-terrorism activities are distributed across government and its agencies, public bodies, the private and third sectors and the public (Home Office 2011b: 109). In addition, international institutions like the EU and UN Security Council as well as other nation states (particular the US) have played an important formal and informal role in shaping UK policy and vice versa (Pantazis and Pemberton 2009a).

In summary then, preventing radicalisation is a complicated policy area involving many sub-areas of activity and governed by a range of

actors. These features suggest the potential salience of a range of specialist knowledge and raise questions as to the types of expertise that are regarded as relevant in this multifaceted policy area.

3.1.3 The complex and contested nature of Prevent in practice

The complicated structure and governance of Prevent is matched by its complex and controversial practice. The first point is that in practice Prevent does not always correspond to its aims as stated in policy documents (O'Toole et al. 2016). Early research on Prevent for example raised issues regarding discontinuities between the national strategy to prevent violence and the local funding of community development projects (Lakhani 2012; Thomas 2010). More generally, there have been varying levels of enthusiasm and ability on the part of local councils to implement the strategy (Lakhani 2012; Thomas 2010). Husband and Alam (2011: 139-144) for example referred to the 'policy overload' experienced by those delivering the agenda in West Yorkshire, caused by the large amounts of guidance produced by central government, the range of departments involved, and the overlap with other policy areas like equalities; as a result, council chief executives were active in shaping or resisting government policy. Research suggests that these patterns continued under the 2010-2015 Coalition government, with Prevent implemented differently across the country (O'Toole et al. 2016: 10-13). The formal separation of Prevent from community cohesion in the 2011 strategy for example has not necessarily materialised in practice since it tends to be the same practitioners who work on both strategies (Thomas 2014: 488-9). These observations link counter-radicalisation to a wider literature on policy implementation, highlighting the gap between strategic intentions and actual practice (Elmore 1997: 249-251). They speak to Lipsky's (1980) thesis that policies are formed at the discretion of individual implementers, or 'street level bureaucrats', within the pressures of their jobs.

Research into the implementation of Prevent has also drawn out the contestation between policy actors. Differences between stakeholders' visions and priorities for the strategy have been documented (Lakhani 2012; Thomas 2010). Further, O'Toole et al. (2016: 8-10) argue that Prevent policy documents are a result of negotiation between actors over key ideas. The policy debates that have spilled into the media do suggest that official viewpoints on this issue are not homogenous and that there is some elite discord. Former Prime Minister Tony Blair for example was famously

resistant to the idea that British foreign policy had radicalised British citizens, a position that his successor Gordon Brown was reportedly more accepting of (Swaine 2009). Within the Coalition government, Education and then Justice Secretary Michael Gove emerged as a particularly hardline voice, criticising the Home Office for what he perceived as limited action on non-violent extremism (BBC 2014b). Muslim civil society meanwhile has had a range of responses to Prevent, with some organisations rejecting it and other cooperating with it, albeit with varying levels of enthusiasm (O'Toole et al. 2016: 13-14). Muslim communities more generally have been highly critical of Prevent (BBC 2015a), and the introduction of the Prevent duty in particular has led to resistance from some groups and individuals within a number of sectors, particularly university students (K. McVeigh 2015) but also teachers (Coughlan 2016), the police (Dodd 2016) and the health sector (Summerfield 2016).

These empirical accounts highlight the negotiated nature of Prevent's design and the differential, contested and chaotic nature of its implementation. O'Toole et al. (2016: 15) conclude that, in practice, Prevent is 'patchy, contested and/or resisted by governance actors, professionals and citizens'. Such observations cohere with Fussey's (2013) analysis of counter-terrorism in the UK, which highlighted the diversity of actors involved across different levels of state and the tensions between them. At a European level, states' approaches to counter-terrorism have been described in terms of 'policy messiness, that is, ethically inconsistent and practically contradictory policies' (P. O'Brien 2016: 380). While O'Toole et al. (2016: 6-8) note the articulation of pre-emptive and disciplinary aims in policy documents, as discussed in Section 3.3, this vein of research highlights the importance of examining the development and implementation of Prevent in practice. In addition to the potentially diverse sites of expertise relevant to this area of policy making, the contested nature of Prevent in practice indicates the controversial nature of the ideas underpinning it.

3.2 UK Government conceptions of radicalisation

So far in this chapter it has been argued that Prevent aims to anticipate and prevent individuals from committing or supporting acts of terrorism through a complex array of interventions and actors, facing contestation and resistance in practice. The strategy rests on a theory of radicalisation. This section addresses the origins of the idea of 'radicalisation' and its official

meaning in the UK, as expressed in policy documents and statements. Expert challenges to the official perspective on radicalisation theory are examined in Chapter 4.3.3.

3.2 1 Radicalisation: emergence of the concept

The first consideration here is the etymology of 'radicalisation'. Its official UK definition and usage has evolved over time. Heath-Kelly (2012) argues that while the UK has made historical attempts at the prevention of terrorism, pre-emption on the basis of radicalisation theory is a distinctly new area of activity. The concept is agreed by many in the field to have originated in European policy circles after 2004 as a way of articulating increasing concern about 'homegrown' terrorism (European Commission's Expert Group on Violent Radicalisation 2008: 5-7; Schmid 2013: 1-2). It materialised gradually: in the 2006 CONTEST strategy for example, it appeared but was not defined. This situation was mirrored in the contemporaneous 2005 EU counter-radicalisation strategy. Indeed even usage of the term 'radicalisation' was inconsistent in the early days of Prevent: the first standalone Prevent document from the DCLG for example (Communities and Local Government: 2007) does not mention it.

By 2009 however, the idea had been conceptualised more fully in CONTEST. It was expressed as a 'process by which people come to support violent extremism and, in some cases, join terrorist groups' (HM Government 2009a: 11). The key change that came in 2011 was the loss of the term 'violent', and the emphasis on a pathway relationship between extremism and terrorism. This was part of a wider shift in focus to non-violent extremism. Thus in the 2011 strategy, radicalisation is defined as 'the process by which a person comes to support terrorism and forms of extremism leading to terrorism' (Home Office 2011a: 108). Extremism in turn is defined as 'opposition to fundamental British values', named as democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty and tolerance of difference (Home Office 2011a: 107). The focus on extremism is similar to a definition adopted by the EU: 'the phenomenon of people embracing intolerant opinions, views and ideas which could lead to violent extremism' (European Parliament 2015). While these definitions are explicitly linked to violence or terrorism specifically, official definitions internationally are diverse and some focus instead on extreme beliefs as the principle threat (Neumann 2013: 874-6; Schmid 2013: 12-13; Sedgwick 2010: 483-4). In the UK then,

the idea of radicalisation invokes a process of individuals adopting increasingly extreme beliefs with the potential endpoint of terrorist action.

The UK has now reached a point where the term 'radicalisation' is saturated in public discussions of terrorism. For Neumann and Kleinmann (2013: 360), it has become a 'buzzword' and, for Kundnani (2012: 3), 'the master signifier of the late 'war on terror''. Such statements suggest a widespread change in approaches to understanding and addressing terrorism. The term has heavy usage in the media (Sedgwick 2010: 480), where 'radicalisation' is used to signify threat although often refers in practice to broader issues like alienation and anger (Hoskins and O'Loughlin 2009). Although the term itself is absent from UK legislation, the 2015 Counter-terrorism and Security Act was widely interpreted, including in the official accompanying guidance (HM Government 2015), to refer to radicalisation in part 5 on the 'risk of being drawn into terrorism' (Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015: 18-27). This is in addition to previous Acts that criminalised various aspects of pre-attack behaviour, including for example the 'dissemination of terrorist publications' in the Terrorism Act (2006). The term is not UK-specific but has been used since around 2005 by a number of countries across Europe and North America (Lindekilde 2012; Schmid 2013: 12-13). However, the UK has been seen as one of the earliest and most enthusiastic policy entrepreneurs in the area; Vidino and Brandon (2012: 164) for example call the UK a 'pioneer', with its counter-radicalisation strategy serving as a 'model' for other European countries. Prevention of radicalisation has also become a central part of the EU counter-terrorism strategy (Council of the European Union 2005), in particular contrast to the US which has been characterised as resistant to the identification of any roots other than 'evil' (Coolsaet 2010: 860)⁴. Again, the UK was central to this development: holding the EU Presidency following the 2005 London attacks, it drove through its '4 P's' model of Prepare, Protect, Pursue and Prevent, and a specific counter-radicalisation strategy was passed by the end of 2005 (Bossong 2014: 68-70).

Despite its relative absence prior to the early 2000s, radicalisation has then become a powerful and established term. For Githens-Mazer and Lambert (2010) however, usage of the term by policy makers and the media amounts to a simplistic and un-evidence based 'conventional

⁴ The US has subsequently developed a counter-radicalisation strategy, named 'Empowering Local Partners to Prevent Violent Extremism in the United States' (Department of Homeland Security 2011).

wisdom'. Its rapid rise to prominence indeed raises questions as to the nature of the knowledge underpinning it, and in particular the actors that can credibly claim that knowledge and the basis on which they do so.

3.2.2 Operationalisation of the concept

The idea of radicalisation essentially theorises the individual-level transformation to 'terrorist'. The language used by the UK Government to describe this movement has changed over time. In the 2006 CONTEST (HM Government 2006: 10), there is a clear line drawn between the two states of 'non-terrorist' and 'terrorist':

It is also important to see this as a two stage process. An alienated individual who has become highly radicalised is not necessarily a terrorist. Only a tiny minority of radicalised individuals actually cross over to become terrorists: by financing, lending facilities to, or encouraging active terrorists, or by actively participating in terrorist attacks.

Use of the term 'highly' however suggests a conceptualisation of radicalisation that involves levels or a series of stages, and indeed the idea of a more gradual development became apparent in later policy documents. The latest iteration of Prevent states that: 'Radicalisation is usually a process not an event. During that development, behaviours as well as opinions are likely to change' (Home Office 2011a: 56). Indeed radicalisation was described as a 'conveyor belt' by former Prime Minister David Cameron that must be 'dismantle[d]' (Cameron 2013). This analysis reflects the dominant understanding of radicalisation across Europe that extremism involves a linear development from 'not extreme' to 'extreme' and 'non-violent' to 'violent' (Lindekilde 2012: 337-8).

The idea that 'behaviours as well as opinions are likely to change' leads directly to the Government's formation of indicators of radicalisation. These, detailed in Appendix B, are used to identify people who may be vulnerable to radicalisation, assess the threat that they pose, and design intervention packages to counter that threat. This approach echoes academic efforts to develop a psychometric tool to measure violent extremism, with judgements made according to risk factors like attitudes and personal history related to violence (Pressman and Flockton 2012). An earlier document published on Channel (HM Government 2010) gives indicators that are more tightly connected to violence, including expressing

opinions of support for violence, obtaining extremist material e.g. literature, and having military training or combat experience. Nevertheless there has been criticism of the indicator approach: the analysis has been characterised as a deficit model that is based on the idea of cultural deficiencies and individual failings as the cause of radicalisation (Mirza 2010: 22, quoted in Coppock and McGovern 2014: 250). Further, the content of the indicators is seen to be inclusive of harmless behaviours and also, despite overtures to objective risk assessment, actually reminiscent of pre-emptive and racialised profiling (Monaghan and Molner 2016). In practice, research has shown that understandings of indicators vary amongst the diversity of professionals involved in referral and assessment processes, leading to disagreements and variable practice (Lindekilde 2015). Such criticisms led the 2011 Prevent strategy to state that: 'the indicators (if observed) set the bar for referral quite high and would not (as is sometimes claimed) enable the referral of people simply for the holding of political opinions or having commitment to a faith' (Home Office 2011a: 57). The indicators however clearly locate radicalisation as an individual process and identify features that can raise suspicion and motivate state action.

The current understanding of radicalisation focuses on the role of extreme ideas. According to the Prevent policy document, the three key factors that lead people to commit acts of terrorism are first, ideology (that is violent, separatist and based on feelings of victimisation), second, the communication of that ideology, and third, individual and contextual factors that encourage the take up of that ideology (Home Office 2011a: 18). Ideology is therefore seen as the central motivating factor in terrorist actions and the basis upon which terrorist groups are built (Home Office 2011a: 44-45). In line with the Government's wider analysis of the terrorism threat, the area of extremism that is currently of most concern is Islamism, although the current Prevent strategy also mentions the importance of responding to Northern Ireland-related terrorism, far right extremism and others (Home Office 2011a: 13-15). Islamism is described thus:

Islamist extremists deem Western intervention in Muslim-majority countries as a 'war on Islam', creating a narrative of 'them' and 'us'. They seek to impose a global Islamic state governed by their interpretation of Shari'ah as state law, rejecting liberal values such as democracy, the rule of law and equality. Their ideology also

includes the uncompromising belief that people cannot be Muslim and British, and insists that those who do not agree with them are not true Muslims. (HM Government 2013: 2)

The concern is with both Al Qaeda-related groups that are motivated by this ideology as well as lone actors and their process of 'self radicalisation' (Brokenshire 2013; Home Office 2011a: 14). One caveat is that the situation is slightly different for Irish-related and extreme right wing terrorism, where ideology is a relevant factor alongside others including status, social deprivation, local recruitment networks and peer pressure (Home Office 2011a: 20-21). As well as being the central factor articulated in policy documents, the role of ideology is referred to repeatedly by Government in public pronouncements on radicalisation and the causes of terrorism:

Prevent must also recognise and tackle the insidious impact of non-violent extremism, which can create an atmosphere conducive to terrorism and can popularise views which terrorists exploit. (May 2011a)

We will not tolerate extremist activity of any sort, which creates an environment for radicalising individuals and could lead them on a pathway towards terrorism. (HM Government 2013: 1)

to defeat this terrorist threat in the long run, we must also understand and address its root causes. That means confronting the poisonous ideology of Islamist extremism itself. (Cameron 2015)

As indicated by these quotes, extremist ideology is posited as the central cause of terrorism and is central to the Prevent strategy.

Around this central organising concept of ideology are two supporting factors. The first emphasises the importance of 'ideologues'. As Theresa May stated in 2011 as Home Secretary: 'And, at their most vulnerable, they may be influenced - even groomed - by people who offer deceptively easy answers to difficult questions' (May 2011b). The presence of these people in particular institutions has been a cause for concern: current priorities include mosques, Islamic centers, prisons and universities, some of which are said to create 'an environment conducive to radicalisation' (HM Government 2013: 2). The second set of subsidiary factors are personal and contextual and may include, for example, youth, low income, the desire for a sense of belonging or identity, lack of trust in

institutions, social networks, and anger at counter-terrorism strategy, police tactics or foreign policy (Home Office 2011a: 17-19). While a number of factors are seen as relevant to the radicalisation process then, their role is in facilitating the central issue of adopting extremist beliefs. This idea that extremism is the central cause of terrorism, and that policy should be directed towards stopping its expression and proliferation, has become the dominant policy narrative.

The latest version of Prevent states that the official analysis of radicalisation has changed little since the first published CONTEST strategy in 2006 (Home Office 2011a: 18). Similarly, Kundnani (2015: 8) argues that although the Prevent policy has changed over time, its rationale has remained the same. There is clearly much overlap between different versions of Prevent: very early understandings of radicalisation for example cited both university campuses and prisons as a 'recruiting ground' for terrorists (Home Office 2005: 18-19). However, an analysis of how the term radicalisation is used in the three available versions of CONTEST highlights some contrast and change over time. In the 2006 edition (HM Government 2006: 10), it was seen to encompass all the causes of terrorism. The document describes three sets of factors that can result in radicalisation: a sense of grievance or injustice about globalisation or particular Western foreign policies; alienation through socio-economic exclusion; and interaction with radical views. In this 2006 strategy, the role of grievances is relatively detailed, which serves to give it emphasis. In addition, ideology, in the form of 'radical views', is one individual factor rather than the overriding, organising factor. In the next iteration of CONTEST (HM Government 2009a: 41-45), radicalisation is regarded as one of four distinct 'strategic factors' that cause terrorism alongside conflict and instability, ideology, and technology (including the communication of extremism). Radicalisation is seen to be caused by those three factors in addition to grievances and social and psychological factors. Compared to the 2006 strategy then, the relationships change as the factors begin to be separated out. In the 2011 CONTEST strategy, the four strategic factors remain the same (Home Office 2011b: 32-37). However, radicalisation becomes associated much more strongly with ideology; while it is said to be only 'one factor' amongst 'others' (36), indeed it is the only factor detailed in this section. The place of ideology in the conceptualisation thus became stronger over time.

A further area that has altered is the idea of complexity. The first two CONTEST strategies emphasised the complexity of the radicalisation process, with the 2006 (HM Government 2006: 10) document for example stating that: 'There are a range of potential factors in radicalisation and no single factor predominates. It is likely the catalyst for any given individual becoming a terrorist will be a combination of different factors particular to that person.' This idea is not found however in the 2011 CONTEST and Prevent documents. Similarly, in the US, Patel (2011: 1-3, 13-14) argues that some arms of counter-terrorism refer to the complexity of radicalisation (including a lack of linearity and a variety of risk factors and protective factors) while other use simplistic, linear models with indicators focusing on radical Islamism.

Clearly the official boundaries of 'radicalisation' as a concept are permeable. Despite the transfer of many ideas and priorities across time, the theory of radicalisation has been adapted to some extent within official circles since the inception of Prevent. A host of factors have been discussed, while their relative strengths and the relationships between them have shifted. These shifts in the policy theory speak to core debates and faultlines between substantive perspectives on radicalisation. Overall, the situation suggests that the official conceptualisation of radicalisation exists against a background of theoretical contestation; in turn this suggests a diversity of relevant expertise. Chapter 4.3 examines the main threads of this contestation, but first the official theory of radicalisation is placed within the wider contexts of securitisation and anticipatory policy making.

3.3 Interpreting radicalisation and counter-radicalisation: securitisation and anticipation

This sub-section examines interpretations of the rise of radicalisation theory and its correspondent counter-radicalisation strategy. These discussions are situated in a much wider literature that is critical of the UK's approach to countering terrorism, including the effects of states' new counter-terrorism powers on human rights and civil liberties (e.g. Pantucci 2010; Robison 2009). Here, the review places radicalisation within a context of securitisation theory and highlights the influence of the precautionary principle.

3.3.1 Radicalisation and the securitisation of the state's relationship with Muslim communities

Securitisation refers to a process whereby issues are 'staged as existential threats to a referent object by a securitising actor who thereby generates endorsement of emergency measures beyond rules that would otherwise bind' (Buzan, Wæver and de Wilde 1998: 5). It is a process through which an argument is constructed to present an issue as a security threat (24-5); in societal terms, the threat is often to community identity (119-121). Politicians, social movements and the media are central to this process (40).

Analysts have used this framework to understand state responses to terrorism since 9/11. In this conception, terrorism is framed not only an extraordinary threat to British security but also to British values; as a result, exceptional actions have been justified in the interests of survival, with the issue removed from the normal politics of decision making (Mavelli 2013). Similarly, Rothe and Muzatti (2004) document features of a moral panic (Cohen 1972) in the US since 2001, with terrorism seen as a threat to a way of life and the West in general, and politicians using a language of war to introduce a host of punitive legislative changes. The impact of these security fears associated with terrorism has been noted across policy areas; for example in immigration policy through enhanced border controls and the surveillance of migrants and diaspora since 9/11 (Noxolo 2009). Further, a lack of integration and social problems in immigrant communities have become seen as inherently risky, and linked with radicalisation and homegrown terrorism (Staun 2010). With terrorism constructed as an existential threat, security governance is extended to new policy sites.

Radicalisation has been seen as the key discourse that associates Muslim communities with both a security concern as well as a threat to British culture. The term is employed to label individuals within Muslim communities as both 'at risk' (vulnerable) and 'risky' (a potential threat) (Heath-Kelly 2013). Indicators of radicalisation tend to encompass conservative religious beliefs and behaviour (Coolsaet 2008: 261-2) as well as identity, values and politics (Martin 2014: 71-74). Indeed, such ideas serve to associate non-violent activities with terrorism (Kundnani 2012: 5-6) and the notion of vulnerability in effect widens the net of risk assessment (Richards 2011: 150-151). Many authors argue however that it is primarily Muslim youth in general and unproblematic behaviours like activism that are re-conceptualised in terms of security (Lynch 2013: 242, 245-6), redefined as 'risky' and used to legitimate surveillance and intervention (Coppock and McGovern 2014: 248-52). A caveat to most models of

radicalisation is that they are not deterministic: as de Goede and Simon (2012: 323-4) argue however, they nevertheless entail associating certain behaviours with potential violence and so create sites for security governance. Further, without certainty over when 'at risk' populations become 'risky', they are constructed as perpetually dangerous (Heath-Kelly 2013: 406-408). In these analyses, radicalisation theory serves to significantly widen the scope of counter-terrorism.

The concern is that this has serious negative consequences for communities. Ideas of 'Muslim difference' gained traction from the 1980s, especially in opposition to 'British values' (Husband and Alam 2011: 31-3). Research on Prevent suggests a solidification of this theme, highlighting: the perception that Prevent is a front for surveillance activities (e.g. Awan 2011; Kundnani 2009); the tendency for Prevent funding to stigmatise whole communities, particularly if it is used for community projects, and that people who are Muslim can feel that they are automatically suspects as a result (Choudhury and Fenwick 2011: 54-56; Lakhani 2012); and the possibility that it destabilises community relations (Birt 2009). In such ways Prevent is a key part of the post-9/11 landscape, which is argued to have labelled Muslims as the new 'suspect community' in the UK, with the whole religious community identified as deviant and potentially harbouring threats (Pantazis and Pemberton 2009b). Walsh (2016) argues that moral panics around terrorism have extended past violent criminals to view Muslims in general as 'folk devils' (Cohen 1972). Thus media reports construct Islam as a threat through, for example, reporting on Muslim extremists and terrorists with little on British Muslims more generally (Husband and Alam 2011: 78-83). The rise in Islamophobia is well established, with a 44% increase in Islamophobic crimes recorded by the Metropolitan police between June 2015 and June 2016 (Metropolitan Police 2016) and controversies over expressions of Islamic identity like the 'burkini' (Cesari 2005: 45-9). An example of this real-life impact comes from Brown and Saeed's study (2014) of British Muslim women in UK universities. They found that fears over campus radicalisation have led to Islamic groups coming under suspicion and active participation being effectively discouraged: Prevent therefore has an effect on the everyday lives of students, constraining their behaviour and shaping their identities in terms of how they participate in university life. The impact of framing communities as a potential security threat has then been extensive.

In terms of policy and practice, the securitisation of the state's relationship with Muslims is expressed in various ways. Edmunds (2012) argues that there are two sides to securitisation: it can be 'hard' to address Islam as a threat to security, for example in the form of rendition and other practices of the war on terror, or 'soft' to focus on a threat to national identity or culture, thus focusing on cultural practices like banning the hijab. The contemporary focus of counter-terrorism on Al Qaeda-related terrorism (Cesari 2005: 40-5; Home Office 2011b: 40) means that the impact of counter-terrorism measures, for example the stop and search powers given under the Terrorism Act 2000, lies disproportionately on Muslim communities (Coppock and McGovern 2014: 243-4). Prevent meanwhile has brought together security concerns with community policy (Husband and Alam 2011: 87-91). With Muslim identities seen through a security lens, Muslim communities are encouraged by Government to help defeat radicalisation (Noxolo 2009). Community engagement efforts with Muslim communities have become increasingly associated with a security threat, while Prevent has become increasingly led by the Home Office and the police and focuses largely on Muslim communities (Thomas 2014).

The securitisation thesis is not without its detractors. Boswell (2007) argues that it has limited applicability to migration control: given the policy focus on homegrown radicalisation, there are few references to terrorism in migration debates⁵. Greer (2015) focuses on the complexity of relationships between the state and Muslim communities, and Ragazzi (2016) argues for more focus on how securitised identities promoted by the state are resisted or negotiated by communities. In terms of Prevent specifically, Garbaye and Latour (2016) argue that widespread resistance since its inception resulted in a degree of rollback by the Coalition government, particularly in terms of the overwhelming focus on Muslim communities, that amounted to 'desecuritisation'. Although the empirical evidence (Thomas 2014: 486) suggests that such policy changes have not been fully reflected in practice, it is clear that securitisation is a complex and variable process. Interpreting Prevent in terms of securitisation however points to the significance of radicalisation theory in identifying threats and driving contemporary counter-terrorism activities and its practical impacts, mainly on Muslim communities. More generally, the critical nature of securitisation accounts

⁵ More recent concerns regarding a relationship between Syrian refugees and terrorism did prompt Prime Minister Theresa May to make assurances of the enhanced 'screening' of migrants (Riley-Smith 2015).

highlight the contested nature of Prevent and radicalisation theory, and their political baggage, raising questions as to the composition and nature of the knowledge underpinning this highly partisan strategy.

3.3.2 Counter-radicalisation as anticipatory governance

At the same time, Prevent can be situated within a body of risk management strategies that seek to anticipate and pre-empt future danger. It has been argued that radicalisation theory renders the unknowns of terrorism governable: as a linear process, it can be pre-empted (Heath-Kelly 2013). For Martin (2014), Prevent seeks to imagine and act on potential futures, which remain essentially unpredictable even with any improvements in data or theory. While Dunlap (2016) highlights historical precedents to anticipatory attempts at social control, specifically in counter-insurgency campaigns, Heath-Kelly (2012: 71-5) suggests that anticipation takes on a particular nature in Prevent. In particular, she differentiates contemporary prevention from its earlier manifestations in the Prevention of Terrorism Acts of the 1970s and 80s. These were informed by a criminal justice model, taking the form of, for example, proscription, deportation and internment. While many such practices remain in use today, Heath-Kelly argues that they are now justified in terms of preventing the spread of ideology and possible future crimes rather than punishment.

In essence, it has been argued that counter-radicalisation strategies are part of a wider application of precautionary governance (De Goede and Simon 2012: 1-4; Hörnqvist and Flyghed 2012: 320). From these critical standpoints, counter-radicalisation efforts are characterised as part of the anticipatory turn in counter-terrorism. This development in approaches to countering terrorism, especially since 2001, has been examined in the UK as well as countries like the US, Australia and Canada. Using an extension of the 'precautionary principle', a strategy of decision making most usually identified in environmental and public health policy, in essence these analyses suggest a move towards anticipating and preventing attacks even on the basis of unclear evidence, rather than waiting to respond when they occur (Borgers and van Sliedregt 2009; Goldsmith 2008; Mythen 2014: 99-107; Stern and Wiener 2006). Heath-Kelly (2012: 71) summarises the contribution of this perspective in terms of its argument that policy is not reacting to an observed threat so much as creating a threat to respond to. Despite a limited evidence base, the tendency for this type of approach to heighten fear and encourage exceptional responses has been noted. Many

authors argue for example that the thesis of 'new terrorism', with its focus on deadly yet uncertain threats, has created an imperative for counter-terrorism action, prompting greater and more urgent attempts at risk management (Denney 2005: 137-8, 146). Burnett and Whyte (2005) argue that the narrative imposes a framework on both unknowable and diverse issues and leads to a characterisation of threats that supports use of the precautionary principle, which in turn encourages excessive and repressive responses.

Analysts have sought to trace the manifestations of precaution in contemporary policy responses to terrorism. In general, an important part of the justification for counter-terrorism legislation since 2001 in the UK has been the idea that contemporary terrorism presents new problems that require early action (Walker 2009: 23-32). In practice, this means that policies are justified on the basis of hypothetically high, imminent and catastrophic risk (McCulloch and Pickering 2009, 2010; Mythen and Walklate 2008); that the notion of 'exceptionalism' is invoked to argue that we are in exceptional circumstances that require an exceptional response (Aradau and Van Munster 2009); that there is a tendency to 'probability neglect', or worst-case scenario thinking, and increased likelihood of accepting disproportionate measures (Sunstein 2003); that techniques such as screening (Salter 2008) and 'dataveillance' (Amoore and de Goede 2005), are used, which focus on *potential* criminals and involve 'needle in the hay' work, thus extending suspicion to broader groups of people in order to identify a very few; and, finally, that the difficulties in generating evidence and the resultant uncertainty in knowledge becomes the very reason for adopting particular measures (Borgers and Sliedregt 2009; De Goede 2008). In this sense, the argument is that if terrorism has changed, so must counter-terrorism: further, if the nature of new terrorism is that its events or their nature cannot be predicted, precaution and pre-emption become the most appropriate strategies (Stampnitzky 2013: 152-8; 161-164). There are calls from officials for proportionate responses that do not single out whole populations for suspicion (e.g. Manningham-Buller 2007; Omand 2007). In general, however, this literature suggests that the idea of contemporary terrorism as a fundamentally new security challenge, and the focus on threats of unknown but potentially imminent and inevitably disastrous events, permeates the contemporary policy response to terrorism.

Counter-terrorism policy can thus be linked to a wider literature on the risk-based management of social problems. Discourses of risk, control and self-protection are seen as central to a post-1970s move towards welfare state liberalisation (Culpitt 1999). Time is distorted through a risk lens: the present is extended into the future, which is uncertain but amenable to anticipatory action with a little imagination (Nowotny, Scott and Gibbons 2001: 39-41). Analysed within Foucault's governmentality perspective, such approaches have been seen as ways of using knowledge to examine and classify populations according to risk, serving as a tool of social control (Mythen 2014: 33-7). In particular, this puts knowledge to the value-dependent task of assessing where danger lies. In terms of the criminal justice system, it is argued that there has been a shift away from dealing with individuals towards predicting, preventing and managing risks presented by groups of people classified according to their level of danger, guided by statistical risk profiling (Feeley and Simon 1992). Focused on risks, criminal justice becomes concerned with 'pre-crime', or anticipating and providing security against potential problems (Zedner 2000, 2007). Counter-terrorism policy has been argued to lie within such broader changes in state practices (Mythen and Walklate 2010).

The link between precaution and evidence is not straightforward. Recent analysis suggests that in practice, precautionary decision making is not always contrary to the principles of evidence-based policy, and indeed sometimes the two can work in tandem (Monaghan, Pawson and Wicker 2012). In addition, it is unclear that the precautionary principle can be so easily transported across disciplinary boundaries, with the uncertainties in counter-terrorism concerning more the probabilities of individual agency and the resultant 'unknown unknowns' than scientific complexity. Analysing counter-terrorism with a risk management lens however problematises the theoretical basis of counter-radicalisation strategies. It points to uncertainties and unknowns in the knowledge base, the existence of fear and risk in the nature of the policy problem, and the link between both of these and adopted policy solutions. The role of expertise in risk management is addressed more specifically in the next chapter, alongside an analysis of the knowledge base of radicalisation. In general however, the approach raises questions regarding the nature and role of expertise under such conditions. Chapter 2 emphasised that scientific experts can face challenges to their authority from a plurality of knowledge claims. Stirling (2003: 49-53) for example argues that implicit in the precautionary

approach to risk management is a critical approach to risk knowledge and the idea that that a range of voices are relevant to appraising risk. Applying such ideas to radicalisation, we can examine the extent to which its expert community mirrors such wider analyses, the types of knowledge that are relevant in these conditions and how authority is gained when experts must, to some extent, orientate their analysis to the future.

3.4 Conclusion

This chapter placed radicalisation expertise in its policy context. It argued that the UK's policy theory, strategy and implementation are complex and contested. Counter-radicalisation policy was seen to be a busy and active field, encompassing a range of activities and actors. Research on Prevent has suggested that its heterogeneous governance makes for differential and resisted practice. The theory of radicalisation that underlies Prevent has achieved great influence yet has been subject to changes in its content since the inception of Prevent. Critical perspectives highlight radicalisation theory as an enabler of the securitisation of relationships between the state and Muslim communities and as part of a wider turn to precautionary risk management. These accounts suggest that underlying the Government's focus on ideology are contested interpretations of the policy agenda, and the thesis develops a framework for analysing these divergent perspectives. It contributes an analysis of the knowledge underpinning the conceptualisation and aims of Prevent to the existing literature on its design, implementation and outcomes. The next chapter builds on this analysis of the complex and contested nature of official attempts to describe and address radicalisation by examining the evidence base of radicalisation theory.

Chapter 4: The uncertain and contested nature of knowledge on radicalisation

Terrorism is regarded as one of the most significant contemporary risks (Cabinet Office 2015: 14, 42-53; Fisher 2011; Mythen 2014: 91-107). At the same time, it is often expressed as a policy problem fraught with complexity and uncertainty (e.g. Boyle and Haggerty 2012; Daase and Kessler 2007; Fischbacher-Smith 2016; Hayden 2007; Jackson 2015). Such conceptualisations have a wider applicability: social problems in general and our knowledge on risks in particular are often seen as problematic in these ways. This chapter focuses on the evidence base of radicalisation theory. It first situates radicalisation within a discussion of expertise on risk, with Section 4.1 discussing complex policy problems, uncertain knowledge, and the implications of these for the nature of expertise. Section 4.2 discusses the fundamental uncertainty associated with terrorism and the limitations in the evidence base upon which radicalisation expertise lies. Section 4.3 highlights the fragmented nature of radicalisation research before detailing the key aspects of conceptual and theoretical contestation that have emerged amongst radicalisation experts. Overall, the chapter proposes an account of knowledge on radicalisation that highlights the value of conducting a study on the nature of expertise on this topic.

4.1 The implications of complexity and uncertain knowledge for expertise

The complex nature of social problems has been expressed in a number of ways. Differentiated from complication (Pawson 2013: 53-60), complexity can be thought of as 'emergence'. This is the notion that systems are more than the sum of their parts, since the parts have interrelations that change the nature of the whole (Byrne 2011: 19-29). Complexity has been seen as a source of difficulty for social policy (Ruggie 1975), with governments managing a large array of problems that involve interdependence between actors and agencies, uncertainty over the outcome of decisions and an increasing rate of social change. Pawson (2013: 34-43) closely analyses the nature of complexity in terms of social policy and programmes, detailing many aspects including context, the volition of recipients, and differential implementation processes, all of which affect how social programmes are implemented, their effects and their success.

The nature of complex problems has implications for the role of evidence and experts in their resolution. Rittel and Webber (1973)

characterise social issues as 'wicked problems', the definition of or solution to which cannot be agreed upon. In this context, policy choices require judgement as well as facts; at the same time, few solutions will ever be completely successful and success can never be definitively judged due to the complexity of social systems and the unanticipatable potential impacts of decisions. More recently, policy problems have been described as 'messy' (Ney 2009: 4-11): complex, multifactorial, of an uncertain nature, value-driven and longstanding. In this context, although there may be much evidence available, it is likely to be overwhelming and confusing rather than helpful, and again is unlikely to provide clear answers. Similarly, Turner (2003: 52-4) discusses 'ill-structured' problems; those where scientific consensus, neutrality on the possible solutions, and agreement on legitimate knowledge is unlikely to exist. For Schon and Rein (1994: 3-9, 23-8), while many policy disagreements can be settled with evidence, 'intractable policy controversies' cannot. Instead, in this type of case, evidence is interpreted differently and used selectively to support arguments, with disputants motivated by values or 'frames', defined as orientating outlooks that determine the positions of actors and lead to conflict. Such policy narratives, or ways of explaining a situation and prescribing a solution, can be particularly powerful in complex and uncertain policy areas (Boswell, Geddes and Scholten 2011). In these conceptualisations, complexity presents multiple challenges for designing, implementing and evaluating public policies. The nature of complex problems is that evidence cannot be neatly applied nor experts adjudicate, providing an ideal situation for credibility contests (Gieryn 1999) between experts to flourish.

Attempts to understand and predict risks compound these difficulties. Research on risk has been conducted within both realist and constructionist frameworks (Mythen 2014: 20-26). From a realist perspective, risk is regarded as a tangible phenomenon, amenable to measurement and assessment. Within social science, such approaches have often adopted experimental methodologies to analyse and assess individual perceptions of risk. Studies in cognitive science for example have sought to discern the biases in individual risk perception compared to expert risk assessments (Lupton 2013: 26-35). In this strand of research, both risk and expertise are regarded as measurable and therefore knowable phenomena. Constructionist perspectives, largely within the social sciences, focus instead on the social aspects of risk, particularly how

our understandings of it are constructed and how it is regulated (Mythen 2014: 20-26). Underpinning this approach is the idea that risk is subjective: risk assessment is not conclusive but instead requires the application of theory and judgment, factors which inevitably shape conclusions as well as subsequent policy decisions (Slovic 2000: 390-4). As such, the framing of risks is not only rooted in probabilities but also social and political processes: risk discourses are 'moral, emotive and political as well as calculative' (Sparks 2001: 169). The cultural or anthropological perspective for example (Lupton 2013: 52-76; Mythen 2014: 40-43) entails that conceptions of risk are context-dependent and influenced in particular by cultural values; in addition, they take on a political role in that identifying a risk involves assigning blame, thus creating a deviant 'other'. Within a constructionist framework then, risks are not amenable to objective measurement but instead our knowledge of them is socially constructed and subject to the influence of politics and values.

Within constructionist risk theory there is a preoccupation with the nature of knowledge. The risk society thesis posits that the nature of knowledge has changed. Giddens (1990: 36-45; 129-131) argues that modernity is marked by reflexivity: social practices constantly shift in the light of new knowledge and reflection, so that action is guided by reason rather than tradition. At the same time, all knowledge is tentative and 'nothing is certain' (Giddens 1990: 39). While the existence of risk is not questioned, its nature is essentially unknown and uncontrollable: Beck states that contemporary risks, including terrorism alongside others like global warming and nuclear accidents, are global, propagated by human actions, and difficult to predict and regulate (Mythen 2014: 28-33). He argues that it is usually impossible to define strict, direct causal relations in modern, complex risks, and an outdated mode of science effectively attempts to deny this, insisting on data quality, reliability and proof of causality and, in effect, avoiding action and ignoring risks (Beck 1992: 62-64). In response to this situation, Funtowicz and Ravetz argue that a new type of science, one that can deal with problems framed by risk, where 'facts are uncertain, values in dispute, stakes high and decisions urgent' (1993: 744), is emerging. Integral to sociological accounts of risk is then the impossibility of definitive knowledge: risk cannot be objectively measured or fully known.

The nature of uncertainty contained within theories of risk is multifaceted. Realist conceptions of risk are criticised: Stirling (2003) argues that probability is difficult to calculate in social situations, where conditions are complex, unstable, incomparable to the past, and not well understood. Stirling differentiates uncertainty, where possible outcomes are known but their likelihoods are not from ambiguity, which results from the multidimensional nature of risk with its economic, social and environmental facets and ignorance, which occurs when neither likelihood nor outcomes are known because, for example, concepts are not yet refined or the risk occurs within a complex, open system. In practice, risk-based problems of the environment for example have been described as universal, long-term, data-poor, complex, and often reliant on mathematical models, the knowledge produced by which is inherently uncertain (Funtowicz and Ravetz 1990: 7-11; 1993: 741-753). Boswell (2012) argues that policy areas involving risk and illegal activity often have a lack of available, reliable or continuous evidence, with the phenomenon observed only during a crisis. Areas of risk can then be characterised by a lack of conclusive evidence on the one hand, and recognition of complexity on the other.

In this context of complexity and uncertainty, the ability of science to address contemporary social problems has been questioned. Weaver (1948) argued that the main task of modern science was to address problems of 'organised complexity': social issues like the prevention of wars and economic depression were complex and multifactorial, with particular interrelations that it was necessary to understand, and science was just beginning to tackle them. A much reduced ambition seems however to have taken hold, particularly in the social sciences: Nowotny, Scott and Gibbons (2001: 4-10) argue that unpredictability and unknowability are central concepts in contemporary society, with determinism in social relations rejected and the efforts of research to study unknowns bringing constantly new sources of uncertainty. Indeed a core perspective of science and technology studies is that science is a social process rather than an objective method of discovery and that knowledge is ambiguous (Edge 1995). For example, to Latour (1998), the idea of progressive, autonomous and fairly certain science has been replaced by uncertain, subjective, controversial research that is bound to society, has its progress doubted and achievements questioned, and provides not 'the answer' but instead is engaged in a wider social dialogue. While the rise of evidence-based policy seemed to hail a return to a belief in technocracy, the field has

generally come to adopt a much more limited and collaborative role for research evidence (Monaghan 2011: 21-25). Clearly different epistemologies react in different ways to these issues: Pawson (2006: 17-20) is critical of research that attempts to understand the social world through artificial and abstract approaches like experiments, and instead argues that social complexity should be tackled by a realist approach to knowledge generation that investigates competing hypotheses to arrive at tentative conclusions. Increasing recognition of the complexity of policy problems and the uncertainty associated with contemporary risks has then circumscribed perceptions of the ability of research to provide certain or definitive answers to pertinent social questions.

The nature of expertise in this context of uncertain and complex knowledge has been examined within risk theories. For some analysts, experts take on the essential role of diagnosing and explaining risk. Beck (1992: 51-58; 71-2) argues that contemporary risks are rarely experienced directly: instead, the public rely on 'second-hand non-experience' in the form of generalised, elite, scientific knowledge. Expert knowledge, often claiming objectivity, is key to advising on the specifics of risk analysis and management (Boyne 2003: 80) and thus constructing social understandings of risks and potential responses (Lupton 2013: 43-48). Moreover, Nelkin (1995) argues that the ability to claim expertise in areas of scientific dispute is a key source of authority especially where the evidence is uncertain and limited. From these perspectives then, experts take on a particular authority in areas of complex and uncertain knowledge.

At the same time, the risk literature is suggestive of distrust in experts. One reason for this is their failure to prevent or contain risks, and a resultant suspicion of those who claim authoritative knowledge (Lupton 2006). In Beck's (1992: 59) theory of the risk society for example, science is regarded as open to criticism because it has not only failed to address risks but indeed is involved in creating them. Rather than bringing positive change, experts have been found responsible for the downsides of technological progress like environmental degradation and the development of advanced weaponry (Boyne 2003: 82-4). At the same time, Funtowicz and Ravetz argue that scientists' legitimacy can be threatened by uncertainty: making incorrect predictions or hesitating to speculate can harm credibility (1990: 11-13). A second reason for contemporary distrust of experts is our awareness of the limits of knowledge. Coupled with

society's wide knowledge of risks, this brings into question the idea of expertise itself (Giddens 1990: 129-131). Although we place trust in the 'expert systems' that organise and utilise expert knowledge, their abstract nature creates fear and scepticism (Giddens 1990: 83-92). Finally, open contestation between experts erodes their authority: experts' inability to definitively solve problems means that they are likely to be part of wider value-driven debates (Lupton 2006; 2013: 46-48). Echoing Collins and Evans' (2002) 'problem of legitimacy', these themes of distrust signal changes in the nature and authority of expertise.

Studies of boundary work in the sociology of scientific knowledge also find expression in constructionist accounts of risk, where the superior nature of expertise is questioned. The realist assumption of the measurability of risk and the differentiation between expert risk 'assessment' and lay risk 'perception' can be criticised on the grounds that not only are not all risks measurable, but expert assessments are open to biases, potentially wrong, and often at odds with each other; at the same time, those with lay knowledge are able to reason and offer their own expertise (Mythen 2014: 22-26). Wynne's (1996) analysis for example focused on the cultural roots of expert knowledge on risk, arguing that it is not so easily distinguished from lay. In this situation, the divide between scientific and lay knowledge breaks down and the public are able to challenge and judge science (Beck 1992: 167-9). Indeed Beck (1992: 57-8) argues that the reason for public rejection of risk assessments is the mismatch of values shown in the conclusions of each party rather than because the public are misinformed or ignorant. These perspectives are supported by empirical research, for example by Slovic, Fischhoff and Lichtenstein (2000: 151-3), that suggests that expert judgements on risk are not always better than lay, especially where there is a lack of data. Similarly, psychological research on expert decision making across many topic areas suggests that experts are no better than lay people at making judgments in conditions of uncertain knowledge (Johnson 1988). Within this perspective then, traditional forms of expertise are questioned and begin to lose authority.

Concomitant to this trend, analysts theorise a pluralisation of risk expertise that again mirrors wider trends identified by the sociology of expertise and covered in Chapter 2. Stirling (2003: 60-64) argues that pluralism is inherent in social science approaches to risk that tend to seek a

fuller understanding of subjective understandings of risk through appreciating different forms of knowledge, adopting interdisciplinary approaches, accessing differing interpretations, and recognising the implications of values. Beck (1992: 28-30) argues that understanding contemporary risks involves multiple types of knowledge from many different actors as opposed to a small number of authoritative, objective experts: 'there is no expert on risk' (1992: 29). This echoes Turner's (2003: 52-4; 67-8) thesis that in ill-structured policy problems, the knowledge of experts with different disciplinary or professional backgrounds, for example, is more likely to be accepted as relevant and those experts that can bring together knowledge in a collaborative way are valuable. Funtowicz and Ravetz's (1993: 739-741) post-normal science for example is democratic, with broad communities involved in conducting, judging and using research, employing dialogue between different types of knowledge and perspectives to give contextualised explanations. They argue that when uncertainty becomes politicised, that is, part of democratic discussions, different forms of expertise become empowered to expose dominant approaches to criticism (1990: 64). Beck theorises that protesters against the harm caused by risk 'become small, private alternative experts in risks of modernisation' (1992: 61): using science to bolster authority, they are able to generate evidence of harm, often on previously unstudied or denied phenomena. In Epstein's discussion of AIDS activists, the complexity and uncertain knowledge associated with the issue played a key role in reducing the credibility of scientific experts and allowing a diversity of alternative experts to successfully claim credibility (1995: 411-12). A further example comes from a study of expertise on speed limit enforcement, which showed the public using their experience of driving to claim expertise and argue against research-based positions (Wells 2011: 236-7). Similarly, Irwin (1995: 105-131) details cases of environmental risk where citizens criticised expert knowledge and generated their own, arguing that a plurality of knowledge types are useful for understanding risk issues. The breakdown of scientific expertise can then create space for the development of authoritative knowledge on risk issues from a wider range of sources.

As was apparent in Chapter 2's broader discussion, the limitations and repercussions of this apparent shift from a stable minority of authoritative scientific experts to a democratic melee have been noted by analysts. First, the equality of participation is questioned. While social science understandings of risk may have permeated policy, raising

awareness of the limits of calculation (Stirling 2003), Wendling (2011) argues that social scientists themselves tend to have a limited and instrumental role in expert processes on risk issues. Further, for example in advisory committees with lay experts on risk assessment issues, there can be a lack of critical discussion even if participation is widened, with an emphasis on achieving consensus (Stirling 2003: 60-64). Second, the process of claiming expertise becomes competitive. Indeed, recent research on speed limit enforcement expertise suggests that in order for experts to be trusted in a context of uncertain knowledge, they must engage in persuasion, networking, effective communication and marketing techniques, for example claiming authoritative knowledge on the basis of objectivity or superior methods (Wells 2011: 229-235). In this context there are likely to be challenges to the idea of 'expertise' and doubts over those that hold it. Thus for Beck, the breakdown of scientific authority can result in 'ideologies and prejudices' (1992: 169) gaining authority, with newfound abilities to use scientific knowledge to support partisan positions. New sources of knowledge have in practice been criticised for a lack of objectivity, theoretical knowledge and certified expertise (Funtowicz and Ravetz 1993: 752-753). Thirdly, controversy increases: the social and ethical dimensions of risk issues, especially when framed as urgent, leads to contestation between social groups (Funtowicz and Ravetz 1990: 7-11; 1993: 741-753). In particular, as experts from different professional backgrounds as well as non-experts and the wider public come together to build knowledge on particular risks, struggles emerge over how to define and approach problems (Lupton 2013: 43-48). With politics and values intimately involved in discussions, Beck argues that conflict is inevitable, with 'competing rationality claims' (1992: 30) coming from a 'contradictory babble of scientific tongues' (1992: 169). For Wells, the range of expertise involved can stall the resolution of debates and, further, controversy is likely especially if the 'expertized public' is being criminalised since they have both knowledge and interest in the debate (Wells 2011: 236-7). In general then, on issues that are marked by complexity and uncertainty, the trends discussed in Chapter 2 in the way that expertise is conceptualised and attributed, and conflict regarding claims to credible knowledge in expert communities, are echoed and amplified. While the thesis examines how these dynamics apparent in attempts at risk management more broadly manifest themselves in radicalisation expertise, the following two sections

take a step back to examine the uncertain and contested nature of radicalisation knowledge.

4.2 Limitations to the evidence base on radicalisation

4.2.1 The fundamental limitations to terrorism knowledge

there are known knowns; there are things we know we know. We also know there are known unknowns; that is to say we know there are some things we do not know. But there are also unknown unknowns - the ones we don't know we don't know (Rumsfeld, cited in BBC 2006)

This well-known quote from Donald Rumsfeld, ex-US Secretary of Defence, draws attention to one of the central sources of terrorism-related fear: the idea that there are threats 'out there' that we are not and cannot be aware of and thus cannot prevent. This was expressed by the Irish Republican Army in 1984 with their statement: 'Today we were unlucky, but remember we only have to be lucky once. You will have to be lucky always' (cited in Taylor 2001: 265). As discussed in Chapter 4.1, risk society theorists have argued that modern life is permeated by such uncertainty - that the dark side of the precedence of reflection and reason over tradition is our profound recognition that the knowledge on which we act is tentative (Giddens 1990: 36-45). Terrorism can bring this modern condition to the fore: Beck (2002) argues that a terrorist act can undermine social trust by contributing to public fear of an unquantifiable, uncertain and uncontrollable world. It can create a fear of future attacks and highlight a society's vulnerabilities, creating 'a belief that the population is at continual risk of attack without warning' (Denney 2005: 136). The dread that can arise when faced with an unknown threat can be detrimental to social relations and result in lobbying for increased security, alongside anger at government and its ability to prevent attacks (Ross 2007: 106-110). Bakker and van Zuijdewijn (2015) for example describe foreign fighters as a 'low probability, high-impact threat' in that while their physical threat is low, they have created fear, contributed to the heightening of Islamophobia and influenced the policy agenda. Tied into the idea of 'new terrorism', there is the fear of threats developing, particularly in terms of the use of chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear weapons (Khan et al. 2001; Koblenz 2011). Thus in the absence of certainty, and despite low probabilities of terrorist attack (Sunstein 2003), the fear of a constant, imminent and deadly threat is a

powerful element in contemporary characterisations of terrorism as a policy problem.

The fear is that terrorism is essentially unmeasurable: attacks are not always possible to anticipate or detect. 'Crime science' attempts to predict the risks, with little success in understanding the relevant variables (McCulloch and Pickering 2009: 635). Risk assessments are usually calculated in terms of threat (intent and ability) plus vulnerability (probability of success) and consequences (magnitude, plus damage, minus any counter measures) (Koblentz 2011: 502-3). Within measurements of each of these factors however, there is a degree of uncertainty. Chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear terrorism is particularly problematic, and expert risk assessments run the full gamut of possible conclusions (Koblentz 2011). In practice, policy makers report uncertainties as to the extent and nature of the problem and acknowledge the 'unknowns' as challenges for intelligence agencies (Mottram 2007: 48). A lack of language and cultural knowledge hinders understanding of Islamist terrorism for example, while more general limits are acknowledged in terms of the predictive powers of social and behavioural science methods (Rudner 2007: 198-201). While forecasting is possible for phenomena like natural disasters, where previous patterns can be used to identify potential futures, this ability is limited by the roles of decision making and context in terrorism (Sinai 2007: 32-3, 44-5). Further, the sporadic nature of events makes probability analysis difficult, in contrast to areas like public health that often produce identifiable patterns (Spencer 2006). Amoore (2014: 13) argues that the demand for prediction and the desire to make 'all potential futures knowable' however, even with this uncertainty and incomplete data, calls for the inclusion of speculation and imagination in risk calculations. Clearly the problem should not be overstated: social science can make general forecasts as to for example the likelihood and potential location of attacks as well as general trends in techniques (Sinai 2007: 44-5). However, this 'unknown', as a factor that is vital to decision making but impossible to investigate, adds a thick layer of uncertainty to analysis and policy making in this area.

Some authors have questioned the construction of uncertainty and unknowns in terrorism studies. Daase and Kessler (2007: 412) argue that the fourth category of Rumsfeld's knowledge and non-knowledge is 'unknown knowns', or 'the knowns we don't want to know'. This is

knowledge that is ignored, denied or downplayed because it disrupts or challenges the accepted narrative. Jackson (2012) similarly defined 'unknown knowns' in terms of knowledge that exists but is unacknowledged or not engaged with by analysts. This may be knowledge from inside the field that challenges orthodox understandings, for example that politics and policy are central to radicalisation, or knowledge from outside the field, for example from other disciplines or professions, that is judged to be inferior or 'unscientific'. These types of knowledge and non-knowledge, for Daase and Kessler, are formative in how terrorism is perceived and counter-terrorism strategies formulated and justified. On top of this, Zulaika (2012) argues that post-9/11, terrorism is framed as fate rather than the outcome of particular social and political situations, which necessitates pre-emption and undermines evidence-based causal analysis. These factors feed into what Jackson (2015) calls an 'epistemological crisis' in counter-terrorism. This involves claims by officials and experts regarding the inevitability of future terrorism attacks, our inability to predict them, our lack of knowledge of terrorism, as well as a desire to act in the face of these unknowns. In this situation, Jackson argues that the relevance of our existing knowledge is denied, terrorists' own explanations are ignored and instead we focus on the unknowns and use our imaginations to guide counter-terrorism efforts, including counter-radicalisation. The question arising out of this for the present thesis then is not only how expertise is established given the fundamental limitations to knowledge in the area, but also, given the denial of knowledges involved in 'unknown knowns', what types of expertise on radicalisation are downplayed in this way and the ways by which this is done.

4.2.2 The evidence base of radicalisation studies

Alongside these discussions of the status of knowledge on terrorism, there is an extensive literature on the nature of the evidence base within terrorism studies itself. A fairly typical observation comes from Horgan (2008: 73): 'It is unfortunate that much academic research on terrorism, despite (or perhaps because of) its often prescriptive nature, remains often uninformed, skewed in nature but perhaps most significantly, often unsupported by empirical enquiry'. Thus it is argued that there are few terrorism scholars with close field contact through for example terrorist literature or interviews (Ranstorp 2007: 5-8): instead of empirical research, the field has tended to produce normative analysis (Schulze 2004) and

literature reviews (Silke 2007: 79-80), and theories of terrorism are mainly developed and tested through secondary and tertiary data sources (Horgan 2008: 74). The nature of the topic in terms of its secretive, violent, contemporary, infrequent and changing nature is said to entail difficulties in conducting primary research, for example in gaining access to sources and judging their objectivity and reliability (Schuurman and Eijkman 2013: 3-5), as well as dealing with the risks of fieldwork (Orsini 2013; Toros 2008: 286-9). Commentators frequently point to analytical deficiencies in the field: most research is exploratory and not explanatory and thus restricts theoretical development (Silke 2007: 78). There is a preponderance of one-off studies from writers with a 'mercenary interest' (Sageman 2014: 569) who do not contribute to the discipline long-term (Ranstorp 2007: 5-8) and are not grounded in previously-generated knowledge, with only a minority of studies contributing new knowledge (Silke 2001: 12-13). Knowledge is created in disciplinary silos (Ranstorp 2007: 5-8), often to serve short-term policy interests (Silke 2001: 1-3) and with a focus on the contemporary over the historical (Duyvesteyn 2007). Finally, reviews find that there has been little insight generated from few evaluation activities in counter-terrorism (Lum, Kennedy and Sherley 2008; Van Um and PISOIU 2014: 240). Evaluations tend to focus on implementation rather than outcomes, on a limited range of countries and policies, and rarely reach cross-study agreement on effectiveness (Brzoska 2016; Van Um and PISOIU 2014: 230-232). The meaning of policy success is contested and problems of attribution common in evaluation research are amplified in this data-poor, complex and context-bound topic (Hegemann and Kahl 2015: 201-3; Van Um and PISOIU 2014: 233-235, 237-240). Of course this characterisation of terrorism studies is not without contention: Schmid (2014) argues that the field has generally improved since its post-9/11 growth, and Stern (2014) points out that an inability to understand and predict terrorism is no different to the challenges faced by other fields that study individual decision making. However, the refrains of evidential failure from those inside the field are long-discussed, and radicalisation research is situated within this evidentially sparse landscape.

In this context, radicalisation can be seen as an archetypal wicked problem (Rittel and Webber 1973). It is characterised by most researchers as a complex process that involves many factors, resulting in individualised pathways (Neumann 2013: 874-6; Vidino and Brandon 2012: 169-171). A leaked MI5 report for example, based on classified research by the

Behavioural Science Unit, highlighted the diversity of those radicalised and the lack of any clear individual profile or universal pathway (Travis 2008 a, b). In one research review, the only standard trait of radicalised individuals identified was 'men in their twenties'; the conflicted nature of the research field, the authors argued, highlighted the individual nature of radicalisation (McGilloway, Ghosh and Bhui 2015: 49). A Home Affairs Committee inquiry noted the lack of a demographic profile of individuals that become radicalised: 'Rashad Ali, of the counter-radicalisation organisation Centri, concluded that "I don't think there is a typical profile ... It actually could be anybody"' (Home Affairs Committee 2012: 9). This complexity relates to a fundamental limitation of radicalisation studies. Norman Bettison, the former Association of Chief Police Officers lead for Prevent, for example, argues that no knowledge on radicalisation factors and processes can 'enable the identification of the terrorist in waiting' (2009: 131). Profiling or prediction on an individual level is widely agreed to be futile (Kundnani 2012: 21-22; Patel 2011: 8-9). Clearly this does not trivialise the knowledge produced by the field: an expert group in radicalisation emphasised that it is possible to build profiles of typical pathways and create various ideal 'types', each with different backgrounds, motivations, and group roles (European Commission's Expert Group on Violent Radicalisation 2008: 10-13). However, the inability to predict and profile does present fundamental issues in the knowledge base of Prevent as a policy that seeks to work in anticipation of future events, rooting out and intervening with specific individuals before they pose an actual threat.

Research reviews on radicalisation frequently identify specific problems in the data generated by the field. A Home Affairs Committee inquiry into radicalisation stated: 'The weakness of the evidence base came across strongly during our inquiry' (Home Affairs Committee 2012: 10). One problem is a general lack of evidence. A literature review by Bouhana and Wikstrom (2011: 13-14) for example found that only 55 out of 16, 582 relevant documents used primary data, and that, in addition, normal quality thresholds of systematic review would result in zero studies included. This situation stands in contrast to the apparent certainty of many radicalisation models: as King and Taylor (2011: 603) state, 'Many theories purport to describe the exact stages involved in the radicalization process, yet paradoxically, very little empirical data exists on the psychology of those who become radicalized'. Models of radicalisation suffer from a lack of both theoretical orientation and empirical testing, entailing a general uncertainty

regarding their accuracy (Borum 2011a: 15; Borum 2011b: 37-8, 43). This situation has inevitably created gaps in knowledge. The relationship between violent and non-violent extremism in far-right violence for example, is a particular concern (Goodwin, Ramalingam and Briggs 2012) and on the radicalisation of homegrown 'jihadists' in general, King and Taylor (2011) conclude that there is not enough evidence to substantiate any existing theory. On de-radicalisation, Elshimi (2015: 208-211) notes a preponderance of hypotheses but little evidence. Clearly there is some empirical work on radicalisation, using for example biographical information, document or media analysis or interviews, particularly with former terrorists, non-violent extremists or professionals (Borum 2011a: 46-55). A key concern of radicalisation researchers however does appear to be the lack of evidence underlying many of their assertions.

At the same time, many point to the problematically narrow focus of the field. In particular, most research is on non-state Islamists in the West (Schmid 2013: 20-22). There is little analysis of historical cases of radicalisation (Della Porta and LaFree 2012: 5). Writers lament the lack of attention to processes of de-radicalisation (Della Porta and LaFree 2012: 5), and one review of the literature found no studies on the extent of radicalisation (Bouhana and Wikstrom 2011: 12). Finally, and despite the participation of many disciplines in studying radicalisation as well as the growth in collaborative work after 9/11 in terrorism studies more widely (Gordon 2010), the lack of actual interdisciplinary (Bouhana and Wikstrom 2011: 1-2; Lynch 2013: 246-7) and collaborative (Neumann and Kleinmann 2013: 369) work is noted. This situation, as described by radicalisation researchers themselves, indicates the limited analytical boundaries of the field.

Amongst the evidence that does exist are said to be multiple methodological problems. Some criticism is focused on social scientific models that posit radicalisation as a number of hierarchical stages (Christmann 2012: 10-22). Sageman is particularly critical of their lack of testing; the model developed by analysts in the New York Police Department (Silber and Bhatt 2007) for example is described as 'vague, simplistic, and did not stand up to close empirical scrutiny' (2014: 568-9). A further concern is a tendency for models to rely on case studies of terrorists without reference to those who did not reach that point (De Goede and Simon 2012: 4-6; Schmid 2013: 23-25) and to assume predictability,

embodied in a lack of fluidity, on the basis of such limited data (e.g. Patel 2011: 13-14). The abstract nature of models in general has been argued to illegitimately de-contextualise data in an attempt to achieve standardisation (Lynch 2013: 246-7). Finally, their uncumulative nature, in that a multitude of models exist separately with little reference to each other, is seen as detrimental to knowledge development in the field (King and Taylor 2011: 603).

All of these points relate to wider issues of research design. In particular, radicalisation research is criticised for a preponderance of secondary analysis using sometimes questionable data sources like media accounts (Christmann 2012: 7-9), for employing small samples (Kundnani 2015: 19-21), and for rarely using control groups to examine why a minority radicalise when the majority don't (King and Taylor 2011: 615-8). Neumann and Kleinman found that while a range of primary data is used in the field, the most commonly used source was academic literature (2013: 372-4). In terms of the quality of the field, they report a mixed picture: for example, they judged 46% of studies to have high empirical value but 29% low, with no primary data used. They explained the persistence of weak research by the relatively high levels of government funding with its associated short time frames and lack of peer review. They also referred to the unestablished nature of radicalisation research, a recurring theme in the thesis, with its lack of cohesion and consolidation that led to issues including a preponderance of temporary researchers, the lack of a central journal and the participation of many disciplines (2013: 377-9). Finally, they discuss the inherent difficulty of fieldwork, and particular problems include the small number of cases of violent radicalised individuals that are available to study (Bouhana and Wikstrom 2011: 1-2) and the lack of access to classified data (King and Taylor 2011: 615-8). Alongside the problems in prediction and a lack of evidence on radicalisation are then questions regarding the validity and reliability of theories generated on this topic.

A final issue to be examined here is that of the evidence base for counter-radicalisation programmes. The Prevent strategy (Home Office 2011a: 61) states that: 'There is little empirical evidence underpinning intervention work in this area here in the UK and internationally'. One literature review found no 'scientific' evaluations of counter-radicalisation programmes (Bouhana and Wikstrom 2011: 12). Feddes and Gallucci

(2015: 6-7) meanwhile did find 55 evaluations worldwide of counter-radicalisation or de-radicalisation programmes, however only 12% of these reported primary data (11-12) and indeed 37% gave no detail on the methods used (14), leading to the conclusion that there is 'hardly any empirically based evidence of preventive or de-radicalisation interventions' (17). There are a number of problems with evaluating counter-radicalisation efforts. The first is generic to preventive programmes and concerns measuring a negative, or a lack of radicalisation (Mastroe 2016: 51-2). Using substitute indicators of success like a lack of terrorist attacks, a decline in terrorism convictions or a reduction in public fear are criticised as lacking in proof of a causal relationship with Prevent (Kundnani 2015: 36-8; Romaniuk and Fink 2012: 8-11). These problems of attribution are compounded by other difficulties, including in measuring the outcomes of programmes that seek to change attitudes and behaviours (Home Office 2011a: 36-37), in accessing monitoring data, in evaluating long-term change (Mastroe 2016: 51-2), in securing the cooperation of participants, and in the lack of agreed mechanisms for assessing levels of radicalisation (Dawson, Edwards and Jeffray 2014: 31-2, 36-8). A RUSI publication (Dawson, Edwards and Jeffray 2014) based on interviews with counter-radicalisation practitioners found a general consensus that it was difficult to evaluate impact in this area, and that there had been few outcome or impact evaluations conducted. As a result, there is a tendency to focus on outputs (Hirschfield et al. 2012: 41-2; House of Commons 2010: 51-2), indicating a lack of knowledge as to effectiveness. In addition, the complexity of counter-radicalisation, with a plurality of interventions and responsible actors entails difficulties in comparing results (Mastroe 2016: 51-2). There is a potential to learn from evaluation approaches in similar but more established areas like crime prevention, and the UK has sought to improve monitoring and evaluation of Prevent since the 2011 review (Dawson, Edwards and Jeffray 2014: 75-87). However, building an evidence base for counter-radicalisation efforts, in addition to the problems in researching the mechanisms of radicalisation itself, clearly faces multiple difficulties.

In general then there are well-established concerns about the knowledge base of radicalisation theory. As Schmid (2013: 1) states, 'the popularity of the concept of 'radicalisation' stands in no direct relationship to its actual explanatory power regarding the root causes of terrorism'. While research has developed knowledge of relevant individual and contextual

factors and 'empirical generalisations', or the tendencies of radicalised people, a 2011 review found that no models of radicalisation consider causal mechanisms or how and why such factors interact to produce (or not produce) radicalisation (Bouhana and Wikstrom 2011: 1-2). Indeed the role of 'assumptions and generalisations' in filling the gap created by a lack of evidence on definitions, measurements and theories of radicalisation has been noted (Coolsaet 2008: 260-61). In 2009, Bob Quick, while Assistant Commissioner with responsibility for counter-terrorism in the Metropolitan Police, described research on radicalisation as 'uncharted territory' and a key area for improvement in the force (Home Affairs Committee 2009: Q114). Similarly, speaking in 2011, Hazel Blears MP articulated the ignorance surrounding radicalisation, saying that 'I do not think that any of us really understood—we still do not—the many and varied factors that lead people down such a path, that lead them even to contemplate taking such steps' (Hansard 2011: Column 9WH). These quotes echo the tendency within the research community to deny the extent of knowledge on radicalisation. Radicalisation faces then many of the issues associated with understanding contemporary risks: as well as the fundamental complexity and uncertainty, there are difficulties in generating a reliable evidence base and the lack of a clear policy imperative.

Despite these features, there are many voices that claim expertise and contribute to research and debate on radicalisation. Radicalisation studies has been compared to positivistic psychology more generally and accused of suggesting scientific certainty (Coppock and McGovern 2014: 248). One literature review (King and Taylor 2011: 616) states that:

Unfortunately, these limitations [*i.e. limitations in knowledge of radicalisation factors and processes*] have not been properly communicated. The claims made by theorists have entered government and public discourses on terrorism in the West, and the factors and processes involved have acquired an air of certainty.

The authors call for acknowledgment of the inherent limitations of knowledge in this area, given the lack of empirical evidence and the subsequent difficulties in understanding the process (King and Taylor 2011: 615-8). Such limits to the evidence base however have implications for the foundation of radicalisation expertise. In particular, they raise questions as to the alternative ways by which expertise is demonstrated, judged and

denied. The available evidence has also given rise to a variety of interpretations, to which the thesis now turns.

4.3 Diversity and contestation in radicalisation theory

This section examines radicalisation theory in the context of complex and uncertain knowledge. It introduces the radicalisation research field and examines challenges to the official theory of radicalisation that was discussed in Chapter 3. Radicalisation theory is a large and diverse area of literature and this section does not aim to review it. Instead, it draws on conceptual pieces and literature reviews to give an overview of the main lines of debate in the field. The argument will be made that many of those who study radicalisation believe that the concept is by no means clear and unequivocal and that it is a highly contested field of research.

4.3.1 The fragmented nature of radicalisation research

The topic of radicalisation encompasses a range of areas and types of research. Indeed Dalgaard-Nielsen (2010: 798) describes the research field as 'dynamic and somewhat messy'. There are various sub-topics that can provide a focus of research and discussion at particular times (Bakker 2015: 283). Producers of radicalisation knowledge are situated in a range of disciplines and use a variety of methodologies and theoretical frameworks (Borum 2011a: 8; Della Porta and LaFree 2012: 5). Monaghan and Molner (2016: 3-5) for example argue that the latter correspond to three main themes: cognitive, social networks and narratives. The contributing disciplines meanwhile are mainly in the social sciences and include political science and sociology, plus psychology, history and philosophy (Monaghan and Molner 2016: 3-5; Neumann and Kleinmann 2013: 370). Social psychologists contribute knowledge on, for example, group dynamics and conflict situations (Borum 2011a: 820-22; King and Taylor 2011: 604). Other researchers use for example social movement theory for its insights into why groups in particular contexts begin to use violence (Della Porta and LaFree 2012: 6) and the role of networks in recruitment and socialisation to beliefs (Borum 2011a: 816-20). Empirical studies on particular radicalised individuals meanwhile are said to be useful for analysing the variety in trajectories to the use of violence (Dalgaard-Nielsen 2010: 806-9). Following the 2001 attacks in the US, when scholars sought to explain an apparently new and urgent type of homegrown, 'jihadist' terrorism that was emerging, this diversity of approaches was reconceptualised as relating to radicalisation and the different areas of work

began to converge around that concept (Neumann and Kleinman 2013: 362-4). Reflecting the emergence of the concept in policy, practice and public debate as discussed in Chapter 3.2.1, a bibliography compiled of radicalisation and de-radicalisation literature found that most literature had been published since 2001 and especially since 2005 (Schmid and Price 2011).

This disciplinary and topical variation is similar to terrorism studies. The field had early roots in counter-insurgency studies, and included the transfer of some personnel, literature and ideas (Stampnitzky 2013: 60-66). In the UK the field became particularly active, with increased funding and research activity, following 9/11 (Wilkinson 2007: 316-19), and the discipline in general witnessed a growth in large-scale, complex projects by teams of researchers over the same time period (Silke 2007: 78-79). Terrorism studies is also multidisciplinary (Sinai 2007: 32-3). Although led by political science and international relations, a range of other social sciences are involved (Wilkinson 2007: 316-19), and following 9/11 there was a growth in contributions from science, medicine and technology, and computer science in particular (Gordon 2010). Sageman (2014: 565) defines the key question of the field as, 'What leads a person to turn to political violence?', and, similar to the sub-field of radicalisation studies, most research is now on Islamist groups: this increased through the 1990s and especially after 9/11 (Silke 2007: 83-5). However, the field is characterised as 'fragmented' by Gordon (2010) who cites evidence that its articles are published in a range of discipline-specific journals, that papers from social science and science form two separate literatures and rarely cite one another, and that a whole range of sub-topics exist with each their own literature and scholarly activities.

As suggested by previous research on terrorism expertise and observations on radicalisation experts discussed in Section 2.3.1, radicalisation research is not confined to university departments and research centres. There is substantial interest from think tanks and governments: Neumann and Kleinman's analysis of a database of radicalisation publications for example found that 29% were published in non-academic outlets (2013: 369-70). Think tanks have produced a number of research-based reports on cross-cutting issues, including the Change Institute's research on the role of ideology in radicalisation (Change Institute 2008) and Demos' comparative study of violent and non-violent

radicalisation (Bartlett, Birdwell and King 2010), as well as on particular topics like RAND's work on the role of the internet in radicalisation (von Behr et al. 2013) and the Institute for Strategic Dialogue's work in partnership with King's College London on women and ISIS (Saltman and Smith 2015).

Corresponding to the variety of attempts to understand radicalisation, a range of explanations have been produced by the field. In general, and reminiscent of debate on the causes of terrorism more broadly (McAllister and Schmid 2011), there is a lack of agreement on the factors and processes involved (Richards 2011: 143). An expert group on radicalisation highlighted the diversity by stating that: 'Global, sociological and political drivers matter as much as ideological and psychological ones' (European Commission's Expert Group on Violent Radicalisation 2008: 7). Other authors have classed the factors in terms of micro and macro, or internal and external (Bakker 2015: 5-6), structural and personal (Vidino and Brandon 2012: 169-171), individual and situational (King and Taylor 2011: 614-5) or environmental (Bouhana and Wikstrom 2011: 3-4). Some highlight the importance of change or crisis, followed by reflection and the subsequent seeking of new environments and belief systems in increasing susceptibility to violent extremism (Bouhana and Wikstrom 2011: 23-34; Travis: 2008a, b). Hörnqvist and Flyghed (2012) meanwhile identify two main lines of argument in the literature: radicalisation as the result of either culture and values or of socio-economic exclusion and injustice. This diversity of explanations is not just a national issue: Bossong (2012: 8-10) argues from the perspective of EU policy networks that evidence on radicalisation is complex, contentious and cannot be easily translated into action. The centrality of formal organisations in recruitment for example is particularly controversial (King and Taylor 2011: 612-4). In general then researchers have formulated a diverse host of theories on radicalisation in terms of the factors and processes involved.

These accounts suggest that radicalisation has a heterogeneous evidence base. These fragmented structures of knowledge production in turn indicate a diverse expert community that has produced a range of substantive conclusions as to the research problem. Indeed, the nature of radicalisation itself is highly contested, and the following sub-sections highlight key conceptual and theoretical areas of debate and criticisms of the official version of radicalisation theory.

4.3.2 Conceptual debates

While radicalisation research forms a central line of inquiry in terrorism studies, the focus of radicalisation experts' inquiry is not easily demarcated. While often described as 'new', Della Porta and LaFree (2012: 6) state that the term 'radicalisation' has been in use since the 1970s to describe changes in the type and level of violence used in conflicts (Della Porta 1995). In its contemporary usage however, radicalisation presents a framework for explaining terrorism. Even this description is not straightforward: it has been described as a new manifestation of ongoing debates on the root causes of terrorism (Neumann 2008: 3-4), but also differentiated from research that investigates the causes of terror more widely (Schmid 2013: 19). Its remit has been described as 'what goes on before the bomb goes off' (Neumann 2008: 4); the general nature of this term indicates an issue that is discussed by Bouhana and Wikstrom (2011: 1-2) as the vague 'boundaries' of the subject, with multiple interchangeable, and poorly defined key concepts. The literature has for example been characterised as asking why, and also partly how, radicalisation happens (Borum 2011a: 14), although there are those that take the opposite approach with Bouhana and Wikstrom (2011: 3-4) characterising their approach as interested in the how (mechanisms) rather than the why (motivations). These discussions indicate a topic area that is not well-established.

At the same time, there is no clear, agreed-upon definition of radicalisation (Schmid 2016). As Coolsaet (2010: 869-70), a member of the European Network of Experts on Radicalisation (ENER), states: 'the more research was produced on the issue of radicalisation, the clearer it became that the very notion of radicalisation was ill-defined, complex and controversial'. Some definitions refer explicitly to religious causes, as in: 'radicalisation means when individuals use religion to justify the use or threat of serious violence' (Abbas and Siddique 2012: 124). Some focus on cognitive radicalisation, for example: 'the process whereby people become extremists' (Neumann 2013: 874) or 'the process of developing extremist ideologies and beliefs' (Borum 2011a: 9-11). Others refer explicitly to violence, describing radicalisation as 'a process leading towards the increased use of political violence' (Della Porta and LaFree 2012: 5), 'the psychological transformations that occur among Western Muslims as they increasingly accept the legitimacy of terrorism in support of violent jihad

against Western countries' (King and Taylor 2011: 603), 'the process by which an individual acquires the propensity to engage in acts of terrorism' (Bouhana and Wikstrom 2011: 6) or 'socialisation to extremism which manifests itself in terrorism' (European Commission's Expert Group on Violent Radicalisation 2008: 7). These divergent definitions reflect different conceptualisations of the actors, processes and end points of radicalisation.

Overall then, and reflective of the policy situation, there are a range of academic definitions of radicalisation (Schmid 2013: 17-19): variations occur in terms of reference to attitudes or action, individuals or groups, and political violence or terrorism (European Commission's Expert Group on Violent Radicalisation 2008: 5-7). In addition, one literature review argued that there is a tendency to use the terms radicalism, extremism and terrorism interchangeably (Schmid 2013: 11). Similarly, Elshimi (2015: 208-211) found that the meaning of 'de-radicalisation' was unclear in the literature and amongst experts, was commonly conflated with others including 'counter-radicalisation' and 'disengagement', and contained a variety of meanings particularly around cognitive or behavioural aspects. Further, there is a lack of conceptual clarity: Lynch (2013: 241) argues that the field is 'conceptually and chronologically immature'. In particular, the scope of radicalisation is undefined: there is no clear differentiation between who is radicalised and who is not (Richards 2011: 144-6). This confusion has been explained by the variety of contexts across which the term is in use, including security and law enforcement, foreign policy and integration, all of which have different conceptualisations of the problem (Sedgwick 2010: 485-90). In general then there is a lack of agreement on the meaning of the unifying term of the field.

This is similar to the situation in the wider field of terrorism studies. 'Terrorism' lies in the tradition of 'essentially contested concepts' (Gallie 1955). Its nature is such that its meaning can be interpreted in different ways by different stakeholders. There is no internationally agreed definition (Schmid 2011: 40) and instead we have a plethora of definitions and non-definitions from various academic and policy sources (Dedeoglu 2003: 88-93). The actions that should be included and excluded, and the importance of motivations or objectives, are key areas of contention (Schmid 2011). 'Lone wolf' or 'self-motivated' terrorism for example is defined in a number of ways, using a range of terms, and this flexibility leads to difficulties in tracking patterns and developing theory (Spaaij and Hamm 2015: 168-171).

Many analysts deny the possibility of objectively defining terrorism and instead point to its subjective, moral and political character. It has been argued that 'terrorism' is a politicised term, generally reflective of the speaker's political agenda and used to delegitimise enemies, and that it changes over time reflecting historical situations (Butko 2009: 189-190). Discourse analyses, primarily from the sub-discipline of Critical Terrorism Studies and its forebears, contribute to this line of inquiry, with authors pointing to politicised usage of terms like 'Islamic terrorism' and 'retaliation' (e.g. Chomsky 1991; Jackson 2007a), and others questioning the ontological basis of 'terrorism' itself – whether it is a useful or meaningful category (Zulaika 1991). Neither radicalisation nor its associated terms can then be defined clearly or unequivocally, lending the boundaries of the topic area a flexibility that suggests implications for the definition of relevant expertise.

4.3.3 Theoretical debates

Mirroring these definitional debates, the idea that radicalisation is an individual process of adopting an extreme ideology leading to violence, the central tenet of UK counter-radicalisation policy, is highly contested. This disagreement is linked to whether radicalisation is primarily cognitive (involving beliefs) or behavioural (involving violence), and the nature of the relationship between the two. It is characterised by Neumann (2013: 873-4) as the central debate in the field, creating a 'faultline' that leads to different definitions of radicalisation and internationally divergent policy responses. The purpose here is not to give an in-depth review of the extensive literature that analyses the nature of radicalisation but to present a summary of these issues with a view to highlighting their contested status.

One view, often referred to as 'conveyor belt' theory, posits that non-violent extremism is a key component of radicalisation, and that there is a causal relationship between extreme beliefs and violence. As discussed in Section 3.2, this perspective became more influential the latest version of CONTEST (Arenes 2014: 64-7, 70). Indeed Kundhani argues that radicalisation research has orientated itself around not explaining terrorism, but answering the question of 'why do some individual Muslims support an extremist interpretation of Islam that leads to violence' (2015: 14). Thus radicalisation theory focuses on dangerous ideas and possible exposure to them, examining the reasons for their acceptance (Heath-Kelly 2013: 397-402). The idea has been promoted in particular by

think tanks, including Quilliam, Policy Exchange and the Centre for Social Cohesion, and has led to a variety of policy recommendations including curbing the communication of extremism and promoting moderate Islam (Arenes 2014: 64-7; Kundnani 2015: 16-18). Usama Hasan of the Quilliam Foundation, set up as 'the world's first counter-extremism think tank' (Quilliam 2015) and engaging extensively in public and policy debates on radicalisation in the UK, for example stated to the Home Affairs Select Committee that 'it is all down to ideology - extreme ideology [...] That is what changes people who are otherwise peaceful' (Home Affairs Committee 2015a: at 16:18:26). Academic work meanwhile has argued that the propagation of ideology can provide role models, motivate individuals, bring groups together, and justify violence (European Commission's Expert Group on Violent Radicalisation 2008: 14-17). Schmid (2014: 14-24) argues that cognitive and behavioural extremism are intimately connected, with extreme beliefs both a threat to democracy and potentially rapidly developing into violent actions. Within this broad approach there are of course a range of views, some more nuanced than others. Neumann (2013: 879-885) for example states that it is a complex and difficult topic, maintaining that while there may be a range of reasons for participation in violence and different levels of ideological commitment, political beliefs remain inseparable from action and thus an important part of the analysis. It should be noted, as Neumann (2013: 879-81) points out, that few would argue that ideology is the only factor or that there is a clear and linear relationship between beliefs and violence. However, one side of the debate clearly places great emphasis on the role of beliefs in motivating violence.

The role of ideology in radicalisation has however been challenged on a number of grounds. The official narrative is criticised for constructing simplistic understandings of extremism: it employs binary oppositions of 'extreme' and 'moderate'; conflates 'extremists' with 'terrorists'; ignores the relative nature of definitions of extremism; and sidelines the multifarious reasons that groups adopt or reject violence over time (Hamilton-Hart 2005: 310-14; Jackson 2007a: 401-2). It is argued that ideological commitment often comes late, if at all, in the radicalisation process (Schmid 2013: 26-28). Indeed the non-necessity of ideology to violent radicalisation is emphasised (Borum 2011a: 9-11). Della Porta and LaFree (2012: 6-8) for example argue that while they are connected, views and actions are not reliant on each other. It has been argued that causality has not been proven (Kundnani 2012: 21-22): indeed it is false to assume that extreme

beliefs lead to violent action since not all radicals are terrorists and some terrorists are not radical, committed ideologues (Neumann 2013: 878-9). Richards (2015: 373) states that most terrorism studies academics agree that non-violent extremism cannot be a cause of terrorism: if ideology is a cause, then it must refer to violence and so by definition is violent. The European Commission's Expert Group on Violent Radicalisation (2008: 14-17) reached agreement that ideology is not always relevant and that other factors are necessary.

Similar lines of thought are found within state institutions: a leaked MI5 report for example found that ideology was important but not sufficient to radicalisation, which was normally the result of choice rather than 'brainwashing' (Travis 2008a, b). A leaked civil service document (Gilligan 2010) denied the link between Islamism and terrorism, claiming that conveyor belts were not realistic, that ideology is not the only factor, and that non-violent extremism may in fact reduce the likelihood that violence is used through allowing the expression of views. Indeed an inquiry by the Communities and Local Government Select Committee criticised the Government for its focus on ideology to the detriment of wider social, economic and political factors (Communities and Local Government Committee 2010: 25-34). Research in Muslim communities has found similar positions, with participants in one study arguing that even supporting violent groups does not indicate a willingness to join in or a sharing of all beliefs (Kuhle and Lindekilde 2012: 1611-20). Overall, these arguments seek to complexify the radicalisation process, highlighting its irreducibility to a universal central cause and adopting explanations that avoid simplifying the link between attitude and action, and bring in rational choice and agency (Kuhle and Lindekilde 2012: 1611-20; Kundnani 2015: 14-15).

In addition to criticising the focus on ideology, dominant conceptualisations of radicalisation are criticised for their level of analysis. Models of radicalisation as well as counter-radicalisation policies tend to focus on the individual. This is in contrast to terrorism studies historically (Kundnani 2015: 14-15): in radicalisation studies, the focus is on individual psychology and theology (Kundnani 2012: 13-18), while the ideology and the group are secondary and the social and political context is downplayed (Della Porta and LaFree 2012: 6; Schmid 2016: 27; Sedgwick 2010: 480). Political and historical causes are overshadowed by personal experiences and frustrations which necessitate concern and care for vulnerable

individuals (De Goede and Simon 2012: 14-16). While some analyses focus on local political grievances, again these are often reduced to the level of the individual as macro frustrations become 'pathological' (Hamilton-Hart 2005). Various explanations have been given for this focus on the micro rather than the macro. For some, it reflects wider trends towards the 'psychologisation of social problems' (Coppock and McGovern 2014: 246) or neo-liberal risk management, where the individual nature of the process renders it amenable to control (Kuhle and Lindekilde 2012: 1607-8). For example, Kundnani argues that the focus on individual psychology as well as religious ideology as the main causes allows modellers to identify indicators and build simplistic and predictive models (2012: 8-11). Others relate it to the nature of the subject matter: the reluctance to study root causes for fear of excusing terror partly led to the enthusiastic reception of radicalisation and its focus on individual vulnerability and socialisation (Schmid 2013: 2-5). In these accounts, an individual-level focus leads to a partial understanding of radicalisation.

In place of the individual adoption of extremist ideology there are those who argue for increased focus on environmental and political factors. Thus there are calls to acknowledge and analyse the complexity of radicalisation (Schmid 2013: 2-5). Widespread agreement has been claimed that there are many other possible reasons both for joining groups and for using violence (Schmid 2013: 28-9), including local grievances (Jackson 2007a: 412-19), personal relationships (Coolsaet 2008: 261-2) and wider sub-cultures or cultures (Crone 2016: 597-9). Others highlight the nature of radicalisation as a 'process of interaction' (Della Porta and LaFree 2012: 6-8), emphasising the political context in terms of decisions made by groups and states as actors in a struggle, or the dynamics of a conflict situation (Kundnani 2015: 22-25). Research conducted in British Muslim communities reached similar conclusions: participants downplayed religious factors and believed that radicalisation was caused by a range of political and social factors including exclusion and discrimination (Abbas and Siddique 2012). Just as these authors call for inclusion of a range of explanatory factors in radicalisation theory, they argue that analysis should go beyond individual level analysis to create a more holistic understanding of radicalisation.

The dominant model of radicalisation in the UK, as expressed in *CONTEST* and *Prevent*, is therefore highly contested. There is a lack of

agreement on basic concepts and a plethora of theorised explanations. As Hegemann and Kahl (2016) argue, evidence-based policy making faces difficulties on this this topic, 'for which there is no authoritative knowledge' (3); it is a topic that lacks a consensual, established evidence base, and that is conceptually and politically contested. The role of the media and policy in radicalisation debates lends a visibility and urgency to these discussions. At the same time, radicalisation theory is rooted in a number of different areas of knowledge. Such a heterogeneous and contested field of knowledge provides a good arena in which to study the mechanics of experts vying for attention and authority.

4.4 Conclusion

This chapter has framed radicalisation in terms of complex and uncertain risk. Complexity is often considered a difficulty for social policy, limiting the potential for evidence to inform decision making and likely stimulating a range of claims to relevant knowledge. It was argued that risk engenders uncertain knowledge: it cannot be objectively understood or fully known. In this context, research has indicated a decline in the authority of scientific experts, a pluralisation of expertise, and conflict between these disparate knowledge claims. The thesis examines how these dynamics are manifested in radicalisation expertise.

The chapter has indicated that radicalisation presents a pertinent case of these dynamics, and a critical case for examining the credibility contests (Gieryn 1999) discussed in Chapter 2.2. It drew together observations of the uncertain evidence base in this area, and the thesis contributes an analysis of how expertise is warranted in these conditions, and in particular how credible expertise is claimed and denied. At the same time, the review suggested a diverse knowledge base characterised by a lack of consensus; the thesis contributes a detailed account of this pluralism in the UK's radicalisation community. It examines how this theoretical pluralism evident in the literature is expressed in practice in the structure of the radicalisation expert community, and provides a comparative analysis of the positions that are articulated by experts in public debates. The following chapter explains the methodological approach taken to addressing these issues.

Chapter 5: Researching radicalisation expertise

The aim of the research was to explain how credible expertise is established on radicalisation, a topic that is fundamentally uncertain and contested. Part of the research examined how the boundaries of radicalisation expertise are constructed and used to exclude particular types of knowledge. It also sought to understand the immediate context within which radicalisation experts are situated; specifically the structure of the expert community, the commonalities and divergences between experts' substantive perspectives on the issue, and how the findings of the research can be applied to public debates on radicalisation. This chapter will explain and reflect on the research methodology that was designed towards achieving these ends.

Section 5.1 concerns the overall direction and methodology of the study. First, the focus on radicalisation expertise as a case study is explained and justified. Next, the thesis' roots in pluralistic policy analysis and the applicability of frameworks for analysing the substantive perspectives of radicalisation experts are assessed. Finally, the discussion turns to issues of researcher identity in studies of expertise. Section 5.2 focuses on the methods used to address the research questions. First it discusses the use of document analysis to map the perspectives of radicalisation experts. Next, it details the sources that were consulted and the analytical approach that was taken to relevant texts. The use of elite interviews is justified and the interview methods discussed. Ethical issues, particularly around the anonymisation of data from public figures, are raised. Finally, Section 5.3 focuses on the aims and techniques of data analysis.

5.1 Research strategy

5.1.1 Radicalisation expertise as a case study

The research was designed as a case study. Case studies can be defined as 'an in-depth, multifaceted investigation, using qualitative research methods, of a single social phenomenon' (Orum, Feagin and Sjoberg 1991: 2). Focusing in on one area of expertise enabled the specifics of the case to be explored in detail and explanatory factors to be sought, taking into account its 'live' and contemporary nature alongside its context and complexities (Yin 2009: 4-11). Case studies offer the advantage therefore of examining the social world in its natural setting and achieving an in-depth understanding of the worldviews and practices therein (Orum, Feagin and

Sjoberg 1991: 9-12). Indeed, those who have previously studied the construction of expert credibility have noted the importance of studying it in context, since the factors involved and their outcome will differ by case (Gieryn 1999: 14-15; Shapin 1995: 261).

The overall aim of the case study approach is to answer the research questions (see Chapter 1.3) using an appropriate empirical focus, and contribute to the development of theories on the nature of expertise. The aim was not therefore to create conclusions that are statistically generalisable to any population, but instead to contribute to theory-building (Platt 1988: 8-11). In this thesis, radicalisation expertise is of interest not only of itself, but in terms of what it can tell us about the social meaning of expertise more widely. The case has been chosen because of its particular features that illustrate the processes of expertise that are being studied (Silverman 2010: 141): here, the limitations of the evidence base and the high levels of contestation are particularly relevant. A case is one example of a wider phenomenon, and the study must focus on particular processes within the case (Silverman 2010: 138-9): in this thesis, the focus is on how experts conceptualise credible expertise, including the relative relevance of academic and experiential knowledges, and the implications of this for the nature of the expert community and expert debate on radicalisation.

Identifying the boundary of empirical work necessitated the development of preliminary ideas as to what might constitute a 'radicalisation expert'. There is generally no clearly defined pool of experts or elites in any topic area (Littig 2009: 103-4), and there is no pre-defined sampling frame available of UK-based radicalisation experts. The problematic nature of identifying radicalisation experts was particularly apparent in some interviews. One think tank researcher for example was asked:

K: Something else you mentioned before I put the tape on was even if you don't see yourself as an expert in radicalisation, there might be a tendency for other people to, if you know a little bit more than them, there might be a tendency for them to call you an expert. Is that something you've experienced in terms of radicalisation?

9: Well you're here.

There is the suggestion here that I actively constructed the interviewee as an 'expert', by virtue of inviting them to be involved in the research, and in

ignorance of any doubts they might have that this was so. Another interviewee was more forceful in questioning their inclusion in the research. After explaining their position on the role of policy engagement in constituting a radicalisation expert, this academic said:

Now all of this to be honest with you Kate is slightly secondary to what I do. I mean I've done work on extremism for a long time and I talk along with colleagues and others about radicalisation and what it is and so on but I don't really talk about it in the sense that I think you're getting at. I'm not necessarily sure that radicalisation per se is a singular specific process that people can make sense of; I think it's far more fluid than we often think it is. I'm not probably an expert in radicalisation that is consistent with what you're looking at. (21)

Coming halfway through the interview, this reflection demonstrates the difficulties of drawing a clear boundary around the radicalisation expert community. Moreover, in studies on expertise, clearly the approach taken to sampling constructs the results and conclusions in a rather direct way. Echoes of this problem can be seen in policy network analysis, which has been criticised for its difficulty in clearly defining groups and networks in the messiness of policy fields that are not neatly organised into topical silos (Parsons 1995: 184-192). Clearly the boundary of the expert community is not fixed and indeed investigating this boundary was a central motivation for conducting the research.

Initial observations of the topic area suggested that, in practice, a fluid and diverse set of experts contribute to radicalisation debates. Theories of expertise (examined in Chapters 2 and 4) suggested that different types of knowledge may be relevant. The research sought to examine this apparent pluralism; for the purposes of the research then, 'expert' was conceptualised widely. Individuals were considered experts due to their research or experience in the field. Those who claimed knowledge or were attributed expertise in policy making processes or public debates were also included. This approach resonates with Eyal's (2013: 869-70) argument for the value of analysing expertise as distinct from professions (in this case researchers) in order to acknowledge the power of a wider set of actors. In interviews, it soon became clear that many considered radicalisation expertise to be inclusive of experiential knowledge. Overall, this approach enabled consideration and comparison

of where the boundaries of expertise are drawn by the diversity of those who contribute knowledge on the topic.

This approach was markedly different from research on terrorism experts that focuses on the most influential researchers (e.g. Miller and Mills 2009). Similarly, Raphael (2008) has considered how to identify the boundary of terrorism studies and thus the key terrorism experts. He argues that the size and diversity of the expert community entails a need for researchers to construct a rigorous boundary in order to reach authoritative conclusions on the character of terrorism studies. This thesis complements such research on a core set of researchers by contributing an analysis of the broader set of individuals who, in practice, claim knowledge on radicalisation. In addition, previous research on terrorism experts has largely concentrated on researchers, although it has acknowledged the diverse institutional settings of terrorism research and tended to include think tanks, research institutes, the media and government agencies alongside academics (George 1991; Miller and Mills 2009; Reid and Chen 2007; Stampnitzky 2011: 4-5). Herman and O'Sullivan did include journalists, policy analysts and police/military/security agencies in their conceptualisation of a terrorism expert (1990: 142). This thesis follows on most closely from that relatively broad conceptualisation.

An important consideration in studies of expertise is the audience, or arbiter, of expertise. As Shapin (1995: 261) argues, studies of expert credibility need to 'specify the credibility of *what* and *for whom*' (original emphasis). In other words, some definition is needed not only in terms of what claim to knowledge is of interest, but also who the target audience is. Shapin (1995: 268-9) notes that most studies focus on the public credibility of experts' claims, although some look at 'internal' or peer judgement, or judgement between different expert groups, for example disciplines. Other research compares the differential credibility assessments amongst stakeholders (e.g. Berdahl et al. 2016; Yamamoto 2012). Raphael (2008) analyses this issue in his study of terrorism expertise, pointing out the important role that the audience plays in constructing the meaning of expertise. Taking a similar approach to Reid and colleagues (e.g. Reid and Chen 2007), he uses 'peer assessment' as the arbiter of expertise. This entails relying on and examining the judgments of other researchers, rather than the media or policy for example, in attributions of expertise. This thesis adopts a similar approach, with a view to examining how expertise is

constructed within the confines of the community itself. Examining it from this angle, rather than according to an external consumer, or arbiter, of expertise, for example the policy community, affords us insight into internal wrangles over the production of legitimate knowledge. Clearly in this case however, experts come from a range of disciplines, specialisms and institutional backgrounds, and thus 'peer' is defined quite widely, although with the uniting feature of having a claim to authoritative knowledge.

The third empirical boundary concerned the focus of experts' interests. Debates around Prevent cover a range of issues from how to conceptualise the policy problem, through how best to formulate and implement a strategy to deal with it, to the impact or outcomes that it is having. This thesis concentrates on the first of these categories, which includes consideration of the issues that underpin or provide the core philosophy, motivations and focus for Prevent. This can be seen broadly as the nature and causes of radicalisation, although much of the UK debate in this area has focused on the role of extremist ideologies and the people who espouse them, and the analysis reflects this. The final boundaries are more technical. One is the timeframe of concern, which is ongoing from 2003, when Prevent became part of the UK's counter-terrorism strategy. Interviews were conducted between October 2012 and October 2014. Clearly some contextual aspects have changed since this time in terms of policy, the expert community, and public debate around radicalisation, and such points are noted, where appropriate, alongside the findings. The second technical boundary is the geographical location: the thesis is focused on UK-based experts. This was a particularly appropriate locale given the origin and prominence of counter-radicalisation in the UK and the number and range of individuals claiming expert knowledge on radicalisation there. Of course UK-based radicalisation experts are part of a global community, and the research does not aim to act as a representation of other or wider networks. Instead, limiting the scope of the research provided analytical focus and the aim was to understand and explain the nature of this particular community in context.

5.1.2 Investigating a dynamic policy process

The third research question was concerned with mapping the expert community; one objective of this work was to delineate and compare the substantive perspectives on radicalisation contained within. This work drew on two strands of policy analysis: policy network analysis, and the role of

ideas in public policy making. With a theoretical base of pluralism, policy network analysis turns away from the study of formal decision making and institutions to consider the role of diverse sets of actors in policy making. Pluralism has its roots in theories that describe the policy process less in terms of planned strategy and major changes than 'muddling through' or incremental change (Lindblom 1959). Policy making is characterised by competition between groups of actors with divergent interests and beliefs, which seek to get their ideas heard and accepted (Thatcher 1998: 392). Policy change, in turn, is a result of negotiation between a range of actors with differential levels of representation and influence (Lindblom 1959, 1979). The suitability of such an approach to understanding the radicalisation expert community was highlighted in the three vignettes presented in Section 1.1, which described a multiplicity of actors involved in debating theories of the policy problem and how to solve it. Other research has identified the messy and contested nature of the counter-radicalisation policy process (Chapter 3.1.3) and the influence of right wing think tanks on Government thinking (Kundnani 2015: 16-18). Equally, the value of studying radicalisation as a sub-area of terrorism is demonstrated by the recognition within policy network analysis of the specificity of policy processes in particular policy areas (John 1998: 5-8). Of particular interest here are of course competing knowledge-based groups. While there are many different approaches to studying policy networks, the varieties of which can be seen on a continuum from tightly knit and stable policy communities to dispersed and fluctuating issue networks (Marsh and Rhodes 1992), the overall aim is to study the personal or institutional groupings and relationships between actors, within and without government, and how this shapes policy making (Marsh 1998).

The second strand of policy analysis that informs the thesis is the role of ideas in policy making. The focus here is on debate, advocacy, knowledge, beliefs, and contestation in the policy process (Campbell 2002). Part of this line of analysis works within a pluralist framework to detail coalitions of actors that are bound by beliefs and compete to get their ideas heard and accepted (John 1998: 144-166). Fischer and Gottweis (2012) have identified these concerns as part of the 'argumentative turn' in policy analysis, entailing a shift of focus from the assessment of policy options, inputs and outputs to the construction of arguments and competing ideas and the use of tactics of persuasion and negotiation. Equally relevant to the concerns of this thesis are the motivations behind this focus, discussed by

Fischer and Gottweis, of contested policy problems, uncertain knowledge and unpredictable challenges, all features pertinent to radicalisation theory and policy. One particularly relevant manifestation of the ideas approach is found in the agenda setting literature. In a pluralist context, the priorities adopted by policy makers and the public reflect the outcome of competition between groups that seek to shape debates and promote their concerns (Parsons 1995: 125-131). Researchers have analysed a range of tactics employed to do so, including the use of resources, symbols, threats, brokers and direct access to power (Cobb, Ross and Ross 1976) and the conditions necessary for success, for example the visibility of proponents and sympathetic national values (Stone 1989). Such literature provides a background to the thesis not in terms of how issues get on the policy or media agenda per se, but on the competitive processes behind this: specifically, the role that constructions of expertise play in this knowledge battle.

Understanding the shape of the radicalisation expert community required a methodology that brought together the analysis of policy networks and ideas in the policy process. Initially, epistemic communities (Haas 1992) were regarded as particularly appropriate to the concerns of the research due to their focus on knowledge-based actors, and the suitability of this framework materialised as the research was underway. Epistemic communities are groups or networks of professionals with recognised knowledge and authority on a particular topic. They have a shared framing of the policy problem, or a 'common causal paradigm' (Haas and Haas 1995: 260) as well as shared conceptions of legitimate knowledge (Nutley, Walter and Davies 2007: 106-9). Epistemic communities do not necessarily rely on scientific expertise, but may draw on a range of types of knowledge (Davis-Cross 2013). They may be national or international, and formal or informal (Haas 1992: 16-17). Haas (1992: 12-16) argues that epistemic communities are especially likely to appear under conditions of uncertainty, where the nature of problems and the outcome of decisions is unclear, and there is more demand for expert knowledge, features that clearly relate to the area of radicalisation.

For Davis-Cross (2015: 91), epistemic communities can be defined as 'networks of experts who persuade others of their shared norms and policy goals by virtue of their professional knowledge'. This definition highlights the tendency of epistemic communities to be active in agenda setting and pushing for policy change (Antoniades 2003). It also introduces

the theme of conflict and competition. Enabled by their claim to authoritative expertise, epistemic communities tend to be exclusionary; they will attempt to prevent outsiders from joining and other communities from gaining influence (Haas 1992: 17-18). If there is no dominant consensus on a topic, then multiple epistemic communities can form in competition with each other (Davis-Cross 2013: 159; Haas and Haas 1995: 260-262). Stephens et al. (2011) for example study experts in climate change mitigation, arguing that while they have shared beliefs, the size and diversity of the expert community mean that it could be characterised as several epistemic communities. Youde (2005) provides a case study of the response to AIDS in South Africa, arguing that governmental inaction was the result of the policy influence of a counter-epistemic community, or an alternative set of experts. In this case, he shows that there is more than one epistemic community on that particular issue, representing different interpretations of the issue and policy recommendations.

The epistemic communities framework does not however map cleanly onto the radicalisation field. Davis-Cross (2013) characterises epistemic communities as explicitly coordinated and identifiable, often based around particular professions. This is not the case with radicalisation experts, who belong to a more loosely organised and informal field of knowledge, with professions (e.g. academics, ex-extremists) cutting across communities according to their different beliefs. This point is clear from the vignettes presented in Chapter 1.1, where a diversity of actors supported a variety of interpretations of the issues. Following Monaghan's use of the Advocacy Coalition Framework (2011: 68-72), the framework was therefore adapted to encompass actors that can be grouped according to broadly different perspectives on radicalisation and authoritative expertise rather than tightly coherent or stable coalitions; as such, they are termed 'perspectives' rather than 'communities'. Finally, while epistemic communities are usually analysed in terms of their ability to achieve policy change, the approach is applied instead to focus on the nature of groups of radicalisation experts as actors in the policy process.

While the epistemic community framework was regarded as most fitting, others are of course available. One option was discourse coalitions (Hajer 1997), which applies discourse analysis to policy processes, explaining how groups of actors construct problem definitions and compete to get them more widely accepted, and why particular analyses are able to dominate others. This approach has been used for example to analyse the

rebuilding of 'Ground Zero' in New York (Hajer 2005) and constructions of drug-related crime (Stevens 2007b). However, this framework is more concerned with a close analysis of language and a wider diversity of policy actors than is relevant to the research questions here. The Advocacy Coalition Framework (Jenkins-Smith and Sabatier 1994) was more applicable. This approach similarly analyses policy in terms of groups of actors that organise around a set of beliefs and that work to promote those beliefs, and thus influence decision making, in particular policy areas. These beliefs are split into three types, corresponding to how deeply they are held: deep core, or basic values; policy core, or values and priorities in terms of the policy issue; and specific policy preferences. Work in this tradition generally aims to chart coalitions of actors over time and explain changes in their make-up and perspectives as well as their impact on policy. The approach thus integrates the theory of pluralist systems of governance and the power and relationships of policy network theory with a focus on ideas in the policy process (Dowding 1995: 147-50). The approach is adaptable: Monaghan (2011) for example uses it to analyse the nature and use of evidence in the policy process. However, advocacy coalitions are similarly diverse to discourse coalitions, and are bound more by beliefs than a claim to authoritative knowledge (Ullrich 2004: 61-5): given the focus on knowledge-based actors, this makes the Advocacy Coalition Framework less relevant to the thesis. The epistemic communities framework then was used to examine the internal dynamics of the radicalisation community; dynamics that have an impact on the policy process and shape the direction of policy and public discussion.

5.1.3 The place of the researcher in studies of expertise

The thesis' focus on expertise, and its correspondent sample of mainly other researchers, raises methodological issues regarding my position in relation to the research topic and interviewees⁶. These issues speak to wider debates on the insider or outsider status of researchers, discussed in terms of how far researcher identity is considered to correspond with research participants', and the relative merits or disadvantages of this in terms of the knowledge that is generated. Much writing on this is in terms of researching race and ethnicity (e.g. Gunaratnam 2003; Twine and Warren 2000). Terrorism and counter-terrorism researchers have also discussed

⁶ This section reflects on the role played by the researcher in constructing the findings and uses the first person as a tool to support this reflexivity.

such issues. Smyth (2005: 11-12) for example reflects on her work in Northern Ireland, finding that insider/outsider identities are not clear cut; she considered herself an insider in terms of nationality but an outsider in terms of the groups she was researching and her status as an educated researcher. More recently, Ahmed (2016) writes on the role of religious identity in research practice in a political climate where, she argues, interviewees are often suspicious of her motivations. Given the sensitivity of the topic, she felt that being honest in all aspects of her insider/outside identity led to increased trust and openness in participants.

The primary considerations in my research were less about issues of religion or nationality but my position in relation to the expert community that I was studying. Perhaps more relevant then are reflections regarding professional identity; Mercer (2007) for example reflects on conducting research on the universities where she worked. She found that her insider/outsider status was changeable even during interviews, with topics more or less likely to engender feelings of commonality. Bogner and Menz (2009: 58-72) argue that the expert interviewee can perceive the interviewer as fulfilling a number of different roles, including: a 'co-expert'; an expert from a different specialism; a layperson; a superior; a 'potential critic', or an 'accomplice'. In this sense, how the researcher presents themselves and their research has implications for the interview dynamic and types of data generated. Trinczek (2009: 210-11), in his research with managers, argues that when interviewing experts, interviewers should strive to be experts themselves and seek to engage as a legitimate equal rather than a neutral data-gatherer: 'the more an interviewer demonstrates knowledgeability during the interview by giving competent assessments, stating reasons, and raising counterarguments, the more managers in turn will be willing to offer their own knowledge and take a stance on issues' (2009: 211). My approach initially was to study the radicalisation research community from the 'outside'. Similar to Wells (2011: 226), I framed my research questions in terms of understanding a community of which I was not a part, and thus considered my position not to be concerned with contributing to substantive debates on the issue but 'remaining detached' and using the case to study wider questions about expertise. Clearly it is possible for studies of expertise to take a different approach: there is a marked difference here with the research of Salter for example, who has reflected on his role in investigating an expert community from the inside (2013). While studying aviation security in Canada, he worked with the

Canadian Air Transportation Security Authority. This work included, for example, giving lectures, speaking at professional conferences and attending commercial fairs: activities that involved 'immersing myself in the field of practice, learning the daily language, plotting the struggles between agencies and ideas, understanding the deep well of specific commonsense beliefs that constitute the habitus' (2013: 105). He therefore used his academic expertise to gain credibility and become part of the practitioner field, which in turn allowed him greater access for his research and conferred to him a deep contextual knowledge.

In comparison to Salter's position, I was clearly on the outside of my field of interest during the period of research. First, I have no previous experience in the field of terrorism, or radicalisation more specifically. More generally, as a PhD student, I was less qualified in terms of academic credentials than many of my interviewees. In addition, the time that I spent as part of the community that I was studying was relatively minimal: rather than 'participant as observer' with the requisite integration into the community of study alongside research activities, I was more 'observer as participant', with some of my interactions limited to a one-hour interview (in addition of course to engaging with the often copious amounts of material publically available by and on interviewees) (Gold 1958). Perhaps most significantly, and again similar to Wells (2011), my research concerns a contested field of knowledge and indeed focuses on the contestation therein; my aim was to avoid getting embroiled in these debates and instead to study their nature. I sought to maintain not objectivity but neutrality in the sense of speaking to all corners of the debate and mapping all positions as fairly as possible. This stance was designed into the thesis through the research questions, which aimed not to reach any conclusions on the 'true' experts or the 'right' side of the debate, but instead to map and explain how markers of authority are fought over in this particular field. This appeared to be an appropriate stance since my research is not on radicalisation directly. Even with these intentions however, and starting from this position, clearly there is a question over whether this could remain tenable over time as I built knowledge in the area, attended and presented at conferences, developed relationships and of course reached my own position on the relevant debates as well as conclusions in my research. In addition, I was invited twice during the course of the research to give media interviews on particular violent events, and once to brief a UK-wide interest group on the Prevent strategy. More fundamentally, taking radicalisation as

the focus of the research could be seen as endorsing the field or even actively contributing to its construction. Taken together, these factors call into question the extent that I am able to maintain any 'outsider' position and instead I find that, like many of those who discuss researcher identity in other contexts, my insider/outsider status with regards to the radicalisation research field is complicated and liable to fluctuation. It is clearly easier to continue to claim outsider status in terms of the expert community that was the focus of the research, while recognising that I am part of the wider community of those who research and write about the ideas and policies that have developed in the topic area.

5.2 Methods

5.2.1 Using documents to map the perspectives of the radicalisation expert community

Publically available documents were analysed to answer the third research question on the constitution of the expert community and in particular to delineate the four perspectives (presented in Chapter 9.2). Since the focus of the thesis is on an often public-facing expert community, drawing on available secondary data that is created by and reflects its real-life operation was particularly useful (Ritchie 2003: 34-35). While interviews gave direct access to experts' knowledge and beliefs, using 'naturally occurring' documentary data was useful for getting at the practices of the expert community and for building contextual information about the case within which to situate interview findings (Peräkylä and Ruusuvuori 2011: 529). In addition, the four perspectives differ over time in terms of their make-up, positions, relationships with others and so on (John 1998: 69-70), and documents were useful for surveying the breadth and history of the expert community. In this sense, documents were analysed in terms of their content rather than focusing on how they function in the expert community, for example in terms of how they are put together or used (Prior 2011).

Document analysis was carried out throughout the timespan of the research. It involved generating narrative data to provide a rich description of the expert community in practice. This was markedly different from Reid and Chen's (2007) quantitative efforts, based mainly on academic citations, to map the terrorism research community. Drawing on established techniques for identifying actors and mapping perspectives in particular topic areas (Haas 1992: 5-7; Hajer 1997: 65-66; Heath, Fuller and Johnston 2009: 650), documents were sourced through internet searching. Of course,

while the Internet is a good resource for stories, statements and opinions on contemporary events and debates from a range of news, academic, official and advocacy sources, it is clearly important to consider the nature of sources and their purpose and to search widely, using different access methods and search styles (Dochartaigh 2007). Very initial attempts to locate material started with specific internet searches using keywords like 'radicalisation expert' and 'violent extremism*' + 'research interest', as well as searching for contributions from particular known experts. However, the findings were actually generated much more gradually through building knowledge of, and tracing leads from, a variety of sources including relevant research centres, think tanks, official advisory boards, citations in policy documents, delegate lists, publications, speeches, testimonials, public inquiry submissions, interviews, media reports, meeting records, membership lists and blogs. As policy debates came and went, new sources emerged, and existing ones continually became apparent as new lines of thought were followed. The search first concentrated on those experts who were most active, a by-product of finding much of this information online. However, as fieldwork progressed and familiarity with the area was gained, those whose expertise was less visible or who were not immediately identified as a radicalisation expert became apparent. This included those who for example had published less, participated less in public debates, whose primary area of interest was another topic but a theme of their work was radicalisation, or who had informal links with policy makers to provide advice on the topic. While the search widened naturally in this way, the findings are largely limited to the public-facing community of experts, in the sense that the perspectives are built from public profiles and activities.

The objective of this work was to generate a directory of radicalisation experts. The findings are therefore comprised of a list of experts and their institutions, their research and professional interests and activities, positions in radicalisation debates, and their relations with other experts – particularly instances where they voice approval or disdain, agreement or disagreement with others or had worked together, for example on co-publications. The mapping was also concerned with experts' functioning in the wider policy community; any known policy roles, invitations to official inquiries, media interviews and so on. In this sense, the focus was very much on ideas, debates, positions, beliefs and contestation rather than a materialistic analysis of resources, activities or relationships.

This 'directory' acted then as a tool for organising the data, and was subsequently used as a basis for constructing the four perspectives.

Clearly there is a question over the extent to which these methods will give an adequate understanding of the field, based as they are upon both the specific sample of the research project and my interpretation of publically available data. In addition, my understanding was constructed in line with the research questions and its geographical and topical context must be acknowledged (Heath, Fuller and Johnston 2009; Scott 2000: 53-54). An important caveat is that the resultant four perspectives do not suggest a uniform and tightly knit group of actors. They are not formal in that the members do not necessarily work together directly or explicitly support each other either in public or in interviews, although in many cases they do, but instead are bound by their broadly similar views. This is not to say that they agree on everything; there will of course be points of difference between actors despite sharing broadly similar perspectives. In addition, the boundaries between the perspectives are not neatly drawn and there has been engagement across perspectives by experts who may sit on the border of their main grouping or where there is cross-perspective agreement. Further, the boundaries are not fixed, but are affected by definitions of 'expert' and 'radicalisation' alongside shifting issues and affiliations, and their changing and permeable character is recognised. There are also caveats in terms of the organisations and individuals that have been given as examples of those who have articulated each perspective. First, there are experts that are not clearly part of any perspective or whose affiliation is unclear; further, there is diversity within, for example in the levels of activity undertaken. More generally, the constitution of groupings and the relations within and between them have changed over time, and the map therefore presents a summary of the time during which radicalisation expertise has developed and within the scope of the thesis (approximately 2003-2016), rather than a snapshot of a particular time. With these limitations acknowledged, the methods enabled an analysis of the characteristics of the radicalisation expert community.

Similar methods were used to construct the three vignettes that illustrate the operation of radicalisation expertise in practice. This involved online searching for expert commentary on the nature of radicalisation as related to the particular topics. This broad search had the advantage of including resources like blog posts, think tank articles, and other ways by

which experts self-publish. The archives of a selection of media outlets that frequently feature news and commentary on radicalisation were targeted for closer inspection: this included the BBC (BBC n.d.a; BBC n.d.b), the Guardian (The Guardian n.d.a; n.d.b), and the Telegraph (The Telegraph 2013b; n.d.). Specialist resources, for example the transcripts of Home Affairs Committee hearings on Syria (Home Affairs Committee 2014b), were consulted. As in the wider thesis, the focus was on those UK-based individuals who claimed or were conferred specialist knowledge of radicalisation, irrespective of the source of that knowledge.

5.2.2 Textual analysis

In addition to using documents to understand the broad contours of the field, documents formed the basis of a literature review on expertise and a study of the background to the research (Chapters 2, 3 and 4). In terms of the former, the focus was on literature primarily from sociology and political science pertaining to the meaning of expertise, the authority of experts, expertise and risk, and previous research on terrorism expertise. The background to the case of radicalisation expertise meanwhile rests on commentary from radicalisation experts as well as their critical audience on the weak and contested nature of the evidence base. The case is further contextualised through a review of UK counter-radicalisation policy, drawing on documents released between 2003 and 2016, and concentrating particularly on the conceptualisations of radicalisation therein.

A third use of documents was to address research questions one and two on the nature of expertise. This involved analysing a small sample of documents written by or about experts in the field that fairly directly discussed the nature of radicalisation expertise. This work was weighted towards the beginning of the fieldwork period, with the intention of gaining a background understanding to inform the conduct of interviews. The aim was to examine how expertise is substantiated, defined, defended and conferred, and thus authority constructed, in public fora; how such constructions are used by experts to position themselves, i.e. to offer valued analysis and defend substantive arguments, as well as to deny the credibility of the arguments of others; and how experts distinguish themselves from others in the field, with the aim of further informing the four perspectives.

Documents that could most usefully talk to the research questions were sought. The sample consisted of texts that became apparent through

the wider mapping process, and consists mainly of media interventions. Thus the focus was on statements pertaining to the research questions, regarding theories of radicalisation and suggesting themes relating to the nature of expertise. Some documents were of interest because they presented examples of how claims to expertise are expressed or authoritative knowledge described, whilst others gave examples of the grounds on which expert credibility is questioned. Perspectives from across the field, in terms of both positions in substantive debates and the type of knowledge drawn on, and texts from across the timeframe of interest, were sought. Thirteen documents were analysed in this way (see Appendix C). Analysis was attempted on a larger number of documents (twenty); however the final thirteen were regarded as the most relevant and meaningful to the research. Clearly this analysis focused on a minority of documents by a selection of experts. While it provides a reflection of the expert community of interest, it cannot be used to generalise statistically but instead to indicate the types of argumentative methods used by experts in this area.

These texts were analysed qualitatively. The focus was on the texts themselves, and rather than quantifying the appearance of words or ideas (May 1997: 171-174) the aim was to examine their meaning and impact (Berger 2000: 53-55), interpreting them in the context of both documentary features and the radicalisation expert and policy context (May 1997: 162-4; Silverman 2001: 125-138; Gomm 2008: 297). Various types of data were generated from these sources (drawing on Deacon et al. 1999: 320-325). This included: contextual features regarding for example author, date of publication and audience; statements referring to authoritative knowledge; relational statements differentiating bodies of knowledge in approval or disapproval; and any other features of central relevance to the thesis, particularly the politicisation of the radicalisation field and references to uncertain knowledge. Of particular interest was the use of 'credibility markers' including objectivity, moral superiority, methodological rigour, privileged understanding, logical reasoning and other ways by which trust of the audience is sought (Gomm 2008: 313-321). The presence of any of these points was documented for each sample text. Clearly not all points were present in every text: thus the texts were not analysed 'line by line' but instead were sifted for the relevant material. Themes were developed (Gill 2000: 176-180) and compared across the texts. As well as raising discussion points for interviews, they were brought together with data from

interviews to answer the research questions and are therefore integrated throughout the analysis.

5.2.3 Elite interviews

Interviews with a cross-section of radicalisation experts were carried out to complement documentary and textual analysis. Results of the document-based work were used to construct the sample frame, to gain a background understanding relevant to each interview, and to aid in developing interview schedules. Rather than comparing interview data with documentary data, the focus was on interviewees' perspectives on the research questions. The aim of interviews was thus to ascertain experts' direct interpretations and explanations of radicalisation expertise. Providing generated data that focuses on individual interpretations, interviews complemented the naturally occurring data from documents (Ritchie 2003: 34-37). Interviews were deemed more appropriate than focus groups given the controversial nature of the issue and the importance of exploring a variety of perspectives in depth. The interview method drew on techniques used in 'elite' interviewing. Dexter (2006: 19) defines elites as 'the influential, the prominent, and the well-informed'. Rather than documenting experts' specialist knowledge however, the aim was to get at the perspectives of those who are in a position to shape our understandings of, and policy responses to, radicalisation.

Thorough preparation was carried out for each interview. Making a good impression within elite interviews, in terms of being well-prepared and seeking to build rapport, can help to build credibility and open doors to further interviewees (Goldstein 2002: 671). In particular, an understanding of the experts' particular professional background and specialism was built to demonstrate interviewer competence and encourage interviewees' interest (Littig 2009: 105-6). Most interviewees were public figures and thus had resources like webpages, published work, videos or commentary by others available online. Using such sources, background documents were compiled with information regarding aspects of biography relevant to the research. This included, for example: professional positions; research projects and publications; other research-related activities e.g. presentations or grants; policy or practice roles; media commentary; and organisational background. Clearly the amount and type of information that was gathered varied by individual; it was much more difficult to build background profiles of civil servants for example. In most cases however,

this individual preparation resulted in an understanding of the background of each interviewee that informed the tailoring of topic guides through individualised questioning (Richards 1996: 202).

Common to elite interviewing, a semi-structured approach was taken. A skeleton topic guide was created to ensure that the interviews addressed the research questions and achieved a level of consistency so that data could be compared across the sample (Lewis 2003: 50-51). This was however amended a number of times throughout the research in line with emergent findings as well as reflections on the success of particular lines of questioning. The guide included questions around key topics, possible follow-up questions and prompts (Bryman 2004: 324). Interviews began by explaining the research: clear and relevant statements of the thesis topic and methods were prepared to ensure interviewees were informed and motivated (Walford 1994: 225-8). Interviewees were next asked to describe their involvement in the radicalisation field, before going on to discuss substantive questions regarding the nature of radicalisation expertise, influence and authority, and perspectives in the field. These set questions were of course not always wholly successful. In the body of questions, for example, interviewees sometimes seemed to be discussing general traits of expertise: it was thus important, where possible, to draw the conversation back to radicalisation expertise in particular. In addition, questions regarding contestation and different perspectives met with mixed success, with some interviewees readily understanding and responding to the line of questioning and others reluctant or unable to engage. While based around core questions then, interviews remained flexible with the aim of engaging with participants to address the research questions in the most appropriate way.

Standardisation was also limited by the aim of remaining responsive to individual interviewees' specialised knowledge, staying flexible to any leads that emerged (Rubin and Rubin 2005: 14-16), and attempting to create a casual, conversational atmosphere (Berry 2002: 679). Achieving such a balance of structure and flexibility is an issue discussed in the wider literature on semi-structured interviews (e.g. Flick 2002: 91-93). The elite interviewing literature suggests that it may be particularly difficult given the potentially powerful status of the interviewee (Kogan 1994: 71-2): Olander (1995: 142-6) for example argues that interviewers need to be mindful that interviewees are used to getting attention and taking control of

conversations. Fitz and Halpin (1994: 44-5) describe their correspondent experience of a monologue-type interview. In my interviews, such issues did arise. Retaining control over the interview schedule did prove to be a challenge, as passionate and eloquent interviewees often talked at length and rarely in the intended order. For example, sometimes it seemed as if interviewees had planned what to say in advance, and thus the initial questions resulted in long answers with much relevant material to follow up on, resulting in changes to the planned structure. In such situations, notes were taken while the interviewee was talking to facilitate the formulation of follow-up questions. The structure and style of interviews aimed then to allow interviewees to bring their experience and perspective to bear on the concerns of the research.

Analysts point to reliability issues as a particular problem in elite interviews. Ball (1994) likens interviews with political actors to 'a game' with multiple agendas to understand and negotiate on both sides. Additionally, interviewees may exaggerate their position or contribution to give more credit to themselves, especially if it is part of their function to achieve influence (Berry 2002: 680-1). In such a context, research interviews are conducted and analysed in a context of wider policy conflicts (Wicker and Connolly 2014). In addition to comparing views across the sample, it can also be useful to ask questions to encourage elite interviewees to acknowledge differing views, defend their own and engage with the limits of their argument (Dexter 2006: 79). At the same time however, Blakeley (2013: 164-5) reflects on the importance of building trust through listening to interviewees' perspectives and asking questions carefully, without insulting or arguing. Similarly, Clutterbuck and Warnes (2013: 18), in a discussion of interviewing counter-terrorism officials, counsel that interviewers should aim for neutrality and avoid engaging in any debate with interviewees. In this sense it was useful to de-personalise sensitive questions, particularly by presenting counterpoints from the literature and knowledge of the field from other sources or from other interviewees to draw out this contestation without risking rapport. The tone and tactics taken in terms of questions and manner differed however by interview, and it was important to think through such aspects of interviews and their impact on the dialogue in analysis (Dexter 2006: 32-4). Overall, given the politicised nature of radicalisation discussions, my background knowledge of interviewees' positions in debates was useful in interpreting their comments.

The organisation and documentation of interviews were important concerns. Notes were made during and immediately after interviews, and included reflections on the interview style and content and any new routes of enquiry (Bryman 2004: 325). Organisations and individuals whose position indicated a particular significance to the research were interviewed at later stages so that factors including the appropriateness and order of questions, interview timing and language could be improved (Hundley and van Teijlingen 2001). With consent, all interviews were recorded to allow for both full concentration in the interview itself as well as more accurate transcription and analysis (Bryman 2004: 329-30). A full transcription of each interview was produced to a level appropriate for thematic analysis (Kvale and Brinkmann 2009: 180). Transcription was carried out throughout the project, as soon as possible after interviews (Bryman 2004: 408) to enable both familiarisation with the data and immediate reflection on findings.

5.2.4 Interview sampling

Sample size is usually small with elite interviews (Richards 1996: 200), and a total of 32 interviews were conducted, plus 2 pilot interviews. Data from the pilot interviews was not included in the final analysis; their purpose was to practice and develop the interview style through interviewing people outside of, but in positions comparable to, the intended sample, and to include both intended interview questions as well as reflective methodological questions, for example regarding recruitment methods and the line of questioning. The aim with sample size was to strike a balance between being able to elicit and compare a range of perspectives and having enough time to prepare for interviews and analyse the data (Kvale and Brinkmann 2009: 113). The emphasis was thus more on quality than quantity: the aim was to draw upon the perspectives of people who were closely knowledgeable about the topic (Rubin and Rubin 2005: 65-68). The main contemporary study of terrorism experts by Stampnitzky (2011) interviewed a similar-sized sample. As with the research design more generally, the individuals interviewed are not statistically representative of any wider community, and thus generalisation is to theory rather than to population (Miles and Huberman 1994: 27).

The database of experts that was produced as a resource for mapping the expert community also acted as a sampling frame. For the purpose of deciding who to approach, these findings were condensed into a

list of the most relevant experts. As with document and textual analysis, the sampling strategy for interviews was purposive. Thus, the focus was on instances of the processes of interest; those sources that would most usefully illuminate the research questions. To enhance understanding and more fully address the research questions by enabling the comparison of similarities and differences across the sample, a range of types of interviewee were sought (Lewis 2003: 50-51; Mason 1996: 94). Thus the list was designed to include a good balance of substantive perspectives on radicalisation theory. In this sense, the sample aimed to include individuals who had previously articulated views common to all four perspectives. The sample is therefore in a dual relationship with the epistemic communities, both shaping and being shaped by them. Within this, individuals were approached with the aim of again achieving a good range in terms of professional background, centrality to the topic area (i.e. prominence and specialism) and seniority. The final sample includes fourteen academics, eleven think tank researchers, four civil servants or former civil servants, one former special advisor, one practitioner, and one columnist/community activist. In addition, many interviewees had diverse professional backgrounds. While the sample was focused on those who could most clearly be defined as experts in radicalisation, it was also important to seek a minority of interviews with those on the periphery, who also contribute to research and debate in the area. Indeed in Neumann and Kleinmann's literature review of the field, they note that some researchers are studying issues related to radicalisation without using the term or considering themselves part of research field, leading them to adopt a wide interpretation of 'radicalisation' as 'anything that relates to how and why people become extremists' (2013: 366). Appropriate back-ups and alternatives were identified where possible in case of problems in access.

There was a degree of flexibility designed in and certainly the sampling process in practice was non-linear. Although a strategy and population boundary was constructed, this was reviewed throughout and evolved as new questions arose, interim conclusions were made, potentially relevant individuals were identified, or attempts to gain access failed (Dexter 2006: 45-6; Flick 2006: 126-8; Robson 1993: 141-2). Given the lack of a pre-defined sample, the knowledge of experts themselves was useful in highlighting new leads, and the sampling frame was augmented by snowball sampling. This method is often used to follow elites' networks (Littig 2009: 104) and can be useful for including those that cannot be found

through public sources (Robson 1993: 142). Interviewees were asked for recommendations of others to speak to, as well as to assist with access to particular contacts where appropriate (Dexter 2006: 36-7; 44-45). In practice, many of the names forwarded by interviewees were already part of the sample population, although there were suggestions of 'harder to reach' individuals, for example government employees, that had not been identified through document analysis.

Gaining access to interviewees was attempted after careful preparation. Potential interviewees were expected to be busy and perhaps have gatekeepers to negotiate (Littig 2009: 104-5), and difficulties in access can cause bias in the sample (Richards 1996: 200). Initial emails were sent with information on the aims of the research, why they were being approached, and what exactly was being requested. This was personalised to make the research relevant to the individual and emphasise the interest in their perspective (Duke 2002: 46). If the individual agreed to take part, an information sheet was sent to increase interviewees' confidence and interest in the research (Richards 1996: 201-2). Persistence was a key tactic, with many interviewees requiring follow-up emails or phone calls to establish contact. In practice, there was no response from eight potential interviewees; one ceased contact after agreeing to interview; and one refused on the grounds of lack of time. Despite these difficulties, the sample was inclusive of experts that display a range of types of expertise and articulate all four perspectives.

In addition, there are particular sectors not represented in the interview data. Journalists were considered potential experts, however despite the amount of media commentary on the topic there are few that profess expert knowledge of homegrown radicalisation in the UK and none are included in the sample. Some of the interviewees have of course written articles in the media. In addition, although two interviewees had police backgrounds, there are no serving police or intelligence officers in the sample; the Association of Chief Police Officers was approached but no interview was forthcoming, and while interviews generated suggestions of and links to policy actors, no appropriate contacts were found in the security services to approach. Clearly these bodies will harbour radicalisation expertise as a result of their professional experience, and indeed some interviewees did refer to this alongside other sources of practitioner expertise as described in Chapter 7. In this sense their

expertise is not wholly absent from the data, however the lack of first-hand reflections is a limitation of the dataset. Aside from the interviewees with policy backgrounds, the findings reflect therefore the public side of radicalisation expertise, concentrating on those experts who maintain (to some extent) a public profile that could be traced. In this sense it is an analysis of the expertise that is visible in and gives shape to public, academic and policy discussions.

5.2.5 Ethics

The research was guided by the University of Leeds' ethics guidelines, and ethical approval was gained from the appropriate Faculty ethics committee (reference: AREA 11-165). The consequences of choices and actions on participants' interests were considered throughout the research (May 2011: 60-64). Participants were given full information on the purpose of the research, their involvement, and confidentiality arrangements to enable an informed choice to be made regarding participation (Homan 1991: 67-95). Some interviewees asked further questions regarding ethics arrangements by email or during interviews. Every effort was made to protect interviewees' privacy (Homan 1991: 44-67): in particular, recordings were kept secure and interviews are quoted only with permission. Interviewees were offered the opportunity to review and amend their transcript, which can help to build trust (Richards 1996: 203). A summary document was provided, as requested, to one interviewee, while eighteen others requested a copy of their transcript. Four of these interviewees made revisions to their transcripts, for anonymisation purposes or to amend phrasing. Further, thirteen interviewees, including all local and national government employees and a number of academics and think tank researchers, requested the opportunity to approve quotations, and this permission was sought before submission. Nine interviewees amended quotes, usually to address points where it was felt that more clarity was necessary. Reflecting on the ethical issues involved in interviewing other researchers, Wiles et al. (2006: 287-90) similarly report that many of their participants asked to review and revise transcripts and some wanted data removed or not used, especially in cases where they were critical of other researchers. Discussion of these ethical issues and interviewees' consent was recorded, rather than using signed consent forms, to help reduce the formality of the process.

Initially, interviewees were given the choice of whether their data was made anonymous or not. However, this became a cumbersome process with individuals requesting a variety of procedures, and the decision was made to make all interviewees anonymous for the sake of consistency. This was not an easy decision: identity can be useful to give context in elite interviews, and, in addition, it can be difficult to conceal identities due to the well-known nature of individuals' work and views (Walford 1994: 89-90). In Wiles et al.'s (2006: 291-3) fieldwork with researchers for example, anonymity was problematic because the research community was small, some members were well known, and interviewees often referred to known examples, for example of research projects. In addition, blanket anonymity poses difficulties for judging the quality of the research (Schuurman and Eijkman 2013: 3-5). However, while often not regarded as a 'vulnerable' group, elite interviewees can be vulnerable in terms of their relationships with the wider community (Blakeley 2013: 165). The research involved talking to individuals who have public profiles and on reflection it seemed beneficial to ensure that anonymity was protected throughout the research process and in publications. This is particularly significant given the politicised nature of the topic area and the fact that the interview sample overlapped with authors of the publications discussed throughout the thesis. Clearly most interviewees were well-informed and articulate in their subject area, and indeed most were researchers themselves and aware of such risks. Some however were sensitive to these issues: two did not want their data made available for future use, and one requested confirmation that their data would only be used in my thesis or publications, and not on social media.

Transcription practice followed guidance from the UK Data Archive (UK Data Archive: n.d.). Names and other key identifying features were removed from all transcripts or identified to be removed later if the material was quoted, and care was taken over more subtle identifying features when writing up, for example detail of specific research projects. Of course, given that many of the interviewees knew each other, and many are well known more generally, achieving anonymity faces difficulties in practice. In particular, there is the issue of 'identifiers'; phrasing or particular points that are repeated by interviewees in the public domain. Of course it was impossible to ensure that these were completely absent from the thesis. Such difficulties are also noted by other researchers (e.g. Neal and McLaughlin 2009: 693-4; Saunders, Kitzinger and Kitzinger 2015: 128-9).

This seems to be a point recognised by many of the interviewees given the number of requests to review and anonymise their interview material.

5.3 Analysis

Interview transcripts were thematically analysed. Themes were identified and built based on both the initial research questions and the data itself, in a cyclical process aimed at achieving synthesis between theory and data (Mason 1994: 91-95). Interview data was coded using NVivo; this is a useful way of organising the data to achieve an overview and provides a basis from which specific parts can be analysed (Mason 2002: 152-3). It can be useful to leave codes broadly inclusive until more data is processed and codes can be refined and compared (Dey 1993: 105). Thus after each 5 transcripts, the list of codes was reviewed. For example, descriptions were specified and codes were merged, broken down or deleted. This avoided imposing a strict structure in the early stages and instead tightened it over time. There were the usual difficulties in coding; for example when text was relevant to more than one of the created codes (Mason 2002: 151) or when the meaning of interviewees' comments was unclear. In such cases, notes were made to track my decision making. The detail of themes was developed using data from across the interviews, identifying patterns and contrasts between interviewees, and exploring the links between themes (Coffey and Atkinson 1996: 46-49). These were interpreted through contextual detail where possible, for example on interviewee backgrounds and interviewee/er interactions. In particular, returning to the context within the transcript and noting any examples or caveats was important, since NVivo draws out and isolates comments for thematic analysis.

Data analysis was conducted throughout the research. The directory of experts was compiled and draft perspectives mapped in the early stages of fieldwork, although both were updated throughout. This enabled the early identification of key documents for textual analysis as well as construction of the sampling frame. In turn, textual analysis was carried out alongside initial interviews. Thematic accounts of both were produced in an attempt to identify and explore emergent themes. The findings from these thematic accounts were then integrated where appropriate into ongoing interviews. Interview analysis was however largely weighted towards the latter stages of the research (Ritchie and Spencer 1994: 217). Data generated in both the preparation for interviews as well as the interviews themselves fed back into the construction of the four

perspectives. Analysis of interviews was brought together with observations from documentary and textual analysis in order to answer the research questions. The ultimate aim of this overall analysis was to test explanations, and build a contextualised understanding, of the contested nature of radicalisation expertise.

A final point here concerns theory refinement. The themes addressed in the thesis were developed in an iterative way. Some credibility markers were hypothesised to be important given the expertise literature and initial documentary forays into the field; others emerged as important in the interviews, which also had the benefit of drawing out their particular and nuanced nature in this topic area. The pluralist analysis of the expert community and the importance of experiential expertise were also hypothesised on the basis of initial documentary analysis. Over time the emergent themes were integrated back into interview schedules and analysed through the development of the four perspectives. Initial sketches of the four perspectives meanwhile were refined over time through document analysis. They were further modified using interview data where participants distinguished themselves from others or referred to broad groupings in the field. Questions related to the model were integrated into the final set of interviews as a method of respondent validation (Lewis and Ritchie 2003: 276). Finally, the vignettes presented in Chapters 1 and 9 provided further means of theory refinement. Two were drafted during the fieldwork, with the aim of feeding into the ongoing analysis. These provided an opportunity to interpret expert debates on radicalisation in terms of the findings of the thesis, developing and testing the conclusions made as to the diverse and contested nature of radicalisation expertise. These practices ensured that the thesis' ideas were refined throughout the period of research.

5.4 Conclusion

This chapter has detailed the approach and methods adopted within the thesis. The aim of the research was to enable an in-depth study of one expert community; to explore the structure of that community as well as the low level struggles over credibility within it. As a result of these efforts, various types of data were produced. First was the directory of experts, which recorded the details of those in the expert community, focusing on relevant publications, public appearances and perspectives. The data also included a set of notes from the close reading of key policy documents,

academic literature, and documents produced by radicalisation experts that were relevant to answering the research questions. Finally, there were a set of transcripts from interviews with radicalisation experts. The generation of this data enabled an analysis of the meaning of expertise in a non-institutionalised, diverse field characterised by uncertain and contested knowledge. The next chapter is the first of four that report the findings of analysis of this data, focusing on the understandings of authoritative expertise held by the expert community.

Chapter 6: The contested nature of radicalisation expertise

This chapter is the first of two to empirically examine the specific nature of radicalisation expertise. It uses data generated in interviews with radicalisation experts to discuss how particular features of an individual's knowledge, skills and experience convey authority. It thus examines how those working on the topic construct and justify their own expert status as well as attribute it to others. At the same time, it will be seen that the importance of some of these traits is contested and, further, that all traits can be used to deny the expertise of others. In this sense, descriptions of expertise actively construct the boundaries of what is considered relevant and authoritative knowledge.

Each section presents a thematic analysis of conceptualisations of radicalisation expertise. Thus the chapter examines the contested status of a number of markers of expertise, including: experience and knowledge; academic credentials; primary research; quality of scholarship; policy relevance, and objectivity. These themes will be compared to previous studies of terrorism experts and wider literature on the nature of expertise, analysing how standard traits of expertise take shape in radicalisation studies. The aim is not to arrive at a conclusive definition of a 'radicalisation expert' but rather to examine the concepts that are deployed by those that work in the field to describe the basis of its expertise. In the terms of Gieryn (1999), the aim is to describe how credibility markers are used to delineate the boundaries of expertise in the field.

6.1 The demonstration of experience and knowledge

The aim of the research was to explore the particular nature of radicalisation expertise. Some interview questions however led to discussion of fairly general conceptions of an expert. Two are examined here: expertise based on, first, working on the topic, and, second, demonstrating knowledge of it.

6.1.1 Time spent working in the topic area

One commonly discussed marker of expertise can be summarised as quite generally being someone who works on the topic. One manifestation of this theme was the time dedicated to the topic daily. This was offered by some interviewees as an initial reflection on the nature of their expertise. One think tank interviewee for example said they would consider people 'authorities' if 'this is their job, they are able to dedicate the amount of time

necessary to be familiar with an area' (33). A similar reflection was given by an interviewee involved in setting up an expert advisory panel on radicalisation when discussing how decisions were made on who to include. Alongside using 'networks and contacts', the interviewee said:

It was also no more scientific than me looking around and identifying those individuals who were active researchers in the field and approaching them to participate. (4)

In this sense, the very fact that a researcher was working on the topic suggested that they could be suitable for an expert panel. Conversely, many interviewees argued that expertise was difficult to claim if radicalisation was not a person's main area of work, on which they spent a significant amount of time, gaining knowledge and engaging in a variety of activities, but was instead an ad hoc activity or interest. For example, this researcher who has worked on a number of projects related to radicalisation in both think tanks and the civil service was asked:

K: But to kick off, do you see yourself as an expert in radicalisation?

27: No. Because I don't, I mean this comes back obviously to how you define an expert, I realise, but I do not spend every day of my life either working with individuals who are vulnerable to radicalisation, who have been radicalised or de-radicalised, or spend my days studying radicalisation. Or indeed focusing on the policy implications of radicalisation.

Conducting serious or substantial work appears then to be an important factor in terms of identifying radicalisation expertise.

In addition to radicalisation being a major part of an expert's daily work, a second aspect of this theme is long-term engagement with the field. This can be illustrated by the following quote from a think tank researcher. The participant references Alex Schmid, a long-term terrorism researcher:

There's a lot of work that I think is very useful and I wouldn't discredit it, I don't discredit it at all, in fact it's invaluable, what I mean is, yes I would call for example Alex Schmid an expert, I would consider him an expert, what I object to is not say someone like him who has experience and academic qualifications and a number of studies behind him etc., there are people out there who have done a lot of stuff. (33)

This idea of doing ‘a lot of stuff’ over a period of time was a common narrative. Other interviewees similarly identified individuals as experts because they had been studying radicalisation for an extended period of time and had gained special insight as a result of this long term engagement and reflection on the issue. This is reminiscent of the cognitive research discussed in Section 2.1.1 on the acquisition of skills through long-term practice. In terms of radicalisation expertise however, the emphasis is less on skill acquisition and more on producing tangible outputs, particularly publications, and the development of a rounded knowledge and an up-to-date awareness of debates in the field. One academic researcher who has focused on right wing extremism explained that:

I mean that, take the extreme right for example, I don't know every single person that is working within that very large industry, but I know the direction of the literature, I know the key contributions. I couldn't tell you what every PhD student and post doc is working on but I can tell you the rough direction the literature is heading in, the key areas that are being examined, the key questions that are being asked, so you have more of a grasp of the literature when you've been working in it for a significant degree of time. (21)

Long-term engagement with the field is here linked to gaining a broad understanding of its knowledge base. Conversely, a senior government analyst (34) said that through working in the area for six or seven years they had built knowledge of scientific and policy debates on the topic that resulted in what could be called expertise, but considered that this was limited compared to academics who may have studied it for twenty or thirty years. The prevalence of think tanks in this field led to particular concerns in this regard, as voiced by two interviewees (16, 21): an academic researcher who has worked extensively with a wide variety of think tanks said that due to a tendency to undertake shorter-term projects on a variety of topics, ‘it's incredibly difficult for them to build up what I think is required in order to be a genuine expert’ (21). In this sense, a lack of long-term engagement with the topic is used to indicate lower levels of expertise.

While many interviewees referred to research or research-related work like writing or presenting when discussing this theme, suggestions are also apparent of a more inclusive idea of how time could be spent on the topic through in-depth engagement or reflection more generally. There was

only one interviewee whose account differed from the general narrative of the time spent on the topic being important. This was a think tank researcher (3) who reported being consulted as an expert despite, as they described it, their young age and relatively short career. They explained this through various contextual factors including a demand for expertise on the topic coupled with a lack of experts. Such factors indicate the weak boundaries of the expert community, a theme indicated in Chapter 4 and returned to in Chapter 8.2.1. In general however, the time spent researching radicalisation was agreed by a range of interviewees to be an important factor in terms of being regarded as an expert.

6.1.2 Specialist knowledge

In addition to conducting substantial work on the topic, interviewees commonly identified specialist knowledge as a core component of radicalisation expertise. The possession of specialised (Cozzens and Woodhouse 1995: 540-541) and collective or consensual (Nowotny, Scott and Gibbons 2001: 223-6) knowledge has been seen as central to the authority of claims to expertise. In Collins' and Evans' (2007) model of expertise, experts are differentiated from non-experts on the basis of their level of specialised knowledge. When discussing examples of individuals who interviewees regarded as experts, a common justification was their level of knowledge. In particular, others were considered experts if they held extensive and detailed knowledge on particular sub-topics, drawn from both literature and an understanding of debates on the issue.

Interviewees differed in the subjects of knowledge that they regarded as important. Most commonly cited was in-depth knowledge of Al Qaeda or 'Islamist' factions, particularly relating to the role of ideology in violent practice and history regarding the use of violence. As an example, one interviewee discussed Robin Simcox of the Henry Jackson Society, a think tank that established the Centre for the Response to Radicalisation and Terrorism in 2015, has been highly active in campaigning against extremism and is largely supportive of the Government's counter-radicalisation efforts. Simcox was compared favourably to the expert community more generally:

But again Robin, who I have massive differences of views about certain things, but his research level and his level of knowledge is brilliant. As in I can actually sit and have a conversation with him about stuff that other people just wouldn't be interested in at all, like

intra-differences of Al Qaeda, theoretical differences and what the factions are. Most people who are experts in this area wouldn't have a clue, whereas his level of pursuance and diligence is very good.
(19)

Others extended this to knowledge of religion or terrorism more generally. For one interviewee (8), an academic who works in equalities and diversity, knowledge of the social, political and cultural context of young Muslims was valued. These diverse conceptualisations of the essential knowledge base of an expert reflect the diverse and contested nature of radicalisation theory addressed in Chapter 4.3.

Many interviewees' comments indicated that relevant knowledge was likely to come from conducting research or consulting literature. Others referred to the experiential knowledge of counter-radicalisation professionals or ex-extremists. A further source of knowledge was from actors like politicians and activists who had followed the topic area in an informal but in-depth way. One academic researcher (6) identified the importance of long-term engagement with the topic and the knowledge that this engendered. They referred to the idea of 'depth experts': through a long career on the topic, they had built a detailed understanding of their specialism and related topics, the history of their subject matter and the language relevant to their sub-field. This idea of a thorough and nuanced understanding and thus an intellectual rigour was characteristic then of the type of expert knowledge discussed. The variety of ways by which this could be achieved gives an initial indication of flexibility in the notion of expertise.

Conversely, some interviewees denied the expertise of others due to their perceived lack of knowledge. For example, some were condemned for failing to understand the policy landscape and therefore criticising it on false grounds; others for having an inadequate knowledge of religion and using related concepts in an ill-informed way. One interviewee raised the importance of theoretical knowledge, which they regarded as the singularly most important feature of expertise:

I don't think – I think I have too practical a view of it. I don't have the. Hm, this is interesting and goes to the heart perhaps of what makes an expert. I don't consider myself an expert because I don't have the theoretical knowledge across a wide range of fields that would

be required before I would say somebody could begin to think of themselves as an expert. (9)

While many interviewees expressed either admiration or disdain for an individual's level of knowledge, there were two interviewees who stressed that knowledge was not enough. This was related to the complexity of the topic, its multiple sub-topics and the diversity of radicalisation theories. Given that these are core defining features of the topic area and cross-cutting themes of the thesis, this raises questions as what other features are necessary to be considered a radicalisation expert. Further, while the ideas that individuals are experts because they spend time working on the topic and because they have knowledge about it were strong and relatively uncontested themes in the data, clearly they are fairly tautological, generic and indeed were usually discussed as initial reflections. The following sections therefore discuss particular aspects of experts' professional experience, knowledge and skills that are valued in radicalisation. These relate to five major themes: academic credentials; primary research; quality scholarship; policy relevance, and objectivity.

6.2 Academic metrics

This section examines the authority of academic knowledge on radicalisation. Formal recognition of skills is a standard means of identifying experts (e.g. Shanteau et al. 2002), and other studies of expert credibility have found that academic qualifications and publications are particularly authoritative means by which experts can claim credibility (Berdahl et al. 2016: 390-392, 396; Penders and Nelis 2011: 493-6). Similarly, professional knowledge gains its status through being 'certified and credentialed' (MacDonald 1995: 161, 161-167). On terrorism studies specifically, Jackson (2012: 18) has commented that 'social scientific credentials' are one way by which experts are 'authorised' to speak. However, the vignettes presented in Section 1.1 illustrated the diverse knowledge base of radicalisation and suggest that academic credibility may face challenge in this topic area. Other research has suggested that academic accreditation is not always regarded by experts as a guarantor of expertise (Reay 2007: 109-114) or that certification may only be valued by experiential experts as a means of legitimation to those more established (Henley 2015: 269-274). This section discusses then the importance of scholarly credentials, explaining in what sense and on what basis they were seen by interviewees as a trait of expertise in radicalisation, and how

credential-based judgements are used to delineate credible expertise in the field.

6.2.1 *The tangibles of academia*

Interviewees commonly referred to the tangibles of academia as a trait of authentic radicalisation experts. In particular, qualifications and publications were seen as valuable credentials. The importance of such metrics in judging expertise was mentioned not only by academics but also by others in the sample. Conversely, discussion of academic institution was relatively absent in the dataset, despite the importance of those like the University of St Andrews and King's College London to previous research on terrorism expertise (e.g. Burnett and Whyte 2005: 8-10; Miller and Mills 2010: 213-214). This may be explained by the diverse and distributed nature of the radicalisation expert community and its lack of an established, central, long-term institutional base.

The first of these themes relates then to scholarly outputs. When discussed by interviewees, publications seemed to be regarded as a shorthand sign that an individual's knowledge had been validated by others. Publications were listed by one interviewee (11) alongside other tangibles, including citations, the number of PhD students that they had supervised and their institution's score on the Research Excellence Framework, as ways of judging university-based expertise. An academic interviewee articulated this point in relation to their own expertise:

I mean I'm an academic and my expertise is measured by traditional metrics for academic expertise. It's actually very simple. I'm [a *senior member of staff in*] a centre that studies radicalisation, I direct research projects in that area, I've published about it myself, so whatever traditional academic metric you use I would probably be considered an expert in that field. (25)

Publications are seen as important here in terms of both understanding one's own expertise as well as that of others. The role of publications was explained by one academic in terms of external validation, in that they provide evidence of expertise, and in particular of being part of an expert community. This quote is part of a response to the question of whether they were a radicalisation expert:

And the external dynamic is all of the things that you would expect, like I've got a copy of my CV there, [...] you can see the kind of

external recognition you get, things you've published, things you've written [...] in order for me to do the sort of work that I do do, I have to be seen as a part of that community in the public world that is concerned with security [...] issues. And because I've been part of that community, my expertise that I feel internally is also validated externally. (17)

The reference to 'community' here suggests that publications are a way of demonstrating that knowledge is accepted by other experts and that its authority is based on its consensual or at least contributory nature. One academic interviewee said that given the low quality of commentary in this particular field, publications were particularly important for differentiating those who 'could credibly be called an expert' (21). In this sense, they are used to signify a boundary between experts and non-experts. In most cases however, the nature of these publications was left open and peer review was not specified as a sign of quality. In some cases, particularly in reference to academics, it may have been taken as implicit; when in reference to the wider community of experts however its lack of mention may suggest that it is not regarded as essential and instead the format of esteemed publications is relatively flexible.

A further scholarly metric used by interviewees to identify expertise was formal study and professional position. When listing their expert credentials, one academic interviewee said:

Well you know, people tend to expect an expert to have a PhD so I've got one of those. (32)

Alluding to the expectations of others, this highlights the importance of an academic qualification. Although this was the only interviewee to mention their own qualifications, others linked qualifications to expertise more generally. In particular, this took the form of interviewees explicitly questioning their own expert status by reference to their lack of formal qualifications on the topic, as displayed by the following two quotes:

By no means am I an expert, I've not been to any university course on radicalisation or anything like that. (12)

I mean I don't know if I would call myself an expert. I have an interest in the area. I don't have any formal qualification in the field but I do, I'm familiar with the subject, I do know about the subject but I haven't formally studied something like al-Qaeda thought or

ideology, but it's something that I'm very familiar with and have quite a bit of insight into, but I'm not sure if I would call myself an expert as such. (11)

These interviewees appeared to define themselves as an expert or not depending on their qualifications, and a distinction is drawn between those that have an interest and knowledge in the area, and those that have formally studied the topic and are therefore experts. In this sense, accreditation was important to non-academics as well as academics.

6.2.2 The limits of theoretical knowledge as constitutive of radicalisation expertise

It appears however that academic metrics as a source of credibility have limited power amongst radicalisation experts. Many interviewees drew attention to problems with university-based knowledge and the limitations of relying on such metrics to identify expertise. In particular, amongst some in the field there appears to be a concern that academic knowledge is disconnected and abstract, and that a focus on theory entails a lack of understanding of the local dynamics of radicalisation. In general, insights from those living or working in communities were valued alongside, or even above, those of researchers. This view tended to be held by those who work in think tanks that are more closely connected to policy, practice and communities. For example, one researcher, who works in a research institute and described themselves as working at the interface of communities and policy on radicalisation, said:

Because obviously if you're coming in as an academic, for example if your PhD was on the thoughts of Osama bin Laden for example, you may know in depth AQ ideology, but you're not necessarily aware of how that plays out locally in a British Muslim community or in a context like [*English city*] specifically. And also maybe the wider repercussions of those sorts of ideas. (11)

Referring specifically to radicalisation, this comment clearly highlights the perceived importance of understanding the local manifestations of abstract models and theories. It speaks both to conceptualisations of radicalisation as a 'context-bound phenomenon par excellence' (European Commission's Expert Group on Violent Radicalisation 2008: 7) as well as widespread criticisms of the side-lining of context in much radicalisation theory addressed in Chapter 4.3.3.

Such comments point to the applied nature of the topic. A think tank researcher with a background in counter-terrorism policing explained:

But if the work that you've done is only writing publications, you begin to wonder, and this is focused on radicalisation, which above all is about people and is about the reality of today and how you can stop individuals becoming radicalised to the point where they take the next big step into violence and extremism. I think just having theoretical knowledge doesn't make you an expert. It might make you an expert in aspects of radicalisation, for example if you know a lot about jihadist ideology, which is an immensely complex area, then you would be an expert who could make a contribution to radicalisation debates and the literature etc., but it doesn't make you an expert on radicalisation. You need to go, it doesn't make you an expert on, actually how do people start along this process, you're looking at one part of it which is the ideology that they can become exposed to, but you're not looking at the other things that might trigger them or might push them, like the fact that they've met up with somebody else of a similar bent who says, 'I know somebody as well' and then you get three of them together and then they start reinforcing their own viewpoints and then you get a sort of momentum building. But that's the practical side of it, which is as important as the theoretical side. (9)

This interviewee defined the problem of radicalisation in terms of stopping violence; the emphasis they give to practical knowledge is premised on an assumption of the applied nature of the field. At the same time, radicalisation is discussed as a complex and multifaceted problem, as introduced in Chapters 3 and 4 and discussed further in Chapter 8, and for this interviewee, these features suggest limitations to the relevance of specialised theoretical knowledge. A practitioner with a research background (23) made a similar point, agreeing that practical knowledge is essential to surpass a macro and theoretical understanding and achieve a grounded and realistic perspective on the actual process of radicalisation. In addition, the applied nature of the problem was used to question the credibility of academic knowledge, which was seen as divorced from reality and ultimately ineffectual. This interviewee, who works with a range of sectors on this topic, discussed the range of experts in the field:

I guess there are those who are primarily interested in a theoretical understanding of the problem and those who are interested in a practical response to it. Which is where I've found myself coming up against the academic machine, because unless your ideas are sort of theoretically grounded you don't get through the door. I would say well, it's all very useful but how is your research going to change the real world? So there's those researchers who I guess do this sort of theoretical bit but also ground it in real lives, real stories, real experiences and sort of privilege that alongside other forms of data. (20)

Applied knowledge is clearly valued here and the credibility of those that focus on theory is questioned. In contrast to these criticisms of abstract academia, a think tank researcher highlighted the value of their profession in terms of its practical and forward-thinking approach, closer connections to practice and policy, and ability to support policy development (3). Questions over the credibility of social science are longstanding: authors have long lamented the lack of relevance of much sociological research to policy concerns and its lack of policy impact (Scott and Shore 1979) and advised that social science be relevant to social problems (Lynd 1940). Comments on the limitations of theoretical knowledge speak to a wider approach within sociology that seeks to apply specialist knowledge to social problems in partnership with non-academics (e.g. Lauder, Brown and Halsey 2004). The arguments are also found amongst experts in other disciplines, with economists in one study for example describing academic economics as abstract and tending to produce knowledge that is irrelevant to policy and practice (Reay 2007: 105-109).

Clearly this questioning of academic expertise is dependent on the audience for that expertise: as one interviewee (15) said, while purely academic knowledge may have limited relevance in this highly policy-relevant topic area, it is clearly more relevant in exclusively academic fora. In addition, some of this discussion points not necessarily to the precedence of experiential knowledge over academic but instead to the importance of both, a theme that is addressed in more detail in Chapter 7.4. In general however interviewees gave clear articulations of the limits of academic credibility that are related to the nature of the topic. The hierarchies of evidence discussed in Chapter 2.1.2 privilege big data over qualitative analysis and professional opinion. The distinctive character of

radicalisation expertise can be seen however in the strong theme of the latter. In addition to the prominence of experiential knowledge in policy and public debates, there is an indication here that experts themselves trust in its relevance and authority. Thus, the importance of local and practical knowledge to the area form the basis of contested understandings of expertise, and radicalisation research speaks to a conceptualisation of expertise as experience-based rather than accreditation-based (Collins and Evans 2002: 260). Overall, it is an area in which academic claims to credibility have a particularly limited credence.

6.3 Empirical research

Primary research was a further theme that emerged as an important marker of expertise in radicalisation. Given the broader popularity of evidence-based decision making in the UK and the relative position of research in hierarchies of evidence, this might be expected to be a core theme; at the same time it is slightly surprising given the continuing refrain that the topic area is marked by a general lack of primary research as discussed in Chapter 4.2.2. The first sub-section assesses and explains the importance of primary evidence in this context, and the second shows how it can be used to establish a boundary between experts and non-experts.

6.3.1 The importance of primary research

There was general agreement amongst interviewees that radicalisation experts should have experience of primary research on the topic. This was a key theme when interviewees were asked to explain their own expert status, and was also identified as a yardstick of expertise in others. First, some interviewees identified others as experts if their arguments were grounded in evidence, and some stated that evidence underpinned their own views on the topic: one practitioner for example with a research background stressed that their organisation's perspective was based on, and shifted according to, empirical data (19). In addition, some emphasised that conducting empirical research was one of their core values as a researcher. Others were less emphatic but noted that they had experience in primary research in relevant settings, and often compared themselves favourably to what they perceived as the weak state of the research area in general or specific researchers that didn't have fieldwork experience.

For some, primary research was explicitly related to expertise. Empirical research with people labelled 'radicalised' or their immediate

contacts was something that an expert should do (32) or that indicated expert status (23, 32). More subtly, when interviewees were asked about the characteristics of a radicalisation expert, they often named specific individuals and discussed the empirical work that they had done. Thus, others were identified as experts if they had experience of interviewing former members of violent groups, violent or even non-violent extremists, although researching at the 'hard edge' seemed to be particularly admired. This academic interviewee for example discussed a researcher who has conducted relevant fieldwork including on radicalisation amongst North African communities in London:

But where there are people who have got specific radicalisation expertise would be I think where you've got people who have real knowledge of particular communities. So I'm thinking of for example Jonathan Githens-Mazer at Exeter who's done a lot of on the ground fieldwork in particular communities in East London and West London, has knowledge of those communities, and would be able to give a fairly clear view of who would be seen to be radical in some of those communities and who would not be seen to be radical in those communities. (28)

Here, expertise is closely tied to empirical research, which is valued for the in-depth, local understandings that it generates. Such qualities were not only found in academia: three interviewees emphasised primary research experience as a feature of government expertise. Thus a senior government analyst said that one of the reasons that colleagues were radicalisation experts was that they often had experience in analysing primary data, particularly as a result of their professional interaction with the intelligence agencies (34). This was emphasised by a think tank researcher who had experience working on the topic in central government:

The obvious candidates who are right at the centre of this, who bridge both the policy and practical side, are the Behavioural Science Unit at the Security Service, and only they, hand on heart, can say that they have interviewed terrorists, violent extremists, non-violent extremists, over a sustained period of time, and therefore have as good an understanding as we would expect, given that they are speaking to these individuals first-hand, although we must accept that there are limitations and constraints on those

discussions, not least that the individuals in question may not wish to necessarily talk to the Service or indeed the police. (27)

Here, MI5, through its fieldwork and in despite of methodological challenges, is conferred authoritative knowledge. For another think tank interviewee, 'the majority of the expertise on this subject lies inside Government', primary because of their access to data; this included 'people working in the Office of Security and Counter-terrorism, people in Special Branch of the Metropolitan Police, subject field experts in MI5' (16). A similar point was made by Bob Quick, at the time Assistant Commissioner with responsibility for counter-terrorism in the Metropolitan Police, speaking to the Home Affairs Committee in 2009: he mentioned the 'very revealing research' conducted by the Security Service into radicalisation (Home Affairs Committee 2009, Q114).

A key reason for the importance of empirical research was the necessity of connecting closely with the phenomenon rather than understanding it in the abstract. Many of the discussions around this theme involved the desire to 'get out there and get your hands dirty and speak to people, do interviews' (16). For example, this academic stated:

So I very much see myself as an empiricist, but I'm an empiricist informed by anthropological sensitivities, in the best sense of anthropology. In other words I get off my ass and I go and I embed myself in communities and I sit and I keep my mouth shut and I listen and I watch what's going on around me. (26)

In this way, most of the interviewees that talked about this topic suggested a version of empirical research that involved aspects of qualitative research, particularly naturalistic inquiry using methods that include interviews and observations (Snape and Spencer 2003: 4). This was explained by a think tank researcher in terms of building a grounded understanding and rich picture, or understanding the 'human' elements of the topic. On this basis, fieldwork is differentiated from theoretical and quantitative analysis in particular:

It [*conducting fieldwork*] certainly gives you more credibility when you are talking about it internally and externally. There are plenty of academics out there who have written a lot about the process of radicalisation and quite literally have never met anyone who has radicalised, may be radicalised, deradicalised. If you never meet the

human subjects about which you're talking, you miss something quite important. When you're doing observational ethnographic research work, it's so important to get cues from behaviour, body language, the clothes people are wearing, all of those human bits of it, if you're just looking at 'this person attended this school and then they left school at sixteen', or you're just looking at it from 'here's five different theories of human behaviour', so one is highly theoretical, one is empirical-based but is sort of numbers and statistics, and if you're basing all of your work on those two but never on meeting, greeting, discussing, arguing, seeing them interact with each other, I think you are missing one of the most useful ways that you can do research. So in my mind yes you are more of an expert or at least you have more of a rounded view of the subject. (16)

This allusion to closeness echoed similar comments from an academic researcher, who said that radicalisation experts will have gone 'beyond the literature to do research and to be in the field [...] otherwise we're simply desk-based researchers proclaiming to be experts on things that we've often never encountered' (21). Both quotes speak to radicalisation as a subject that requires research that uses appropriate methods to access ground-level, lived or everyday understandings and, conversely, cannot be fully understood in the abstract. One academic interviewee described their own work in such terms, referring to their access to a range of primary material on one particular sub-topic and the depth of understanding that that conferred (6). The precedence of naturalistic inquiry over metadata parallels the importance of applied over theoretical knowledge discussed in Section 6.2.2, as they both involve closeness to the research phenomenon. Clearly this favouring of ethnographically-inspired qualitative research will reflect the sample, although it also reflects findings from Neumann and Kleinmann's review of radicalisation research (2013: 370-371), which found that qualitative approaches were common. Neumann and Kleinmann's review found that narrative and case study analysis were however more common than interviews, suggesting that while primary research is an important marker of expertise for interviewees, in practice it is difficult to attain.

Other interviewees had different explanations for the significance of empirical research to expert status. Running through many of the

comments on this topic were concerns with the lack of existing primary evidence on the topic, which seemed to place those who did have fieldwork experience in a privileged position. For example, data-based research was seen as a way to counter the uncertainty, anecdotalism and myths of the topic area, make choices between competing explanations, and so help it to progress (34). Others explained its importance through reference to the applied nature of the field. For one academic researcher, primary data had ethical necessity in terms of providing reliable evidence to underpin policies that impact on peoples' lives (32). From a Government perspective, primary evidence was seen as particularly important, compared to abstract theoretical knowledge, in terms of answering practical questions on effective ways to deal with radicalisation (34). For many interviewees then, the nature of the topic area with its limitations in the evidence base and its close relationship with policy and practice, alongside the necessity of close examination of the issue in practice, meant that experience of primary research was a key component of authoritative knowledge on radicalisation.

6.3.2 Inexperience with primary research as an inhibitor of expertise

While experience with primary research was used to bolster expert status, it was also used to identify the boundaries of the expert field; that is, those without it were excluded or at least their expertise was questioned. This was linked to the nature of the evidence base on radicalisation. In Chapter 4, it was argued that a key message from reviews of both terrorism studies and the sub-topic of radicalisation is the lack of primary data and reliance on secondary sources, issues that can be seen in a wider context of uncertain knowledge on complex contemporary risks. Interviewees echoed these criticisms of the knowledge base. One think tank researcher for example discussed the limited evidence available on the topic:

I think what [*a research project*] also gave me was a real understanding that certainly from a Western policy perspective, also particularly a UK perspective, the numbers that we're talking about are so very small. [...] And so I think my biggest concern about the issue of radicalisation and expertise [...], is that in terms of the, say for example, policy issues such as drugs or alcohol abuse, anything in the public health sector, think of the numbers and the genuine statistical data and extrapolation and sampling etc. that can be done to come up with a real understanding of, if we for example put a minimum price on alcohol, how will that affect alcohol related

incidents in A and E. [...] And we can't, we just don't have the data to do that with radicalisation in the Islamism-inspired terrorism arena. (33)

This interviewee described the specificity of this topic in relation to the few sporadic cases available for study. A closely related problem is data access, discussed by one interviewee in that individuals are perhaps unlikely to identify themselves as in a process of radicalisation (34). Interviewees talked about the emotional difficulties of doing fieldwork in this area as well as the difficult and time-consuming process of gaining access to research sites or participants. There was some deviation from this perspective: one academic researcher (32) argued that similar issues are present in criminology more widely. Further, a think tank researcher (20) pointed to right wing extremism as a sub-topic relatively amenable to empirical analysis, and another interviewee (13) argued that while there are problems in attempting to identify individual-level predictive theories of radicalisation, knowledge can more feasibly be generated on issues including the social and political causes of terrorism. The faults in the knowledge base are clearly not all-encompassing nor exclusive to radicalisation studies; however, the field is certainly characterised by a preponderance of reservations about the possibility of establishing reliable knowledge on the topic.

These difficulties of data generation were regarded as an inhibitor of the possibility of radicalisation expertise. One interviewee (20) claimed that the lack of data leads to difficulties in building reliable knowledge and making rigorous conclusions on the causes of radicalisation. These problems were seen as insurmountable and limited the quality of expertise in the field, and in particular the ability to have levels of confidence in expertise comparable to that on other topics with large datasets available. For this interviewee, a lot of radicalisation expertise is 'untested' and theories are 'suppositions' (20). Some interviewees referred to a general lack of fieldwork among those who discuss radicalisation and the notion that ideas are passed around without substantiating evidence, an observation previously raised in a review of research on terrorism in Thailand (Connors 2006: 163-8). One practitioner identified data-related weaknesses amongst academics who study radicalisation, resulting in a detachment from 'reality' that was said to threaten the robustness of conclusions (23). Two other researchers (7, 13) made similar points,

doubting claims to radicalisation expertise given the lack of consensual knowledge on individual-level engagement with political violence. In this sense, expert analysis on radicalisation was seen to be weakened by a lack of primary data.

Interviewees correspondingly criticised those whose work is not based on primary data. In public debate, experts have criticised colleagues for a lack of primary research. For example, think tank researcher Jamie Bartlett (2011), reflecting on the development of radicalisation expertise since the September 2001 attacks in the US in an online news source, commented that ‘too many of them spend their hours concocting fantastically complex models of radicalisation; without troubling themselves to go anywhere near a ‘radical’.’ Here other experts are criticised for a focus on theory development without reference to empirical evidence. Interviewees echoed these points. One interviewee, who does have fieldwork experience, talked extensively about the field’s reliance on ‘secondary source material’ and theoretical analysis. Although this was explained partly by the difficulty of getting access to and building trust with convicted individuals, they said that the amount of authority held by academics talking on terrorism without any empirical backing is ‘just quite bizarre’. They were asked:

K: Okay, so do you think then that there are actually very few experts in the field?

27: Yes.

K: Because not very many people have access to this quality primary data?

27: So not many people have access to the data, and two, my real concern within academia and counter-terrorism, is that I think it’s just such a cottage industry that really we are perpetuating myths and fiction, rarely fact. We just don’t seem to be doing a terribly good job. There are therefore only a few individuals who really understand this issue, there are plenty of very clever individuals in both academia and think tanks who can talk about radicalisation but I don’t really think that they have actually had real experience or indeed access to the primary data that would make their case so much more worthwhile to listen to.

During the discussion on this topic the interviewee used the phrase 'you said it yourself', indicating a response to my explanation of the motivations of the study. At the same time, it was a long, detailed discussion that reflected the shape of the literature on terrorism studies. Similarly, some interviewees objected to the use of the term 'expert' in the field because of, as they described it, a proliferation of people that speak from opinion rather than data. For example, when asked for examples of experts in the field, this academic said:

There aren't many. I guess the word expert is just a block for me. I could tell you scholars in the field, but experts, I don't think in those terms, sorry, I know that's not helpful because that's what you're looking at, but frankly there's just so few people who've actually done research, not just written about but done actual research on this. (32)

There is a differentiation expressed here between the mass of writing on the subject and the expertise of those who have conducted research on it. A think tank researcher added to this by highlighting the contested nature of the topic area and criticising the tendency of media to describe as experts even those who present opinions as facts (33). Against this background of questioning the expert status of many in the field as a result of their reliance on secondary data analysis, three interviewees, working in academia, a think tank and as a practitioner, pointedly highlighted the relative uniqueness of their own field experience. For example, the academic said:

My entry into the field - one thing I will say is that I'm in this field because I did very very direct empirical research into a very very specific set of circumstances of violence. I'm not a theoriser who has, I've met quite a lot of people who are working in this and contingent fields like psychologists and so on who haven't kind of interviewed and talked to people involved in these sorts of activities. (6)

Similarly, a think tank researcher explained the value of one of their reports in terms of its use of primary data: 'at least you have a document that people can refer to which is based on primary data, rather than previously which was based on a bunch of fairly odd ideas that were probably anecdotal in nature' (27). Such comments use primary data to mark a boundary between authoritative and weak knowledge, and between experts and non-experts.

In such ways, conducting relevant primary research acted as a marker that was used by interviewees to both claim and deny expertise. Criticisms of the field's failure to generate significant amounts of data are transferred to the individual level and are used to judge levels of expertise. Conversely, the scarcity of data conveys an authority on those that do have access to it and as a result are able to claim contributions of rare and exclusive knowledge. In addition, primary research was said to convey a detailed understanding of the issue in practice and potentially generate insights that could be applied to help address the issue. Overall then, and in a context of the rising prominence of experiential expertise as discussed in Chapter 2.1.2, this suggests that researchers' ability to generate primary data remains a key source of credibility within the radicalisation expert community.

6.4 Professional scholarship

This section discusses the importance of quality scholarship to radicalisation expertise. On other complex and controversial risk issues, the rigour and transparency of fellow experts' methods was important in credibility judgements, with poor research methods and evidence quality leading to criticisms of credibility (Berdahl et al. 2016: 395-6; Lach et al. 2003; Wells 2011: 232-3). Use of the term 'junk science' for example, meaning a lack of scientific credentials on the part of the author, not peer reviewed, biased or even fraudulent, is one example of a rhetorical ploy used in politicised discussions (Herrick and Jamieson 2001). More broadly, a key strategy of credibility-seeking by think tanks is claiming to use scientific methods (Stone 1996: 9-25). This section examines how this theme takes shape amongst radicalisation experts, particularly given the difficulties of conducting primary research in this area.

6.4.1 The importance of quality scholarship to radicalisation expertise

Interviewees' comments relating to research referred not just to the importance of generating primary data, but the quality of scholarship and adherence to the rules of (social) science. One aspect of this was methodological. This was evident when interviewees reflected on their own practice and suggested that the basis of their expertise is research skills. Three researchers referred to their professional values in terms of attempting to build effective research designs, use sound methods, conduct careful study, achieve rigour, and be transparent in their methodologies. At the same time, some interviewees admired others for doing elaborate,

detailed work. For example, when discussing how rigorous research in this area is, this think tank researcher singled out the think tank Demos approvingly:

There are people at Demos that I think are very good, whose work is brilliant and they're a left-wing think tank, but I think some of their work is fantastic, looking at the radicalisation process, the de-radicalisation work, the analysis of different measures that take place [...] their work is very serious, it's very rigorous, it's very professionally done, it has academic standards, and they put their data and work out and you can subject it to criticism and analyse it.
(19)

Such qualities were also discussed by a senior Government analyst (34) who referred to the skills of colleagues in terms of robust, rigorous, and transparent methods, and the use of high standards of evidence in an attempt to increase accuracy, which was regarded as important given their influence on policy making. This was contrasted with experiential experts, who were said to offer anecdotal, though valid, information. Clearly these types of comments on the methodological and analytical rules of science relate to all subjects, not just radicalisation, but the importance of being guided by such generic rules in a field with substantial methodological challenges was highlighted by an academic researcher (32). How this approach might apply to radicalisation specifically was considered by interviewees, who gave the examples of methodological innovation, particularly in this value-orientated area fraught with fieldwork problems (16), and employing clearly defined concepts, particularly again given the 'absence of any real working definitions' in the field (33). While fieldwork is regarded as an important trait of a radicalisation expert, clearly a systematic and rigorous methodological approach is regarded as a key tenet of this.

In addition to methodology, a theoretically-driven approach was essential to radicalisation expertise for some interviewees. This was particularly important to two academics. One suggested that 'expertise comes also with a degree of analytical ability which is demonstrated physically in published work' (25), irrespective of professional background or the form of that publication (peer-reviewed, policy report etc.). As a result, they named individuals in think tanks like Jamie Bartlett of Demos and Rachel Briggs, formerly of Demos and the Institute for Strategic Dialogue,

as radicalisation experts despite their non-academic position. Another said that their own professional skills lay not in doing counter-radicalisation, but in creating 'a framework, like a big picture, one of those things where you colour in by numbers' and around which local and practical knowledge could orientate itself (32). This highlights the complementarity of theoretical and applied knowledge, discussed further in Chapter 7.4. Two think tank interviewees talked about the development and testing of hypotheses using empirical data and an ability to create and adapt theoretical frameworks over a period of time (24, 27). A senior government analyst similarly admired particular analysts in academia and think tanks for using primary data to test hypotheses on the topic of online radicalisation (34). This theory-development approach can be seen in this comment from a think tank researcher with a background working in central Government. They named academic psychologist Max Taylor and US-based, ex-CIA case officer turned consultant Marc Sageman as examples of experts on radicalisation:

There are some very good people I think up in St Andrews, so I think the likes of Max Taylor and others are certainly very useful in this space, I think that Marc Sageman has been very good, but again that is because they have been able to access so much primary data. They have that academic experience, they have a theoretical understanding of the concept, they have been able to develop that theoretical understanding by looking at primary data and challenging their own assumptions and creating new hypotheses, which has allowed them then to come up with a series of, I don't know what the word would be, beliefs about radicalisation and what it is and how it works etc., and the process itself. (27)

Amongst researchers with a variety of backgrounds then, primary data and theoretical knowledge have a role in underpinning authoritative expertise on the topic.

A final aspect of scholarship discussed by interviewees related to analytical ability. Reay's research (2007: 117-118) suggested that economists tended to see their ideas and thought processes as an important part of their expertise and a result of long term experience in the field. Applying this approach to radicalisation, some interviewees emphasised a subtle and precise analysis when asked about which experts they admire in the field. One interviewee, an academic with a background

in equalities research, admired a researcher for their 'nuanced understanding and view of what's happening' and said that 'making it more complex and difficult to generalise is important' (8). This was also emphasised by a researcher formerly part of a think tank that they described as working on issues of 'race, faith and equality':

And it's about being able to bring to bear your nuance in your assessment and analysis, and your ability to tease out from the data a subtext, especially in the case of radicalisation and extremism that we're contending with presently, there is a very significant overlay about culture and cultural navigation and being able to understand differences and nuances in culture. (24)

In this sense, the deductive approach described above is integrated with the emphasis on naturalistic research design discussed earlier. In general then, expertise is bound up with analysis that involves a structured research design via hypothesis-testing and the integration of real-life nuances.

Despite the analytical challenges inherent in the topic area, given the nature of radicalisation as a complex issue that is conceptually, theoretically and politically contested and underpinned by uncertain knowledge, clearly there is motivation among many of those interviewed to aim for scientific practice. Indeed criticisms of the lack of theoretical development in terrorism more generally may provide a space in which to differentiate expert knowledge. The emphasis on sound methods and theoretical development speaks overall in the language of science. This resonates with other authors who have observed 'pseudo-scientific' psychological language used in radicalisation discussions (Coppock and McGovern 2014: 252) and 'quasi-scientific' work on the modelling the radicalisation process (de Goede and Simon 2013: 319). More widely, Jackson (2012: 15, 18) has observed a dominant legitimisation of positivism and quantitative analysis in terrorism studies that results in a lack of engagement with knowledge that is 'below the required level of scientificity' (15). At the same time, there is a strain of data discussed here that suggests the importance of local knowledge, in the form of nuanced analysis. This echoes a more general theme of the importance of theoretical knowledge alongside local, cultural knowledge.

6.4.2 Contesting expertise on the basis of poor scholarship

These scientific tenets of a radicalisation expert were used to judge others and therefore to identify the boundaries of expertise. One aspect of this was criticising others for perceived errors, and in particular for reaching conclusions on the basis of factors other than evidence or empirical research. A practitioner with research experience for example referred to an academic who 'at best made stuff up or [...] was deliberately misled' on radicalisation and produced work that was 'not serious' (19). More generally, fellow specialists were criticised for not upholding the values and practices discussed above as constitutive of radicalisation expertise. This example, amended by email following the interview, highlights the use of attributes including a lack of engagement with the literature, minimal amounts of fieldwork and ideological interpretations as grounds to question credibility:

Bob Lambert and Jonathan Githens-Mazer's study on Islamophobia would not, in my view, have stood up as a piece of serious academic work, partly because there was a significant amount of - in my view unsubstantiated - rhetoric about the role of 'neo-con' groups like the Quilliam Foundation (and which then resulted in a squabble). Similarly, King's College London recently put out a piece of research work on far right networks on Twitter, which I would not consider sufficiently rigorous. There is a very large literature on network analysis, and the use of web crawlers to construct and understand online networks. To my knowledge, they did not review this or consult it, which weakened the work. So these types of outputs coming from research centres can sometimes look like academic work, but they are not. They are often closer to think-tank type work, which is typically less rigorous. (16)

This was part of a more general comment on the quality of work, particularly by academics, produced on radicalisation. Similarly, an academic with extensive experience in primary research (26) criticised others in the field for 'appalling' and 'dreadful' standards of evidence: in particular, generalisation from a low number of interviews or interviews in very particular circumstances, for example with incarcerated individuals. A further aspect, discussed again by an academic, was a failure to define key concepts like extremism and terrorism and the impact that this has on conceptualisations of radicalisation (32). Another academic emphasised the importance of possessing the right skills for thorough and accurate fieldwork:

Because when you're talking about any of these groups who are not using the English language as their main medium, unless you know the languages they're using and therefore can get into the mind, the mental structures of the way that they're talking, you're not going to get very far. So I am a bit critical of people who think they're experts on Islamic radicalisation without knowing Arabic or Urdu, if they're in Britain they've got to know Urdu at least. (6)

This academic contrasted their own expertise with others whose studies are not credible because of a lack of such technical skills. At the same time however, the allusion to immersion in communities suggests that the importance of technical expertise speaks to a broader cross-cutting theme of cultural expertise.

Finally, there was some apparent conflict between professions on this issue. Two academics, when asked whether think tanks also contribute expertise on radicalisation, criticised some think tanks for a lack of methodological and theoretical sophistication despite having larger resources than academics for data generation (21, 32). An example of such academic questioning of particular think tank contributions is seen in a Guardian newspaper article by two researchers from Aberystwyth, discussing research by Policy Exchange (Smyth and Gunning 2007). Aberystwyth is the historic UK center of critical terrorism studies, while the Guardian has been an outlet for much debate on Prevent. The article used the phrases 'not reliable', 'validity remains dubious', 'unhelpful analytically', 'without any evidence' and 'alleged', terms which question the scientific value of the research. The authors also referred to 'findings at odds with other research', thus laying the weight of the expert community against Policy Exchange. In contrast to this characterisation, the authors called for 'sound research' and an 'intelligent response', terms which seem to demarcate the other side as unreliable. Clearly there are many think tanks active on radicalisation and much collaboration and movement between professions; however, such comments reflect a wider usage of scientific terminology to demarcate radicalisation expertise.

In general then, the idea of an expert being a professional scholar and upholding scientific values leads to mirroring criticisms of those that are perceived as failing to meet these criteria: it is a marker that is used to identify the boundaries of expertise in the field. Its importance is particularly pronounced given the criticisms of the quality of knowledge within the topic

area of radicalisation as well as terrorism studies more widely. Such judgements, coming mainly from those who are researchers themselves, are applied not only to researchers but to experts more generally, and thus serve to prioritise research-based evidence over experiential evidence.

6.5 Policy relevance

The embeddedness of radicalisation theory in UK policy was discussed in Chapter 3. Of course, official conceptualisations are not developed and deployed in isolation. Government has suggested that its understanding of the nature of radicalisation is evidence-based (HM Government 2009b: 9), and notes the involvement of academia in building the knowledge that justifies its counter-radicalisation work:

Since the last Prevent strategy, academic, intelligence and other Government work has illuminated the drivers of radicalisation, the characteristics of people who have been radicalised and who have joined terrorist groups, and the specific pathways to support for, and participation in, terrorist acts (Home Office 2011a: 17)

Such statements, alongside the applied nature of the topic area more generally, suggest that policy relevance may be an important source of credibility for radicalisation experts.

This coheres with conceptions of expertise as professional knowledge; that is, specialised knowledge that can be applied to social problems (Meuser and Nagel 2009). An advisory function is a historically important feature of academic security studies (Wæver 2015), and research suggests that in topic areas with high policy relevance, the usability of expert knowledge can be of particular importance to expert credibility (Horton et al. 2016: 24-26). Clearly however experts can take on a variety of policy roles with differing levels of advocacy (Pielke 2007: 1-7); on controversial risk issues, experts have been shown to adopt a range of stances towards policy processes, from complete independence from policy and low levels of contribution, through willing interaction, to pro-active contributors to policy and public debate (Spruijt et al. 2013). As detailed in Chapter 2.3.3, discussions in terrorism studies suggest that policy relevance as a marker of expertise is highly contested. Some terrorism researchers highlight the benefits of engagement or argue that seeking relevance in itself does not harm credibility (Horgan and Boyle 2008: 59-60), while others are more critical of the role that experts play in legitimising state actions, and accusations of collusion have plagued the expert field

(Herman and O'Sullivan 1991; Miller and Mills 2009; 2010). This section addresses how these debates are manifested in the radicalisation expert community, specifically with reference to how credible expertise is conceptualised and challenged on the basis of policy relevance. While discussions around this theme generated much reflection on what an expert should do, or professional values, the section sticks closely to policy engagement as a marker of expertise, and as applied to the radicalisation field in particular.

6.5.1 The importance of applied knowledge

It is clear from documentary evidence that some radicalisation researchers engage heavily with policy and practice. Examples include work at the University of Nottingham (2014) with policy makers on right-wing extremism or at the ICSR in terms of specific issues like foreign fighters (ICSR 2014) as well as on radicalisation more generally, taking the lead for example in efforts to produce a 'Global Consensus' on countering radicalisation (Club de Madrid 2015). Some interviewees were indeed enthusiastic about engaging with policy and regarded it as an important part of their work. Interviewees gave various examples of engagement, showing the range of policy and practice-related activities in this topic area. These included participation in: House of Commons committee inquiries; the 2005 'Preventing Extremism Together' Working Groups; meetings, research and other forms of interaction with Government departments and units (including internationally); local authority work, including both informal and formal roles; media commentary, writing and television documentary research; and criminal cases. In addition, numerous interviewees said that they were happy to share knowledge or offer advice either in general or in specific situations where they were called on or where they saw an opportunity to improve counter-radicalisation policy. Others referred to abstract notions of an expert as someone who helps in the formation of policy, or the ability to produce research tailored for decision making as a specific type of expertise. One researcher (13) offered a different perspective: they claimed 'negative expertise', in that they attempt to stop 'things from happening rather than recommending anything to happen', which was seen as 'the most we can do' given the nature of the policy process as relatively closed-minded across all issues. This echoes recent writing that argues for an oppositional role from critical terrorism studies scholars that can hold the state the account for its action in this area

(Jackson 2016). In general however, many interviewees included some kind of policy work in explanations of their expertise.

As well as being identified as a positive trait of expertise, policy activities were used as a marker by which to judge others. Thus policy engagement was identified by some as a skill necessary to radicalisation expertise: radicalisation experts simply have 'to be able to apply it [*their knowledge*] to policy because it's a policy-driven concept' (4). An academic with extensive experience in policy engagement explicitly questioned the expertise of those with no such experience:

[*An aspect of radicalisation expertise*] would be demonstrating a capacity or a history of engaging with relevant non-academic audiences on those issues. You cannot claim to be an expert on radicalisation and what the government should be doing on X, Y and Z unless you've actually exchanged your knowledge with policy makers, practitioners and third sector groups. That might be providing evidence to Home Affairs committees, Government committees, it could be engaging with policy makers at conferences and workshops, it could be going in for a secondment, it could be doing any number of things, but if you're on television or writing about how Government should change its policy and being badged as an expert then you'd better have the experience of engaging with those audiences. (21)

There is an implicit assumption here that experts seek to apply their knowledge on radicalisation and in this context, to do so authoritatively, they must have experience in policy engagement. Such values led to questions around the credibility of those without such experience. Many such comments related to the shortcomings of theoretical knowledge. One think tank researcher for example said that academic skills are not enough to be useful to government, 'because it strikes me as being first and foremost a kind of policy question' (15). A similar point was made in relation to critical researchers during a discussion of the different perspectives in the field by a think tank researcher who said that 'I really don't see them making any useful contribution to the debates where it matters, either at policy or practice' (9). Fellow experts are criticised here for not contributing constructively, not to knowledge generation but to policy making. Another interviewee described how they applied these values to the organisation of an expert panel on radicalisation:

The aim of [*the expert panel*] was to in a sense triangulate the knowledge deficit that existed in policymakers with practitioners out there in the field and academia. One of the critiques I had of academia was that in terms of day to day real time policy relevance for policy practitioners it was unhelpful. Academics were contributing and rightly so, but in a really purist manner in terms of concepts and yes they do fieldwork, but in the absence of having any grounding or exposure to how the policy practitioner process actually works, I don't think academia is sufficiently able to advise appropriately policy makers. (24)

This amounts to a criticism of academic work 'in this area' on the basis of its abstraction from policy and practice. Most, although not all, such comments came from think tanks. More generally, many interviewees prioritised the skills of policy engagement as an aspect of radicalisation expertise and conversely criticised those who claim expertise, particularly in an applied context, without them.

The shortcomings of theoretical knowledge were often highlighted in contrast to think tanks, which were described by numerous interviewees as possessing policy and practice-related skills. Four think tank interviewees said that their work on radicalisation was orientated by a perspective of making academic insights useful to policy makers. Influencing public policy is of course a standard role of think tanks, and although there are many variations in this in terms of how much and how they provide policy advice (Stone 2007: 261, 271-4), their work is usually tailored to addressing government priorities (James 1993: 492-4). For example, one interviewee described the work of their organisation in terms of bringing 'the academic research into it and it was to be led by that, but what we were producing was a piece of research that could be used to try and inform policy' (4). This ability to mediate between academia and policy was drawn in contrast to the academic skill set by three interviewees: one said that think tanks can offer valuable expertise on radicalisation because of their skills in applying 'decent research methods and get[*ting*] stuff out quickly', in comparison to the long timeframe of much academic work that by the time it is published can be 'of no value' to policy makers (16). Thus think tanks were differentiated from academics by virtue of these expert skills, for example:

I guess for me the key things that think tanks do, which academics don't do, is they think through the policy implications of what the research tells them, so it's the impact side of things. So it's sort of saying not only what is the analysis but what does it actually mean in terms of the meaningful choices for policy makers, I think generally academics are quite bad at doing the next step. They can give you what the problem is and deconstruct all of that, but then what do you do about it is the bit that think tanks are good at doing. So I think that's where their expertise lies in some ways. (8)

This ability to apply knowledge to policy making is here described as an expert competence. In fact, one think tank researcher said:

So I'd say I'm more of an expert in applying research for policy than perhaps radicalisation in and of itself. (16)

As such, these skills can be even more important than knowledge in terms of being recognised as a relevant expert. As a topic of high policy interest, relevance to and engagement with policy, practice and publics signified authority to some experts. Further, hierarchies of expertise are established on this basis: expertise without such skills is seen as less useful and therefore less credible. Attempts to describe think tanks in opposition to academia show then how this skill set can be used to demarcate expertise.

6.5.2 The limits of policy engagement as an indicator of expert credibility

At the same time, such attempts to reify expertise in terms of policy relevance were not universally accepted. In general, too much focus on 'the policy side of it' was said to detract from think tanks' 'level of expertise' as compared to practitioners and academics (27). More specifically, the uncertain and contested nature of the evidence base, as discussed in Chapter 4, had the potential to undermine the authority of experts' advice on counter-radicalisation. Thus for one civil servant (14), claiming expertise suggested a level of confidence in recommendations for practice that was unwarranted. In practice however, it was reported that in the process of providing policy advice, a label of 'expert' was often assumed anyway. One academic (6) for example perceived that an impetus to achieve 'impact' was said to encourage claims to expertise 'without having proper knowledge' and produce a 'dangerous tendency to replicate the line that they're all irrational fanatics' to replicate policy framings of radicalisation. Another academic (32) referred to public engagement more broadly,

questioning the expertise of those that are called on to analyse particular events in the media. They argued that due to the lack of data on such recent events, 'you are always on to comment on stuff that you don't know anything about', and thus 'I don't know what an expert is in that situation [...] short of someone who has intimate knowledge of that particular case'. For some interviewees then, achieving policy relevance did not necessarily signify expertise.

Further, the credibility of those that *do* engage was questioned by some who problematise the expert-state relationship in this area. This has been noted in another study on ecological scientists (Lach et al. 2003: 174), who favoured policy relevance but were also worried that it would damage their credibility. An academic, who was critical of the concept of radicalisation and the knowledge produced by its expert community, identified a prevalent 'problem-solving approach' in the field where 'suddenly scholars become a task force for the Government and they have to solve a problem for the Government' rather than understanding the complexities of an issue, which is the 'job' of academics (26). A similar perspective was voiced by another researcher, who was critical of the 'positivist' bent of academic work in this area, arguing that academics should not only orientate themselves by the needs of Government but conduct research that is independent from those needs (13). These two interviewees identified examples of issues that are likely to be downplayed or ignored in such research, including the role of the state in radicalisation. The implication of such a problem solving approach then is that those who orientate themselves by political priorities are likely to offer a partial analysis, thus reducing the quality of expertise they offer. While this was a minority position, it reflects the stance of critical terrorism studies scholars on the problem solving approach of 'orthodox' terrorism studies, which they describe as an uncritical approach to research that seeks to address problems without questioning how they have emerged, often seeking objectivity and ignoring the political nature of knowledge (Jackson et al. 2011: 18-21). In contrast, many such scholars have maintained a desire to be policy relevant from a critical stance, helping to improve counter-terrorism policies while avoiding co-option (Gunning 2007: 239-241; Toros 2016). This debate mirrors Burawoy's (2004) conceptualisation of the different roles of sociologists, particularly the distinction between policy sociology that seeks to answer practical questions, and critical sociology that is more keenly aware of who and what such knowledge serves and

indeed seeks a more 'counter-hegemonic' public sociology that engages with civil society (Burawoy 2005: 390). On radicalisation, some find that the credibility of those that engage with policy is undermined by the introduction of bias into analysis.

The impetus for experts to engage with policy takes on a particular tone in the radicalisation expert community. For many, engagement with non-academic audiences was a constituent part of expertise given the policy-relevant nature of the topic area. In this sense, there was a strong argument that experts could not hold only theoretical knowledge, but must be applied. However, applying knowledge also led to questions of expert credibility due to the quality of knowledge that could be offered on this topic and the possibility of bias. The use of bias as a result of policy engagement to question credibility and therefore mark the boundary of expertise is closely related to the wider ideological biases discussed in the next section.

6.6 Objectivity

Running parallel to discussions on policy relevance were frequent references by interviewees to objectivity or related terms like independence or neutrality. For interviewees, such terms seemed to indicate a lack of bias in a context of heated debates on radicalisation. They speak to an image of science as value-free, conducted by a detached researcher, in order to produce generalisable statements (May 2011: 8-13). This understanding of science is of course difficult to maintain in its purest form given acknowledgement of the impossibility of value-free knowledge and the influence of corporate funders over science (Jones 2004: 253-4).

Objectivity is a trait however that has been claimed by experts in other topic areas (Steel, Lach and Satyal 2006: 489-90), and neutrality noted as a way by which experts can claim authority in policy making processes (Pielke 2007: 1-7). Previous research also suggests a crossover between the professionalism discussed earlier and objectivity (Yamamoto 2012: 117-21): environmental scientists claimed that they would fairly consider all the evidence and maintain a high quality of work and so any biases would have less impact on their research. Indeed Lorenc et al. (2014: 1044) found that academics were more likely to be seen by policy makers as objective and so authoritative. This final section examines the role of objectivity in radicalisation expertise, considering how these wider themes apply in a politicised context, where, as seen in Chapter 2.2, the public and highly

contested nature of the topic entails a close relationship between expertise and political positions.

6.6.1 Objectivity as a marker of expertise

For some, objectivity was a value by which they defined their own work and claimed credibility in opposition to others. It was also used to approve of others' work. One academic was particularly keen to stress this value when discussing the politicised nature of the field. They said that they had 'tried to avoid becoming a part of' the political debates around radicalisation:

I do, funnily enough, even though the current climate is not conducive to that, I do believe that as an academic I have to search for the truth, and I think that a lot of these people who are in any of these corners start with a conclusion and make the evidence fit around the conclusion, and I think it should be the opposite way, you have to be completely open-minded and let the evidence lead you wherever it leads you. (25)

Referring to draft versions of the perspectives that are presented in Chapter 9, the idea of objectivity is used by this interviewee to differentiate themselves from apparently more politicised colleagues. One academic interviewee (7) differentiated academic research on the basis of its 'detachment', while another said that compared to think tanks, academics were inherently more objective:

I think we have got something distinct to offer because we do overall tend to be a bit more detached from, there is a tradition of academic freedom, we're not doing stuff simply to replicate what our paymasters say. (6)

All of these comments were however qualified, including as 'trying to' achieve objectivity despite inherent human bias (25), the pressure for academics to achieve impact that encourages close engagement with the state (7), and the tendency for experts to frame their research to government priorities through use of the terminology of radicalisation and a focus on Islamism (6). One academic, who themselves wished to work 'independently', argued that researchers 'need to declare their allegiances', in particular those that are a result of Government funding (26). Such comments placed limits on the extent to which academics could achieve objectivity in practice.

The tendency to claim objectivity was also displayed by non-academic interviewees. One researcher said that they judge community experts partly by whether they are 'independent of the various political forces that are playing out in this debate' (13), suggesting that the importance of objectivity extended past the research community. Even those who work in think tanks, previously discussed as political operatives, held to this value: one think tank researcher active in the early days of Prevent said that their organisation had tried to be critical of all sides in the debate and 'take a bit of a detached view of those issues' (4), while another said that contrary to some think tanks, they 'just personally prefer to try and do sound, as objective as I can, research' (33). A third said that 'remember we have, as a think tank, a constitution. We are not political [...] we must be independent of political influence' (27). One think tank interviewee said that while research in the field may have a particular ideological perspective, their policing background encouraged them to 'follow the evidence; I like to see the evidence and I like to make my own judgement on that evidence' (9). The use of independence as a credibility factor by think tanks has been documented previously (Stone 1996). One practitioner interviewee approved of an experts' analysis because it was 'objective [...] done for the sake of information or knowledge gaining' (19). This same interviewee said that their organisation sought to achieve 'not objectivity but political neutrality', in that they worked across all main political parties, as well as working with people from a range of political, disciplinary and religious perspectives: 'they all advise us and get involved in the work that we do' (19). In this sense, neutrality was seen as a value that increased the credibility of interviewees' own work. The emphasis on such values extended to an expert panel on radicalisation, with an interviewee involved in its organisation saying that its 'foremost principle' was 'academic intellectual integrity and neutrality', meaning that the political affiliations of members was not seen as an important factor in deciding who to approach (24). In summary then, interviewees made many references to objectivity as a way of differentiating their own work or that of others, with the implication that a more credible analysis was offered. Such claims are perhaps particularly powerful in the context of a controversial and competitive research topic, where references to objectivity allow experts to distinguish themselves from the fray.

6.6.2 Biases and expertise

Conversely, a lack of objectivity is used to question others' credibility. Research on other expert communities also suggests that the importance of objectivity entails criticising those who advocate particular values (Yamamoto 2012: 102-4). In one study, experts used objectivity as a 'marketing strategy' for their own work, claiming bias in contradictory research (Wells 2011: 229-231). In another, scientists on the politically conservative right were more likely to be concerned about biases as a result of funding source, although claims to objectivity and accusations of bias came from all directions in this data (Steel, Lach and Satyal 2006: 489-90). Indeed Kinchy and Kleinman (2003: 878) claim that, given the power of the objectivity discourse, a lack of objectivity is a common means of discrediting experts on controversial topics. Some of the ecologists that they interviewed had for example been discredited through reference to being an 'environmentalist', in other words having a value bias.

In interviews with radicalisation experts, having a normative agenda was argued to reduce the quality of analysis offered. The normative slant of much writing on terrorism has been noted in the literature (George 1991; Horgan and Boyle 2008: 54-55). Discussing right wing think tanks, one interviewee said that while the 'political agenda' of terrorism experts did not necessarily undermine expertise, 'the intellectual content of what these people had to say was skewed to fit a political agenda and so it reduced its intellectual value' (13). An interviewee argued that some think tanks have 'political interests' and represent ideological stances rather than being 'driven by quality evidence' (26). Similarly, the politicised nature of the topic for an ex-Government advisor on Prevent meant that many of the dominant arguments were based on cherry-picked evidence (18). Such comments could also be directed at experts that tend to support the Government's focus on extremism. Thus another interviewee was asked whether other experts in the field tend to be objective and spoke about one particular example:

I don't think [*academic expert*] is an expert in anything apart from himself [...] he also has no expertise in radicalisation whatever. What he does have is a very political view of what radicalisation is, or what he thinks radicalisation should be rather than what it is actually, and I'm not sure he then is able to really differentiate between quite a political view he holds about radicalisation, multiculturalism, the Islamic faith in reality, versus perhaps a more

sober, independent objective assessment that we would perhaps expect from someone else who doesn't have that political dynamic.
(27)

This particular individual, for this interviewee, contributed to the debate not on the basis of a professional position, from which they might be able to give a more 'independent assessment', but because of their 'particular views, political, social, etc.' Similar comments were levelled at critical researchers. Discussing researchers' allegations of 'spying' under Prevent, one interviewee said that 'they're speaking about it from a political angle, they have an axe to grind so to speak' (19). Three particular individuals were singled out for disdain by this interviewee, with comments including that 'his ideological bent influences his analysis' and he 'froths at the mouth when he speaks', which in turn meant that 'I wouldn't take anything he says academically seriously' (19). At the same time, this interviewee sought to limit this discussion, arguing that those who were 'serious' about their work or 'genuine' in their views could be distinguished from those that are completely ideological and not open to engagement (19). This comment echoes attempts to differentiate a core of experts from commentators and others who contribute to politicised discussions, as seen on both expertise in general (Collins 2014: 83-91) as well as in terrorism studies (Horgan and Boyle 2008). In general however, a key theme in interviews was a tendency to criticise fellow experts for a lack of rigour due to ideological bias. These allusions to the lack of expertise shown by those who aren't objective essentially serve to establish the boundaries of expertise.

The issues of policy relevance, objectivity and bias are therefore somewhat intertwined. Policy relevant research and activities were regarded positively by many interviewees in this topic area. At the same time, developing a relationship with the state had the potential to undermine expertise by damaging the independence of research, an issue that was seen as particularly problematic in the politically-charged area of counter-radicalisation. In contrast to this, objectivity or independence from non-research interests was regarded by many as a signifier of reliable knowledge. More widely then, biases on the part of the expert were regarded as detrimental to expertise. In this sense, credible expertise is defined on the basis of differentiation from the wider political tussles of the topic area (discussed further in Chapter 9). Similar themes were displayed in a study of ecologists, who were found to balance two seemingly

contradictory claims to credibility: relevance and neutrality (Kinchy and Kleinman 2003). Both were seen as 'historically resonant discourse[s]' in that they are established ways of talking about science. Seeking a balance between them involved showing the usefulness of expertise without drifting into advocacy for particular positions and indeed actively engaging in boundary work to distinguish ecological science from environmental politics. In radicalisation, the emphasis on objectivity and cynicism to problem solving on behalf of the state is matched by the strength of enthusiasm for and engagement in policy relevant activity within the expert community.

6.7 Conclusion

This chapter has examined the nature of radicalisation expertise, focusing on how expert credibility is claimed and contested. After explaining common definitions of experts as those that work in the area or have relevant knowledge, it sought to focus in on specific markers of expertise in this topic area. Thus academic credentials were regarded as important by some experts; however, academic credibility was contested by reference to a lack of practical knowledge, which is seen as particularly important in this topic area. Academics can however find credibility in fieldwork since it displays a closeness to the research issue that is similar to practical knowledge. Through these themes, radicalisation emerged as an issue where a close and nuanced understanding of the topic area are core means of claiming credibility. In a context of the many challenges to knowledge as discussed in Chapter 4, there was also a strong theme of quality. In particular, achieving methodological rigour and making contributions to theory development were valued, although again with a strong theme of the appreciation of local nuances. This was contrasted with poor methods, including a lack of cultural knowledge or skills. The final sections considered the interaction of conceptions of credible expertise with the political nature of the field. Policy relevance and objectivity were lauded but contrasted with a risk of bias through either working with the state to achieve impact or having an ideological perspective. The chapter suggests overall that demonstrating expertise in radicalisation is far from straightforward, and that claims to expertise can be contested from a number of angles.

Much of the data discussed in this chapter referred to researchers; while there was some reference to experiential expertise, this is drawn out more fully in the next chapter. It analyses the role of experiential knowledge

in conceptions of radicalisation expertise, focusing on how it is regarded and dismissed as a credible source of knowledge. While experience-based experts may offer the closeness to the research issue that seems to be an important requirement of radicalisation expertise, their knowledge does not sit so clearly within the requirement to scientific method and objectivity.

Chapter 7: Experiential knowledge as a basis for radicalisation expertise

This chapter discusses the role of experiential knowledge in conceptualisations of radicalisation expertise. Such knowledge is often used alongside research credentials as a basis for claims to expertise on this topic. As addressed in Chapter 2.1.2, experts with this type of knowledge claim have also risen to prominence more widely, with many commentators claiming that experience is now a legitimate source of authoritative knowledge (e.g. Cozzens and Woodhouse 1995; Nowotny 2003) and is valuable in public policy debates (e.g. Corburn 2005). Such claims are particularly visible in health, where there are cases of patients contributing to knowledge of a disease, often from an initial position of resistance to the dominant consensus (e.g. Bloor 2000; Clarke 2000). Irwin (1995: 105-131) documents many cases of environmental risk where knowledge based on practice or on observation of a local environment has been used to criticise scientific knowledge as disconnected. At the same time, the notion of experiential expertise continues to be contested: Prior (2003) for example has argued that experts are characterised by technical knowledge, distinguished from the experiential knowledge of lay people. Indeed in practice, local knowledge has often been excluded from policy making, framed as anecdotal and applied, and thus differentiated from objective and generalisable science (Irwin 1995: 131-4). The evidence-based policy movement has tended to value research-based evidence, especially quantitative, over first-hand narratives (Epstein, Farina and Heidt 2014: 243-7). Research has suggested that scientists and policy makers often identify expertise on the basis of formal education rather than practice, and privilege scientifically-generated, data-based knowledge, with lay knowledge seen as anecdotal and valued only as complementary (Moran and Rau 2016; Young and Matthews 2007: 128-132).

This chapter examines such debates in the context of radicalisation knowledge. It considers three prominent experience-based sources of expertise: practitioners, ex-extremists, and communities. There have also been calls to recognise and use the expertise of survivors of terrorist violence (Ramalingam 2014). However, this knowledge source was not raised in interviews and has had minimal visibility in debates, and is not discussed here. The chapter discusses how the three knowledge sources are viewed by those with knowledge claims on radicalisation; in particular, how and why they are used to signify expertise on this particular topic as

well as the means by which they are denigrated. It ends with a short section on amalgamations of scientific and experiential knowledge.

7.1 Practitioners as radicalisation experts

As described in Chapter 3.1, Prevent is 'delivered through local authorities, statutory organisations, policing and a wide range of community organisations' (Home Office 2011a: 96). The Prevent duty (HM Government 2015) greatly extends the scope of counter-radicalisation practice in the sense that it is now part of the remit of a broad range of professionals; the main focus here however is on those practitioners that specialise in the issue. Rather than simply acting to deliver a national strategy, such practitioners were discussed by many interviewees as potential radicalisation experts.

Practitioners have been visible in policy-level discussions. The 2015 Countering Extremism inquiry for example took evidence from Inspire and CAGE, organisations at different ends of the political spectrum but both involved in practical work around radicalisation and terrorism (Home Affairs Committee 2015b). Indeed the report of the 2012 'Roots of Radicalisation' inquiry (House of Commons 2012: 12) stated that

there is a wealth of knowledge held by people working with individuals judged to be vulnerable to violent radicalisation at a local level that could better inform our understanding of why some of these individuals do become radicalised and, crucially, why some do not

Practitioner knowledge here has the potential to contribute to radicalisation theories. In the report, the primary reason for its importance is the lack of other evidence, particularly 'objective data', available. In this sense, the nature of the evidence base has strengthened the authority of experiential expertise. In the security sector more widely, practitioners are active in creating knowledge on risks and setting policy agendas (e.g. Bigo 2002; Leander 2005), and Klauser (e.g. 2009) has examined how different forms of expertise, including that based on practical and technical knowledge, interact to manage particular security situations. While these comments might suggest that practitioners are an important source of radicalisation expertise, this section examines perspectives on the nature and credibility of their knowledge. It first considers explanations of the credibility of

practitioner expertise on radicalisation, and second the limitations of the credibility that such knowledge confers.

7.1.1 Explaining the expertise of practitioners

Interviewees identified a number of different types of actor that may offer practitioner expertise. A researcher, themselves with professional experience, described the range of potential radicalisation experts with practitioner backgrounds:

As a topic, radicalisation does have an interesting and possibly unique and strong second element of practical experts who have been involved in counter-radicalisation programmes, or programmes at street level. I'm talking about social workers, teachers, organisations that actually focus on this issue, who do have a lot of practical expertise within this topic. But it's a different kind of expertise as opposed to just academic knowledge. (9)

The significant cohort of practitioners with contributory expertise (Collins and Evans 2007) is distinguished here from academic expertise and also regarded as particular to the topic of radicalisation. Similarly, another interviewee was emphatic that expertise comes not from those who theorise radicalisation but who have long-term experience in a range of areas, including community engagement (the example given was the Radical Middle Way), working in localities with 'jihadi preachers' (e.g. STREET and the 'Brixton Salafis'), and those taking a 'rights-based legal approach' (e.g. CAGE) (10). In a published interview, Alyas Karmani, Co-Director of STREET UK, which conducts counter-radicalisation work, refers to the 'evidence base of practice' that practitioners have of the radicalisation process, and indeed himself refers to this experience alongside his research activities when arguing against the primacy of ideology in explanations of radicalisation (Fitzgerald 2016a: 141). A further example of such a knowledge claim comes from Sajda Mughal of JAN Trust, an organisation that conducts work on social issues including radicalisation. In an interview on Newsnight (BBC 2016b), she was introduced as 'A 7/7 survivor who became a de-radicalisation expert' (at 11.30) and went on to say:

I have to agree that there is not one single factor that leads someone to radicalisation. I mean I've worked, since 7/7 I've been working on this issue and I've worked with a large number of individuals who have been at risk of radicalisation, mainly young

people, and also know people who've been radicalised, and there are a number of factors, whether it's socio-economic, or whether it's a personal grievance, or [interrupted by presenter] (at 12.24)

While also referencing a research project conducted by her organisation, clearly her practitioner experience in this area is used as a basis to claim expertise. As well as contributing to knowledge generation, a former senior civil servant (29) suggested that practitioners' knowledge influenced the design of Prevent. In particular, this interviewee reported that central government policy was 'quite heavily influenced by the Muslim Contact Unit', established within the Metropolitan Police Special Branch in 2002 and lauded and lambasted in equal measure for its work, in that they 'rather adopted his [Robert Lambert's, former head of the Unit] ideas of using "moderate" extremists to counter extreme extremists'. In general then practitioner knowledge was seen by these interviewees as an important source of expertise for understanding radicalisation as well as formulating responses.

The classification of practitioners' knowledge as expertise was usually explained by the situations that they had observed as a professional. This could refer to contextual knowledge about a local community: one practitioner talked about their close connection to 'the streets' that involved 'finding out what's going on, ear to the ground, close to issues' (23). For others, the value of practitioner knowledge was a more specific witnessing of radicalisation processes. This might be related to particular cases, or an understanding of the wider dynamics of radicalisation in practice. One policy analyst for example discussed those who provide counter-radicalisation interventions as a type of expert, since they have direct contact with those who are considered radicalised, and therefore witness the theorised process (34). Similarly, a think tank researcher said that practitioners' perspectives are an important part of the evidence base because they are formed of 'direct and personal experiences' of radicalisation (33). One interviewee gave the specific example of ex-police officer Robert Lambert, who was praised for his extensive field experience which 'gave him a very serious, in-depth encounter with but also analysis of and familiarity with those ideas, ideologies' (11). Those who work for Channel and other counter-radicalisation programmes were seen as experts by one think tank researcher since they are 'really really in constant contact with the really top end, cutting edge bit of radicalisation' (16). One

interviewee for example described counter-radicalisation practitioner organisation STREET as having an expertise that is 'grounded in [*the*] local experience' of working with individuals like Abdullah el-Faisal, convicted in 2003 of solicitation to murder and encouraging racial hatred, and those that they seek to influence, and in this sense tightly focused on understanding and preventing terrorism (31). Other interviewees talked about intelligence agencies that had 'watched patterns of radicalisation in radical groups' (18) and had access to information that is not widely available in this area of covert activity. One ex-practitioner explained their own expertise in terms of having worked in counter-radicalisation, experience which gave them first-hand involvement around particular cases or locations, as well as wider engagement with a range of Muslim groups (31). Practitioners' detailed knowledge of community dynamics, including varieties of extremism and differentiating extreme thought and behaviour, was seen as particularly valuable (18). For example, one practitioner described their knowledge of al-Qaeda ideology and how it had been developed through directly challenging those who voiced it over a long period of time. This involved

understanding the whole pathway around the creation of the dar al-harb ideology, how it proliferated, who it proliferated to, who the ideologues were, how they were able to target individuals, why they did it in a particular way, so we know all of that. (23)

Referring to the 'narrative' of Al-Qaeda and related groups, this and other comments describe practitioners' expertise as a detailed knowledge of radicalisation processes as a result of direct observation and engagement.

There was much differentiation by interviewees between this proximal, applied knowledge and abstract, academic knowledge. The strength of practitioner knowledge, according to one interviewee, is that it is centred on observations of what actually happens, rather than theories of what happens (9). A practitioner (23) emphasised the necessity of casework to building up a thorough and nuanced explanatory understanding of radicalisation and the inadequacy of interview-based analyses, and said that while academics may have expertise, 'first hand primary experience' gave a 'different edge or perspective'. This example was given by a researcher and policy consultant who has worked on radicalisation:

So for example you might have a local organisation like STREET that works in Brixton and nearby areas, where people know people

who are being radicalised and they've been subject to those experiences themselves in the past and have resisted those influences. They would have a very specific in-depth awareness of the tactics and the procedures used by radicalisers that, you could not really buy that expertise from an academic that'd studied AQ or jihadist movements in the UK. So yeah I think all of those different forms of expertise do apply very much in the radicalisation field. (11)

Even relevant research-based knowledge is regarded here as lacking the depth of practitioner knowledge. This interviewee argued that while in-depth analysis is important in the long term, the significance of practitioner experts lay in the fact that 'what we're dealing with is essentially not an academic subject' and indeed 'the fundamental pursuit is a practical answer' to stopping violence. The notion of longevity was also raised by an interviewee who talked about the length of time that some practitioners have been involved in addressing a range of types of violence that come under counter-terrorism operations (10). This was explicitly used as a basis to claim credibility by one practitioner, who referred to their long term case work with a variety of cases that had given them a detailed, differentiated knowledge opposed to the singular theories or narratives sought by academia (19). A local authority officer (30) described local authority practitioners' expertise in terms of understanding how theoretical models of radicalisation operate on the ground. An example was given where such practitioner knowledge was compared to researcher knowledge:

Let's say in terms of people going to Syria for example, which is obviously topical at the moment, I think the Home Office and think tanks, certainly the think tanks, have good ideas as to why this happens, and we all understand why, it's various reasons, the ummah, the importance of Syria in Islamic theology etc. So I think that broad level is well understood, but I think what practitioners are now able to do which think tanks wouldn't be is talk to people who have thought about going or know people who have gone and understand as to why people have gone, away from the theory, the exact details of how, when and why that's actually happening in reality and understanding what triggered it in this specific case, rather than looking at broad motivating factors. (30)

This suggests that as well as having direct contact with individuals who are said to embody abstract notions of 'radicalisation', such experts are seen

as holding a detailed knowledge of contemporary, local dynamics, potentially coupled with theological knowledge regarding the basis of al-Qaeda ideology. This coheres with Husband and Alam's (2011: 139-144) interpretation of interviews with local policy actors, who were concerned that national government didn't understand the local issues and practical concerns around Prevent; in resisting Prevent, they were articulating their 'local expertise and professional skills' (142). Attempts to differentiate practitioner from academic knowledge echo Reppy's (2015) account of conflict between military and civilian experts, the latter being seen as 'amateurs' by the military because of their limited military experience. The contribution of the practitioner perspective is then in having access to and understanding of the local dynamics of radicalisation processes in practice.

Such practitioners are therefore regarded as able to create knowledge on radicalisation. That is, they are regarded as being able to use practical experience to contribute to theory building. This is reminiscent of individualistic accounts of expertise that are based on a developing ability to recognise patterns and organise knowledge into higher level frameworks (Bereiter and Scardamalia 1993: 26-31). One interviewee with experience as a police practitioner talked about having 'a practical base to expertise', in that their experience of being 'steeped in' the topic allowed them 'to develop a more theoretical way of looking at things' (9). Another interviewee was asked whether counter-radicalisation practitioners like themselves can contribute to building an explanatory understanding of radicalisation, to which they replied in the affirmative and proceeded to explain their model of radicalisation derived from casework (23). They went on to explain that 'all of the schematics and frameworks we developed, these are tools that we developed that weren't developed before' and 'all of these concepts we developed over a period of time, so there's quite a lot of thinking that went behind it' (23). Overall then, counter-radicalisation practitioners' expertise was framed as a result of observing 'radicalisation' directly, observations that acted as a form of primary data and enabled authoritative statements on the nature of radicalisation to be made. Further, practitioners were seen by some as being able to create knowledge on the issue; displaying expertise on the basis of an ability to move from knowledge of specific cases to a more abstract understanding. Of course many, although not all, of those that gave this perspective had practitioner experience themselves and in this sense it emerged as an important way of claiming as well as conferring credibility.

7.1.2 Questioning the expertise of practitioners

At the same time, some interviewees questioned the expertise of practitioners. A roughly equal number of interviewees expressed such reservations as had expressed approval. Criticisms of the credibility of practitioners' claims to expertise tended to be explained in a fairly nuanced way or applied to particular sectors, although three interviewees were more certain that practitioners could not be classed as experts.

One limitation of practitioners' expertise that was discussed by interviewees related to their knowledge on radicalisation. Mainly this was concerned with the nature of their work and the extent to which it involved dealing with actual violence. One aspect of this was the secrecy of practitioners' knowledge. A researcher who has had interaction with a range of Prevent practitioners gave the example of police officers running programmes on IT awareness and more generally dealing with extremism rather than actual violence. As a result, they said that 'the expert status claimed by aspects of the police and security services, I have real concerns about whether it's overblown really to a certain extent', and that instead there is an element of abusing 'cultural capital' in terms of falsely claiming authority on the issue (7). This ability to claim undue authority was also raised by a think tank researcher, who reported working on collaborative research projects alongside practitioners from policy making and security backgrounds who were able to draw authority from their professional knowledge without sharing it: 'So because of that you can never really verify what their basis actually is and so it's very difficult to develop a trust or credibility from them' (15). Even when we do know what they know, the relevance of that knowledge can be questioned as discussed by this think tank researcher:

16 - I mean, personally, there's a lot of people working I think as community activists, community advisors, Prevent leads in local authorities, who don't really know anything about this subject but have all come up and said they're experts, and they all say the same thing which is 'it's all about understanding our young people and engaging them', and that is the extent of their insight into the subject and it's not particularly impressive.

K - Right, so despite their day to day experience on the ground with potentially radicalised youth?

16 - A lot of them don't do any of that, a lot of them are sitting around not doing that at all, filling in fundraising forms for trying to get money in to do projects.

For this interviewee, Prevent practitioners often work more on community engagement than directly preventing violence and therefore don't necessarily develop expertise on radicalisation. This quote also mentions 'community activists', which will be discussed in Section 7.3. In a related point, a practitioner-researcher argued that Prevent practitioners across the public sector, despite ongoing attempts at professional development, in general have low levels of specialist knowledge on radicalisation:

If I was totally honest though, one thing I think would be fascinating to do would be a knowledge awareness survey across the country of the various different tiers of staff, and I think that would be fascinating, because I think it would reveal, my hunch would be the level of knowledge is very very basic. Even though people may have been working in the area for a year or two, there's no set mechanism or pedagogical approach to developing awareness and learning within people. (19)

While this statement of course reflects the account of one individual, stated during an interview in 2013, the point stands that the lack of knowledge of practitioners, six years after the start of the Prevent programme, is used to question their expert credibility on radicalisation. Indeed, in reference to frontline practitioners, a representative of the EU's Radicalisation Awareness Network explained the motivation for their knowledge exchange activities in terms of counter-radicalisation practitioners' knowledge: 'What we see is that, very often, there is a lack of knowledge and people can hardly distinguish between what is radical, what is potentially extremist, and what is not' (Fitzgerald 2016b: 132). In such ways, both the relevance and the depth of knowledge offered in terms of understanding radicalisation by those who work on counter-radicalisation is questioned.

A second point raised by interviewees concerned a lack of analytical approach amongst practitioners. One academic (22) argued that practitioners' contributions usually constitute 'empirical knowledge', which is interpreted through convictions to be applied to policy and practice. Conversely, they argued that prioritising theory and applying explicit analytical frameworks can lead to a deeper understanding. Similarly, a think tank analyst (24) said that 'I wouldn't necessarily say that they are experts'

because of their lack of 'roundedness', 'nuance', 'texture' and ability to 'make the connections', describing expertise as a 'craft' and a 'way of thinking' that requires bringing together a range of insights on a topic, as opposed to practitioners' specialist skills. An academic said that 'with practitioners I wouldn't call it expertise, I would call it experience', differentiating it from the knowledge and 'analytical ability' of academia (25). Another academic specifically pointed to 'professional bias' as a limiting factor in the expertise of practitioners:

I think that practitioners can do it. [...] The job of the scholar however is to go beyond that and to look at something in a much more systematic way. It's not the job of the youth worker to understand everything there is to know about radicalisation. They will understand a good deal about it because they're working with young people, young people talk to them and so on and they will form views about it, but they don't necessarily have the whole picture. (26)

Such comments serve to construct a boundary between research-based knowledge and practitioner knowledge, finding the strength of the former in its ability to be 'systematic' in its consideration of a range of evidence rather than relying on professional experience. This limited role for practitioners emerges from other research too: on the notion of 'pracademics', or practitioners with academic backgrounds, their detailed local knowledge is useful for understanding social problems, but only insofar as it can be systematically gathered and analysed (Braga 2016: 312-313). Meanwhile the benefit of involving practitioners in research is expressed in terms of learning from their relevant contextual knowledge rather than their contribution to knowledge generation (Zimmerman et al. 2016).

The section began by noting the explosion of a practitioner industry around Prevent, and parliamentary calls for the knowledge of these practitioners to be harnessed. It is clear however that within the radicalisation expert community, the nature and extent of this knowledge is contested. Many interviewees did indeed name multiple types of professionals and specific individuals who they believed had developed a detailed and relevant knowledge on radicalisation that constituted expertise. In this sense, the expert community includes professionals who are an integral part of the counter-radicalisation apparatus, illustrating a close relationship between the expert community and its policy context. In

particular, the grounded nature of this knowledge, gained through close observation and interaction with the essential processes under study, was valued. Indeed it was drawn in favourable contrast to abstract theoretical knowledge. This notion of proximity to the research issue is fairly consistent across themes in the thesis; it emerged for example in empirical research as a signifier of credibility in Section 6.3. Indeed, and as raised by the Home Affairs Committee in the comments at the start of the section, part of the value of practitioner knowledge is that its case-based nature can help to fill the data hole that exists on radicalisation. This is a topic then on which evidence from lived experiences is valued by the expert community. This presents a contrast to the hierarchies of knowledge discussed in Chapter 2.1.2, which place generalisable data at the pinnacle of knowledge for policy. The credibility of practitioner knowledge is drawn from proximity to the policy problem and embodied in the subjective knowledge held by key individuals who have the relevant experience. Conceptualisations of the topic area as applied mean that the detachment valued in other areas of social science (Elias 1956) appears to carry less significance for expert credibility. Practitioners' potential to provide data however is countered by criticisms of the relevance and depth of their knowledge on radicalisation. In addition, notions of analytical ability were invoked to highlight the subjective and anecdotal nature of practitioners' knowledge. Their ability to claim credible expertise is therefore contested. There is little consensus on the nature of a 'radicalisation expert' emerging, with conflicting accounts from interviewees, and knowledge claims being both attributed and denied credibility.

7.2 Ex-extremists as radicalisation experts

Ex-extremists have been a particularly prolific voice in the radicalisation expert community. Perhaps the most high profile example is the Quilliam Foundation, founded by former members of Hizb ut-Tahrir, an Islamic organisation that has been considered extreme, although non-violent, and threatened with proscription in the UK. In a typical exposition of his experiences, Maajid Nawaz, the Founding Chairman of Quilliam, responds here to questions on his radicalisation in an in-depth television interview for the BBC:

In general there are a few factors that lead to somebody doing that, and these are the factors that also led to me adopting these views. One is the grievances I've spoken about, the other is the narrative

I've spoken about. A third is an acute sense of identity crisis – not knowing whether I was British, whether I was Pakistani, which is the country of my heritage, or whether I was indeed Muslim. These identities all came to a head. And then the fourth factor, I came across a charismatic recruiter who was able to join these dots for me in that way (BBC 2012: at 07:20)

Here Nawaz not only recounts his own experience, but uses it to make generalisations; his personal experience is organised into four 'factors' which are said later in the interview (at 20:18) to constitute a theorised process of 'radicalisation' and on this basis policy recommendations are made. More broadly, 2011 saw the launch of the Against Violent Extremism Network, a global organisation run by the London-based Institute for Strategic Dialogue to bring together 'former violent extremists ('formers') and survivors of violent extremism' and use their knowledge to help counter radicalisation. At a policy level, the value placed upon ex-extremists' knowledge is evidenced by the inclusion of Nawaz alongside fellow ex-Hizb ut-Tahrir member Rashad Ali of 'counter-extremism consultancy' Centri at the Home Affairs Committee hearings on radicalisation in 2012 (2012: 49). During a parliamentary debate on Government funding of the Quilliam Foundation in 2011, participants referred to Quilliam as a credible and powerful source of knowledge, offering not only relevant personal experiences but a more general understanding of ideology. Hazel Blears, at the time MP and former Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government, underlined that Quilliam 'have been enormously powerful and valuable in working out strategies to counter extremism' (Hansard 2011: Column 10WH). In general, ex-extremists' knowledge has become a commonly cited part of debates on the nature of radicalisation.

At the same time, the expertise of ex-extremists was questioned by interviewees, and their apparent influence on public debate and government policy criticised. While there is little research specifically considering ex-extremists as experts, there is some methodological reflexivity in the terrorism studies literature on the use of terrorists' accounts in contributing to our knowledge on the subject. Horgan (2011: 199-201) for example highlights the methodological problems in interpreting terrorists' accounts in interview-based studies, arguing that the timing of the interview for example can have a significant impact on the interviewees' understandings of their involvement in terrorism. Similarly, researchers of

'cults' have discussed the difficulties of relying on the testimony of ex-cult members to understand the nature of the group, with questions over how to interpret their accounts and difficulty in abstracting their experiences (e.g. Ayella 1990). Clubb (2016) and Alonso and Bada (2016) meanwhile have discussed the role that former combatants can play in preventing radicalisation. The focus here however is on the knowledge that they can offer about the radicalisation process itself. The following two sub-sections examine how those in the radicalisation expert community judge ex-extremists' knowledge claims.

7.2.1 Explaining the expertise of ex-extremists

Some interviewees described the value of ex-extremists' knowledge in terms of first-hand accounts. One policy maker, during a part of the interview where they were denying their own expertise on radicalisation, felt that expertise could be claimed only on the basis of extensive research or 'if you've been through it'. Referring to the example of the individual convicted of the attempted murder of Stephen Timms MP in 2010, this interviewee stated: 'if you're Roshonara Choudhry you're pretty expert in radicalisation because you got radicalised' (14). Similarly, a former senior Home Office official was asked which aspects of Quilliam's knowledge were particularly useful to Government during the initial years of Prevent and referred partly to their experiences in Hizb ut-Tahrir resulting in their 'direct access to that kind of thinking and ideology' (29). Clearly this perspective still holds some weight in Government: a senior Home Office official referred to ex-extremists like Quilliam as a type of expert, due to the fact that they have experienced radicalisation and can relate that personal experience (34).

The personal perspective was not important only to policy makers however. One practitioner valued the knowledge of former extremists because 'they understand journey and trajectory', meaning the individual process of radicalisation (23). Another gave the example of Manwar Ali Abu Muntasir as an expert who has 'been there and done that' in terms of 'recruiting individuals to go and fight jihad in Afghanistan' (19). A researcher referred to the 'powerful' nature of ex-extremists' claims to knowledge as 'a degree of experience even closer to the phenomenon' than practitioners as 'the subject, not just the observant' and their likely engagement with wider 'dynamics' rather than only their immediate personal experience (11). Another explained that Quilliam do have an authoritative claim to expertise

partly because of their 'first hand experiences of the sociology of recruitment at local levels among youths in sixth form colleges at the east end of London and Essex' (4), thus describing the nature of ex-extremists' knowledge in terms of its direct insights into the practical operation of abstract theories. Methodological connotations were also drawn by a practitioner, formerly involved in a group usually considered extreme themselves, who compared personal experience to 'unobtrusive research where people are actually directly involved as actors within a field in order to gain first hand insight into the field' and that such experiences can potentially then be retrospectively analysed to produce valuable knowledge (19). A parallel is being drawn here with participant observation, which involves 'the researcher immersing herself or himself in a research 'setting'' (Mason 2002: 84), observing and participating in the everyday life of the culture in order to understand it from 'the native point of view' (Spradley 1980: 35). At the same time, the value placed on individual accounts clearly ties in with dominant interpretations of radicalisation as a predominantly individual psychological process. In this context, ex-extremists can be constructed as communicators of direct experiences of radicalisation itself.

In addition to substantive content, ex-extremists' knowledge was valued by some interviewees for its exclusivity. This theme of rarity also came up in the parliamentary debate on Quilliam (Hansard 2011), where the organisation was described by Paul Goggins MP (Labour) as a 'unique centre of knowledge' (Column 2WH). Further, their experience was said to give them knowledge of ideology and theology that Government cannot achieve (Column 18WH). Similarly, one think tank researcher referred to it as 'unique' and 'a perspective that's different from others and that's more scarce as a resource and so it is highly valuable' (15). A think tank researcher and former counter-terrorism practitioner was asked whether the experiential knowledge of ex-extremists amounted to expertise and said that:

they can give insights that as an academic working in university-shire, you won't speak enough Arabic, you won't have enough hours in the day to go out and talk to all the people that they can talk to, with the backgrounds that they can talk to. You won't be able to understand the context of the theological debates that go on online for example in extremist forums, you won't even be able to get access to them. (9)

This compares ex-extremists favourably to academics. Language skills and cultural knowledge are seen here as important in researching this topic effectively, getting access to the research site, and gaining a full understanding. This considers ex-extremists to hold a special kind of knowledge, and ability to generate knowledge, that is relatively rare in the wider expert field. Clearly this is a generalisation and many academics specialising in this area will have language skills and cultural knowledge. The veracity of the statement is of less significance here however than its use as a credibility factor. Similarly, a think tank researcher who said that they had been 'in regular touch with' a range of stakeholders including policy makers, practitioners, former extremists, victims and communities on this topic pointed to 'the limitations of social science and science' in this field and emphasised the value of expertise of 'those people who have been through the process themselves and come out the other end' because 'they are some of the few people who actually have access to this thing we're studying in the first place' (20). Similarly to practitioners then, part of the value of ex-extremists' knowledge is in relation to its nature as primary data, which is regarded as important due to its scarcity in this field. This interviewee went on to discuss the value of this knowledge to policy making; recognising that, like those with personal knowledge in other policy areas, they 'have got a unique knowledge base and actually we're not utilising it and it needs to be fed into and inform policy a lot more' because it amounts to 'a whole body of knowledge that's integral to getting the right solution' (20). This comment speaks to the recurrent theme that radicalisation is not just an academic subject to be studied but a practical problem to be addressed.

At the same time, there was some differentiation amongst interviewees between ex-extremists who could credibly claim expertise and those who couldn't. Quilliam for example were said to be able to 'place their personal experience in a wider framework of understanding' (8). More generally another interviewee said that the value of an ex-extremists' account depended on whether they were able to take it from just an 'anecdotal story' to one that they 'use to generalise, abstract and then put back into other forms of knowledge' (19). Despite this analytical potential, one interviewee pointed out that ex-extremists' 'expertise is personal [and] not academic expertise' (4). While some interviewees believed then that ex-extremists' offered a unique source of knowledge that must sit alongside

others to attain a full understanding of the issue, this comment hints at the contested status of this type of expertise.

7.2.2 Questioning the expertise of ex-extremists

The expert status of ex-extremists was questioned on a number of grounds. Indeed there were far more comments critical of ex-extremists' claims to expertise than there were favourable. Most interviewees gave critical accounts of ex-extremists' expertise, and the minority that were not critical did not discuss ex-extremists rather than giving positive comments. Only one interviewee was wholly positive about the contribution of ex-extremists, with the remainder of those who raised positive points also pointing to limitations.

Some criticisms focused on the extent of ex-extremists' knowledge; the first aspect of this related to substantive content. For two interviewees, other types of experience were more useful for understanding and countering radicalisation. One was sceptical that knowledge from those who had themselves been extremists was necessarily preferable to that from other types of activism: 'the idea is it's about countering things not encouraging them, and that's a form of experience that's more germane to that policy area' (10). Similarly, another researcher highlighted the value of knowledge on preventing radicalisation or the factors that turn people away from terrorism, rather than the factors that lead to violence as demonstrated by ex-extremists' knowledge (11). A similar point was made in a Guardian column by Ziauddin Sardar (2008), an academic who specialises in Islam, who called the relative influence of ex-extremists a 'slap in the face' for those who had always worked against extremism.

At the same time, some interviewees questioned the extent to which ex-extremists held knowledge of actual violence. This reflection from a university researcher on their work with an ex-extremist was fairly typical of this group of comments:

What struck me, obviously this is not to be generalised to all of them because I've only talked in-depth to one of them, is that this guy was never radicalised. This isn't what I call radicalisation, this is maybe teenage rebellion. Their claim to expertise, I wasn't impressed. (32)

Thus the experience that formed the basis of an ex-extremists' claim to expertise is seen as questionable in terms of its relevance to actual

radicalisation, understood narrowly as involving violence. Similarly, an interviewee argued that while knowledge from ex-extremists would be useful in theory, Hizb ut-Tahrir were 'very much a youth thing, a youth idealisation, fantasy-type movement. But they're not involved in criminal activity, they're not involved in any violent extremism' and so 'the experience that Quilliam brought to bear for us was irrelevant to the issue of violent extremism' (12). This individual spoke from longstanding activist experience in political Islam and has tended to be critical of Prevent; in this sense it might be expected that they are critical of a previously-Government-funded counter-extremism organisation. However, the view was widely held in the sample: it was echoed for example by a university researcher who differentiated the knowledge of radical political activity held by ex-members of Hizb ut-Tahrir from knowledge of violent extremism, arguing that the former is only relevant if we accept the 'conveyor belt' model of radicalisation, which posits a linear transition from non-violent extremism to terrorism (7). Membership of extreme groups was said by one think tank researcher to be limited evidence of radicalisation and that 'actually the extent to which they really believed in that radicalism, the extent to which they turned to violence and how close their relationships were with some of the people that were interested in this field I think is never really that clear' (15). As with practitioners, the relevance of experience that provides the basis of claims to expertise is therefore questioned. Another think tank researcher did draw a distinction between ex-extremists with direct experience of terrorist activity and those without, highlighting the variable levels of directly relevant knowledge held by individuals (16). Even this however conceptualises radicalisation in a particular way that entails a limited relevance for those whose expertise is not tightly focused on violence and its perceived causes, or at least, with its focus on ideology and individual-level analysis, can only contribute to broader discussions.

A second set of criticisms focused on the analytical value of ex-extremists' knowledge. First, it was described as illustrative rather than explanatory, and with a limited ability to contribute original insights. One academic for example argued that ex-extremists contribute only 'a visceral understanding', of value particularly to policy and public audiences, but that such individual accounts that have 'a certain superficiality' and contribute little to existing evidence (7). Another academic, while discussing their own conceptualisation of a 'radicalisation expert', said that the experts called to

the Government's post-Woolwich Task Force 'best not be just former extremists talking about radicalisation because even though they're useful they can only take us so far' (21). This again suggests a concern with the limited reach of personal accounts. In addition, some interviewees pointed to the particularity of ex-extremists' experiences. One academic gave this example:

So we've got for example Against Violent Extremism, as a group, that brings together people who have had particular experiences in particular groups. And obviously they have real expertise within their particular group and at that particular moment in time. I think it's quite important that we focus on the time-bound nature and the location-bound nature of a lot of that expertise. I think where a lot of the dangers come is when a particular set of experiences then become generalised, theorised into something which can be applied across wider periods of time and across wider geographical spaces and socio-cultural spaces. (28)

While the interviewee discussed the importance and usefulness of this type of initiative, they drew attention to its limitations in terms of theorising 'what radicalisation means across time and space' from a relatively small number of cases. This in effect highlights the specificity of ex-extremists' knowledge, which in turn is said to provide a limited platform from which to claim expertise and offer policy advice. A think tank researcher made a similar point: while ex-extremists may provide expertise on particular times, places and groups, they were regarded as not 'equally well qualified' to talk about other circumstances (16). This argument was made graphically by a writer in the Guardian (Sardar 2008) who wrote of the Quilliam Foundation: 'just because you have been an inmate of a mental hospital does not mean you are an expert in clinical psychology.' In this example, the validity of ex-extremists' claims to knowledge of radicalisation is questioned by reference to the difficulty of drawing abstract lessons from individual experiences. While individual accounts may be a powerful way by which to claim expertise then, their lack of generalisability is a common criticism.

These references to the illustrative and particular nature of ex-extremists' knowledge were often coupled with convictions that understandings of radicalisation should draw on a broad body of knowledge. The value of assembling multiple sources of knowledge to achieve a fuller

understanding of radicalisation is a recurrent theme that is addressed more fully in Chapter 8. Thus one activist-turned-researcher said:

The thing I would warn against is the sovereignty of the individual narrative. The idea of Ed Husain's memoir or Maajid Nawaz's memoir, you're almost selling the individual experience to sell your expertise, whereas actually I have a lot of problems with that, because actually an analysis should be an aggregate survey of a lot of different experiences in order to get a graduated view about how a process as complicated as radicalisation, whatever that is, but at least complexify it, represent its complexity truthfully and honestly and not at a popular level provide a certain narrative that provides a certain set of policy prescriptions to give some ballast of momentum. (10)

Referring to two co-founders of Quilliam, this again criticises ex-extremists' knowledge for giving a partial and simplified picture of radicalisation and the value of amalgamating knowledge is highlighted. This perspective was repeated by a think tank researcher who argued that while ex-extremists' perspectives are useful, 'there will inevitably be gaps to their knowledge' and 'you need a variety of views' because 'once somebody has personal experience of something they can claim an authority that is comprehensive rather than actually quite partial' (20). A civil servant involved in the implementation of Prevent used the example of former activists from the far right to make the same case, arguing that ex-extremists therefore 'really just know about their own bit of the jigsaw', an important consideration given the 'broad' nature of the subject (14). That interviewee argued that the prioritisation of 'Islamism' in policy had enabled those with such backgrounds to claim expertise, but that this 'just totally fails to understand the plurality of so many different paths'. The complexity of radicalisation is used here to explain the limitations of ex-extremists' knowledge. Most who held such positions were careful to emphasise that individual accounts were useful and could give 'insight' and 'bring something very valuable and interesting', particularly in terms of individual experiences, but that this didn't 'necessarily translate into expertise' and especially not academic expertise (25) and emphasised the need to 'move it [*discussions on radicalisation*] away from anecdotes' (16). In such ways the potential expertise of ex-extremists' is characterised as an individual narrative of a specific case, with ignorance of context or comparators, and therefore not

amounting to expertise, which due to the nature of the topic must present composite knowledge.

A third way by which the analytical value of ex-extremists' accounts was questioned was through reference to the tenets of 'science'. A particularly strong example of the scientific credentials of ex-extremists' arguments being questioned was in a televised exchange between Jonathan Githens-Mazer, an academic who has tended to be critical of Prevent and radicalisation theory, and Maajid Nawaz of Quilliam (Sky News 2010). Throughout the interview Githens-Mazer referred to a lack of research evidence and a preponderance of ideology and feelings on Quilliam's part, saying for example in reference to the founders of Quilliam that: 'What you have are two people that have very important, interesting experiences, but it's not scientific proof, it's not causal logic, in fact it's not logical at all the kinds of arguments that they're putting forward' (07:12). Such points use the language of science to exclude ex-extremists from the expert community. One way by which this theme was discussed in interviews was by reference to generalisability; an academic contrasted ex-extremists' often 'narrow understanding' with expertise, which was said to involve 'the ability to draw generalisable knowledge out of anecdotal evidence' on the basis of scientific training (32). A second aspect was in relation to subjectivity and objectivity. Thus two think tank researchers noted that personal experience entailed 'a vested interest and a personal and emotional connection to the subject matter' (20) that would shape interpretations of the topic. One explicitly contrasted this with academic expertise, saying that 'the skills that you should have to research a subject are research skills, they're skills of collecting data and analysing it carefully, they're not skills of 'I was there once so I understand what it's like'' (16). Clearly these criticisms draw on wider debates over experiential versus research-based knowledge, with expertise confined to the latter and ex-extremists subsequently having a minimal role to play. Interviewees emphasised that these debates are longstanding in counter-terrorism and related fields. For example, a researcher whose background is on new religious movements argued:

We know in that field that the most problematic people to talk to are ex-members of groups, because ex-members of groups always have axes to grind and they have certain legitimations of why they were a member and why it went wrong. [...] And we know from

studies of new religions that if you want to understand a new group and you only interview apostates, they will have a very negative message that will give you a slanted view of the group. (6)

The suggestion being made by these interviewees then is that experiential expertise is likely to be subjective and thus not only a partial but also a biased or un-objective analysis. This notion of unscientific knowledge is a core line of attack against the possibility of ex-extremists' as experts.

In addition to these criticisms of knowledge and analytical power, a third way by which former extremists' expertise was questioned was to bring in points related to personal qualities. One way that this was done was to refer to character. One researcher with an activist background questioned the judgement of those that have joined extremist organisations in the past since they were 'naïve enough to fall hook, line and sinker and spend many years within a very extreme organisation that most Muslims shun, actually laugh at or really can't see makes any sense' (10). A tendency to simplistic argument was raised by a university researcher:

What scares me when I speak to them is that I get the same feeling that I got when I spoke to HT [*Hizb ut-Tahrir*] when I was a student, which is these aren't people who are engaging with you, they're just arguing with you, and there's no ability to see grey. (8)

This reference to rhetoric and an inability to complexify the issue was repeated by a former senior Home Office employee (29). All three of these points were presented as more widely held, particularly in Government, Muslim communities and academia. Further, one interviewee who has previously advised Government on Prevent highlighted potential bias in the agendas of former extremists, particularly in terms of community politics, saying that 'they might be wanting to settle their own scores with people they've fallen out with over the years' (18). Finally, two interviewees (18, 29) also referred to some ex-extremists as having excessive ambition and confidence and being 'self-serving'. References to character served then as a means of questioning the expertise of ex-extremists. This tendency indicates the politicised nature of expert debates on radicalisation, which is addressed in Chapter 9.

Some interviewees did then consider ex-extremists to be credible radicalisation experts. Indeed they have been an active voice in radicalisation debates and were valued by interviewees for their close

connection to the subject matter and subsequent deep understanding that is said to be rarely found in other types of expertise. At the same time however their expertise was undermined by reference to a number of factors. Their knowledge could be questioned as lacking relevance to actual violence, and as superficial, partial, and subjective. Personal qualities were also used to question expertise. Much of the criticism focused on the personal nature of ex-extremists' knowledge. Thus it could be constructed as unacademic, unscholarly and non-research based, demonstrating that a broader theme of scientific primacy can function to prioritise some forms of expertise over others in the radicalisation field. Thus, science is painted here as potentially providing superior evidence and analysis, its ability to generalise is regarded positively, and experiential expertise is criticised for its lack of scientific basis. At the same time, the picture is complicated by the dual use of ideas like 'science' and 'experience': it was seen in Chapter 6.2.2 that academic researchers were criticised for being too abstract in an applied field where local knowledge is regarded as of central importance and so divorced from the 'realities' of radicalisation in practice. This reinforces the difficulty of arriving at a clear meaning of 'radicalisation expertise' and conversely highlights its contested meaning.

7.3 Expertise from communities

A third type of experiential expertise that was discussed in interviews comes from what can be termed 'community experts'. In terms of radicalisation, the relevant knowledge comes from the primarily Muslim communities that are targeted by counter-radicalisation policy. This type of expertise is reminiscent of Wynne's analysis of 'lay' knowledge (1996). It has also been termed 'local knowledge'; that provided by members of a particular community and gained through 'lived experience' (Corburn 2007: 153). The visibility of community experts in Prevent debates is grounded in wider moves towards more open policy making. Since the 1990s there has been an increased focus on community engagement as a way of achieving inclusive policy making and addressing complex issues (Head 2007: 442-3). More recently, a 'localism' agenda sought to increase the responsibilities of local government and encourage local communities to help manage and implement public services (Lowndes and Pratchett 2012). Within this, faith and ethnicity have been particular markers of community: McLoughlin (2005: 58-9) writes that since the 1980s, local and national government

have pursued consultation with and provided funding for Muslim organisations, while New Labour in particular created a 'faith relations industry' to engage with faith communities as well as employing community representatives from ethnic minorities as advisors (Back et al. 2002: 449-50). With the advent of Prevent, there was a renewed drive to consult with Muslim communities and the further creation of community representatives to this end (Husband and Alam 2011: 160-1). Muslim community representatives are of course a diverse group, one aspect of which is civil society actors who engage with government and claim expertise on the basis of both Muslim identity and relevant professional experience (Jones et al. 2015).

Interviewees pointed to various examples of community expertise. They included individuals with backgrounds in religious activism who have 'knowledge of the communities' (18) or whose 'community activism and experience' (10) have enabled them to become involved in policy and practice around Prevent. For one interviewee, 'religious identity' allowed 'people to position themselves as a particular expert' and act as 'interlocutors' between communities and policy (4). Interviewees mentioned various groups that displayed community expertise, including the UK Islamic Mission, the East London Mosque, the All Islamic Forum Europe and the Islamic Society of Britain alongside larger organisations like the Sufi Muslim Council, the British Muslim Forum and the Muslim Council of Britain and regional outfits like the Bradford Council for Mosques. One interviewee mentioned individuals who fought in the 1979-1989 Soviet-Afghan war as a particularly useful source of expertise. Clearly there is overlap here in terms of personnel with ex-extremists and practitioners: the three categories are not necessarily mutually exclusive but can be seen as emphasising different facets of experiential expertise.

Community expertise is apparent in Prevent's policy making processes. An early Prevent document stated that 'Most of the actions flow directly from suggestions made to us by those working most actively to tackle these issues in their own communities', suggesting that community representatives were actively recruited to provide knowledge for countering radicalisation (Communities and Local Government 2007: 8). As an example, members of the 2005 'Preventing Extremism Together' working groups set up by the government were largely Muslim individuals active in public life, for example political advisors, government employees,

community volunteers and politicians. Two members of the working groups explicitly described the value of personal experience in that context to the Communities and Local Government Select Committee, saying that all members 'brought an exceptional degree of expertise and insights to the challenges that confront the Muslim and non-Muslim Community alike' (Communities and Local Government 2009: 1.11). A more recent example of community expertise in government advisory processes is the inclusion of the East London Mosque Trust and the Muslim Council of Britain at the 2015 Home Affairs Committee inquiry into 'Countering Extremism' (Home Affairs Committee 2016: 42-43). In addition, David Anderson QC, the Independent Reviewer of Terrorism Legislation, commented in 2014 to the Parliamentary Joint Committee on Human Rights on the importance of community expertise. When asked whether Prevent should have independent oversight, he alluded to the diversity of relevant expertise in this particular area of counter-terrorism:

I think Prevent needs oversight. It seems to me that Pursue, which is effectively what I oversee now, is very appropriate for a QC to oversee, because it is basically about the law and the various ancillary powers of arrest and search, and so on. Prevent, it seems to me, is much broader. I don't think you would just appoint an English QC as the reviewer of the Prevent programme. That, perhaps, is an area where some diversity of expertise might be more useful, whether you are looking at people from affected communities, people with understanding of online activity, people who know a bit about education, people who know a bit about prisons. I just think it would make sense to have that breadth of expertise on the Prevent review. (Joint Committee on Human Rights 2014: 17)

In addition to the topical and disciplinary diversity (discussed in Chapters 4 and 8), Anderson refers here to the necessity of harnessing experiential expertise from communities. The extent to which this happens in practice is contested: researcher and activist Arun Kundnani stated in a parliamentary inquiry that: 'You have to allow people in the community to bring their expertise to bear which certainly has not happened to the degree it should have happened' (House of Commons 2010: Ev 57). This comment raises the question of the extent to which such knowledge is included or excluded in the expert community, and more specifically the extent to which this

knowledge is seen to constitute expertise. The following sub-sections examine first the ways by which the credible expertise of such actors was maintained, and second the ways by which it was undermined.

7.3.1 The expertise of communities

Those interviewees who believed that community expertise could make a valid and important contribution to understandings of radicalisation defended this view first with reference to knowledge. One aspect of this was detailed and intimate knowledge of the cultural and political dynamics of British Muslim communities, topics suggested as key to understanding contemporary manifestations of radicalisation. Some interviewees talked about this in terms of their own knowledge. One identified the value of their contribution to radicalisation debates on the basis of 'academic research and also, and more importantly, a long community activism and engagement and understanding some of the critical political dynamics' (10). Two think tank researchers highlighted the importance of such knowledge to effective radicalisation research: one said that 'I largely led on all of our Muslim-related work, partly because as a Muslim myself I understood some of the internal challenges that had erupted around 7/7 and then the fallout thereafter' (24). Another, describing the value of the research skills of a member of a radicalisation expert panel when conducting fieldwork on radicalisation, said that 'he was able to move in these circles, he was able to speak to people in a way that was informed by actual religious concepts [...], he was able to engage them critically' (4). A former Government advisor on Prevent detailed their own understanding of the diversities and complexities of Muslim communities in the UK and was then asked whether this knowledge gave them an understanding of radicalisation specifically:

My contribution was as a Muslim in the room, someone who knows about Islam and Muslim communities - to be able to say 'well actually I can see resonances here, this is what you're telling me about terrorism in the Irish community or how parts of the Irish community were alienated by certain counter-terrorism legislation, then I can tell you that this resonates with what I see in the Muslim community or how the community is split on a given issue'. (18)

This type of expertise is then particular to the contemporary Government focus on 'Islamist' radicalisation. It can provide contextual knowledge that is seen as an essential contribution to developing a full understanding of the

problem but at the same time is differentiated from any knowledge on 'terrorism' more generally.

Comments on relevant knowledge were also used to confer community expertise on others. For example, one researcher said:

I guess what's bolted onto that [*'institutional actors', or practitioners, as experts*] are people who have knowledge of particular communities, or particular political or religious or other dynamics that are pertinent to this particular area at this moment in time. (10)

Again this identifies community knowledge as essential for understanding contemporary radicalisation. The emphasis on 'particular' however is reminiscent of comments on ex-extremists' knowledge and contrasts with more generalisable knowledge. One academic gave the example of Quilliam, in this case emphasising not just the personal experience of extremism of two of the founders, but the religious base of their expertise, saying that:

their particular expertise lies in the fact that they are not primarily academics but Muslims, moderate Muslims or Muslims who have reached a moderate position having experienced the temptations of extremism first hand. Thus they are aware of the complexity, and they have the language, the faith, the culture, to actually make more sense of Islamism (5)

On that basis they are able to contribute understandings of radicalisation. Indeed one former senior civil servant described Muslim advisors being 'brought in to government to give us specific advice on the Islamic faith, how Muslim communities operated and their beliefs and values, and also to introduce us to contacts and so on' (29). Similarly, one interviewee, themselves with an activist background, pointedly highlighted the importance of their religious identity to their involvement in an expert panel on radicalisation:

And you know, these are Muslims in the room! For some of them it was as simple as that. I'm not talking about the academics but some of the officials [*from the countries involved in the panel*] that we were dialoguing with. These are Muslims! [*laughs*] (10)

Although this refers to the perspectives of policy makers, the general analysis was backed up by someone involved in organising this expert panel who said that Muslim academics were included because they could

'understand not only the conceptual and intellectual academic side of things but also by virtue of their own personal lives they were grounded in Muslim communities' (24). At the same time, one interviewee indicated that an ability to communicate such knowledge was important: arguing that community actors' expertise was 'not just in relation to their identity and their relationship with communities, they've also been able to say something sensible about it' (4). For most interviewees who discussed this topic however, the ability to provide knowledge on religious communities was seen to constitute a contribution to understandings of radicalisation and therefore a basis for claiming expertise in the area.

This theme of religious identity as a basis for expertise has a wider context. Meer (2010: 55-8) writes of a shift away from race and ethnicity as the key factors in how individuals define themselves or are defined by others and a growth in 'Muslim consciousness'. In one study, the articulation of Muslim identity intensified following 9/11, being asserted and defended in a context of counter-terrorism measures and Islamophobia (Peek 2005: 230-236). These emergent Muslim identity politics are entwined with the increasing state engagement with faith communities in general and Muslim communities in particular discussed at the start of the section. At the same time, media analysis finds that issues involving Islam have been increasingly reported in terms of not just religion but political ideology and political movements (Nickels et al. 2012: 345). Meanwhile, policy language around terrorism has often referred to Muslims in general and highlighted a threat to British culture and values, in contrast to previous coverage of Irish-related terrorism that tended to refer specifically to the groups using terrorist tactics (Hickman et al. 2011: 11-13, 16-17). In this sense, the religious aspect of the violence has come to the fore. Of course, analysts have questioned the religious basis of 'religious terrorism' (Gunning and Jackson 2011) and research has complexified the role of identity in radicalisation (e.g. Choudhury 2007). In general however these shifting identities and changes in the framing of terrorism help to explain the significance of claiming expertise on the basis of 'being a Muslim'.

The second aspect of community experts' knowledge highlighted by interviewees was knowledge of extremism more directly. This was emphasised by one interviewee, who described their lifelong experience with Muslim groups, observation of the discussions of young Muslims regarding both local discontents and global sympathies, and resultant

understandings of ‘why young people might be attracted to some of the more radical organisations out there’ (12). This interviewee drew similarities between their own knowledge and that of Muslim groups who have ‘a phenomenal amount of experience’ working against violent extremism in communities from which they can draw an understanding of radicalisation and how to counter it. One academic saw Government as a key driver of this type of expertise through their attempts to frame the policy problem mainly in terms of ‘Islamism’ and present the view that:

these Muslim communities are different places, we don’t really understand, let’s get some Muslims who can tell us, the Ed Hussain’s of this world were almost like ‘you don’t understand what some of the norms and discussions are’ [...] and so I think in the initial years it was like people claiming to shed more light on discourses and debates within sections of the Muslim communities (7).

Referring to Ed Hussain of the Quilliam Foundation, this describes a supply and demand relationship where the rise of community expertise has been due to its policy relevance and ability to provide scarce and valuable knowledge on the type of radicalisation that is of most concern to Government. The reference to ‘discourses and debates’ was echoed by another interviewee (18), who said that one source of radicalisation expertise is ‘experts in the community who know what the discourses are in the community and are able to say actually this discourse does impact quite heavily on radicalisation but that doesn’t’. In particular, this entailed an ability to offer insights into the nuances of religious groups and to distinguish between religious conservatism and violent extremism. A local authority Prevent officer referred to the contemporary example of foreign fighters saying that knowledge from communities, in terms of both community leaders and ‘regular everyday people’, was ‘not necessarily expertise in theory or concepts but expertise in the sense of ‘why’s this guy gone to Syria’ (30). As this quote suggests, community expertise is described as providing a rich, street-level knowledge, in a privileged position due to its scarcity, relevant to understanding contemporary UK radicalisation and touching with varying levels of directness on actual violence, and thus is distinguished by its nature from abstract knowledge.

This type of expertise was valued then not only for its knowledge content but also its nature as deep and locally embedded. Community

experts were judged by their levels of closeness to communities: discussing the most well-known Muslim groups that have engaged with government at a strategic level, one interviewee was asked whether they can really be considered relevant experts on the basis of their community knowledge and replied that it depended on the extent of their 'reach and grassroots foundation' (8), while another said that the level of connectedness to communities was a key source of credibility (13). For others it was more about direct personal experience: one activist said that their relevant knowledge was formed on the basis of 'life experiences' as a Muslim (12). Another similarly referred to gaining knowledge over time, explaining that they could provide:

a judgement based on experience, even though you haven't had time to go and do a three month research project. It may have validity because it's based on years of observation and analysis and you've seen it before or you've seen a version of something before. (10)

This is clearly a form of knowledge differentiated from research fieldwork, as explained by another interviewee who said that a key part of their ability to 'reinforce my expertise' is 'making reference to things that have been outside of their [*the audience's*] thinking on these issues', specifically 'community kind of insights' (24). This interviewee has been involved with managing an expert panel on radicalisation and valued such insights in that context too, saying that it was important to include those who could offer 'experience of what is happening in real time in the field from a community perspective', again emphasising the ongoing nature of such expertise. Another interviewee alluded to primary data, valuing the perspective of those who have 'witnessed problems of political violence, witnessed the various ways in which people in that community think about those questions' (13), and went on to explain their use of the term 'community knowledge':

Most of the people that I would I suppose call community experts are people who are community activists, so people who may be individuals who either voluntarily or through some paid capacity spend a lot of time interacting with people at the community or street level, having conversations about what are the issues that are of concern to you, what should we be doing as a community to address these issues. [...] if you have people like that who also live

in that community and share an identity with the people in that community, then they have an incredibly rich knowledge of what's happening with those young people at street level. And that to me has value within this debate. (13)

The emphasis here is on detailed contextual knowledge, rather than generalised knowledge of political violence. As this quote indicates, community experts clearly overlap with the practitioner category. At the same time however, community experts are differentiated by having 'an intimate connection through [*their*] personal life' (13) to the community. This indicates a particular type of knowledge that is valued for a close and involved understanding and is a distinct form of expertise. This corresponds with Corburn's (2005: 49-51, 59-62) analysis that the credibility of local knowledge comes from witnessing and living rather than rigorous methods; using the senses in everyday experience to identify problems and hypothesise causes. In other studies, community members have compared themselves favourably to researchers, claiming a 'direct' knowledge that is grounded in real experiences (Thompson et al. 2012: 607-9) as well as an ability to generate data that was likely to result in a more authentic picture (Callaghan and Wilstow 2008: 176-8). Further, it is claimed to have developed over long period of time in a specific area, drawing in memories that cross the generations (Moran and Rau 2016). In a policy making context, lay perspectives have been valued for their ability to bring context and specifics to abstract knowledge (Horlick-Jones, Rowe and Walls 2007). All in all then, community experts have been active in this area, and they were considered by participants to offer knowledge on communities relevant to contemporary manifestations of extremism, gained through experience of living through those contexts.

7.3.2 Questioning the credibility of community experts

Some interviewees however discussed limitations to community expertise. One aspect of this was the argument that community members lack relevant knowledge and instead form part of a well-funded Prevent community. This is a more widely-discussed theme. The report of the first Parliamentary inquiry into Prevent for example stated that: '[t]he construction of an 'Islamic experts industry'—groups which are "artificially created, often in collaboration [*with Government*] to promote favoured ideologies"—is a matter of wide concern' (House of Commons 2010: 35). The term 'Islamic experts industry' had come from the testimony of the

National Muslim Women's Advisory Group, a Government initiative established in 2008, and signalled to the Committee poor representative structures for Muslim communities. Husband and Alam's (2011: 163) study of Prevent also identified the development of an 'industry' of community organisations seeking funding alongside experts and consultants. Kundnani (2012: 3) similarly refers to 'the emergence of a government-funded industry of advisers, analysts, scholars, entrepreneurs and self-appointed community representatives' with claims to knowledge on radicalisation. Lakhani (2012: 196) reports such concerns from local fieldwork with community groups and practitioners, who were concerned that Muslim groups had gained Prevent funding but in many cases lacked experience with or specialist knowledge of violent extremism. Community leaders more generally have historically faced criticisms regarding their unelected status and questionable levels of commonality with the community they represent (Cain and Yuval Davis 1990: 9-12). Authors (Back et al. 2002: 449-50; Spalek and Imtoul 2007) note the emphasis on state engagement with 'moderate' Muslims post-9/11. Those who identify as Salafi, a strain of Islam, or Islamist, defined as Islamic activists, are constructed as threats rather than communities to be engaged (Spalek and Lambert 2008: 264-7); the Muslim Council of Britain for example was said to have been sidelined by the Government after criticising counter-terrorism measures (Meer 2010: 89-90). Such arguments point to the role of politics in defining what is regarded as community expertise. In interviews, there was some allusion to the idea of an 'industry' developing on this topic, with community experts playing a role in this. One interviewee for example referred to personal connections, saying that some community actors achieved influence 'because they were on good terms with Government ministers' (8). A more widely voiced theme regarded funding. The clearest exposition of this came from a think tank researcher when asked about personal experience as a basis for expertise:

Okay, the weird, what happened with Prevent, and this is all relevant, is that inevitably the Government puts up a load of money and then a load of credible experts come charging forwards saying 'yeah I'm an expert on this subject, I'm from the Muslim community, I'm a former nationalist skinhead', whatever, and it's like a money grab. And you've seen all these little experts pop up all over the place. (16)

Similarly, one researcher and activist said that ‘some Muslims’ might argue they are the only ones who ‘can deal with all these problems [...] because they want to give themselves a good slice of the funding pie’ (10). An academic claimed to be ‘very questioning of the money that some of these groups attracted’ under Labour through Prevent funds, calling them ‘essentially start-ups’ (7) while another said that some of those that capitalised on Prevent funding ‘are kind of self-identifying Muslim community leaders or representatives of Muslim organisations that haven’t really gone very far’ (8). Such comments question the authenticity of such experts, limiting the amount of expertise that can be conferred on community actors by pointing to the role of politics rather than knowledge in their expert status.

The relevance of community experts’ knowledge was also questioned. This speaks to a broader point on the importance of defining who is providing community knowledge (Callaghan and Wilstow 2008). Thus critical comments from interviewees characterised community actors as community representatives rather than experts, with no knowledge on the specific issue of terrorism. One activist and researcher said that:

My own personal experiences of most Muslim community actors who were consulted with by Government did not have the time or resources or even the skills to actually do a thorough study of those people who might be deemed as radical. They might have engaged them in order to marginalise them in their own community institutions, but that wasn’t the same thing as understanding the issues. (10)

Here, practical experience is not deemed sufficient to develop an advanced understanding of radicalisation. The reference to ‘a thorough study’ makes an implicit comparison with scholarly expertise. Similarly, a policy maker argued that a shared religion was not an adequate basis for expertise, saying that they were ‘very sceptical about the Prevent bandwagon that’s trundling along [...] and the numbers of Muslims who seem to have self-styled themselves as experts on it and it seems to be for no reason other than they’ve got a faith in common with some of these individuals’ (14). A think tank interviewee talked about community activists ‘who don’t really know anything about this subject but have all come up and said they’re experts’ despite limited specialist knowledge in the area (16). These comments didn’t necessarily suggest that such actors didn’t have expertise,

but instead that their expertise was not on radicalisation, or that they were not a 'radicalisation expert': a former senior civil servant similarly said that although Muslim advisors were recognised as experts on Muslim faith and communities, they 'did not live up to expectations on radicalisation [...] because I think it's broadly true that most Muslims don't know anything more about radicalisation and terrorism than do most other people' (29). This was echoed by a researcher who has worked as a counter-radicalisation practitioner:

I think the sections of Muslim community that I found to be expert on that were sections of the community that had encountered it at close quarters, which is a geographic thing but it also something about the nature of those communities [...] therefore it soon became apparent to me and colleagues that many sections of the Muslim community had no expertise on the problem. (31)

Conversely, some interviewees said that instead of providing knowledge on radicalisation, community members were better placed to provide more general information on policy impact. One explained this in detail:

A lot of those people have their pet theories on why did those four guys end up doing 7/7. All these people will have their answers to these questions. And obviously in answering those questions they are drawing on their knowledge that comes out of those communities to a certain extent. But for me their contribution to answering that question is of less value than their ability to describe a more general picture of what is happening within a particular community and to be able to assess what policies might help or make matters worse, not even specifically in terms of radicalisation but in terms of how young people are living their lives. (13)

There is a differentiation here between community experts that can provide knowledge on policy context and impact, based on 'a set of experiences and knowledge that is important', to inform discussions of radicalisation, and radicalisation experts who can contribute knowledge on the causes of terrorism. Referring again to Muslim advisors under Labour, another interviewee said that 'they weren't there because they were experts on radicalisation' but instead 'they were advising them on the politics of what the Government was doing' and 'representing different political constituencies in the Muslim communities' (8). In terms of their own expertise, that interviewee, who was a member of an expert panel on

radicalisation, expressed the impression that their role was to provide expertise on ‘the impact of anti-radicalisation programmes on communities and civil societies’ and ‘the networks of community organisations and NGOs [*non-governmental organisations*]’ and researchers on anti-racism and Muslim communities ‘that I had access to and I was talking to’ rather than radicalisation more directly (8). While recognising the contribution of such expertise, such comments clearly differentiate it from ‘radicalisation expertise’. This coheres with recent analysis that, while defending the value of first-hand accounts, primarily frames its role in terms of understanding policy impact rather than analysing causes (Epstein, Farina and Heidt 2014: 251-5).

Community experts’ knowledge was also criticised more fundamentally as anecdotal by two interviewees. One said that community members ‘have something valid and interesting to say, but I’m not sure whether that would make you an expert’ because it would ‘be anecdotal knowledge of this is what is happening in my area, my community’ (8). Another said that many ‘Muslims who engage this issue’ were acting as ‘native informants’ and claiming supremacy of their own experience and individual narrative, often over others’, instead of providing more generalisable knowledge, particularly problematic in ‘a problem as complex as this’. The interviewee went on to say:

But then Governments themselves want to hear direct narratives as well. They actually want native informants in the process as a kind of expertise, but I think it’s wrong for a whole community to sell itself at that level, it’s self-defeating, it means you can only then offer illustrative example, you can’t offer an analysis, you can’t offer a set of graduated responses. You can only offer a very minuscule amount of expertise. (10)

This interviewee highlights the divergence between such actors’ credibility in the policy process and their credibility in terms of making a contribution to knowledge. It views the knowledge of many community actors as partial expertise, limited by its personal and non-analytical nature. More generally, even those who did claim or confer relevant knowledge and experience didn’t necessarily believe that this amounted to expertise: one said that their academic research and activism gave them ‘important kinds of expertise but that doesn’t make me an expert’ (10); another with a background in Islamic activism differentiated between their ‘understanding’

of the issues and being an expert, which they denied (12); a third said that, as with practitioners and ex-extremists, community activists may be 'specialist' and able to provide 'insight' but that this does not amount to being an expert (24). Instead, it seems that these actors are thought of as providing a more general awareness that is valuable in broader understandings of radicalisation.

Clearly the idea of community expertise is contested. It was often raised in interviews and some community actors were identified by interviewees as having directly relevant knowledge. When this was probed further however, most interviewees painted a more nuanced picture with a much smaller group that could be considered radicalisation experts because of close contact with violent extremism, a larger community that could provide contextual knowledge useful to understanding radicalisation, and a majority whose knowledge lacked the adequate level of specialist knowledge and abstraction to be considered expertise. Thus having an informed contribution was drawn by some interviewees in contrast to having actual expertise on the topic. In particular, phrases like 'lack of thorough study', 'speculative', 'anecdotal' indicated an opposition to scholarly knowledge and were used to highlight the limitations of community expertise and sometimes to explicitly differentiate community knowledge from expert knowledge. In practice this suggests that one does not have to be considered a 'radicalisation expert' to contribute authoritatively to public discussions on the topic, and, to be considered to have expertise relevant to radicalisation, individuals do not have to be a 'radicalisation expert'. Thus the field appears 'messy' in terms of the number and type of 'expert' voices that exist: its nature as a topic area that is thought to require a diversity of knowledge allows a variety of expertise claims to exist.

7.4 Multifaceted expertise

Throughout Chapters 6 and 7, a recurrent theme has been an apparent clash between practical and theoretical knowledge. However, interviewees also valued expertise that involved bringing together knowledge and skills from different professions. Thus interviewees did not talk only about the value of particular types of knowledge in making an expert, but in terms of the amalgamation of different types of knowledge. For example, they would refer to activism, research, community knowledge and practitioner experience all underpinning their knowledge on the subject.

The strongest form of this theme was in terms of practical and theoretical knowledge. This speaks to the notion of 'pracademics', usually meaning police officers with academic backgrounds who offer a mix of experiential and academic knowledge (Braga 2016). This involved, for example, researchers discussing their practical experience or practitioners detailing their research credentials. Thus one interviewee was discussing their involvement in the radicalisation field and made a point of saying that they had 'straddled activism and research' in race-related topics 'since the late 90s' (13), while a think tank researcher, again detailing their background in the subject, mentioned practical experience with a Prevent-funded project alongside their research credentials and their subsequent understanding 'in detail [of] how it [*Prevent*] works' (16). Two interviewees referred to the influence of their multifaceted experience on their understandings of radicalisation: for one, it was a combination of 'frontline work' and being an academic that enabled them to develop theories of radicalisation (23). Another, who had been involved in what is often described as an extreme organisation, alongside academic study, counter-terrorism training and practitioner-level counter-radicalisation work, said that:

So I think actually all of it plays a part in giving you a certain awareness, whether it's the theory, the knowledge, the experience, the practice, I think all of that shaped my view of what radicalisation is or the different trends it takes place in. (19)

In this sense, their credibility was described as multifaceted but anchored in the two core themes of theoretical knowledge and practical experience. Another said that in addition to their research credentials, their expertise was formed on the basis of 'regular' contact with practical counter-radicalisation actors, including '[a] policy level, former extremists, people who've been victims of violent radicalisation, communities that are trying to fight it, practitioners like schoolteachers, doctors, social workers who are seeing evidence of it in the work they do' (20). Conversely, when asked whether they were a radicalisation expert, one policy researcher said that they would not describe themselves as an expert because of a lack of professional diversity in their experience (15). All of these quotes suggest that the interviewees value the knowledge they have gained from a range of sources other than research, and in particular value the amalgamation of diverse sources of knowledge.

This was also applied when conferring expertise: one interviewee, themselves having practical and research experience, explained that Bob Lambert and Abdul Haqq Baker could 'genuinely' be called experts since they were able to combine practical knowledge with theory (9). Another interviewee gave the example of Lindsay Clutterbuck at RAND, formerly a specialist in counter-terrorism at the Metropolitan Police Service who they said was 'a really valuable person' in this debate due to their practical and research experience that enabled them to use their historical knowledge 'to put things in perspective' at the same time as understanding 'the challenges to deal with or to implement some of the solutions that are suggested' (15). These quotes prioritise then not one form of expertise over another, but argue for an amalgamation of different sorts of knowledge - both practical and theoretical - in the 'radicalisation expert' individually. For some (24) this was a general professional value that entailed having a 'roundedness' from different types of experience that improved insights. For others however it was explained by the nature of the topic, with the fieldwork and 'detached rigorous analysis' of academia necessary alongside a grounded understanding of how radicalisation actually happens in communities:

If you're able to bring both of those things together then that's where you really can do something, go somewhere with the analysis. Now I think, that's why I said that there's a body of people, a reasonably small group of people, if you've lived through the Muslim community and you have an inner working sense of radicalisation processes or a sense of a lived feel for where community debates, discussions are, it's your life and soul, it's your everyday being, and at the same time you're able to take that and use a policy language to access policy makers, and access academic sources and also academics who are involved in that process [...] So I think when you're able to combine those different forms, even though you may not be a specialist in any one of those things, having the fluency to live in those three different worlds I think gives you a different vantage point, that's why I was hesitating to call it expertise, but it gives you a different usefulness in the problem. (11)

Drawing on the diverse characterisations of authoritative knowledge discussed in previous sections, this is describing an ability to work across and communicate between different professional areas. Similarly, an

interviewee who had emphasised the importance of bringing together theoretical and practical knowledge throughout their interview brought this back to the nature of the topic:

But I think there is a, if you had picked theoretical physics, then maybe your definition of expert in that would be very different, but when you're talking radicalisation, which is primarily about people, then there is this divide and this need for there to be two sides, the practical and the theoretical and a blend of the two. (9)

While Chapters 6 and 7 have shown ways by which experts seek to defend and deny the credibility of particular forms of knowledge, there is also value attached in this topic area to expertise that amalgamates different types of knowledge.

7.5 Conclusion

This chapter has provided an account of the role of experiential knowledge in constituting radicalisation expertise. The particular aim was to examine how it is assigned or denied credibility; how those with knowledge claims on the topic seek to draw the boundaries of credible expertise in order to include or exclude particular forms of experiential knowledge. Experiential expertise was valued on a number of grounds. In particular, the knowledge of ex-extremists but also counter-radicalisation practitioners was seen as grounded in the realities of radicalisation, while community experts were regarded as offering a deep, local knowledge as embedded 'witnesses' to extremism if not violent radicalisation. Such knowledge was seen as relatively inaccessible by research-based experts, valuable given the scarcity of data on this topic, and essential given the 'people-centred', context-specific nature of the research issue. At the same time, experiential expertise was criticised on a number of grounds. It was often regarded as of little relevance to the core problem of violence, as subjective rather than objective, specific rather than generalisable, and anecdotal rather than systematic. There were also points raised regarding the trustworthiness of ex-extremists, and the role of state funding in creating an inflated role for community experts. In the final section, it was seen that some interviewees believed that as a topic, radicalisation requires both theoretical and practical knowledge, which helps to explain why many of the criticisms of those who claim knowledge in this area revolve around those two key factors. Experiential expertise thus takes a difficult and nuanced role in constituting radicalisation expertise; vaulted to prominence by those who

value apparently authentic reports from the frontline of radicalisation, and undermined by others who question both the veracity and validity of those reports.

Tables 7.1 and 7.2 summarise the findings of Chapters 6 and 7. Table 7.1 focuses on the ways by which those with knowledge claims on radicalisation conceptualise credible expertise on their topic. Table 7.2 lists the factors that are used to contest expert credibility: in some cases, credibility is contested by the absence of a generally valued marker (e.g. a lack of long term involvement in the field, specialist knowledge or objectivity); in other cases, it is the nature of a claim to authoritative knowledge that is questioned (particularly the importance of policy relevance, academic credentials and experiential knowledge). The following two chapters pull these findings together; Chapter 8, building on indications of diversity in conceptualisations of radicalisation expertise, examines the pluralistic nature of the expert community.

Table 7.1: Claiming radicalisation expertise

Credibility markers for radicalisation expertise
<p><i>Knowledge</i></p> <p>Time spent on the issue daily</p> <p>Long term involvement in the field</p> <p>Specialist knowledge: thorough understanding of the topic</p> <p>Contextual knowledge</p> <p>Theoretical knowledge</p>
<p><i>Depth of understanding</i></p> <p>Understanding through primary research</p> <p>First-hand knowledge of the topic</p> <p>Second-hand knowledge: witness to radicalisation processes</p> <p>Embedded, everyday knowledge</p>
<p><i>Quality</i></p> <p>Academic metrics: evidence of quality of work and acceptance by academic community</p> <p>Methodological rigour</p> <p>Objectivity: separation from political influence and value judgements</p>
<p><i>Relevance</i></p> <p>Application of knowledge: being 'useful'</p>

Table 7.2: Contesting radicalisation expertise

Ways by which expert credibility can be contested on radicalisation
<p><i>Knowledge</i></p> <p>Lack of time spent working on the topic or long term involvement</p> <p>Lack of specialist knowledge</p> <p>Shallow knowledge</p> <p>Irrelevant knowledge</p> <p>Lack of theoretical knowledge</p> <p>Partial knowledge (that is specific to particular contexts)</p> <p>Distinction between community representatives and experts</p> <p>Created by Prevent funding</p> <p>Untrustworthy</p>
<p><i>Quality</i></p> <p>Lack of methodological rigour</p> <p>Lack of objectivity</p> <p>Bias, particularly introduced by 'problem solving approach'</p> <p>Displaying false certainty</p> <p>Speculative</p> <p>Subjective</p> <p>Anecdotal</p>
<p><i>Depth of understanding</i></p> <p>Lack of empirical research underpinning claims</p> <p>Abstract; lack of knowledge of local dynamics</p>
<p><i>Relevance</i></p> <p>Irrelevant to policy and practice</p>

Chapter 8: Pluralism in the UK's radicalisation expert community

This chapter, and the next, move away from the mechanics of contested credibility to trace the constitution of the radicalisation expert community in the UK. They seek to summarise and build on Chapters 6 and 7, examining how the community shapes and is shaped by the micro analysis of the previous two chapters. The present chapter focuses on structure, examining the implications of experts' often divergent conceptualisations of radicalisation expertise for the boundaries of the expert community.

Questions regarding the unification and coherence or lack thereof of the radicalisation expert community arise out of the conclusions of other research on terrorism expertise. As discussed in Chapter 2.3.1, much of this research points to invisible colleges, or small, elite and informal social networks that form a core community of terrorism experts (Miller and Mills 2009: 417-8; Reid and Chen 2007). Stampnitzky (2013: 12-13, 201-4) however questions the idea of a stable and dominant core group of terrorism experts, arguing that the field is considerably flexible and that terrorism studies is not an established discipline but a 'liminal space', without strong notions of experts and expertise. From within the field of terrorism studies, Horgan and Boyle (2008: 57) argue that the idea of a unified 'orthodox' terrorism studies is simplistic. Instead, they highlight the highly contested nature of its definitions and theories, its interdisciplinarity and diverse methodologies, and its plurality of approaches to policy engagement.

More broadly, Chapter 2 examined the sociological analyses that have interrogated the boundaries of expertise and sought to highlight the potential contribution of a plurality of knowledge types. On radicalisation specifically, the vignettes in Chapter 1 were presented as initial observations of the field in practice and suggested that the topic area was marked by a plurality of claims to expertise. Chapters 3 and 4 argued that radicalisation theory and counter-radicalisation efforts draw in many areas of knowledge and skill. The evidence presented in the previous two chapters meanwhile suggested the existence of multiple conflicting conceptualisations of credible knowledge rather than an overall model of radicalisation expertise. This chapter examines the theme of pluralism that ties together these observations, examining how these dynamics play out in the radicalisation expert community. Section 8.1 focuses on the diverse types of expertise that are represented in the expert community. Section

8.2 discusses the implications of this for identifying experts in practice, examining the blurry boundaries of the expert community alongside the extent to which radicalisation expertise is held individually.

8.1 A fragmented expert community

8.1.1 The 'newness' of the radicalisation expert community in the UK

As described in Section 3.2.1, use of the terminology of radicalisation is recent and has grown rapidly (Sedgwick 2010: 480). The pre-emptive nature of counter-radicalisation is similarly a new approach in British counter-terrorism (Heath-Kelly 2012). Eight interviewees echoed this, describing Prevent as a new area of policy and practice and radicalisation itself as a new issue. This has entailed a process of actors emerging who are able to talk credibly about radicalisation, as well as a knowledge base being built and demonstrated in the growth of published work. One interviewee, who has worked on radicalisation research as part of a think tank and also has a practitioner background in counter-terrorism, commented that:

I think if you go back ten years, you wouldn't have found anybody who was considered an expert or even would have thought of themselves as an expert, and you wouldn't have found any organisations whose primary or even a main part of their role was to do with radicalisation. So the big change has been this development in individuals, and organisations, that do fill that gap. Some better than others. (9)

Such comments describe the emergence of an area of expertise that was hitherto undeveloped. However, this narrative of 'newness' was challenged by some, who highlighted the longer history in which the 'fashion' of radicalisation (31) is embedded. In particular, the roots of the field were seen to lie in both previous research on the causes of terrorism as well as professional expertise in the areas of community cohesion, youth offending and community policing. In general however, radicalisation was seen to have provided a new terminology and focus by which increasing numbers of researchers, and others with knowledge claims on this topic, have orientated themselves.

There were links drawn by interviewees between the age of the field and how expertise is attributed. In particular, the lack of experts, expertise and evidence in the area was said by three interviewees to create a space

in which particular types of expertise emerged. One interviewee with a background in both academic research and community activism discussed the lack of formal expertise available from Muslim communities on radicalisation:

And the community itself didn't have dedicated terrorism specialists when 9/11 happened. The Quilliam Foundation only emerges in 2008. It takes 8 years or something for the community to propose something that looks like a full-time professional body to analyse this. And even then communities aren't supporting it, it's got to be publically funded in the first few years of its existence. So there weren't people available who were full-time professionals at this. They didn't emerge for a long period of time. So it could be that crises create experts who then fit into the machinery of consultation with Government, academia etc. more seamlessly. In the absence of that structure you have to have ad hoc arrangements. That's a very natural thing. (10)

In the absence of any established structures of expert advice, the argument goes that 'ad hoc' experts, or those who are not 'professionals' in this specific area but have relevant and useful experience, were able to claim authority. A researcher with extensive experience in radicalisation research discussed think tanks as a further example of this:

A disproportionate amount of actually really good academically rigorous studies in this field [are] published actually by think tanks, which is unusual because you wouldn't expect very rigorous studies to be published by think tanks. But maybe it is because of the emerging, young nature of the field that think tanks perhaps, for once more than traditional academic institutions, have come out more quickly and earlier with good and rigorous studies on this topic. (25)

To this researcher, the 'young' nature of the field and a lack of academic engagement in these early stages have led to a proliferation of think tanks in the expert community. As such, the 'newness' of the research area has implications for the expertise it produces. In particular, the low baseline of knowledge and the lack of established expertise and academic engagement were argued by interviewees to have created a vacuum into which a range of players begin to 'fill the gap' when a demand for

knowledge was created. With changes to the terminology and policy responses to terrorism then came developments in its associated expertise.

In this situation, alternative experts are not so much challenging an established expert community, as was apparent in many of the examples in Chapter 2.1.2 (e.g. Irwin 1995). Instead, it is openness, as a feature of the expert community, which facilitates the diversity. For interviewees, an important explanation for this openness was the 'newness' of the topic area, and they referred to a period when there were relatively few knowledge claims being made. This narrative suggests a temporary state that presents an alternative explanation to other literature on security expertise. For other writers, 'permeability, fuzziness, hybridity and weak institutionalization' (Eyal and Pok 2015: 44) can be the permanent features of a field that exists in the space between other professional and topical fields (McQuade 2016; Stampnitzky 2015). The reflections from radicalisation experts suggest that such dynamics are changeable and can be amplified in particular circumstances, including when the topic area is perceived as 'new'.

8.1.2 An expert community in flux

Alongside its nature as a new and informal expert community, the topic area harbours an assorted and changeable set of experts. First, some interviewees described their entry to, or position in, the field in terms of serendipity. For example:

Well, I stumbled into this field. (5)

I would say I was quite peripheral and accidental to that whole field. I came to it accidentally and I haven't done any primary research in the area. (8)

A senior researcher in the civil service suggested that their background is in a number of subjects that are on the periphery of the topic of radicalisation (34). These personal reflections cohere with Stampnitzky's analysis of terrorism experts, many of whom reported that they got into the field 'accidentally' (2013: 45). They suggest that radicalisation is a topic area that permits individuals with a range of backgrounds to work credibly and indicate the lack of an established disciplinary space occupied by radicalisation studies.

In addition, the presence of those that lack a 'sense of belonging' in the topic area was particularly noticeable. One interviewee described themselves as an 'interloper in the field' (22), while another described how

their work on Prevent and radicalisation had come ‘tangentially’ out of other research interests, and that therefore ‘I’ve found myself moving or maybe even writing and presenting in circles that are out of my core interest’ (7). Other interviewees identified with a sub-topic rather than radicalisation studies in general, with one interviewee describing themselves as a ‘complete one-off’ save for claiming a ‘resonance’ with those studying fanaticism, apocalypticism, millenarianism and ‘modernity and the need for meaning’ (5). Similarly, another researcher, a specialist in religion and violence, identified themselves as working on the ‘periphery’ of contemporary radicalisation studies, although well-connected within their specialism (6). While this data suggests that radicalisation studies is a loosely defined field with a lack of central coherence, it also reflects the sample structure, which was designed to include individuals with varying levels of activity on radicalisation specifically but who nonetheless were attributed expertise on the topic. The presence of such diverse knowledge indicates however that it is a topic area that can accommodate experts from a range of backgrounds and with differing levels of involvement.

In addition to harbouring this diversity of expertise, the composition of the expert community was described by interviewees as fluid; that is, experts ‘come and go’. This was articulated by a policy maker when naming the experts that they had engaged with on the topic of radicalisation, saying that ‘People kind of pop up and then disappear again’ (29). While a brief example, the language here suggests that the interviewee’s impression of the field is one of change rather than an enduring set of core experts. One researcher, when asked about the changeable levels of political influence of particular experts, provided a more detailed example of the anti-racist think tank the Institute for Race Relations’s publication of ‘Spooked!’, a report on Prevent (Kundnani 2009):

I remember when [...] the Institute for Race Relations hit the headlines with their Spooked report. So for about three or four months people were deferring to them, talking to them a lot, they were getting a lot of press coverage [...]. Since then there’s not really been much noise from them or much that they have said on the issue, they’ve moved on and covered other issues. It’s not been on the Prevent radar. And prior to that likewise they had very little to say on the issue. They were coming at it really I think from a civil liberties perspective, a human rights perspective, from a race

equalities perspective, and the radicalisation process wasn't really central to their area of work. (11)

This suggests that radicalisation sits outside of other issues and disciplines. With the topic area drawing in a range of potentially relevant knowledge and specialisms, experts have a variable ability and willingness to contribute to debates. A related point is that the particular focus of experts within the topic area of radicalisation is changeable, even amongst those who focus more consistently on radicalisation. One interviewee (16) reflected for example that their expertise on radicalisation had declined recently and also that their specialism in terms of the extreme groups that they studied had changed. This comment was from a think tank researcher and will reflect that professional context; however, with think tanks very active in this topic area it becomes an important feature of its expert community.

Although this theme of fluctuation was dominant, there were a small number of dissenting comments. These indicated a well-networked, closely-related field and perhaps some tendency to exclusivity at its core. A researcher (28) who has a background in security studies and engages in collaborative radicalisation projects said that those who 'see themselves as working squarely in the field' are a 'fairly tight knit' group in that they know each other and their work. Another interviewee (3) painted a starker, and gendered, picture in terms of a particular sub-topic, referring to a 'clique of experts' that could be difficult to access, particularly for women. Such statements echo the findings of other studies on the 'terrorism mafia' or 'invisible colleges' of terrorism experts (Reid and Chen 2007; Stampnitzky 2013: 27-38). They may also describe core experts, or those who are central to particular sub-areas. In practice however, knowledge claims are made on radicalisation by a wider pool of individuals, whose expertise must be taken into account; the boundaries of radicalisation expert community appear permeable and its membership in a state of flux.

8.1.3 Multiple professions

As suggested in Chapter 7, a core aspect of diversity in the radicalisation expert community is professional. Interviewees referred to a range of types and sites of radicalisation expertise. One interviewee, responding to a question about conflicting perspectives on the topic, said:

So the field, let me go back, the field that I'm referring to here in answering that is a field that has a few academics in it, that has a lot more people who claim expertise because of their backgrounds, Maajid Nawaz is a great example of this, he's made a whole career out of being the expert in this kind of space. So they're not academic but they have particular areas of credibility. Plus people who have a professional responsibility in working for the state to do things in this area who can engage in these communities, plus political figures and some journalistic figures, so journalistic figures I'm thinking about Melanie Phillips who would certainly see herself as an expert in this field. (28)

The co-founder of Quilliam is mentioned as a source of expertise here alongside Melanie Phillips, a journalist who has published a book (2012) on radicalisation. The use of both practical and research-based knowledge in credibility claims is mirrored here in the constitution of the expert community as a whole.

In this way, interviewees tended to describe the radicalisation expert community as diverse, containing a wide array of actors including policy makers, practitioners and community actors alongside researchers, academic or otherwise. These actors are not regarded as stakeholders but as potential experts on radicalisation. That is, they are able to generate and contribute knowledge on the processes of radicalisation. In terms of Collins' and Evans' (2007) tables of expertises, the pool from which contributory expertise is drawn is potentially diverse rather than reserved for social scientific experts, in the way of Nowotny's (2003) 'pluralisation of expertise'. Clearly this is a position reflected in practice; for example the Home Affairs Select Committee's 2011 inquiry into radicalisation heard witnesses from a range of backgrounds including university and think tank researchers alongside ex-extremists, practitioners and community activists (House of Commons 2012: 49-50). Further, the Committee's 2015 inquiry into 'Countering Extremism' (Home Affairs Committee 2016: 42-43; see Appendix D for the full lists of witnesses to both inquiries) heard from practitioners and stakeholders more widely but no radicalisation researchers. Those working in the area then tend to recognise that there are a plethora of knowledge claims made on radicalisation from sources other than social scientists.

8.1.4 Multiple disciplines

A further indication of the fragmented nature of the expert community is the presence of a range of disciplines. Both terrorism (Sinai 2007: 32-3) and radicalisation studies (Neumann and Kleinmann 2013: 370) have been characterised as multidisciplinary (see Chapter 4.3.1). The point has been noted by the convener of Radicalisation Research (Francis 2012), a website that communicates academic research to policy:

most of the best research that contributes to this field is not produced by so-called radicalisation experts, but by scholars working across various fields, including sociologists, historians, political scientists, scholars of religion and so on, all of whom can bring an expertise in their field to aid in understanding of the multi-factorial phenomenon which, at the moment, many people choose to refer to as radicalisation.

Rather than expertise being restricted to a tightly bounded disciplinary tradition then, the argument is that relevance is defined widely given the complexity of the topic area. Participants' comments cohered with this, referring to multidisciplinary and the resultant range of modes of analysis, including macro to micro perspectives and quantitative and qualitative approaches. This multidisciplinary is argued to have increased over time:

And I think possibly then within academic study there's a wider range of disciplines getting involved in this work as well. There's been a recognition of, it started off initially I guess as being driven by political science, international relations and security studies, there's now the involvement of psychologists, behavioural psychologists, geographers, sociologists, the net has been widened.
(20)

Alongside this perspective however there were some comments regarding the lack of multidisciplinary and interdisciplinary research in practice. Reflecting the theoretical debates discussed in Section 4.4.3, there was some discussion of imbalances in terms of disciplinary involvement. In particular, a tendency to individual-level analysis and a lack of engagement with researchers doing empirical work in Muslim communities was noted, especially in early debates on Prevent. The implications of this were outlined by this interviewee, an academic with a background in discrimination and equalities:

I think it left the field for a lot of people who are from a counter-terrorism, political science background, and also just people from think tanks from no particular background but more of an ideological position on counter-terrorism and radicalisation and don't even have any research background in those areas. But what was missing as far as I could see was people who were doing the sociology and the empirical work in communities. Not necessarily around radicalisation but just in Muslim communities, which still told us a lot. (8)

Both this interviewee and another academic (7) thus identified an initial lack of input from sociologists, a fact that for this interviewee led to experts with questionable levels of knowledge emerging. The general picture reported by interviewees was then of a multidisciplinary topic demanding, although not necessarily achieving, the involvement of an increasing number of disciplines.

8.1.5 Multiple sub-topics

The fragmented nature of the expert community can also be seen in the number of topics that it addresses. Interviewees suggested that experts are not likely to be qualified to speak about radicalisation processes as a whole but instead on specific factors. The examples given included radicalisation on university campuses, the role of Syria, the far right, online radicalisation and radicalisation in specific contexts. One interviewee, a member of a research centre that works on radicalisation, explained their involvement in the field in such terms:

Yeah so I can say that [*research centre*] and myself have been particularly involved in the debate about homegrown radicalisation in the West. There are a lot of places in the world that we're not looking at. I mean we've barely done anything on the Middle East, or Afghanistan [...] we have to concentrate on what we're good at and I think there are other people who are looking at those places. [...] And we're not pretending to be experts on every part of the world and when we're not feeling that we're competent, both linguistically and in terms of the background of the researchers to do a particular project, we're just not doing it. (25)

This researcher clearly identified their expertise as residing in particular parts of the radicalisation debate, depending specifically on geography. A

further example regards analysis conducted within Government, with a senior researcher in the civil service (34) describing radicalisation as a process that draws on different frameworks of analysis, including individual, group, social and political factors, and that individuals have expertise corresponding to these factors to different extents. The examples of individual psychology and the recruitment role of socio-political movements were given. Interviewees were keen then to discuss expertise in terms of knowledge on a particular sub-topic rather than radicalisation in general. Similarly, a representative of the EU's Radicalisation Awareness Network, which orchestrates knowledge-sharing on the topic, has stated that the composition of academics on the network comprises of 'people dealing with different aspects of radicalisation' (Fitzgerald 2016b: 136). Radicalisation then is a topic area that has produced sub-fields of expertise.

This section has explored the diversity of the radicalisation expert community. Of course, the analysis is based largely on reports from individuals who may not see themselves as 'insiders'. However, it has precedents in previous studies: it is reminiscent of Eyal and Pok's (2015) discussion of expertise as existing in the 'spaces between fields' (40), with open boundaries and messy participation, rather than highly defined and professionalised fields. It reflects the description of early terrorism studies given by Stampnitzky (2013: 39-48) as a fluid space of expertise involving individuals from a range of professions and disciplines. In this context, radicalisation has emerged as a new space that allows diverse voices to claim credibility. It is a topic area in flux, attracting experts with a range of specialist backgrounds whose level of involvement changes over time. This lack of stability is coupled with a heterogeneous knowledge base. Thus the expert community involves both a range of disciplines and a plurality of knowledge types; credibility is not limited to credentialed academics. Finally, radicalisation as a topic area involves an overlapping set of sub-topics; it cannot be regarded as one coherent topic area with an easily-identifiable set of associated experts.

8.2 The implications for identifying radicalisation experts

The picture of the radicalisation expert community that is emerging is one of diversity and contestation. There is the participation of a range of types of expertise, and the heterogeneous constitution of the expert community in turn harbours divergent conceptualisations of credible expertise. This has

implications for how the boundaries of the expert community, and radicalisation experts themselves, can be identified in practice.

8.2.1 Permeable boundaries of the expert community

Some interviewees regarded the label of 'expert' in this topic area as relatively accessible. This reflects reports from terrorism experts of the presence of 'charlatans' in their field (Stampnitzky 2013: 12-13). It mirrors the concerns in Chapter 6.5.2 that the label of 'expert' is often conferred unjustifiably in policy and media contexts. A think tank researcher, who has experience working with primary data on radicalisation, directly identified the proliferation of 'charlatans' claiming radicalisation expertise. This involved individuals who claim expertise and offer advice on the basis of 'pretty much picking stuff out of the Economist or the latest report that has been produced by someone else', and conversely a lack of individuals with empirical knowledge or professional experience participating in debates (27). Another (33) was reluctant to use the label 'expert' in terms of radicalisation and suggested that it was applied too loosely, particularly by the media: 'I think in this area there are perhaps people who with a small amount of knowledge get called an expert' (33). An interviewee who works across counter-radicalisation interventions, training and research with a range of stakeholders, was asked about the presence of those attributed expertise without the requisite knowledge:

I think that is still a problem. It is very easy to set yourself up as an expert. If it was anything else it would be difficult because there's almost a transmitted tradition, so if somebody isn't part of that they're not going to be taken seriously, although it does happen. Realistically, if I have an interest in theoretical physics just because I like the subject, no one is really going to come and ask me what I think of the latest discovery of the Higgs boson particle, what's my view on the different experiments, flaws that it may or may not have. And if I did express an opinion, no one would take it seriously, and rightly so. In this area it's very different though because anyone can set themselves up as an expert, as a commentator. Merely being a Muslim sometimes is enough. Merely having an opinion and a blog is enough at times. (19)

Radicalisation is differentiated here from more bounded research fields. The lack of professionalisation leads to lax thresholds of expertise, and there are hazy boundaries between core experts and wider public debate.

The presence of unqualified actors in the expert community was explained by some interviewees by reference to funding availability for research or counter-radicalisation projects. The expert community was argued by one interviewee for example to be inflated, with ‘probably more people purporting to be active as experts in the field than there are’ as a result of individuals orientating their interests according to the availability of funding (6). A similar point was made in a Guardian article by a commentator with community expertise who argued that Prevent funding has facilitated the rise of ex-extremists (Bunglawala 2009). In general, these accounts suggest that the ‘problem of extension’ that Collins and Evans (2002) sought to address is particularly apparent in this topic area.

Clearly these points were not applied to all of those involved in this topic area. Participants named and discussed what they regarded as high quality knowledge generation, as discussed in Chapters 6 and 7. In addition, the idea of charlatans, although supported by many interviewees, was not shared by all. This think tank researcher and former counter-terrorism practitioner was asked whether there is anyone in the field presented falsely as an expert:

If we’re dealing specifically with radicalisation, I think the answer there is no, mainly because it’s very hard to try and – I think if somebody or some organisation did try and do that, they would very quickly discover that they would be discredited. So I don’t see it happening. (9)

While this quote suggests that the participant didn’t recognise the presence of charlatans in the field, it is weakened by a contrasting comment that was made immediately before this point when it was noted that they felt too ‘peripheral’ to the field to discuss the presence of ‘self-proclaimed experts’, as they termed them. A second limitation however was that over time the quality of the field was argued, by one interviewee with experience in think tanks and advising policy at multiple levels, to have improved: ‘What I’ve observed is you’re getting the filtering of the chaff from the wheat’ (24). They argued that in early debates on radicalisation, the perceived newness of the topic meant that ‘anyone that had a perspective was going to be valuable and was being engaged with’; in contrast, the development of policy theory and priorities ‘led to a narrowing or sorting in the degree of expertise or specialism required’. In this understanding, boundaries have developed around the ‘expert’ community over time. Clearly, however,

questions of credibility continue to concern those in the field and in general there remains a weak distinction between ‘expert’ and ‘lay’ voices.

The particular character of this topic area then is one in which the skills and knowledge needed to claim expertise are relatively widely distributed. To some extent this may be expected given that radicalisation is an area of social science, rather than physical science where technical skills tend to be exclusive to a small group of actors (Shapin 1995: 266-8). In summary, while Chapters 6 and 7 discussed the mechanics of a lack of agreement on the nature of radicalisation expertise, it can be seen that overall this entails concern about how the label is applied in practice. Radicalisation is a multifaceted topic area that facilitates a heterogeneous and leaky expert community where, as discussed in Chapters 6 and 7, an exclusive set of requisite attributes of expertise cannot be identified.

8.2.2 The impossibility of individual ‘radicalisation experts’

Echoing these problems in clearly identifying an expert community were difficulties in identifying individual radicalisation experts. Chapter 6.3.2 presented evidence that the term ‘expert’ was rejected by some interviewees because of the lack of an established evidence base. The variegated nature of expert knowledge on radicalisation also led to resistance to the label of ‘radicalisation expert’. Some claimed that the complexity of the field worked against the possibility of an over-arching expertise. For example, when asked whether they saw themselves as an expert in radicalisation, this think tank researcher replied:

An expert of sorts, but I don’t think anyone’s an expert really, if I’m quite honest. I don’t think that anyone could credibly claim to be an expert on radicalisation [...] Because I think everyone brings a specific strength in terms of one or two clear competencies to the table but the phenomena around extremism is very complex and it’s so textured that having one or two competencies isn’t sufficient in really understanding it. (24)

Such comments echo the criticism of ex-extremists in Chapter 7.2.2 regarding their partial knowledge. Another researcher (16), who has been working on radicalisation for more than five years, similarly said that they wouldn’t consider themselves ‘an expert in radicalisation in and of itself’ because of the number of subjects that it involves, including ‘human nature, behavioural sciences, social psychology, economics’, making it ‘so

incredibly unamenable to single points of expertise'. From this perspective then, the variety of sub-topics and disciplines greatly limits the ability of expertise to be located in one person.

A further feature that detracts from the possibility of an all-encompassing radicalisation expertise is the importance of locality. While discussing the importance of localised understandings of radicalisation, one interviewee said:

So the units of radicalisation if you like are very very different. So it's quite hard to say I think what makes a good generic radicalisation analyst [...] So I suppose I think that the way we talk about radicalisation really, is deeply rooted in sociology really, and a sociology that understands that the social is a key kind of driver, and in the context in which these issues are generally talked about, that's the unit that you need to understand, the social communities in which those radicalised groups are said to be working. (28)

Thus, radicalisation is seen as a thoroughly local phenomenon, necessitating local knowledge and detracting from the possibility of an all-encompassing 'radicalisation expert'. A final issue is the variable nature of violent individuals themselves:

But then I think that probably comes right to heart of your question about your entire PhD, does anyone claim to be an expert in it? I think that would be a pretty stupid claim. So personally no I would never claim to be an expert in it because the only thing you seem able to conclude about radicalisation is everybody's different, so it would be a bit crazy to say that somehow you were an expert in it. (14)

This civil servant is arguing that if every case of 'radicalisation' is different, it is impossible to claim a general expertise on the topic.

These accounts regarding the complexity of radicalisation call into question the individual level theories that focus on ideology discussed in Chapter 4. In particular, the scope of the topic clearly leads to nuances in terms of the extent to which interviewees would self-identify and construct others as an expert in the topic of 'radicalisation' as a whole. Indeed the possibility of being a generic 'radicalisation expert', with knowledge of fundamental and generalisable radicalisation processes, was challenged.

Instead the level of expertise claimed and conferred was said to vary by sub-topic, depending on experience working in that specific area.

8.2.3 The necessity and difficulties of expert collaboration

Given the difficulties of a comprehensive individually-held expertise, there was a strong feeling amongst participants that interaction and collaboration were necessary to create knowledge on radicalisation. The discussion in Chapter 7.4 on the value of expertise that encompasses different types of knowledge is expressed here in the expert community as a whole. The data points to the implications of radicalisation as a wicked problem (Rittel and Webber 1973), as discussed in Chapter 4.2.2, that through its complexity transcends single disciplines. It reflects the partial nature of individual expertise and 'composite' nature of security expertise described by Eriksen (2011: 1175). In terrorism studies more broadly, a partnership between knowledge from academic theory and state practice has been seen as necessary (Ranstorp 2007: 10-11).

On radicalisation specifically, different types of expertise were seen as complementary, and useful in different circumstances, and it was necessary to acknowledge and value each of these constituent parts of the whole. Interviewees referred to the necessity of 'collating', 'integrating' or 'triangulating' knowledge from different theoretical perspectives or sub-topics together to build an understanding of radicalisation. They discussed the sharing of information, collaboration and dialogue as a way of addressing the limitations to individual knowledge. One civil servant (14) for example said that the relevance of an experts' knowledge would depend on the particular case of radicalisation under consideration. Mental health professionals, theologians and academics were given as examples to argue that 'different types of expertise come to the fore in different scenarios'. In this example, expertise was valued for its practical insights, and in this context there is no generic radicalisation expertise. Similarly, while the topic is seen as multidisciplinary, the importance of achieving interdisciplinarity was highlighted by this academic interviewee referring to their experience on a North American research network that has conducted work on radicalisation:

So I think one of the things that's important about the [*North American*] network is that they very much attempt to bring in people from different fields to look at the same issue. So we were working with social psychologists for example. And their experiments in the

lab were being very much mirrored by what I was finding in the field. So there was an interesting arc between the two. And part of the project too involved social geography and the territory of where people live. [...]. But the point we were making was that you have to take religion seriously in this process. [...] And yet so many of the experts in the field aren't specialists in religion. They can talk to these people and say they're Muslims, they're fanatical blah blah blah, they're extremists, they're religious. And that's it. They don't have any greater understanding of what that means. So I think you need a lot more interaction between different scholars to understand things. It has to be an interdisciplinary field. (6)

Collaboration was seen as important here for two reasons: to bring together knowledge from different approaches on the same problem, and to compensate for the lack of comprehensive knowledge held by each individual. Other interviewees commented on their experiences with similar networks: one policy consultant and analyst involved in establishing an expert advisory panel on radicalisation explained how they put this collaborative philosophy into action: 'The mix that we were aiming for was an appropriate balance between clearly internationally renowned experts [...], but to balance it with serious contenders in terms of Muslim academics' (24). The importance of consulting academic terrorism experts alongside academics with some relevant 'personal' experience as two distinct and complementary sources of knowledge is highlighted here. Of course, there were suggestions of tensions when trying to work together on expert panels between different professional and disciplinary backgrounds, in particular on the basis of differing interests, objectives, priorities and standards. At the same time, the extent to which expert collaboration is achieved in practice can be questioned. For example, the 'Expert Group on Violent Radicalisation', established by the European Commission, has been criticised by the researchers behind PowerBase (2009), a website that tracks the activities of terrorism experts, as having a right-wing bias. The researchers behind this website have been more generally critical of terrorism experts (Miller and Mills 2009, 2010). In general however, interviewees were keen to point to the value of working together on this topic.

The extent to which the collaborative nature of radicalisation expertise was actualised in the policy process was contested. A number of

interviewees argued that the Preventing Extremism Together working groups set up after the 7/7 bombings allowed a diverse range of expertise to be expressed to Government. Similarly, an interviewee who works widely in radicalisation, both on research and as a practitioner training front line staff and running counter-radicalisation interventions, argued that no one group of experts monopolised influence over media discussions and policy making:

In my experience people from all sorts of views, whether it's very right wing, very left wing, very academic with a particular perspective, from a psychological background, people who've got a political analysis, people who view this through the lens of grievances, people who view this from the ideological point of view, people of various religious factions, whether its Salafi and Sufi, the likes of Quilliam and the likes who are at the other end of the spectrum to Quilliam. *All* seem to have a role both in media and also the ear of government. (19)

There were limitations however to this idea of varied and collaborative policy advice. Some interviewees argued that from around 2007, Government became increasingly selective and tended to speak more to think tank researchers, particularly those from Policy Exchange, the Centre for Social Cohesion, the Henry Jackson Society and Quilliam. The influence of such think tanks over debate on British Muslim communities has been discussed elsewhere (Mills, Griffin and Miller 2011; Kundnani 2015: 16-18). An interviewee who had worked for three years as a Government advisor on Prevent argued that Government policy emphasised non-violent extremism 'on the basis of a lot of noise from a few former extremists' rather than 'the weight of academic evidence' which they argued is against such a linkage (18). One researcher argued that public debates around political Islam in the mid-2000s were dominated by 'columnists' and 'pundits' (8). Conversely, there was an absence of voices in the debate that 'had done the research on Islamists and the changes and differences or nuances within the political Islam movement over the years', making the debate a 'caricature' of the realities of Muslim communities (8). These points speak to the initial argument of the chapter on the wide contributions and open boundaries of the expert community. Tending to be from participants critical of radicalisation theory and Prevent, they highlight the limitations to achieving consensual or even collaborative knowledge on

radicalisation theory. They again indicate the lack of a single authoritative body of knowledge; this is a topic area underpinned by divergent conceptualisations of the issue, the desired policy response, and authoritative knowledge. Despite aspirations to collaboration then, in practice the topic area has an appearance of conflict. Thus while radicalisation expertise in many ways reflects a trend towards a diversity of expertise generated around a social problem (Gibbons et al. 1994: 1-11), the nature of the topic area places limitations on the creation of assemblages of knowledge and brings contestation and controversy to the fore.

8.3 Conclusion

This chapter has examined the pluralism inherent in the radicalisation expert community in the UK and how this structure interacts with the nature of its expertise. Radicalisation is a loosely defined field of knowledge; experts regard their field as relatively 'new', changeable and open to a range of expert voices. Expertise is claimed from a diversity of professional, disciplinary and topical backgrounds. It can be characterised as a 'transepistemic' expert community; rather than a tightly-bounded specialist research community, it includes a range of experts and is closely linked to those on the 'outside' in counter-radicalisation policy and practice, who shape the topic area and its knowledge generation (Knorr-Cetina 1982). As suggested in Chapters 6 and 7, this array of relevant knowledge facilitates credibility contests (Gieryn 1999), as experts challenge each others' knowledge claims and question each others' credentials. Conversely, contested credibility is expressed in the lack of a defined, established or institutionalised community of experts and the fragmented and diverse nature of the expert community in practice.

One implication of this highlighted by interviewees is the ease with which radicalisation expertise can be claimed and the resultant presence of 'unqualified' expert voices. It is then a relatively open community, with weak distinctions between expert and lay knowledge. Further, the idea of an all-encompassing 'radicalisation expert' is problematic, with individual expertise on radicalisation characterised by interviewees as partial. The nature of radicalisation expertise as a messy, fragmented non-field covering a complex topic area, on which there is little agreement, undermines the possibility of identifying individual 'radicalisation experts'. Instead it is a topic area that draws in those with relevant knowledge to

apply to the central issue, which itself can be seen from a range of perspectives. As a result, collaboration is valued in the expert community. At the same time, the forum that diversity creates for contested credibility and the concerns regarding an uneven achievement of policy influence between experts from different perspectives indicate the political nature of the topic area. The following chapter returns to this recurring theme, discussing in more detail the implications of the contested politics of radicalisation for the expert community and how the pluralist structure of the community is manifested in public debates on the issue.

Chapter 9: The politics and practice of radicalisation expertise

This penultimate chapter continues the examination of the contours of the radicalisation expert community. It focuses on contestation and controversy, addressing the application of radicalisation expertise in public debates. On politicised topics, or highly controversial public issues, rarely does expertise function separately from public debate (as argued in Chapter 2.2). Experts help to define policy problems and propose solutions, with conceptual and theoretical debates underpinned by entrenched political conflict. In this sense, the Chapter examines radicalisation experts not as forming an insular social scientific community but in the midst of extensive interaction with politics and policy.

The public nature of radicalisation as a topic area has been a recurring issue in the thesis. Chapters 6 and 7 suggested that experts' conceptualisations of expertise are often constructed with reference to the practical nature of the issue. It was seen that many experts are active in either advising on or participating in the policy process. Chapter 2.3 highlighted both the constitutive role of the state in terrorism studies and the extensive debates and reflection that this has led to within the expert community. More specifically, the present Chapter builds on the recurring theme of contestation between divergent standpoints. Chapter 3 cited evidence that Prevent faces various lines of criticism from researchers and is contested in practice, while Chapter 4 highlighted the controversial nature of the policy theory, summarising the extensive debates in the academic literature on the nature of radicalisation. On radicalisation then, an array of experts proposes divergent understandings of the issue and how to address it, and ethical and political values permeate the expert discussion alongside evidence.

The first section of the present chapter frames the discussion through reference to the implications of politicised contestation for the nature of expertise and expert debate. The chapter then moves to examine substantive expert debates in practice. Section 9.2 presents an organised schema of the range of substantive perspectives on radicalisation that are articulated by experts. Finally, Section 9.3 examines the expression of radicalisation expertise in public debates by returning to the three vignettes presented in Chapter 1.1.

9.1 The interaction of radicalisation expertise with its political context

The politicised nature of the topic was described by interviewees using terms like 'sensitive', 'public', 'controversial' and 'emotive', alongside 'politicised'. One think tank researcher (16) for example said that research evidence could not answer normative questions of 'what sort of society we want to create' and therefore what policy actions should be taken in this area. A senior ex-civil servant echoed this, highlighting the political nature of the field in which evidence has a limited role:

As I'm sure you know this is an intensely political arena, so it doesn't happen, as it would be in some areas, that ministers don't show much interest and leave you to get on with it once policy is decided. There's such an overlap with politics and, of course, many ministers, particularly those in the Labour government, had a lot of Muslim constituents and also constituents from other minority faiths and they had strong opinions on what should and what shouldn't be done. In relation to what you're studying, this political dimension has to be taken into account. (29)

Prior to 2005 or 2006, radicalisation was seen by interviewees as a little-discussed term, or at most debated in academia. As it was increasingly used in public debates however, its politically sensitive and contestable nature came to the fore, and at the same time debates around terrorism became 'charged', drawing cultural issues into what had been a security-focused topic area (10, 25). These comments points to radicalisation not as an area of technical expertise but as a political debate.

The context of a topic area characterised by conflict and controversy has implications for its associated expertise. One researcher discussed the multiple dimensions of political controversy in the field, including the sensitivity of topics of religion and terrorism, the politics of minority communities, and the pressures of counter-radicalisation funding, meaning that it is a 'heavily contested space' with 'quite heated political debate' where 'it's very difficult to find an objective voice' (11). Thus the politicised nature of the topic is said to impact on expert discussion in two ways: not only by increasing the level of controversial debate in the area, but also by lessening the objectivity of experts in that all parties develop a position on the topic. Participants talked about bias from different angles, for example:

And I think there's been a kind of transatlantic process whereby ways of thinking about terrorism that were being very aggressively

promoted in Washington by neo-conservatives were, via Policy Exchange and a number of other outfits, were pushed in the UK as objective knowledge being promoted by terrorism experts but what was really going on was there was a political agenda behind it. (13)

This echoes published commentary on experts' ideological orientations, with Policy Exchange criticised for taking a tough line on Islamic radicalisation and accused of an ideological stance in its research (Mills, Griffin and Miller 2011; Smyth and Gunning 2007). Pro-state bias is a characterisation levelled at terrorism studies more widely (e.g. Herman and O'Sullivan 1990). In addition however, the biases of critical researchers were noted:

A lot of the research that you read, and I include Bob Lambert and [Jonathan] Githens-Mazer, if I read the papers that they produce, you have to read them with reference to the positioning of the politics of the time, they are as much advocacy as they are research. Whether that advocacy is based on genuine empirical research in terms of the effectiveness, I don't doubt Bob Lambert's knowledge and expertise, but it's pushing a particular agenda and worldview and almost all of the research is either informed by an explicit intention to do that, an implicit intention to inform the wider debate away from academics or is being pre-framed by the question that's been set by the commissioning body. (4)

The interviewee stressed that this was a reflection on the conduct of research and researchers in a politically contested field, rather than a criticism of those two specific researchers, whose names had previously been mentioned in the interview. Such comments point however to the political character of the expert community, with the values inherent to the topic area underpinning expert debate and evidence meshing with advocacy. This is again reminiscent of how terrorism studies more generally has been characterised (e.g. Bowyer Bell 1977). Radicalisation research meanwhile has been characterised as a topic area in which theoretical positions reflect wider political arguments (Hornqvist and Flyghed 2012: 322). Indeed one think tank researcher has argued that research on terrorism and radicalisation tends to ask questions that are essentially political, and that often 'evidence is pressed into the service of ideology, dressed up as objective research' (Bartlett 2011). Overall then, this is a topic where debate is driven by agendas as well as evidence.

Within this politicised context, expert debates can take a particularly vitriolic form. One participant, with a background in activism and critical public commentary on radicalisation, pointed to think tanks like Policy Exchange and the Henry Jackson Society trying to 'discredit' Muslim groups like the East London Mosque and the UK Islamic Mission because of their inclusion of politics and Government policy as a cause of radicalisation (12). Another researcher with a background in both community activism and research, who has provided policy advice at various levels, described 'gossip and backstabbing' amongst some Muslim activists who provided advice (10). In this climate, some interviewees talked of personal experience of name-calling. This practitioner-researcher described personal attacks:

So there are people on the right that would put me in the Muslim faction anyway and see me as some type of internal Muslim spy. And you get this, Google it and you find people who present what I say as some type of secret Muslim agenda, and you get people on the left who are critical because I've shared platforms with people on the right. I've shared platforms with FOSIS as well, and they'll say 'look he's sharing a platform with FOSIS and FOSIS is an Islamist organisation', and I've shared platforms with Douglas Murray. So you get people who shoot you down from different levels [...] it is horrifically difficult. (19)

They mention the Federation of Student Islamic Societies (FOSIS), an organisation which has been critical of Prevent and has been accused of failing to address extremism in universities (e.g. Gilligan 2013b), alongside Douglas Murray of the Henry Jackson Society. Similar stories were told by a researcher on right wing radicalisation, who had been painted as both an 'apologist' for the far right and a 'disgusting, sloppy liberal' (16). Finally, a specific example was given from an academic who had been criticised by others in the field for their views on radicalisation:

As I suspected, academics kind of united against me, vice chancellors rang up my vice chancellor at [*university*] suggesting I be sacked, I be prevented from teaching and doing further research, in the interests of free speech one of them said [...] My senior colleagues supported me but my immediate colleagues wouldn't work with me any longer, so that's the first thing [...] And then in conferences, cold-shouldered [...] They call me widely discredited

[...] It's sort of self-fulfilling in a way, what [*they*] didn't say was widely discredited among academics who don't like [*my*] views. (17)

These reports from those working on the topic highlight the conflict, controversy and competition in the topic area and suggest that debates amongst experts can take a heated and personal form.

One example of how these dynamics manifest themselves is through reference to an experts' funding as a way to question expert credibility. A think tank researcher who claimed to take a 'middle' line on core controversies said that the availability of Prevent funding made this a particularly important dynamic:

The Quilliam Foundation was always seen as too close to the government and then people would undermine what Maajid Nawaz was saying, especially the Islamist guys, people that are considered quite radical in this area to the left, like the guy that runs The Cordoba Foundation, Anas Altikriti and Bob Lambert at Exeter, who would say you're just apologists for the Government, you're just right wingers, you're taking Government money aren't you. To which the Quilliam Foundation responded 'you at the University of Exeter are taking the Cordoba Foundation's money'. A lot of it came down to where you're money's coming from. (16)

An example of this is seen in a televised exchange between academic Jonathan Githens-Mazer and Maajid Nawaz of Quilliam. In the discussion, Githens-Mazer accuses Quilliam of following the 'political wind' in order to create business for themselves, while Nawaz mentions that Githens-Mazer's research centre is funded by organisations with 'serious Islamism problems' (Sky News 2010). Concerns over Quilliam's funding credibility have been acknowledged in Parliament as well (Hansard 2011: Column 4WH), where MPs noted that 'Quilliam being funded largely by two Departments—clearly raises issues about bipartisanship and credibility' and that non-Government funding 'will add to its sense of independence, credibility and power within the Muslim community'. Dal Babu, ex-chief superintendent in the Metropolitan Police (BBC 2015b, 03:05) similarly raised concerns as to Quilliam's government funding and the perception amongst many Muslims that 'they don't seem to be very very challenging [*of Government policy*]'. Other research also suggests that funding from private interests or governments can reduce credibility amongst scientists (Berdahl et al. 2016: 392-4). On radicalisation, the sensitive nature of the

topic has brought these issues to the fore both within the expert community and amongst broader audiences.

A second method of undermining credibility which is used in debates on this topic is to associate experts with 'extremists'. In this sense, the dominant policy narrative concerning the role of extremism in terrorism has filtered down to conceptualisations of credible expertise amongst experts themselves. A researcher discussed attempts at 'demoting others, so pulling away the other's credentials' in these terms:

And often it's that that's been the more powerful dynamic in this particular context, so people saying of others you can't listen to so and so because they are an extremist. So people criticising the STREET project saying, Policy Exchange criticising the Government working with STREET, saying 'what are you doing funding a Salafist organisation', and eventually that point was made so much that it stuck and Government did withdraw funding from projects like that. Or at least it said it did. [...] And the criticism comes from many directions, it's not just from one direction, it's not just say people from the left being criticised by people on the right, there was a lot of that going on, and vice versa [...] So you get delegitimised from all different directions in a way. (11)

This highlights that many of these debates are fed by wider political conflicts in the field; in this case, on the merits of using non-violent extremists to counter violent extremists (Barclay 2011: 13-15). Similarly, a leaked letter from the Quilliam Foundation to the Office for Security and Counter-Terrorism in the Home Office in 2010 named a number of 'Islamist influenced' groups and counselled that the Government should not engage with them (Quilliam Foundation 2010). A blog post from right wing think tank Civitas said that the role of foreign policy in radicalisation is an argument voiced by 'Muslim quasi-apologists for bin Laden' (Conway 2007); in 2015, CAGE received similar treatment following their claim that the British state was partly responsible for foreign fighter 'Jihadi John's' radicalisation (McMicking 2015). Such tactics have even reached Parliament: in a parliamentary debate (Hansard 2011: Column 20WH), one MP stated that 'Although Quilliam is not universally popular, it is clear that many of its critics are apologists for radical Islamism.' In the climate of counter-radicalisation, an association with extremism can be used to discredit actors in the policy process including experts. Both of these points

help to explain the importance of objectivity to expert credibility discussed in Section 6.6 and show how accusations of bias function to challenge credibility in this particular topic area.

At the same time, clearly neither all experts engage in such tactics nor do they fully characterise the field. One participant pointed to specific academic experts who do not get involved in the 'in-fighting' (16). Two interviewees, both of whom were engaged in applied analysis, questioned the characterisation of the field as especially combative. One described a harmonious vision, without any 'great schisms' or 'fundamental issues', but instead involving different researchers coming together to build a coherent understanding of radicalisation (9). Clearly there is collaboration amongst particular experts, perhaps more visible in research teams and contract research for example. The reflections described here however are weighted towards a commonality of heated debates and again suggest the deep divisions characterising this topic area. Another interviewee questioned the extent to which such dynamics are specific to radicalisation or more commonly underpin expert debates, particularly on matters of public interest, arguing that policy development in general 'is charged by the political orientations and positions and allegiances' (24). This draws an important parallel to other highly politicised policy areas, like climate change or illicit drugs, marked by high levels of public interest, a complex problem, an uncertain evidence base and entrenched conflict (e.g. Bauer, Pregernig and Reinecke 2016; Monaghan 2011). It also suggests that there are divisions over whether the field is divided, indicating the complexity of analysing expertise on this topic. In general however, interviewees characterised radicalisation as a topic area fraught with conflict and controversy, and politicised in the sense that wider political debates on the topic closely intertwine with the expert community. The next two sections examine the specifics of this contestation in practice through an analysis of radicalisation expertise in public debates.

9.2 Four expert perspectives on radicalisation

This section illustrates the themes of politics and contestation through an examination of substantive debates amongst radicalisation experts. Other analyses (e.g. Hegemann and Kahl 2016: 16-21) have indicated experts' divergent standpoints; the aim here is to delineate these through introducing four key 'perspectives' on radicalisation theory. The latter term encompasses here the meaning of the concept and its causes and nature.

The identification of publically-articulated perspectives complements attempts to map the academic literature on radicalisation, for example Monaghan and Molner's (2016: 3-5) description of three theoretical frameworks of cognitive, social networks and narratives. The examination of expert interventions in public debate also builds on Chapter 4.3, which used published research to highlight the main areas of debate in radicalisation theory, including the meaning of radicalisation, the role of ideology, and the appropriate level of analysis.

Similarities can be drawn with Miller and Mills' (2009: 422-3) analysis of three expert perspectives on the 'war on terror', which they termed 'orthodox', 'alternative' and 'critical' based on the extent of their support for the state narrative. Before that, Herman and O'Sullivan (1990) classified terrorism experts according to the three categories of 'establishment right wing', 'establishment moderate', and 'dissident'. The present typology has four dimensions with the aim of highlighting the spectral nature of the debate. To one end, the presence of an anti-extremist strain has been particularly visible in radicalisation debates alongside more 'orthodox' or 'establishment' views. On the other, those calling for a more sympathetic and nuanced debate on extremism can be differentiated from those much more likely to reject the concept of radicalisation and state strategies to 'counter' it. Even within this conceptualisation, the four perspectives remain ideal types that are of course more complex in practice.

The four perspectives constitute competing epistemic communities, as discussed in Section 5.1.2. The perspectives can be characterised as epistemic communities because they have a shared understanding of the issue and policy perspective, proposed on the basis of claims to expertise. The lack of a consensual body of knowledge on radicalisation has created a situation in which there can be no unifying epistemic community. While many studies of epistemic communities detail a single body of experts, characterised by an overall shared perspective and policy recommendations (e.g. Gough and Shackley 2001; Sandal 2011), this is not the case in radicalisation. The analysis presented here follows Youde's (2005) notion of 'counter-epistemic communities'; the idea that there can be more than one set of experts, proposing differing interpretations of a given issue. The term 'perspective' is used however to indicate the changeable nature of their membership, and thus emphasise the views proposed over the actors that propose them.

9.2.1 *Introducing the four perspectives*

The four perspectives were identified and refined through document analysis and interviews (see Sections 5.2.1 and 5.3 for details of methods). Interviewees tended to agree that the field contained identifiable conflicting standpoints. They referred for example to ‘clusters of people’, ‘alliances’, and ‘trends of thought’ regarding the process of radicalisation. These terms speak to the presence of relatively loose and informal groups of experts gathering around sets of ideas on radicalisation. One interviewee gave a particularly illuminating description of splits in the field:

32 - It's kind of like belonging to a gang; there are a number of signals that can only be interpreted by other academics. Number one, how do you define radicalisation, that marks you as being in one camp or another and suggests to me whether I'm going to have fun talking to them or not.

K – So what are the other signals then?

32 - Well let's see, what kind of models of radicalisation are they using, probably what kind of language are they using, and this is my own prejudice, what discipline they come from.

The words ‘gang’ and ‘camp’ are particularly illustrative of differing perspectives in the field. Alongside conflicting theories of radicalisation, the interviewee mentions the importance of disciplinary traditions, and the focus on language reinforces the presence of inherently conflicting standpoints. One interviewee (28) argued that the public nature of the topic gave politics an important role in how ideas are formed and debated, and that, as a result, different coalitions form into which academics commonly ‘get pulled’.

At the same time, the suggestion of definable categories of ideas was not accepted by all interviewees. When the idea was proposed and interviewees were asked if they exist in the field, two interviewees said:

I'm not so sure there are [...] I'm not sure I know enough of all the goings on. (9)

Not particularly I don't think, I don't think that's really an issue. (30)

The first is expressed as a result of lack of knowledge. The second was from a local authority Prevent practitioner, and although they didn't recognise the presence of groups of experts gathering around particular

perspectives, they did express awareness of political ‘alignments’ and ‘connections’ of experts. It was more typical however for interviewees to agree that particular perspectives could be identified.

Interviewees also expressed opinions on the form that the perspectives take. One interviewee sought to muddy the boundaries between perspectives, defining them as ‘not neat camps, it’s more of a spectrum’ (11). Others noted that relations between perspectives are changeable. For example, one was asked whether they recognised the four perspectives:

I think I do but I would say that it’s a Venn diagram isn’t it. It’s not four independent squares; we’re not in a boxing ring as it were. I think we are in some cases quite aligned, in some cases very isolated from each other. And it’s really dependent on the topic. (27)

This was echoed by another think tank employee, who explained that on different issues they are on the right, left or in the centre of the debate (16). Another interviewee argued that perspectives and arguments were shaped mainly by professional backgrounds and the resultant priorities and modes of understanding (15). In general however, the four perspectives proposed were supported by interviewees, with one academic stating for example that:

I recognise, well, I can see the groupings that you’re talking about and I think that they make a good deal of sense. (26)

Taking the above caveats into account, Table 9.1 presents a summary of the four perspectives. The table broadly applies Haas’s (1992: 3) original definition of epistemic communities. The first column gives a shorthand name to the perspective; the second details their shared values and causal beliefs on radicalisation; the third outlines their ‘common policy enterprise’; and the fourth speaks to their shared notions of validity, specifically in relation to experts and evidence. The following sections provide a characterisation of each perspective based on interview data and documentary evidence.

Table 9.1: Perspectives of radicalisation experts in the UK

Perspective	Beliefs on the causes of radicalisation	Favoured policy response	Approach to evidence and expertise
Anti-extremism	This perspective holds that the main cause of contemporary terrorism is a radical religious ideology. The issue of radicalisation then encompasses not just violence but the ideas that motivate it.	<p>Radical ideology is regarded as a security problem, and since the relationship between ideas and violence is unpredictable, a harsher approach to extremism is preferable;</p> <p>In particular, it is argued that Government should not engage with extremists, British values and national identity should be defended against multiculturalism, and universities and the Internet are particularly problematic sites of potential radicalisation.</p>	<p>This perspective draws in particular on profiles and personal histories of people involved in terrorism as well as experiential evidence from ex-extremists;</p> <p>It is frequently articulated in public debates, often by think tanks.</p>
Modelling	This perspective argues that there are a range of factors associated with violent radicalisation and recruitment to violent movements, and the primacy given to ideology by the anti-extremism perspective is	<p>Ideology is less likely to be recommended as the sole orientating focus of counter-radicalisation;</p> <p>Instead, there is likely to be nuance advocated in terms of tailored responses for different types of</p>	<p>The actors involved are commonly comprised of academics who are often 'orthodox' terrorism experts;</p> <p>In particular, this includes political scientists, psychologists and public health</p>

	<p>rejected;</p> <p>There is some focus within this perspective on radicalising settings, including prisons and the Internet, as well as on a range of individual, group and environmental factors.</p>	<p>perpetrators, and interventions targeted at particular aspects of radicalisation pathways e.g. gender, the Internet;</p> <p>Rather than a high level focus on ideology, the concern is more practical, focusing on for example detection, dissuasion and stopping violent skills being developed.</p>	<p>researchers with interests in theory development and modelling radicalisation processes;</p> <p>They are relatively reticent about taking part in public debates, although this varies.</p>
Community-orientated	<p>This perspective focuses on violence, not the ideas that promote it, or Islamic culture more generally (although some argue that extremism is a problem in and of itself);</p> <p>Similar to the Modelling perspective, radicalisation is caused by a range of issues not just ideology. Alienation and identity crisis are particular concerns.</p>	<p>It advocates a local and nuanced understanding of extremism and of communities where extremism may develop: stereotyping, demonisation and generalisation should be avoided;</p> <p>It believes that the focus should not be only on Islamic radicalisation: the far right are a particular concern.</p>	<p>This perspective is often informed by empirical research in communities or with practitioners, in particular conducted in the disciplines of sociology, anthropology and social policy;</p> <p>Its researchers often have an interest in race, ethnicity, diversity and faith issues;</p> <p>It places emphasis on methodological quality and objectivity as well as policy</p>

			relevance.
Critical	<p>The main differentiating argument of this perspective is that politics and policy, particularly foreign policy and the 'war on terror', is the central cause of radicalisation;</p> <p>It is argued that there is no clear pathway between radicalisation and terrorism, certainly no linear pathway, and in particular there is no evidence that extremist ideas have a causal relationship with terrorism;</p> <p>Radicalisation itself is believed to be a value judgement rather than an objective and identifiable concept.</p>	<p>This perspective is heavily critical of Prevent and tends towards rejection of it;</p> <p>A core part of the perspective is a defence of groups (particularly Muslims) that are perceived as being attacked by the anti-extremism perspective;</p> <p>It holds that non-violent extremists can help to combat radicalisation and should be engaged with (a pragmatic view of counter-radicalisation work).</p>	<p>Integral to this perspective is a belief that knowledge of radicalisation should be underpinned by sound empirical research, informed by political beliefs;</p> <p>Community and practitioner expertise is valued;</p> <p>There is a tendency to seek independence from policy concerns and take a critical stance in policy engagement.</p>

9.2.2 *The Anti-extremism perspective*

This perspective was the one most commonly identified by interviewees. For example, one interviewee who has articulated the Anti-extremism perspective but was critical of views coming from all sides of the debate, said:

So there is truth in the view that Policy Exchange, and the Centre for Social Cohesion, the Henry Jackson Society, have a shared right of centre point of view, definitely. Does that influence their political perspective, of course it does. Has that influenced their point of view on certain ideological groups, yes because they've got a certain ideological awareness based on their principles and parameters.

(19)

As well as think tanks, this perspective is often articulated by those with personal experience of radicalisation, and Quilliam were also fairly commonly mentioned as part of this group. As well as these think tanks, Professor Anthony Glees and the ICSR were included by some. This grouping has been identified publically by experts in the field, for example an article by two researchers (Githens-Mazer and Lambert 2009) mentions Quilliam, Policy Exchange and the Centre for Social Cohesion as sharing similar views on the relationship between extremism and radicalisation.

The core element of this perspective is a preoccupation with ideology as the central cause of radicalisation. Other causes are downplayed and the role of Government in allowing extremists to operate in the UK and inspire terrorist actions is highlighted. This perspective tends to see 'non-violent extremists' as part of the radicalisation problem and a group of people that are potentially violent. For example, one researcher who has worked on this topic since the 2005 London bombings, operating at the interface of community work and Government policy, explained this position in more detail:

It's not nice and neat, but I think traditionally, generally speaking, they've been arguing for a tougher position against extremist ideas, a clearer line on what national identity is, what British values are, and where that ends and where extremism begins. A more blurred differentiation between extremism and violent extremism, so the problem for them is not just violence, it's the values that underlay that violence, even if people on the other end of the spectrum have

argued that you can't necessarily connect those two things, a broad conservative perhaps extreme narrative doesn't necessarily lead to violence, whereas I think for people on the right that line is blurred and complicated and you're not sure when it will happen. (11)

Although the nuances in this argument are clearly referenced here, the broad scope of analysis can be seen. Regarding the role of ideology for example, Quilliam, in a particularly clear exposition, discuss the 'intrinsic relationship' between extremism and terrorism (2013b: 1). London-based Centri has also published work in this vein, for example Haras Rafiq (2011), while their Director, said that Islamism is the 'root of the problem' of terrorism and its continuation partly due to state policy of multiculturalism, which has resulted in the segregation of Muslim communities.

Many reports have been published that investigate different facets of this relationship. One paper by the Henry Jackson Society gave details of individual cases and statistics regarding convictions and attacks of Islamist terrorism with links to Britain (Simcox et al. 2011). The Centre for Social Cohesion published a report on Hizb ut-Tahrir's beliefs, links to violence, and activities in the UK (Ahmed and Stuart 2009). A Policy Exchange report (MacEoin 2007) alleged that a number of mosques in the UK were providing 'extremist literature', although the results were later disputed (Rajan 2008). Campus radicalisation has been a particular focus of analysis, with reports produced by The Social Affairs Unit (Glees and Pope 2005) and The Centre for Social Cohesion (2010), and indeed Glees (2015) has maintained a long-term interest in writing about campus extremism. Many of these papers involve statistical or demographic analysis of those convicted of terrorist offences or of their convictions, or building profiles of extremist activity in the UK.

Within this broad grouping however, nuances were identified in terms of the spectrum of views held within. One interviewee said:

And on the other side you've got the sort of right coalition, Professor Anthony Glees at the radical end of that, but the Centre for Social Cohesion, Douglas Murray, Kings College London. (16)

At the same time, there are intra-perspective tensions. Douglas Murray (2009) for example has criticised Quilliam for supporting wide intelligence gathering as part of a counter-radicalisation strategy. There are also crossovers between this and other perspectives: Quilliam employees for

example signed a joint letter with experts from a Community-orientated perspective in 2009 arguing that Israeli actions in the Gaza war of 2008-09 were increasing Muslim radicalisation in the UK (Abbas et al. 2009). In general however, the influence of this perspective on Government was highlighted by some interviewees. An ex-Government advisor reported that:

on the one hand you had people like Rachel Briggs and Jamie Bartlett, on the other, you had Douglas Murray and people like that, and often the very sensible analysis and contributions of people like Rachel Briggs were drowned by the likes of Douglas Murray - and this was unfortunate because I think that what Rachel, Jamie and some others had to say was of huge value, but for whatever reasons Government on many occasions decided to veer towards the Douglas Murray camp. Bob Lambert, for example, had great understanding of Muslim communities and some very good ideas and advice on how to work with Muslim communities, but in all the noise produced by the Centre for Social Cohesion, Policy Exchange and others of that ilk, he just got drowned out. (18)

Other sources, for example Arun Kundnani's testimony to the 2009 Select Committee inquiry on Prevent (Communities and Local Government Committee 2010: Q285-286), have similarly emphasised the relative influence of this perspective on Government policy. Indeed the Anti-extremism perspective coheres with the UK Government's theory of radicalisation as discussed in Section 3.2. In general then this influential perspective is characterised by a preoccupation with the role of ideology in radicalisation, extending the focus of counter-radicalisation efforts from violence to the ideas behind it.

9.2.3 The Modelling perspective

The second perspective in Table 9.1 was not explicitly identified by interviewees; however, its relevance was recognised when presented in a number of interviews. This perspective encompasses mainly academics that have carried out research projects on radicalisation processes as a way of understanding non-state terrorism. One interviewee stated for example that:

My particular interest is in radicalisation itself rather than counter-radicalisation or de-radicalisation or even anti-radicalisation, albeit on the grounds that unless you understand better what

radicalisation is or might be then you can't really come up with anything to impact on it in those ways. (9)

This participant was clearly comfortable identifying their work by the terminology of radicalisation, and the quote indicates a preoccupation with examining the issue with a view to informing policy responses.

Various examples of research in this vein can be cited. RAND have collaborated in an EU-funded project entitled Scientific Approach to Finding Indicators of and REsponses to Radicalisation that sought to develop a non-linear model of radicalisation, while retaining the idea that violent radicalisation has its 'roots in thought and discourse' (Safire 2013). A report for the Home Office (Bouhana and Wikstrom 2011) analysed a range of potential factors organised around the idea of 'radicalising settings' that may lead to the use of terrorist tactics, while epidemiological research at Queen Mary University of London seeks to develop markers of 'vulnerability' to radicalisation (Bhui, Warfa and Jones 2014). The ICSR has a programme of work on foreign fighters, working to identify for example the 'push and pull factors' that encourage female participation in Islamic State (ISIS) (Saltman and Smith 2015). Researchers at RUSI constructed a database of 'lone-actor terrorists', profiling them in accordance with particular variables, to examine their nature including process of radicalisation (Ellis et al. 2016). Clearly there are a range of methodological approaches contained within this group, with a commonality however of seeking theoretical development and in particular developing multifactorial models of radicalisation.

In contrast to the Anti-extremism perspective, elements within this grouping are much less insistent on the primacy of ideology, instead considering it as one of many potential radicalising factors. As described by one interviewee:

In a way it's sort of like the boring middle way, that's my personal position, in the sense of saying ideology is one of a number of factors that play into the radicalisation process. If you ignore ideas and beliefs then you do not really have a convincing explanation as to why someone ended up embracing it, they're using it at least as a justification so it has to come in somewhere and it's clear that in certain cases it's more important than in others [...] so I think rather than saying ideology is important or ideology is unimportant, my

argument would be we need to find out how ideology is important, where and when and for whom. (25)

Others were much more forceful in emphasising the importance of retaining a narrow focus on criminal acts:

What on earth is non-violent radicalisation?! What is that?! [...] I guess because I'm a criminologist I care about crime, and being an extremist is not a crime. Being radicalised is not a crime, although some of the things that people do on the way to being radicalised have been criminalised. (32)

Some within this perspective have waded into the public debate on this topic: Andrew Silke at the University of East London for example has explicitly criticised the Government focus on ideology (Weaver 2015). Clearly then there are occasions where this perspective takes on a critique of official radicalisation theory. Organisations like RUSI of course cannot be seen as a coherent mass: on this topic, they have hosted articles by Marie Breen Smyth (2009) and Jonathan Githens-Mazer (e.g. 2013), researchers tending towards the Critical perspective, alongside conducting research that coheres more with a Modelling perspective. Some work at the King's College-based research centre the ICSR will also fall under this category. Their categorisation is particularly difficult however: interviewees also identified their work in the Anti-extremism and Community-orientated perspectives. This illustrates the fuzzy boundaries inherent in the typology, and more specifically the usefulness of orientating the analysis by instances of the articulation of particular viewpoints rather than particular actors. With these caveats however, the central task of this perspective remains to support the development of effective counter-radicalisation policy within the parameters of Government priorities. Although this may seem a likely task of any radicalisation expert, its significance becomes clear in relation to the next two perspectives.

9.2.4 The Community-orientated perspective

A third commonly identified grouping is more explicitly critical of public and policy discussions on radicalisation. It sits between the Anti-extremism and the Critical perspectives, and often regards itself as avoiding either end of the debate and instead seeking a negotiated, compromised position in the middle. In contrast to the Modellers, this perspective views radicalisation as primarily a practical rather than a theoretical problem, and in contrast to the

Anti-extremists it is less likely to seek patterns in statistics and profiles of extremists and their activities, instead engaging in community-level analysis. The perspective was mentioned explicitly by some interviewees, for example:

And on the left you have people like, I suppose Demos as an organisation has been somewhere in the middle and then people like Bob Lambert and the Muslim Contact Unit have been a little bit more on the left. (11)

Highlighting the changeability of the field, this interviewee also mentioned the inclusion of academic contributors but the tendency for their participation to be short term. Others named examples of researchers including Stuart Croft, Jonathan Githens-Mazer, Bob Lambert, Rachel Briggs, Basia Spalek and those at King's College London.

Interviewees who articulated views of this ilk were motivated by an ethical imperative to avoid stigmatising and demonising whole communities in the process of dealing with violence. Discussing the role of Muslim community actors in radicalisation expertise, one interviewee said for example:

But the difference between people like me and say the Quilliam Foundation would be the Quilliam Foundation [...] much supported the shift from counter-terrorism and political violence to counter-radicalisation, i.e. there were certain sorts of political ideas within the world of Islam that impacted upon Muslim European populations and we have to be very very upfront and don't worry about the fall out, in fact we have to push out certain discourses aggressively [...] Somebody like myself would say a very aggressive approach, a stereotyping approach in fact exacerbates the dynamics that one is trying to ameliorate and that it was conflating too many issues together and lumping a lot of people in as problematic who were in my view very distant from the problem. (10)

This interviewee draws their position in contrast to the Anti-extremism perspective, specifically advocating a narrow focus on violence and avoiding the extension of concern to broader social groups and Islamic cultures. A second theme discussed by interviewees was the importance of a nuanced and localised understanding of Islamism and Muslim communities more broadly, with political Islam regarded as a potentially

positive form of civic participation. A depth of understanding was seen as necessary in terms of deciding who to work with against violence and to avoid alienating both communities and practitioners. Some publications for example that are reflective of this perspective have sought to bring context and nuance to the narratives that underpin violence and political Islam more generally (The Change Institute 2008; Choudhury 2007), and indeed highlight the role of political mobilisation in addressing radicalisation (Briggs and Birdwell 2009). One interviewee (8), referring to the 'label Salafist', said that 'making it more complex and difficult to generalise is important'.

Another described the split in the field on this issue:

And those who would say that what we're interested in is behaviours and not beliefs and so you could be a Salafist and not be a security risk. There are those who'd say Salafism is a set of beliefs and a worldview that makes you more likely to go down that path so actually we shouldn't engage with those views at all, whereas I would say actually it could be a peaceful path, it just then gets perverted by a very very tiny minority of people as many different paths do. So I think that's kind of a schism if you like that I've felt first hand. (20)

In general, credible data for the Community-orientated perspective is derived from local fieldwork entailing direct contact with communities and focusing on lived experiences; an understanding of academic theories is valued for its insights into the reality of radicalisation rather than developing abstract models. As well as highlighting the importance of a differentiated understanding of ideology and related concepts like 'vulnerability' and 'radicalisers', this perspective looks inwards at policy and society, or the 'deeper issues' (6). One interviewee, describing what was perceived as a broadly left-leaning political alliance, said:

And then I think a much more sympathetic treatment of multiculturalism, connections being made between foreign policy, a critique of British policy, a critique of historical policy of the UK, places like Northern Ireland and other areas. (11)

The 'War on Terror' and Islamophobia were mentioned by interviewees as particular examples of phenomena that had the potential to encourage violence.

As with the Anti-extremist perspective, there are clearly nuances within this grouping and the aim here is only to explain the broad contours of agreement. Three interviewees in particular emphasised their attempts to be critical of all sides in the debate, reaching a negotiated view, for example regarding extremism as a problem for society but not for counter-terrorism. In addition, experts within this perspective are often lauded by others from different perspectives: researcher Yahya Birt for example is spoken approvingly of by Quilliam (Quilliam Foundation 2008: 8). In general however this perspective is concerned with holding a detailed and sensitive understanding of the 'on the ground' experiences of those at the receiving end of counter-radicalisation policy.

9.2.5 The Critical perspective

The fourth perspective evident in the radicalisation expert community is the Critical perspective. One interviewee described this perspective thus:

I think you certainly have people who are very Islamist in orientation, who are Islamist or who describe themselves as Critical Terrorism Studies or who come from a very anti-imperialist, Marxist background and they are one corner of the debate. (25)

The Critical perspective is particularly oppositional to the Anti-extremism one. Indeed this grouping is often portrayed, particularly by Anti-extremists, as supporting or condoning extremism. For example, in 2015 the Henry Jackson Society published a report on CAGE, which framed them as essentially extremists (Stuart 2015), and had previously 'declined to debate' with a CAGE representative in a television news interview (Channel 4 News 2014). It can be seen as an extension of the Community-orientated perspective:

People like the Institute for Race Relations have been much further out on the left. (11)

A distinction can be drawn between the Critical and the Community-orientated perspectives in that the emphasis is less on critiquing yet improving policy understandings of radicalisation and more on putting forward an overt rejection of the concept. This perspective was evident in some interviewees' comments regarding the terminology of radicalisation. A university researcher said:

Well I mean the terminology offends me enormously [...] I regard myself as a radical, I regard radicalisation as something that's very

valuable, people need to be radical, they need to look at what the roots of problems are, which is what the meaning of radicalisation is. (26)

This indicates a criticism of the normative underpinnings of the term 'radicalisation' and in particular its problematisation of non-violent extremism. It relates to wider arguments that criticise radicalisation theory for extending the reach of counter-terrorism to radical thought (e.g. Richards 2015). Sometimes such criticisms appeared when participants were asked whether they would describe themselves as radicalisation experts:

I'm very cautious and nervous about the phrase radicalisation. It's a label for particular political reasons rather than a very precisely defined academic category, so I'm quite nervous around answering directly yes to that kind of question. (28)

Even though they may use the term in their work then, some experts show resistance to it in theory and therefore a reluctance to explicitly identify themselves with the topic. This flexible use of core terminology indicates the complex nature of the term and reinforces the idea that there is a lack of basic consensus on this topic. More generally, the oppositional nature of this perspective was mentioned by interviewees. For example:

the expertise such as it is that I have tends to run very counter to Government policy both on radicalisation, the way they think it happens, and extremism in cases like the present Birmingham one. (31)

This was a reference to the 2014 controversy around the presence of extremism in schools in Birmingham and highlights the fundamental difference in the causal explanations between this perspective and the official theory of radicalisation.

The central argument of this perspective relates to policy. It emphasises the role that British foreign policy, especially in the Middle East, plays in radicalisation. For example:

A very powerful line that Osama bin Laden recorded, even before the July bombings I think, 'if you bomb our cities we'll bomb your cities'. That's a line that I think that Government failed to appreciate, how that resonated with many Muslims around the world, they see

these governments as basically racist, who don't give a fig about lives overseas. (12)

This is coupled with a more generally critical approach to UK counter-terrorism and counter-radicalisation policy, drawing particular attention to the idea of non-violent extremism and its implications for criminalising critical speech. Some publications in this vein are critical of the evidence underpinning dominant conceptions of radicalisation (Kundnani 2015), for example exploring the meaning of radicalisation to communities themselves (Githens-Mazer et al. 2010). Alongside this policy critique is a concern with the role of Islamophobia and other social, political and economic issues related to radicalisation. There was correspondent criticism of the tendency for radicalisation discussions to focus on individual psychology and move away from the 'root causes' of terrorism, and of Prevent for not responding adequately, or on an equal footing, to Islamophobia and threats of violence towards Muslim communities. This focus on the political elements of radicalisation is coupled with a denial of the centrality of ideology. One interviewee, discussing the variety in analytical approaches to understanding radicalisation, said:

But underlying those differences there's a shared idea that there's this thing called ideology, which we don't have, we've grown out of, but they have and that's what makes them violent. That basic analysis seems to me to have been incredibly influential in these debates, even when you wrap it up in social psychology and so forth, and even when you wrap it up in various other ways that bring in other kinds of disciplines, underneath it all there's that assumption about ideology. And yet there's no serious argument for me that you can reduce political violence just to some kind of ideological original sin. (13)

This vein of argument clearly differentiates the Critical perspective from others in the field. An example of this criticism of the focus on ideology, and its impact in terms of extending counter-terrorism activities into wider Muslim communities, was seen in a joint letter organised by CAGE and sent to the Independent in 2015 (Independent Voices 2015). A crossover in priorities with the Community-orientated perspective was seen in the signatories to this letter. There is more generally a good deal of crossover between the Critical and the Community-orientated perspectives, with researchers like Jonathan Githens-Mazer and Robert Lambert who can be

regarded as sitting on the border between the two and highlighting the fuzzy boundaries between perspectives. In particular, the Critical perspective is similar to the Community-orientated in its engagement with communities and practitioners, and use of local empirical research to examine how radicalisation works in practice. It differs in its more explicit political perspective and normative beliefs, being aligned with critical terrorism studies more broadly and its challenge to existing knowledge on terrorism and commitment to human rights and social justice (Jackson 2007b). In general then, this perspective is critical of the concept of radicalisation as it is articulated by Government, and in particular its focus on the individual and its problematisation of political Islam and Muslim activism.

9.3 Demonstrating the diverse and contested nature of radicalisation expertise

These four perspectives characterise the radicalisation expert community. The first focuses on the role of non-violent extremism and was argued to have been particularly influential in Government thinking. The second also has a policy focus, seeking to inform counter-radicalisation activities through a social scientific approach to understanding radicalisation. The third is orientated by a particular sensitivity towards communities impacted by counter-radicalisation activities, based on a nuanced approach to understanding extremism. Finally, the Critical approach emphasises the role of Government policy in radicalisation and is more likely to involve a rejection of the concept and its associated policy responses. The radicalisation expert community is characterised then by inherent substantive contestation. This shapes the conduct of expert debate, with multiple, diverse and competing knowledge claims and engendering credibility contests (Gieryn 1999) amongst experts. This final section returns to the vignettes presented in Chapter 1. It interprets those three specific debates through an understanding of the diverse and contested nature of radicalisation expertise.

9.3.1 The Woolwich attack

The expert response to the Woolwich incident was marked by diverse claims to knowledge and contested explanations. First, experts were able to draw on a variety of backgrounds to evidence their case. There were those who had conducted research and policy work directly on radicalisation. Their arguments were characterised by the application of

concepts, theories and lessons from their own, often empirical, research on radicalisation. Blog posts written by the academic editor of RadicalisationResearch.org for example reference his own work on the role of beliefs in radicalisation and use this to criticise what he calls 'overly simple explanations' (Francis 2013a; also 2013b). Behind comments by the International Centre for the Study of Radicalisation was an array of policy-primed research, as highlighted by a post on the research centre's website (ICSR 2013). In addition, there were experts who displayed knowledge on a particular sub-topic. A researcher from the think tank the Institute for Strategic Dialogue for example discussed the role of online radicalisation, employing knowledge from his organisation's previous work in the area (Frenett, in BBC 2013b). This knowledge is not squarely about processes of radicalisation but a particular mechanism that was regarded as highly relevant to this case. Further, an expert not normally associated with radicalisation was able to contribute knowledge on religious conversion given the status of the two attackers as converts to Islam (Moosavi 2013). As such, although most of the high profile organisations in the debate, for example Quilliam and the Henry Jackson Society, take part frequently in radicalisation-related discussions, clearly not all experts consulted were 'radicalisation experts' per se: there was space for input from those outside of the community who were able to make their specialist expertise relevant to the particulars of this topic.

Experiential expertise was also represented in a number of guises. This included those with direct relevant experience, particularly ex-extremists like Quilliam (2013a), whose contributions were characterised by statements on extremist ideology and its presence and operation in Muslim communities. A probation officer was able to comment on the killers' gang backgrounds, and how this linkage between radicalisation and gangs was an increasing phenomenon, describing the 'risk' to gang members since 'Islamist groups will exploit both the gang members' psychological and economic vulnerability' (Fletcher, in Doward 2013). Voices from Muslim communities were also represented, for example by those who have worked as community activists around the issues of radicalisation (Hussain, in BBC 2013b). A particularly significant interjection was made by CAGE, who released details of their previous contact with one of the murderers, and his claims of being harassed by MI5, linking this to his radicalisation (e.g. Dodd and Howden 2013). Knowledge from sources other than research was clearly present in the Woolwich debate.

Emerging from this heterogeneity of expertise are the four perspectives. The Anti-extremism perspective was particularly prolific. Typically arguing that terrorism is caused by religious ideology, this perspective was represented in expert statements emphasising the ideas articulated by the killers and their participation in Al-Muhajiroun. Think tanks including Quilliam (Hasan 2013), Centri (Doward 2013) and the Henry Jackson Society (Stuart, in BBC 2013a) were in agreement that the root of the attack was Islamist extremism, and the role of extremist clerics and groups in promoting ideology was a central concern to these organisations. While the relative influence of this perspective is indicated by Quilliam's invitation to directly address the Task Force set up by the Government in the wake of Woolwich (Quilliam 2013a), it was not the only perspective present in debates. From the Modelling perspective, experts highlighted different pathways to radicalisation, denying the all-encompassing role of extremist ideology (e.g. Pantucci, in BBC 2013b; Neumann, in Channel 4 News 2013b). In addition, applying the theoretical model of 'lone wolf' terrorism presented Woolwich as part of a wider pattern of attacks undirected by any terrorist group (Neumann, in Channel 4 News 2013b; News Limited 2013; Pantucci 2013). From a Community-orientated perspective, experts took a more sensitive look at contemporary British Muslim communities. This perspective typically seeks to highlight the nuances in how extremism manifests itself; in this case, for example, the role of online radicalisation was complexified and the difficulties in addressing it highlighted (Quinn 2013). It also promotes a localised understanding of extremism, in this case contributing evidence regarding the particular manifestation of extremism in South East London, where Woolwich is situated (Githens-Mazer 2013). A concern with addressing the demonisation of Muslim communities was articulated in terms of listening to Muslim communities, addressing Islamophobia and the dangers of far right retaliation (Patel, in BBC 2013b; Goodwin 2013). Finally, the Critical perspective, which commonly points to the role of Government policy in radicalisation, or indeed rejects the framing of attacks in terms of 'radicalisation' more generally, was rarely cited by experts in this debate, although it made two significant appearances in terms of the attackers' own defence (The Telegraph 2013a) and evidence from CAGE that the attackers had experienced 'harassment' from MI5 in previous years (Dodd and Howden 2013). While the perspectives were articulated to different extents, all four ways of understanding the issue were present in the debate.

9.3.2 *Foreign fighters*

The debate in this case has been dominated by one source of expertise: King's College's International Centre for the Study of Radicalisation and Political Violence (ICSR). In a context of scant empirical evidence, this research centre has ownership of the majority of the evidence base, having conducted empirical research on the topic through social media and interviews with fighters (ICSR 2014), and their research enables them to make authoritative statements on the numbers and motivations of foreign fighters. It has sought to communicate its evidence and arguments with media, policy makers and other experts and achieved wide coverage. In addition to academic research, ICSR are also apparently able to access 'intelligence sources' (Cuffe 2013), a potentially important source of information in a difficult to research topic. In this case then, the research centre has become the go-to source of expertise for public debate.

While ICSR has the monopoly on empirical evidence, other experts are able to draw on different sources of knowledge to contribute relevant expertise. There is input from academic and think tank researchers (e.g. Bartlett 2014; Francis 2014) who can relate previous research on radicalisation to the particulars of this case, including for example primary research with foreign fighters in past conflicts (Lakhani 2014). Others (Frenett, in BBC 2014a; Pantucci 2014; Glees, in Owen 2014) refer to a broad knowledge of the field, and particular sub-topics like social media and Islamism in the UK, to propose an analysis. Experiential expertise is present in the form of ex-extremists, security officers, journalists, and community activists, who are able to cite their own types of evidence. For example, an individual was called before the Home Affairs Select Committee on this issue due to his experiences living under a control order, and supported his statements by reference to interactions with Muslim communities (Home Affairs Committee 2014a: Q434, Q437). CAGE rely on similar evidence alongside their research with foreign fighters and evidence from historical analysis of convicted terrorists (Channel 4 News 2014; Qureshi 2014). Abdul-Rehman Malik of the Radical Middle Way, an organisation that takes a faith-based, community-cohesion approach to countering radicalisation, introduced his argument on BBC television by drawing on a key characteristic of community expertise: 'I've been engaged in this stuff since the early 1990s when it wasn't popular and when some of the panellists sitting in your studio, it wasn't even on their radar' (BBC

2014a, at 20:32). Area knowledge is offered by a Syrian journalist (Abdeh, in Longman 2012), and a security and intelligence practitioner reflects on the situation using his professional knowledge and ongoing access to 'security authorities around the world' (Barrett, in Chatham House 2014: 3). Like the researchers, some of these experts have particularly consistent positions on radicalisation, based on previous research and experience and long-term involvement with the topic that they are able to apply to this case: the work of Quilliam and the Henry Jackson Society for example generally focuses on the issue of ideological extremism. Despite the lack of empirical evidence available then, a range of knowledge claims are expressed on this topic.

This diversity underpins the appearance of the four perspectives. The debate is led by the Modellers through the ICSR. There is a crossover in their analysis with other perspectives through their concern with radicalisation as a process of adopting extreme views and the role of identity. This highlights the potential for different perspectives to be relatively aligned on particular issues. However, the particular nature of their perspective comes out in their compilation of a database of the social media activities of fighters; their abstract analysis of the numbers of foreign fighters; and their analysis of the factors that constitute a radicalisation process or the mechanics of how extreme views are adopted and how they relate to violence. A further example of a Modelling perspective is research that sought to reframe radicalisation as a public health issue, based on a survey that correlated support for terrorism with mental health problems. This survey approach drew out demographic characteristics and aimed to support policy efforts to identify and pre-empt radicalisation (Knapton 2014). CAGE's interjection in the debate hypothesising a role for MI5 in the radicalisation of Mohammed Emwazi (Saul 2015) highlighted the divide between the Modellers and the Critical perspective, with the Director of the ICSR explicitly posing the counter-argument that Emwazi was radicalised before MI5 approached him (PBS 2015). ICSR's position was echoed by Quilliam as part of their argument that ideology is the main cause of foreign fighter mobilisation (Nawaz 2015). An Anti-extremism perspective was articulated through concerns with Islamism in British Muslim communities (Glees, in Owen 2014) and assessments that ISIS recruits tend to be groomed online with extremist propaganda (Khan 2015), both of which place ideology at the heart of a radicalisation process. Compared to the Woolwich case however, there has been less input from the Anti-extremists.

While in Woolwich there was no direct empirical evidence available and this perspective dominated the debate, on foreign fighters those with more directly relevant evidence appear to be more dominant.

The Community-orientated perspective meanwhile overlaps with the others in its concerns with both extremism and foreign policy. However, their core contribution in this case was to nuance the motivations of foreign fighters. In particular, they highlight the contemporary dynamics of British Muslim communities and youth culture more generally that might lead to a desire to travel to Syria and Iraq. This includes issues of identity, alienation and sense of belonging, excitement and adventure that suggest a response focused on community development (Karmani, in BBC 2015c; Fox News 2015; Karmani, in T. McVeigh 2015). Finally, the Critical perspective on this issue has rejected the idea of grooming. Instead, their focus on issues of cultural alienation (e.g. Furedi 2015) and Western violence (e.g. Kundnani 2015) is illustrative of this stance's broader attribution of a role in radicalisation to the UK state's own actions. CAGE's statements on Emwazi were particularly illustrative of this stance (Saul 2015). In contrast to the Woolwich case then, clearly there is the potential for direct empirical research on the radicalisation of foreign fighters. However, this evidence is mainly held by one research centre who subsequently have led the debates. Other expertise is drawn from previous research on related topics as well as alternative sources of knowledge, and overall the debate displayed a diversity of knowledge claims and divergent perspectives.

9.3.3 The Extremism Risk Guidance 22+ (ERG 22+)

This case, regarding the UK's official indicators of radicalisation, provides an extended illustration of contested expert credibility and shows the Critical position in particular coming to the fore. The Critical perspective was represented by CAGE's report and the signatories of the Guardian letter. Highlighting the diverse specialisms in the community, most of the academic signatories do not research radicalisation itself, and instead contribute analyses of the dominant consensus on radicalisation or research topics including terrorism, race and ethnicity, religion and youth work. CAGE itself contributes to debates on radicalisation on the basis of its employees' personal experiences as 'survivors of the war on terror' (CAGE 2016); Moazzam Begg for example has been detained without charge, including in the US' military prison at Guantanamo Bay. It also draws on its case work as practitioners for those who seek advice when

they are affected by counter-terrorism activities. The Critical perspective in this debate constituted then a meeting of experiential and academic expertise, united by a particular understanding of the issues.

The Critical perspective positioned itself against the official understanding of radicalisation. First, it took the debate away from extremist ideology by focusing on the role of politics, in this case highlighting the omission of political factors from the ERG 22+. A concern with the impact of counter-radicalisation policy and a defence of Muslim communities is seen in the criticism that the ERG 22+ has been extended beyond its remit as originally designed and now has a wide, and detrimental, social impact. More generally, the perspective is critical of the very notion of radicalisation and any claims that it is an objectively identifiable phenomenon: in this case, the indicators of radicalisation are criticised as unproven.

On the other side of the debate were a mix of practitioner-researchers, think tanks and ex-extremists. The Modelling perspective was represented by the two National Offender Management Service researchers, who were psychologists seeking to theorise radicalisation processes, based on fieldwork, to inform policy and practice. In addition, experts from an Anti-extremism perspective sought to defend the official model, referring to the threat of Islamist extremism, and discredit the Critical perspective. The fundamentally different causal understandings of violence and favoured policy responses are shown in this case, with experts forming around particular positions based on their interpretation of the evidence.

In Chapter 1, it was noted that this case highlights the contested nature of both radicalisation theory and radicalisation expertise. The credibility markers relevant to radicalisation expertise were examined in Chapter 6, and lessons from the interviews can be used to understand how expertise is contested on this topic. In interviews, experts discussed the importance of research quality and scientific rigour. This credibility marker was used by both sides in the debate as they claimed to have the more reliable evidence base. For example, experts from the Critical perspective called for the research methods and findings behind the ERG 22+ to be transparent. As one academic stated, 'What is supposed to be a rigorous assessment based on genuine scholarship is actually a process of suspecting thousands of young Muslims without any reasonable basis'

(Kundnani, in Stahl 2016). From the Modellers came a defence of the ERG 22+ through an emphasis of the quality of the research underpinning it, evidenced by its related publications in an academic journal (Lloyd 2012; Lloyd and Dean 2015; Lloyd, in Ross 2016). One supporter went further and used this credibility marker to undermine the Criticals' expertise (Sutton 2016), arguing that their evidence was weak and error-prone. The value of the ERG 22+ was also defended through reference to the relative scarcity of data on this topic, being based on the 'only evidence base' involving data from convicted terrorists to model radicalisation (Lloyd, in Ross 2016). Finally, the use of objectivity as a credibility marker was also apparent in the criticism of the Critical perspective as ideologically biased and in particular 'far left' and 'Islamist' (LBC 2016; Murray 2016). This mirrors the association of critics of Prevent with extremism discussed in Section 9.1 and gives a further example of how abstract notions of credible expertise discussed in the thesis are put into practice in expert debates on radicalisation.

These case studies then demonstrate the diverse and contested nature of radicalisation expertise. Radicalisation expertise is distributed; the cases show the occurrence of multiple forms of expertise. Public commentary by experts on radicalisation is diverse: there are four main divergent expert positions that are articulated to different extents across contexts. In this context of overt contestation between theoretical positions, the debate is sometimes characterised by mistrust and even hostility. The discussions around the ERG 22+ show an extended example of how it is not only experts' ideas that are contested but their claims to knowledge on the topic. The cases have highlighted the nature of the four perspectives as 'ideal types'. On some issues they appear as a more graduated spectrum: for example, the issue of ideology featured heavily in the debate on foreign fighters, although was articulated in different ways and received different levels of emphasis across the debate. This is, however, changeable: the ERG 22+ case in particular highlighted that there can be clear dividing lines between perspectives. Of course these cases provide only an initial test of the theory and are an illustration of three particular contexts; they do, however, illustrate that the findings of the research can contribute to understandings of the nature of radicalisation expertise in practice.

9.4 Conclusion

This chapter has focused on the public expression of radicalisation expertise. First it examined the interaction of radicalisation expertise with its political context. Interviewees reported impressions of a lack of objectivity in the expert community, with expertise closely intertwined with the politics of the issue. This shapes the terms of expert debate, with non-epistemic factors like funding and ideological biases used to question expert credibility. While Chapters 6 and 7 discussed in detail the internal dynamics of contested credibility, this discussion suggested that radicalisation experts tend to view their topic area in terms of conflict and controversy more generally, with much questioning of expert credibility in practice. The chapter went on to examine the specifics of expert contestation on this topic, giving shape to the idea of radicalisation as a contested issue and proposing a new understanding of the underlying dynamics of this. It developed the idea of four competing epistemic communities, characterised by conflicting causal explanations, preferred policy responses and associated notions of credible evidence and expertise. Through three short case studies, the final section demonstrated the diversity and contestation that characterises radicalisation expertise. The next and final chapter presents a summary of the findings of the thesis.

Chapter 10: Conclusion

The thesis has demonstrated the diverse and contested nature of radicalisation expertise. This entailed an examination of first the specific markers that are used to delineate expertise on the topic; and second, the structure of the expert community and the expression of radicalisation expertise in public debate. These questions spoke to issues in the sociology of expertise regarding how expert status is claimed and conferred in particular conditions as well as the increasing recognition of experiential knowledge as constitutive of expertise, a trend that is especially apparent in areas of risk. The research examined the perspectives of the expert community itself and used methods that enabled reflection on experts' reported accounts as well as an examination of how expertise is expressed in practice. It built on previous work on terrorism expertise, addressing outstanding questions regarding the implications of both a problematic evidence base and a multiplicity of visible knowledge claims for the nature of expertise. Overall, the thesis offers an analysis of both how radicalisation expertise is justified despite its conditions of uncertain and contested knowledge, and the implications of experts' contested credibility for policy debates.

The main task of this chapter is to summarise the argument of the thesis and answer the research questions (Section 10.1). The implications of the research are then highlighted (10.2), followed by some final reflections (10.3).

10.1 Overview

Chapter 1 began with three illustrations of radicalisation expertise in practice that indicated a pluralist expert community. It explained the background to the research through a discussion of the uncertain evidence and contestation at the heart of the radicalisation expert community. Chapter 2 examined theories of expertise. It highlighted changing conceptualisations of expertise, with experts typically now identified on the basis of relevant experience. It examined literature that shows experts embroiled in public debate on controversial issues and explained how experts compete to establish their credibility in a variety of context-dependent ways. Finally, a review of previous research on terrorism experts highlighted the contribution of the thesis in terms of applying these theories of expertise to a sub-sector of the field. Chapters 3 and 4 highlighted the features of radicalisation expertise that make it a particularly

appropriate area in which to study these issues. A discussion of policy, practice and theory on the topic suggested a diversity of relevant knowledge, complex and contested ideas, sparse evidence and a concern with the reliability of the knowledge base. Chapter 5 explained the research design. The thesis' concern with pluralism led to reflections on how to define 'expert' for the purposes of fieldwork and the use of the epistemic communities framework. The chapter detailed how data was generated and analysed through elite interviews and document research.

Chapter 6 began the detailed investigation of what it means to be a 'radicalisation expert', and Chapter 7 focused on the contributions of experiential expertise. Through an analysis of the ways by which experts claim credibility in this area, it became clear that all credibility markers could be used to deny expertise as well as substantiate it. Further, the relevance of both academic and experiential knowledge were seen to be limited. The main conclusion of these chapters was that radicalisation expertise is multifaceted, and while in some cases the diversity of knowledges are regarded as complementary, there is a strong tendency to contestation. Building on this micro-level analysis of contested credibility, Chapters 8 and 9 examined the constitution of the radicalisation expert community. Chapter 8 analysed its pluralist nature, characterised by diverse claims to knowledge. Chapter 9 demonstrated the interaction of the expert community with the politics of radicalisation. The politicised nature of expert discussions on the topic was drawn out and the chapter proposed four epistemic communities, termed 'perspectives', specifying the deep conflicts that characterise the field. A return to the three case studies presented in Chapter 1 illustrated the diverse and contested nature of radicalisation expertise.

The first two research questions sought to investigate how the boundaries of expertise are expressed and maintained from the perspective of those within the expert community. The research found that particular features are generally held to indicate radicalisation expertise and increase the credibility of knowledge claims; those that did not display such traits were less likely to qualify as 'experts'. As indicated in the summary tables 7.1 and 7.2 (see Chapter 7.5), certain commonalities can be drawn amongst these authoritative markers of expertise. The general ability to demonstrate knowledge and understanding and contribute to the development of the topic area is strengthened by two more specific factors.

The first is a demonstration that knowledge is grounded in the practical manifestations of radicalisation; this could refer to for example research fieldwork or relevant experience. In addition, the quality of input is important: rigorous knowledge generation and objectivity were regarded as central attributes of expertise. On the other hand, those that displayed a lack of specialist knowledge, that relied on knowledge that was regarded as abstract from its practical manifestations, as irrelevant to the core issue of violence, or as biased and subjective, were less likely to be considered to have expertise. Policy relevance held a disputed position: while it was an essential expert trait for some, others doubted the reliability of advice on this topic and saw policy engagement as a threat to objectivity. The relevance of these features is grounded in the nature of the knowledge base: that is, the difficulties in knowledge generation and the politicised nature of the topic have given rise to features that enable experts to differentiate themselves both from 'charlatans' and from the wider, heated public debate. At the same time, the policy relevant nature of the area provides an imperative for experts to engage with the applied side of their knowledge; this is framed however by the deep divisions regarding expert involvement with the state in this area. Overall then these features of knowledge, skills and experience can be used to attribute or deny radicalisation expertise.

Academic metrics and experiential knowledge were however not accepted as indicative of expert status by all. This suggests that two distinct accounts of credible expertise in radicalisation can be identified. The first involves systematic and theoretical research-based knowledge. The second involves relevance to practice in the sense of being able to understand and explain the nature of radicalisation in particular cases and in a way that can be acted upon by the relevant state agencies. For some, this indicated the importance of amalgamating forms of knowledge, or collaborating with a diversity of experts. At the same time, it engendered conflict. For example, experiential expertise faces much resistance in this topic area but is valued by those who highlight the applied nature of the topic and are concerned about the lack of data available to researchers. On the other hand, academic or research-based knowledge is criticised for being abstract, or insufficiently informed by an understanding of context, and markers like qualifications have limited application. While there are some traits of knowledge that are agreed-upon then, the *types* of knowledge drawn on by experts are contested. As a result, all claims to

expertise can be questioned and there is no fixed notion or easy identification of a 'radicalisation expert'. The weak and contested evidence base has opened up a space for discussion of different, and conflicting, ideas about what kind of data is privileged, where this data can be found, and what should be done with it. These ideas in turn enable authoritative knowledge to be claimed and contested in a variety of ways.

These findings have implications for the nature of the radicalisation expert community. It can be characterised as a complex collection of relevant knowledge and experience with many potential qualifying factors. Its diversity is multifaceted, encompassing for example a variety of professions, disciplines and specialisms. As a topic that lacks a common definition, that is regarded as complex, and that has generated a host of hypothesised explanations as to its nature, it draws in a range of disciplines and sectors. As an idea that originated in, is supported financially by, and receives ongoing interest from within the policy process, and is considered by many to be at the core a 'practical' issue, the contributions from outside an academic community are regarded as important. Indeed the policy interest and funding has created pool of experts that harbours this diversity.

In turn, these features meant that individuals' knowledge on the subject was seen as partial and the idea of a 'radicalisation expert' as problematic. While collaborative knowledge generation is valued, there was an overriding theme of the politicised nature of the topic area as discussed in Chapter 9. Radicalisation is an issue on which interpretations of the evidence compete, with a lack of agreement on the meaning and application of research findings, resulting in factions of expertise that divide along key fault lines of debate. Informed by political positions and at times expressed in bitter debate, expert statements on radicalisation tend to correspond to one of four perspectives on the issue, highlighting the deep conflict that characterises the field. The minutiae of credibility contests (Gieryn 1999) amongst radicalisation experts have implications for how radicalisation is expressed and understood in practice and are demonstrated in diverse public commentary from experts. Underlying the predictable nature of expert commentary on this topic however are complex differences in the meaning ascribed to expertise that suggest deep divisions as to the nature of authoritative knowledge.

10.2 Implications for research and theory

10.2.1 The sociology of expertise

The thesis contributes to sociological understandings of expertise. It examines the struggles for authority in an emerging and developing expert community. As Stampnitzky (2013: 12-13; 2016: 23) has argued in her work on terrorism experts, this is in contrast to much sociological analysis of expertise that focuses on well-defined or established fields of knowledge. In this open and fluid context, a plethora of experts claim knowledge on the basis of a variety of knowledge types. The diversity of expertise inherent in the topic area also demonstrates ways by which expertise can be constructed and justified without an established evidence base. The literature discussed in Chapter 4.1 suggests that on topics that are uncertain and contested, there can be erosion in trust of scientific expertise, creating space for alternative experts to claim credibility. The thesis contributes an empirical analysis that draws out the nuances of how this works in practice on a topic on which empirical claims are particularly limited.

In this sense, the thesis provides a case study of theoretically changing conceptions of expertise. Radicalisation expertise presents a particularly strong example of the rise of experiential knowledge. Other research (e.g. Corburn 2005; Epstein 1995; Thompson et al. 2012) has found that those with claims to experiential expertise gained credibility through developing a scientific language and knowledge and appropriating the credibility markers of scientists. Experiential experts became integrated into a pre-existing scientific expert community rather than relying on personal experiences to claim credibility. Experiential experts in radicalisation however are less likely to be immersed in academic communities. While some do conduct or refer to research, many have carved a unique niche for themselves based on their experiential merits. At the same time, through examining the contemporary manifestation of challenges to scientific expertise and the resistance that experiential knowledge faces when seeking acceptance in expert communities, the thesis demonstrates the difficulties, in practice, of assigning contributory expertise (Collins and Evans 2007). That is, through focusing in detail on peers as the arbiters of expertise, it highlights the complexity of credibility contests (Gieryn 1999). The diverse and contested nature of radicalisation expertise entails multiple audiences within the peer community; peers are not just other researchers, but include those involved in counter-radicalisation activities. The participation of these forms of experiential expertise within the expert community help to shape the meaning of

expertise, and in these conditions there are intra-community credibility contests where experts propose competing definitions of authoritative knowledge. Attempts to articulate the boundaries of radicalisation expertise are fundamentally contested by others in the peer community. On radicalisation then, the diverse constitution of the expert community means that science has less relevance as the central designator of expert authority.

In addition, radicalisation presents a critical case of expert controversy. It is an emotive topic with high levels of public interest, where both experts and expertise intermingle with political debate. Expert debate is characterised by entrenched positions and a lack of emergent consensus. In this context, the thesis examined in detail the basis on which different types of knowledge challenge each other in a struggle for authority. It maps the positions that have been taken along core lines of theoretical contestation, applying the model of epistemic communities to this topic area. Radicalisation expertise has particular implications for the epistemic communities literature. Much of this research has focused on single case studies of scientific expert communities (Davis Cross 2013). Applying the model to radicalisation expertise however demonstrates the role of non-scientists in providing persuasive knowledge and contributes to emerging work on competing epistemic communities (e.g. Youde 2005), highlighting the potential existence of multiple epistemic communities in one topic area. Overall, this account offers an empirical demonstration of the multiple ways by which expertise can be demonstrated in the absence of a reliable and consensual social scientific evidence base whilst highlighting the complexities of how this plays out in practice.

10.2.2 Studies of terrorism expertise

This study of radicalisation expertise complements and extends previous work on terrorism expertise. Other analyses have tended to focus on terrorism studies in general: this research builds an explanatory understanding from the detail and within-case comparisons of a sub-sector of terrorism analysts. While benefitting from the existence of previous knowledge on terrorism expertise that provides context and comparison, the thesis provides fresh analysis on a newly developed strain of terrorism knowledge, and one that has developed rapidly to become a core focus of analysis and policy making.

More specifically, the nature of expertise in this area is a question that was yet to be systematically addressed. While Stampnitzky (2011;

2013: 12-13) applies literature on the development and institutionalisation of disciplines and the sociology of professions to terrorism studies, most analyses of terrorism experts orientate their work by theories other than those of expertise. Past studies have taken various orientating perspectives, including: the knowledge practices of the social construction of terrorism (Reid 1993, 1997; Stampnitzky 2013), materialistic analysis of the resources that support terrorism expertise and the influence that it achieves as a result (Miller and Mills 2009, 2010), and the ideological biases of terrorism experts (Herman and O'Sullivan 1990, 1991; Raphael 2008, 2009). This thesis in contrast was grounded in the ongoing and extensive discussions of the evidence base of terrorism studies, and radicalisation studies more specifically. Applying literature on the meaning of expertise and constructions of credibility, it presented an original understanding of terrorism expertise. In particular, it captured the diverse experiential expertise that has become apparent with the shift in focus to radicalisation. In this sense, it drew out the implications of Stampnitzky's conceptualisation of the field as non-institutionalised for the nature of expertise, analysing the diversity of expertise and the tussles over credible knowledge enabled by that context.

Pluralism was a core theme of the thesis. Through applying theories of expertise, it was argued that a sparse evidence base and controversial topic had given rise to diverse and contested expertise. This account complements analyses that have focused on an elite core of terrorism experts. The thesis conceptualised the expert community widely, drawing attention to the myriad of knowledge claims on radicalisation and focusing on the commonalities and tensions between them. Radicalisation experts disagree on core substantive issues as well as the nature of authoritative knowledge. The continuing refrain of terrorism studies regarding the presence of charlatans for example itself emerges as contested in that many radicalisation experts value a diverse knowledge base. Differing judgements as to the ideal nature of this diversity mean that the boundaries of the expert community cannot clearly be pinpointed. This is indicated by the accusations regarding 'charlatans'. The analysis also highlighted the relevance of sub-topics and of peripheral actors to the constitution of the expert community and their ability to construct authoritative claims to knowledge. Overall, while other research has highlighted the power harnessed by 'orthodox' terrorism and radicalisation experts, taking a broader perspective has demonstrated the relevance and input in practice

of different forms of expertise and the extensive forms of contestation within the expert community.

10.3 Final comments

Complementing work on the aims, implementation and impacts of Prevent, the thesis has focused on its policy theory, problematic knowledge base and resultant questions of where authoritative knowledge for policy is located. Notwithstanding acknowledgement of the limited impact of research evidence on policy making, the differential authority of knowledge claims in general has consequences for how issues are framed and policies constructed. Given the status of the topic area as highly policy-relevant, sensitive, and one in which state policy can have very real effects on communities, these are pertinent social questions.

Diverse knowledge types, the contested meaning of expertise, and the presence of multiple epistemic communities offering substantially differing perspectives on the issue suggests a broad conceptualisation of the relevant expertise and calls for diverse consultation in the policy process. The breadth of perspectives articulated in the thesis draws attention however to the inequalities in policy influence. The status of the Anti-extremism line of analysis has been apparent, in particular cohering with Government policy. The recurring policy activity on Prevent indicates however a potential for the relative influence of experts to change over time. Compared to when the research took place, Prevent is now even more contested and resisted, facing calls for review for example from the Government's Independent Reviewer of Terrorism (Anderson 2016). A focus on the diverse foundations of expertise on this topic enables recognition of the fractures in influential ideas, highlights the socially conditioned nature of attributions of expertise and demonstrates the necessity of interrogating the meaning of expertise in practice.

More broadly, questions regarding the authority of experts have reared up in the political tumult of 2016. The conduct of the UK's EU referendum and the US Presidential election has been framed by reference to the resurgence of 'post-truth politics'. This phrase indicates political debate characterised by a lack of interest in evidence or, in its stronger incarnations, the use and acceptance of lies, or 'alternative facts'. On the audiences' part this translates into a tendency to seek out expertise that coheres with their own views rather than undertake critical appraisal. 'Fake news', defined as misleading or false stories often widely disseminated via

social media, was said to have swung the US election in these ways. These dynamics suggest a rejection of objective truth, and a belief in the importance of opinion. On Brexit for example, economists were criticised for previous mistakes, proposing analyses that were abstract from everyday concerns, having political biases and failing to admit the limits of their knowledge. The public were told to trust their own judgements given a lack of possible expertise on such complex and contentious issues. This amounted to a questioning of expert credibility and indeed a rejection of expert analysis. At the same time, many experts have launched a defence by reference to the importance of specialist knowledge and evidence-based arguments more generally. These issues are not new but they indicate that the instability in the meaning of expertise is central to the conduct of contemporary politics. In wider echoes of the dynamics of radicalisation expertise, they illustrate the constant struggle of expert authority and its implications for how social issues are framed and politics plays out.

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Appendix A: The periodic table of expertises

UBIQUITOUS EXPERTISES					
DISPOSITIONS		Interactive ability/Reflective ability			
SPECIALIST EXPERTISES	<i>UBIQUITOUS TACIT KNOWLEDGE</i>			<i>SPECIALIST TACIT KNOWLEDGE</i>	
	Beer-mat knowledge	Popular understanding	Primary Source knowledge	Interactional expertise	Contributory expertise
Polimorphic/Mimeomorphic					
META-EXPERTISES	<i>EXTERNAL (Transmuted expertises)</i>			<i>INTERNAL (Non-transmuted expertises)</i>	
	Ubiquitous discrimination	Local discrimination	Technical connoisseurship	Downward discrimination	Referred expertise
META-CRITERIA	Credentials		Experience		Track record

Adapted from Collins and Evans (2007: 14)

Appendix B: The Channel Vulnerability Assessment Framework

Engagement with a group, cause or ideology	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Feelings of grievance and injustice • Feeling under threat • A need for identity, meaning and belonging • A desire for status • A desire for excitement and adventure • A need to dominate and control others • Susceptibility to indoctrination • A desire for political or moral change • Opportunistic involvement • Family or friends involvement in extremism • Being at a transitional time of life • Being influenced or controlled by a group • Relevant mental health issues
Intent to cause harm	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Over-identification with a group or ideology • 'Them and Us' thinking • Dehumanisation of the enemy • Attitudes that justify offending • Harmful means to an end • Harmful objectives
Capability to cause harm	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Individual knowledge, skills and competencies • Access to networks, funding or equipment • Criminal capability

Adapted from HM Government (2012)

Appendix C: Sample of documents for textual analysis

	Reference ⁷	Description
1	Smyth and Gunning (2007)	Guardian article
2	Conway (2007)	Civitas blog post
3	Sardar (2008)	Guardian article
4	Bunglawala (2009)	Guardian article
5	PowerBase (2009)	Description of European Network of Experts in Radicalisation
6	Githens-Mazer and Lambert (2009)	Guardian article
7	Communities and Local Government Committee (2010: Ev 56-Ev 60)	Arun Kundhani, oral evidence to Communities and Local Government Committee
8	Sky News (2010)	Maajid Nawaz and Jonathan Githens-Mazer; live TV debate
9	Bartlett (2011)	Huffington Post article
10	Hansard (2011)	Parliamentary debate on the funding of the Quilliam Foundation
11	Francis (2012)	Blog post on RadicalisationResearch website
12	BBC (2012)	Maajid Nawaz interviewed on Hardtalk
13	BBC (2016b)	Sajda Mughal interviewed on NewsNight

⁷ See bibliography for full details

Appendix D: Witnesses to the 2011 and 2015 Home Affairs Committee inquiries regarding radicalisation

1. Inquiry on the 'Roots of Violent Radicalisation' (House of Commons 2012: 49-50)

Tuesday 13 September 2011

Congressman Peter King, Chairman, Committee on Homeland Security, US House of Representatives

Rashad Ali, Centri, and **Maajid Nawaz**, Quilliam Foundation

Tuesday 18 October 2011

Ali Soufan, former FBI agent and founder of the Soufan Group

Akeela Ahmed, Chief Executive, Muslim Youth Helpline, **Alyas Karmani**, Co-director, STREET Project, and **Murtaza Hassan Shaikh**, Averroes Institute

Tuesday 1 November 2011

Dr Matthew Goodwin, University of Nottingham, and **Mike Whine**, Community Security Trust

Sir Norman Bettison, ACPO Lead for Prevent Policing, and **Assistant Chief Constable John Wright**, ACPO National Prevent Coordinator

Tuesday 15 November 2011

Professor Geoff Petts, Universities UK, and **Nabil Ahmed**, President, Federation of Student Islamic Societies

Tuesday 22 November 2011

Michael Spurr, Chief Executive Officer, **Richard Pickering**, Head of Security Group, and **Ahtsham Ali**, Muslim Adviser, National Offender Management Service

Tuesday 29 November 2011

Charles Farr, Director General, Office of Security and Counter-Terrorism, Home Office

Tuesday 6 December 2011

Jamie Bartlett, Demos, **Hannah Stuart**, Henry Jackson Society, and **Professor Peter Neumann**, International Centre for the Study of Radicalisation and Political Violence

David Anderson, QC, Independent Reviewer of Terrorist Legislation,

James Brokenshire, MP, Minister for Crime and Security, Home Office

Tuesday 13 December 2011

Ian Paisley Jr MP, Democratic Unionist Party, **Mike Whine**, **Christian Cullen**, **Imam Sikander Pathan**, Feltham, Young Offenders Institution **Dr Richard Hall**, De Montfort University

2. Inquiry on Countering Extremism (Home Affairs Committee 2016: 42-43)

Tuesday 27 October 2015

Harun Rashid Khan, Deputy Secretary General, **Miqdaad Versi**, Assistant Secretary General, and **Ameena Blake**, Assistant Secretary General, Muslim Council of Britain

Habibur Rahman, Chairman, **Sufia Alam**, Women's Projects Officer, and **Salman Farsi**, Media Officer, East London Mosque Trust

Rt Hon Baroness Warsi

Tuesday 17 November 2015

Mark Keary, Headteacher, Bethnal Green Academy, and **Alison Brannick**, former Deputy Headteacher, Bethnal Green Academy

Sara Khan and **Kalsoom Bashir**, Directors, Inspire

Dr Adnan Siddiqui, Director, CAGE Advocacy Ltd, **Ibrahim Mohamoud**, Communications Officer, CAGE Advocacy Ltd, and **Mohammed Umar Farooq**

Tuesday 24 November 2015

Mark Rowley QPM, Assistant Commissioner for Specialist Operations, Metropolitan Police

Rt Hon John Hayes MP, Minister for Security, and **Charles Farr**, Director General, Office for Security and Counter-Terrorism, Home Office

Tuesday 1 December 2015

Sir Charles Montgomery, Director General, Border Force

Haras Rafiq, Managing Director, Quilliam, and **Farooq Aftab**, Ahmadiyya Muslim Youth Association UK

Megan Dunn, President, National Union of Students, and **Professor Julius Weinberg**, Vice-Chancellor, Kingston University

Tuesday 12 January 2016

Zulfiqar Karim, Senior Vice President, Bradford Council for Mosques, and **Fazal Dad**, Senior Imam, Abu Bakr Mosque Bradford

Mark Rowley QPM, Assistant Commissioner for Specialist Operations, Metropolitan Police

Tuesday 19 January 2016

Konika Dhar

David Anderson, QC, Independent Reviewer of Terrorism Legislation

Shami Chakrabarti CBE

Tuesday 2 February 2016

Dr Anthony House, Head of Public Policy Strategy, Google Europe, Middle East and Africa, **Simon Milner**, Policy Director for UK and Ireland, Middle East and Turkey, Facebook, and **Nick Pickles**, UK Public Policy Manager, Twitter

Saleha Jaffer, Director of Families Against Stress and Trauma (FAST), and **Raheel Mohammed**, Director, Maslaha