Article

Security Traps and Discourses of Radicalization: Examining Surveillance Practices Targeting Muslims in Canada

Jeffrey Monaghan

Queen's University, Canada.
j.monaghan@queensu.ca

Abstract

Security agencies in Canada have become increasingly anxious regarding the threat of domestic radicalization. Defined loosely as “the process of moving from moderate beliefs to extremist belief,” inter-agency security practices aim to categorize and surveil populations deemed at risk of radicalization in Canada, particularly young Muslims. To detail surveillance efforts against domestic radicalization, this article uses the *Access to Information Act (ATIA)* to detail the work of Canada’s inter-agency Combating Violent Extremism Working Group (CVEWG). As a network of security governance actors, the CVEWG is comprised of almost 20 departments and agencies with broad areas of expertise (intelligence, defence, policing, border security, transportation, immigration, etc.). Contributing to critical security studies and scholarship on the sociology of surveillance, this article maps the contours and activities of the CVEWG and uses the *ATIA* to narrate the production and iteration of radicalization threats through Canadian security governance networks. Tracing the influence of other states—the U.S. and U.K., in particular—the article highlights how surveillance practices that target radicalization are disembedded from particular contexts and, instead, framed around abstractions of menacing Islam. By way of conclusion, it casts aspersions on the expansion of counter-terrorism resources towards combating violent extremism; raising questions about the dubious categories and motives in contemporary practices of the “war on terror.”

Introduction

Domestic (“homegrown”) terrorism has emerged as an area of increasing security and policing concern in Canada (see CACP 2008; Canada 2012; RCMP 2009; Senate 2011). In line with other Western states, discourses of “radicalization” and “violent extremism” have become a dominant mode of categorizing contemporary national security threats (Githens-Mazer 2012; Lakhani 2012; Sedgwick 2010). Although these discourses have been used by security agencies for several years, recent events (such as the Boston Marathon bombings and a handful of alleged cases of politically-motivated violence in Canada) have seen the use of “radicalization” and “extremism” shoot into mainstream parlance. While the use of radicalization and violent extremism are often invoked interchangeably, radicalization is more specifically used as a description of the “movement from moderate, mainstream beliefs towards extreme views” (RCMP 2009). The tie that binds radicalization and extremism is the relationship between radicalization (especially branches of Islam) and threats of political violence which fall under the threshold of homegrown/domestic terrorism. To this end, security governance agencies have undertaken significant efforts to institutionalize networked capacities to share and collaborate in broad areas of anti-terrorism knowledge production. Listed as the leading threat to Canada’s national security (see Canada 2012),

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“violent Islamic extremism” has become the focus point for a host of surveillance projects and programs targeting Muslim populations in Canada.

A leading network for the proliferation of security knowledge on domestic extremism and radicalization is known as the Combating Violent Extremism Working Group (CVEWG).¹ Demonstrating the expansive resources being devoted to “combating violent extremism” (CVE), the CVEWG is a network of at least 18 departments and agencies, chaired by Public Safety Canada (PSC). Contributing to literature on security governance and institutionalization of surveillant infrastructures, this article uses the *Access to Information Act* (ATIA) to explore the initial workings of the CVEWG and various efforts to combat violent extremism in Canada. Tracing the development of the CVEWG offers three valuable contributions to current studies on security and surveillance: 1) it demonstrates the productive role of security assemblages by enacting control over knowledge practices, demonstrating how Canadian authorities developed a governance framework to classify forms of Islamic threat within a particular discursive formation of radicalization and extremism; 2) offers an empirical demonstration of security networks that develop around particular discursive structurings; and 3) tests methodological tools for researchers aiming to “study up” (Nader 1969) the vast and often hidden fields of security governance regimes. An analysis of the CVEWG provides a demonstration of how discursive fields translate into fields of practice by focussing on the emergence of CVE networks and the surveillance practices that are carried out under these contemporary trends in security governance.

As an emergent field of security governance that has demonstrated rapid and far-reaching growth, I argue that the discourses of radicalization and violent extremism exemplify what the Critical Approaches to Security in Europe (CASE) Collective (2006: 460) called “security traps,” where “a concern to free people from fear or threat” is used to justify an expansion and widening of the security agenda over a broader field of the social. CASE Collective (2006) have demonstrated how security traps affirm the authority of security experts to define and manage the terrain of legitimate knowledge surrounding various sources of social threat(s) and unease, resulting in a narrowly constructed domain of freedoms whereby iterations of potential threat can only be understood and/or addressed through co-referent mechanisms of security. A number of other scholars have pointed to an inherent paradox of security governance—or (in)security governance—whereby an increase in regimes of security have co-inspired an increase in the perception and construction of security threats (Beck 2006; Bigo 2006; CASE Collective 2006; Zedner 2009). The co-referentiality of (in)security means that dangerousness and surveillance incite each other to a point where, as Dillon (2007: 8) points out, the “more effort that is put into governing terror, the more terror comes to govern the governors.” Documenting the activities of an extensive security network such as the CVEWG illustrates how particular fields of expertise and their discursive technologies take form as a dominant frame of reference, as well as adding empirical weight to the widening of surveillance practices under the polysemy of security. In discussing how security networks like the CVEWG relate to the study of surveillance practices, I argue that surveillance regimes—particularly those targeting Muslims—are a material extension of security trap discourses like radicalization.

The article has four parts and some conclusions. First I detail the emergence of discourses of radicalization and violent extremism in Canada. Second, I offer a quick methodological note on the ATIA and some thoughts on data collection in the field of surveillance and critical security studies. Third, I detail the CVEWG; its emergent rationalities and a number of its current projects. Fourth, I offer a discussion and analysis section of the CVEWG in relation to contemporary literature on the sociology of surveillance and critical security studies. To conclude, I emphasize how discourses of radicalization and violent extremism can be characterized as security traps that justify and re-organize vast counter-terrorism resources—

¹ The working group is also referred to as the Interdepartmental Working Group on Preventing and Countering Violent Extremism.

notwithstanding the negligible threats of terrorism—and have become a dominant trope to articulate the new terrains of the “war on terror.”

New Discourses of Threat: Radicalization and Violent Extremism

Discourses of radicalization—and “radicalization studies”—are an emerging (and relatively new) field of research (Dawson 2009). A number of security scholars have been critical of the shift from analyses of “root causes,” suggesting current discussions of radicalization “are based on an emotional response to the shock of 9/11 and the subsequent securitization of Islam,” producing a mix of definitions and frameworks for understanding contemporary political violence (Githens-Mazer 2012: 557; see also Herbert 2009). Sedgwick (2010: 483) has pointed out that most researchers using the terms radical and radicalization “do not define these terms, either relying on their relative meaning or assuming that their absolute meaning is understood.” Githens-Mazer (2012: 558) notes that, as of early 2011, there “were 107 books, journal articles, government papers and documents, working papers, think-tank reports, and publicly available postgraduate theses that are of direct relevance to the study of radicalization.” Of these 107, he notes that a majority (56) do not offer any of definition radicalization. As Sedgwick (2010: 482) notes, scholars and agencies that have adopted discourses of radicalization do not feel a need to present clear definitions because “the line between moderate and radical is presumed to be self-evident, and because the continuum (‘with-us-or-against-us’) is also presumed to be self-evident.” As an evolving discourse of threat, the mutability of radicalization has served as a useful device for security agencies.

Canada’s adoption of discourses of radicalization and extremism can be in large part attributed to domestic (“homegrown”) attacks in other Western countries (Madrid bombings, London’s 7/7 attacks), as well as the arrest of Momin Khawaja in 2006 as the first individual to be charged and prosecuted under the criminal measures set out in the 2001 *Anti-Terrorism Act*. While the matrix of potential national security threats has included a number of potential groups—including indigenous and protest movements (see Crosby and Monaghan 2012; Monaghan and Walby 2012a, 2012b)—the contemporary threat environment can best be characterized by its pre-occupation with Islamic terrorism. Canada’s spy service, the Canadian Security Intelligence Service (CSIS), maintains an Intelligence Assessments Branch (IAB) that claims to having assessed and produced finished intelligence products on Islamic extremism, homegrown terrorism and violent radicalization in Canada for over a decade. Attention to domestic (“homegrown”) terrorism appears to have arisen in earnest in the mid-late 2000s and, since that time in particular, Canadian authorities have offered various definitions of radicalization and homegrown extremism/terrorism.

In 2005, CSIS (2012a: 42-60) published its first study on “how Canadian Islamic extremists were radicalizing.” Subsequently, CSIS authored a number of reports focusing on Islamic radicalization and extremism. They included titles like *The Radicalization of Canadian Muslims* (2005); *From Radicalization to Jihadization: The radicalizers: the Islamist extremism threat to Canada from within* (2006); *Radicalization in Canada: Current State of Knowledge Counter radicalization in the West* (2007); *Radicalization: State of Knowledge, Scope of the Problem, and Effectiveness of Counter Measures* (2008); *A Study of Radicalization: The Making of Islamic Extremists in Canada Today* (2011).² Much of the initial focus on homegrown terrorism was primarily associated with Westerners leaving to join jihadist movements (Bell 2004), such as the case with Canada’s Khadr family or that of John Lindh, the “American Taliban.” While cases of citizens joining foreign conflicts remains a significant interest, the dramatic increase in radicalization studies have re-focussed attention towards the threat of violence *within* Western states.

In 2009, the RCMP published the first public guide on the topic of radicalization and domestic extremism. Under an esoteric title, *Radicalization: A guide for the Perplexed* (RCMP 2009), the Mounties provide a

²Reports available in CSIS (2012a) 117-2012-440.

wide-ranging and detailed discussion of radicalization and violent extremism. They define radicalization as “the process by which individuals—usually young people—are introduced to an overtly ideological message and belief system that encourages movement from moderate, mainstream beliefs towards extreme views” (RCMP 2009: 6). Careful to warn that not all radicalisms or extremisms result in violence—duly noting such examples as Gandhi, Jesus, and Gloria Steinem—the RCMP guide states that “radical views only become a problem when they are used to promote or condone violence or other forms of extremist behavior, including terrorism” (2009: 3). (Nelson Mandela is also listed, notwithstanding his leadership of the ANC and participation in armed struggle.) An important element of the *Guide for the Perplexed* is the recognition that radicalization transcends ideological, class, religious, and racial lines. Like publications from other policing and security agencies in the U.S. (NYPD 2007) and U.K. (see Awan 2012), elastic notions of radicalization are used to assess a broad spectrum of potential threat.

As recently as October 2010, CSIS integrated an Islamic-component to their definition of radicalization. They define radicalization as “the process of moving from moderate beliefs to extremist belief—whereby Muslim radicalization is the process of moving from moderate, mainstream Islamic beliefs to a belief that violence can legitimately be used to defend Islam against its enemies, support and promote a fundamental view of Islam and an intolerance of both non-believers and those deemed to be impure Muslims” (PSC 2011: 5). CSIS also provides definitions of radicalization that do not adopt neo-Orientalist characterizations of “good” and “bad” interpretations of Islam³; for example, they build upon the RCMP definition by suggesting that radicalization is the movement from “mainstream, socially acceptable beliefs and activities” to those which “exist on the fringes of society and are increasingly unacceptable” (CSIS 2012c: 33). Underlining the link between the adoption of ideas that are “increasingly unacceptable” with the threat of potential areas of criminal activity, the agency adds: “In its most dangerous form, radicalization leads to the use of or the support for violence.”

Other Canadian agencies have offered definitions of radicalization and extremism. In a presentation to the CVEWG in June 2010, Public Safety Canada (PSC) presented a more detailed definition of radicalization and domestic violent extremism. PSC (2011: 140) explains the link between radicalization and domestic extremism by providing the RCMPs two-point definition of radicalization and noting that “violent extremism can be the end-point of the [radicalization] process.” Warning that “radicalization associated with Islamist extremist ideology is particular concern,” PSC states that domestic security, intelligence and law enforcement efforts aim to detect/disrupt violent extremism, and a “broader government community is engaged in preventing it.” PSC (2011: 172) also highlights that “the process of radicalization is a crucial enabler of terrorism.” PSC conclude that “radicalization leading to violence is a growing security concern, both in Canada and internationally, and addressing its causes and implications has become a key element of global counter-terrorism efforts” (*ibid.*) Positioning the discourses of radicalization and violent extremism at the centre of Canada’s counter-terrorism practices, PSC ensures that domestic efforts to counter radicalization are twinned to global contours of the “war on terror.”

As the chair department of the CVEWG, the PSC has been integral to connection between definitions of radicalization provided by CSIS and RCMP—with their implicit/explicit targeting of Muslims—to broader counter-terrorism efforts and issues of national security. In a briefing note prepared by PSC, violent domestic extremism is explained in the context of national security threats to Canadians. The briefing states “violent extremism poses a threat to Canada’s national security in a number of direct ways”:

³ A number of scholars—and critics of the “war on terror”—have detailed Western neo-Orientalist practices of using sociocultural knowledge for counterinsurgency projects. How these practices amount to new forms of Orientalism has been explained by Gregory (2008) and Kienscherf (2011), among others.

- when individuals—based either in Canada or abroad—plan or execute violence against Canadians and Canadian interests at home or abroad;
- when extremist activities within Canada are used to organize, facilitate or launch attacks against other countries; and
- when foreign extremists conduct attacks against our allies and international partners, undermining Canadian interests in global security.

(PSC 2011: 168)

At the conclusion of a briefing note to the Minister of Public Safety, officials warn that “the phenomenon of violent extremism can [...] have a polarizing effect on Canadian society and can put a strain on social cohesion” (*ibid.*). In response to the threat of social insecurity, PSC emphasizes the need for good surveillance and social sorting: “It remains a grave challenge, however, to identify the point at which groups or individuals will resort to violence, and to assess when and how the threat environment will change as a consequence” (*ibid.*). In a CSIS (2012b) PowerPoint presentation entitled “Threat Environment to 2025,” the spy agency gives a broad overview of future security threats; including cyber attacks, espionage, rogue states, and geo-political shifts. CSIS (2012b: 9-11) warns that Islamic extremism will be “an increasingly diffuse but more complicated threat,” warning that “the insider threat” will result in small groups of Canadians who “will continue to be inspired by the narrative and seek to engage in extremist activities both at home and abroad.” As a concluding slide, CSIS (2012b: 12) lists the “biggest challenges ahead.” The first item listed is “dealing with the appeal of extremist narrative.”

As the spatial character of the “war on terror” shifts from away Afghanistan and traditional military conflicts, discourses of radicalization and violent extremism have provided a flexible lexicon to re-organize the objectives of counter-terrorism projects. As we can note from the definitions above, the threat environment is highly asymmetrical. It can comprise threats based domestically or abroad. It can include direct violence, or the support of violence. It can include participation in extremist activities, or providing forms of material support for violence abroad. It can be applied to direct violence against civilians or activities that can be understood by authorities as threatening “Canadian interests.” It can include events that have happened, would have happened, or events that may happen. As I detail with an examination of the formation of the CVEWG, the threat environment constituted by radicalization and violent extremism discourses is animated by the transformations of the “war on terror,” but focussed primarily on activities and individuals within Canada. While the global environment influences the character of contemporary counter-terrorism practices, the prominence of radicalization discourses have provided a re-adjustment to ensure that CVE efforts are primarily designed to operate domestically.

While Canadian authorities have devoted considerable resources to the “grave challenge” of violent extremism and radicalization only recently, these policing and security efforts have been underway in Europe for several years (Awan 2012; IRR 2010). Despite recent debates on the threat of radicalization and various sources or explanations of radicalization (see Brooks 2011; Dalgaard-Nielsen 2010; McCauley and Moskalenko 2011; Sedgwick 2010) studies on security and surveillance practices that target radicalization have been more difficult. Like many research projects examining the practices of surveillance and security that target particular threats, there are numerous barriers to gaining access to data that can speak to the nature of these surveillance practices. Yet, as the size and scope of the CVEWG—and radicalization discourses more generally—demonstrate, these assemblages are in need of critical examination. As I argue below, using the *Access to Information Act* is a worthwhile tool—despite its notable shortcomings—for research into contemporary, but often un-publicized (but not quite covert), forms of intelligence gathering and policing work.

Notes on Methods

Research on the expanding net of security governance presents a number of empirical roadblocks (see Salter and Mutlu 2013). Following Laura Nader's (1969) provocative suggestion that researchers should "study up, down, and sideways" in order to critically examine the most powerful institutions and actors in their domestic context, a number of scholars have developed data collection tools to "study up" security and policing institutions (Gonzales 2012). Accessing materials from these organizations can be very difficult (Earl 2009; Bronskill 2012; Gusterson 1998), yet researchers can employ a number of tools to access what Marx (1984) called "dirty and hidden data." For this article, I have relied on the *Access to Information Act* to collect data on CVEWG for two reasons. First, there are no available public records on the operations of this network. Second, Canadian authorities have been especially closed to discussing national security practices and the *ATIA* offers an opportunity to access data that is produced outside of an explicit request for interview or consultation. While there are a number of limitations, which I address below, the *ATIA* can provide a "backstage" view of contemporary security governance practices (Walby and Larsen 2012).

Although researchers make frequent use of the *ATIA*, critics have pointed out that it has become reliably unreliable (Monaghan and Hameed 2012). Users of the *Act* regularly encounter delays, unreasonable redactions, as well as the overarching problems that stem from structural issues such as chronic underfunding of ATI branches (Mopas and Turnbull 2011). Requests focussing on security and policing are particularly at risk of encountering redactions and delays. Moreover, they are also at risk of interference from a) political offices, such as ministers, members of parliament, or the Prime Minister's Office (Rees 2003); and b) the branches of these security agencies, who would prefer that decisions regarding the disclosure of information not be transferred to bureaucrats within the ATI offices. Sometimes interference, particularly on sensitive issues, can come from both political and bureaucratic sources.

For these reasons, a systematic approach to data collection using the *ATIA* can be difficult. Despite these shortcomings, the challenge for social problem researchers rests on the fact that security bureaucracies produce an incredibly large volume of textual data and, notwithstanding the barriers to access, *ATIA* tactics can be utilized for gaining access to these contemporary security practices. I have employed a tactic known as the "mosaic effect" (see Hameed and Monaghan 2012), which borrows from juridical terminology to describe an effort to collect information from multiple sources and re-assemble that information in a way that reveals the sum—or perhaps more—of all its various parts. For researching the CVEWG, requests have been made to multiple departments, including Public Safety, the RCMP, Department of National Defence, Citizenship and Immigration, Canada Border Services Agency, Justice Canada, and Correctional Services Canada. These requests have focussed on CVE meetings by targeting the textual records produced and distributed in-advance and after these meetings including, but not limited to, items such as briefing notes, meeting minutes, memorandums and reports, meeting notes and agendas, and emails of various CVEWG members. While a significant amount of information has been redacted (the full knowledge of which is not disclosed), these requests have nonetheless generated a large data sample for detailing the practices and organizational logics that inform the working group. As a preliminary attempt to examine the emergence of the CVEWG, this article analyzes data from seven *ATIA* requests, which represents only an early account of the work undertaken by this extensive (and quite secretive) working group. Granted, a full account of the CVEWG is part of a larger research project, the data outlined below is focussed on the emergence phase of the CVEWG to underline the dramatic discursive shift of the "war on terror"; a shift that is particular to Canada and parallels the geo-political shift from foreign wars to a focus on domestic extremism/terrorism. As the terrains of the "war on terror" shift, radicalization discourses function as a security trap which is quickly becoming the most prominent trope for discussing terrorism threats.

The Emergence of the CVE Working Group

In 2010, Public Safety Canada initiated the Combating Violent Extremism Working Group with the objective of providing “strategic-level direction and promote a whole-of-government approach to addressing the threat” (PSC 2011: 162). Background documents from PSC note that the “Working Group provides an avenue for regular information-exchange and collaboration among partners, which ultimately brings greater cohesion to the Government of Canada’s overall PCVE efforts” (*ibid.*). The “whole of government” approach that has been developed by the CVEWG claims to be focussed on three primary activities: 1) detect and disrupt the work of violent extremists; 2) Build resilient communities; 3) Develop research, including outreach to academics. Originally, this was set to complement the “preliminary National Security Framework for Preventing and Countering Violent Extremism,” which defines a series of measures that seek to support four objectives: prevent, identify, intervene and respond, a precursor to the four pillars (prevent, detect, deny, respond) that were finalized in Canada’s official counter-terrorism strategy (see Canada 2012).

Chaired by PSC, the CVEWG is comprised of at least 18 departments and agencies. Encompassing traditional security agencies, as well as a number of other departments, the working group includes: CSIS, PSC, the Royal Canadian Mounted Police (national police force), Citizenship and Immigration Canada, Department of Justice, Privy Council Office (bureaucratic arm of the Prime Minister’s Office), Department of Foreign Affairs, Correctional Services Canada (CSC—federal prison authority), Department of National Defence (DND), Defence Research and Development Canada (research arm of DND), the Canada Revenue Agency and FINTRAC (Financial Transactions and Reports Analysis Centre of Canada), agencies from Public Works Canada (critical infrastructure protection; export controls; Industrial Security Program), Communications Security Establishment Canada (foreign signals SIGINT agency), Public Prosecution Service of Canada, the Canadian Border Services Agency, the Integrated Terrorism Assessment Centre (ITAC, the threat assessment branch of CSIS), and the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA).

As a security network, the working group serves as a venue for knowledge collection and a physical space for meetings and networking. Hosting regular meetings with representatives of these departments and agencies, the working group aims to skill share and set objectives for future collaborations. Notes from a CSIS workshop presented at a CVEWG meeting in October 2010 underscore how the Government of Canada (GoC) is implementing a “co-ordinated strategy to identify, assess, and counter radicalization in Canadian communities” (PSC 2011: 4). At this meeting, briefings were provided by CSIS counterterrorism officials, the RCMP, CSC, and PSC on “the current threat picture surrounding violent extremism in Canada and the radicalization of Canadians” (*ibid.*). According to workshop documents, CSIS “aim[s] to, among other things, provide GoC partners with several key take-away messages” (*ibid.*) With messaging that is not without a flare of hyperbole, the documents—classified as Secret—note that CSIS was providing these workshops “due to the clear recognition of the threat posed today [redacted] Extremism: to our countries, to our citizenry, to regional stability, and to international security, and the violent radicalization and extremism globally today which leads to acts of terrorism, mayhem and destruction” (PSC 2011: 5).

After the initial formation of the working group, PSC devised a preliminary “workplan” document that “serve[d] ... for demarcating the relevant initiatives within the Federal community” (PSC 2011: 46). Preliminary objectives were established to develop “a forward plan” for domestic CVE work and establish a strategic messaging strategy and a “gaps analysis.” PSC underlined the importance of working with PCO to determine how to bring the file forward to Deputy Ministers and the upper echelons of the public service bureaucracy. An initial exercise taken by PSC was a “mapping exercise” to survey the capacities and various initiatives within the GoC. PSC sent a “logic model and mapping questionnaire” to all

members of the working group and many of the department and agency members responded with details of their respective CVE projects (see PSC 2011).

The questionnaire asks respondents to name all the CVE “activities” according to the four pillars of the counter-terrorism strategy and a breakdown of their “resources” dedicated to these activities. They are asked to provide “a sense of the effectiveness” of these activities (ITAC, which is Canada’s much-hyped integrated security intelligence agency, responded “N/A” to this question (PSC 2011: 131). The questionnaire also asks members to reflect on “the main challenges/constraints that your organization encounters in delivering these activities” and “what could make these activities more effective?”

Responses provided by CVEWG members to the questionnaire are heavily redacted and, in the sections that are not redacted, they are comprised largely of stock descriptions of units and branches. Unredacted materials stress the importance of CVE work and the need to combat threats of radicalization and Islamic-inspired terrorism. Many institutions outline generalities, such as CIC, when they claim “the responses below will expand on how the different facets of CIC’s programming can aid to broadly address the issue of violent extremism” (PSC 2011: 98).⁴ Despite the redactions and generalities, questionnaire responses released through the *ATIA* do reveal a number of the projects being pursued by several departments and provide an initial mapping of the vast infrastructure being constructed to address radicalization and violent extremism.

Foremost, almost every response stresses the importance of surveillance practices. CIC notes that the “Department employs a variety of tools and programming to screen for foreign nationals who may engage in violent extremism” (*ibid.*). ITAC stresses their role in aggregating threat data from all security agencies and ensuring these threat assessments are “compiled and analyzed and that the resultant assessments are distributed to our clients” (PSC 2011: 130). Canada Revenue Agency (CRA) is tasked with listing terrorist entities and monitoring for financial transactions. CRA also note that they aim to “prevent the infiltration of charities by terrorist entities” through “liaison arrangements and information-sharing MOUs with CSIS, RCMP and FINTRAC,” as well as having “officers embedded at CSIS, RCMP and ITAC” (PSC 2011: 133). The RCMP discloses that they work domestically and globally “through intelligence-based prevention, detection, investigation, and law enforcement measures taken against terrorists, organized criminals, and other criminal activity” (PSC 2011: 93).

Documents provided by CSC detail how Canada’s federal prison authorities are “especially concerned with inmates associated with terrorist organisations or acts who may be in a position to spread extremist ideology” (PSC 2011: 11). CSC documents note that the department is “working to extend its exchanges with partners in other countries—including especially the US Bureau of Prisons, following the 2007 G8 summit on radicalization within the prison setting” (PSC 2011: 11; CSC 2011; also see Monaghan 2013a). As such, CSC details how they are currently developing a series of specific surveillance measures to prevent radicalization within Canadian prisons including: efforts to avoid inmate-led religious services and instituting “clear reporting requirements and accountability” on external religious service providers; recruiting strategies to target “tolerant faith leaders who are subject to rigorous background and reference checks, as well as annual evaluations”; limiting contact of “terrorist” prisoners; implementing programs and procedures for vulnerable prisoners; establishing contractor/volunteer database, and the implementation of robust vetting and screening of volunteers; monitoring/approving sources of purchased of religious materials; and an increased coordination and surveillance of the transfer/release of prisoners of concern (PSC 2011: 11).

⁴The CIC response included this insertion: “Note: ‘Violent extremism’ was not defined in the questionnaire therefore we take it to mean activities that would fall under sections 34, 35, and/or 36 of the *Immigration and Refugee Protection Act* (IRPA).”

Other departments also provide insight on their various expertises in efforts to create and share profiles of domestic radicalization. DND's research arm, the DRDC, note that they are concerned with the impact of the current economic climate on the behaviour of radical groups, and has recently established the "Psychosocial Cluster" in order to develop stats on at-risk populations (PSC 2011: 179). CIC "uses various "front-end screening and verification tools to ensure high-risk individuals are denied access to Canada," as well as providing "operational support to its front-line officers... [by communicating regularly] with domestic and overseas missions on national security issues" (PSC 2011: 98). In their response to the PSC questionnaire, Justice Canada notes that they have been working "with many non-governmental organizations and other government departments toward the possible implementation of a national "tip line... and education strategy to counter the spread of hate material on the Internet" (PSC 2011: 178). PCO have reported that they have an "interest in gaps and overlaps between national security, social cohesion and PCVE—ensuring complementarity and self-reinforcing projects on both the hard (e.g. CSIS, RCMP) and soft (e.g. CIC, Heritage Canada) sides of PCVE" (PSC 2011: 11). CSIS outlines that they are "working to build greater capacity internationally on this file. In late-2010, it hosted an international workshop on radicalization, [redacted]" (PSC 2011: 87).

A number of documents compiled by PSC provide a broad overview of the CVE outreach efforts that are being coordinated through the "whole of government" approach. Briefing notes outline a number of initiatives to enhance the surveillance capacities targeting immigrant and Muslim communities. The PSC Citizen Engagement Program "is interested in improving its ability to conduct outreach events aimed at reaching youth and newcomers to Canada" (PSC 2011: 164), while DFAIT has incorporated a Muslim Communities Working Group for strategic advice on international practices, and the PSC have been administering the Cross-Cultural Roundtable on Security (CCRS). As potentially the most advanced outreach initiative targeting Muslim communities, the CCRS has established its own Sub-Group on Preventing and Countering Violent Extremism. Yet, while the CCRS has been celebrated by Canadian security officials, Senate committee hearings on Canada's counter-terrorism concluded that the CCRS "has great potential" but the committee warned that a major concern is "that there may be at least a perception that it lacks independence if it is seen merely as an extension of the Department of Public Safety" (Senate 2011: 21). Senators also noted that "meetings of the CCRS may be seen less as a roundtable discussion and more as a one-way briefing from the Department" (*ibid.*). RCMP responses to the questionnaire also provides brief descriptions of a litany of outreach and advisory committees targeting Muslim communities, such as the National Security Community Outreach Program (NSCOP), that aim to "to establish trust with minority communities and gain their assistance and co-operation in protecting Canada's national security" (PSC 2011: 72).

Some briefing notes and memorandums compiled by PSC sketch out the extent to which policing and security agencies have undertaken efforts to combat potential Islamic radicalization. CSIS informs PSC that they have instituted a number of "outreach programs" that "are conducted through each of its regional offices" (PSC 2011: 175). CSIS has also stated that they, as of May 2010, are monitoring at least 200 individuals in Canada for terrorism-related activities. As part of their commitment to investigating radicalization, the RCMP has developed the position of Counter-Terrorism Information Officers (CTIO). CTIOs are to conduct "outreach to communities deemed to be vulnerable to radicalization and recruitment, which has been very successful in British Columbia. It is now being expanded to other urban centres such as Toronto, Montreal, and Ottawa, with the goal of having front-line officers posted in vulnerable communities nationwide" (PSC 2011: 116). Documents note that there are presently approximately 436 trained CTIO officers across Canada—280 in Ontario, 126 in British Columbia, and 30 in Quebec.

International influences are prominent throughout the documents provided. And, while Canadian security governance actors might claim to be innovating best practices, efforts to combat violent extremism have been much further developed in the U.S. and U.K. (see IRR 2010; Lakhani 2012). PSC documents at

times reveal the international influences and pressures placed on Canadian security governance officials to develop CVE practices. One briefing note suggests: “There are a number of policy pressures driving movement on the countering violent extremism file, including upcoming senior management discussions of the issue and increased appetite for bilateral engagement with the United States” (PSC 2011: 164). The RCMP acknowledge the influence of the U.S. in developing transnational CVE efforts in when they discuss the need to bring “together senior managers and experts to discuss the threat and the ways in which both nations are addressing it” (PSC 2011: 119). They also aim to work with U.S. officials to develop a “shared lexicon,” “exchange results on investigations, and share “best practices regarding Front-line Officer Training” (*ibid.*).

The expanding scope of radicalization can be best illustrated by international CVE efforts targeting Afghanistan and Pakistan. DND and DFAIT describe some international CVE efforts (with elaborations redacted) stating that “Afghanistan-Pakistan region, the primary focus of Canadian CVE efforts overseas” (PSC 2011: 12). An email from Lieutenant-Colonel C.D. (Cody) Sherman, the Directorate of Peacekeeping Policy (Middle East and Counter-Terrorism), writes of “the broad array of foreign deployments and international exchanges under the Military Training Assistance Programme done in concert with DFAIT & CIDA” (PSC 2011: 2). Briefing notes also detail that DFAIT’s South Asia Division has established a Countering Violent Extremism Coordinator “to coordinate countering violent extremism initiatives in Afghanistan and Pakistan, working with DFAIT colleagues, partner departments and foreign governments to develop policies and programs to counter violent extremism in the region” (PSC 2011: 12). While Canada’s participation in the war in Afghanistan has received prominent coverage, very little public information has been made available regarding any counter-terrorism activities in Pakistan. *ATIA* materials reveal little aside from the existence of CVE programs, serving as an illustration of the scope of CVE efforts. Although there is little substantive to report, the construction of Canadian counter-terrorism efforts in Pakistan and Afghanistan using the threat discourses of radicalization and violent extremism raises the critical question of how officials in Canada come to define the categories of “moderate” and “extreme” in relation to these foreign political constituencies. If anything, these international programs betray the elasticity of these discourses—and the “flexible positional superiority” (Said 1978:7) of their neo-Orientalist pedigrees (see also Stanski 2009).

Numerous documents related to hosting international events and conferences with ally states underline how CVE efforts have become a key strategic asset to refine Canada’s international contribution to the “war on terror.” PSC documents related to hosting international conference on CVE under the banner of the UN’s Global Counter-Terrorism Forum state that “evaluation of CVE programs, along with multilateral efforts to coordinate with other states, is seen by PSC as a vital issue that PSC is leading on within the context of the Global Counter-Terrorism Forum” (PSC 2013: 2). In a briefing note to the Minister of Public Safety, which was requesting authorization for spending on the conference, PSC officials write: “The take-aways from this Colloquium will inform how PSC—as Canada’s lead in the GCTF CVE working group—will further develop this theme of measuring the effectiveness of prevention and counterterrorism programs. The U.K. and United States in particular are eager for Canada to continue leading in this area” (PSC 2013: 15). Noting how Public Safety Minister Vic Toews announced Canada’s new Counter-terrorism Strategy (Canada 2012) at a multilateral CVE event a year earlier, the briefing note concludes: “In sum, as discussions of CVE continue at the domestic level and within multilateral fora, there are several opportunities, including in the short term, to advance knowledge products and facilitate collaboration towards the goal of enhancing practices of [measurement and evaluation] in the field of terrorism prevention” (PSC 2013: 25). As the networking activities and the knowledge production efforts associated with emergent radicalization discourses suggest, Canadian officials have committed significant attention and resources into carving out particular forms of Canadian expertise within this field of security governance.

Overall, documents related to Canadian CVE initiatives underline how “numerous government departments and agencies are involved in implementing Counter Violent Extremism initiatives within the confines of their respective mandates, necessitating a high degree of coordination, information sharing and cooperation which, ultimately, has helped to promote their success. As a result, many of these initiatives are regarded as innovative best practices by Canada’s international partners” (PSC 2011: 49). Despite efforts to present Canada as a leader in CVE practices, documents produced by Canadian security governance agencies are replete with references, anecdotes, and examples from international partners—almost always from either the U.K. or U.S. Awan (2012) has detailed how counter-radicalization efforts in the U.K. have constructed “suspect communities” that leave Muslim communities feeling isolated, discriminated against, and increasingly criminalized. Canadian officials, often citing the successfulness of the U.K. “Prevent” strategy, are positioned to follow a similar course and, in effect, risk fulfilling Hacking’s “looping effect” (1995) where human kinds are reconstituted to fit the categories that have been pre-designed to understand them. A net result of the emerging fixation on domestic Muslim radicalization—what Mavelli (2013) has called the securitization of Islam—is a feedback loop that simply re-circulates demands for more programs, more information gathering, more surveillance. Scholarship from critical security studies and Surveillance Studies can offer useful guidance for critically analyzing these contemporary trends.

Discussion and Analysis: Radicalization, Security Traps, and Practices of Surveillance

Researchers in the field of security governance have underlined how Western states have experienced an intensification of surveillance techniques and security discourse in everyday life (Bigo 2008; Haggerty and Ericson 2006; Lyon 2006; Monahan 2010). In Canada, there has been a substantive growth in the field of security and security governance (Murphy 2007; Monaghan and Walby 2012a). One of the major areas of security proliferation has been the growth of public sector security spending: in the decade after 9/11, an additional \$92 billion (CAN) in national security spending has been allotted over and above the amount it would have spent had budgets remained in line with levels before September 2001 (Macdonald 2011). A vast majority of this spending has been directed towards security bureaucracies.

Detailing the emergence of security governance structures is a difficult undertaking. Nonetheless, providing a sketch of entities such as the CVEWG assists in understanding the expanding field of security governance post 9/11 September 2001. Valverde (2010: 5) notes that “all that we can know about security is what people do in its name, and that therefore our focus should be on practices of governance that in fact appeal to ‘security.’” As a large network of security actors, the CVEWG is a significant actor in producing and circulating new discourses of radicalization and violent extremism that appeal to Canadian (in)securities. It networks an extensive array of departments and agencies, coordinates workshops and collaborations, and act as drivers to ensure that the topics of radicalization and violent extremism have political traction at the highest levels of government. Moreover, it has ensured that the discourses of radicalization and violent extremism have become standardized into Canada’s “whole of government” counter-terrorism strategy.

As agents in the field of security governance, the CVEWG is central to the construction of (in)security knowledge around radicalization and extremism. The working group and its membership produce definitions, categories of threat, caricatures of extremists and radicals, and conceptualizations of danger. Yet, these knowledge systems are self-referential to a security-scape where pre-emption and “precautionary risk” are ever-expanding (see Aradau and Van Munster 2007; Ericson 2007). While the risk of domestic terrorism remains exceptionally low in Canada, security governance agencies have adapted to focus on more dissipated areas of threat. As critical scholarship has pointed out, the proliferation of discourses of security and insecurity, security actors provide prescriptions, technologies, and “surveillance fantasies” (Aas 2011) to address the risk perceptions that are produced by (in)security governance. The goal in the field of security preparedness, as Bigo (2008, 2006) has argued, is to *manage*

insecurity. Knowledge produced by the field of security preparedness that informs these trends is wide ranging. It involves a massive bureaucracy that is tasked with investigating, sorting, labelling, profiling, categorizing, and re-circulating threats. These “security traps” produce expectations that new threats must exist. As processes of (in)security governance accelerate, so do the networks that produce and sustain them. This expansion illustrates the discursive power of “security traps” in contemporary Western societies.

CASE Collective explained that security traps can be explained by the widening of the contemporary security agenda (2006: 460-464). With more social issues folded into the milieu of “security,” these discursive formations are “a specific form of politicization that appeals to the professionals of security” (2006: 460). As discourses of security lead to the coercive involvement by state agencies, these efforts “raise the issue of protection by securitizing the audience the security discourses are addressing” (CASE Collective 2006: 460). But, CASE (2006: 460) warn, the “fact that one cannot necessarily establish a feeling of security, understood as a feeling of freedom from threat, simply by securitizing and a more issues or by securitizing them more.” As “traps,” security discourses allow for experts in the management of unease to occupy expert status and invoke security measures—securitization processes—as easement methods that require further re-circulations of dangers. In effect, “security traps” result in “the politics of maximal security [which] are also politics of maximal anxiety” (CASE Collective 2006: 461). Articulations of radicalization and extremism illustrate the expansive field of security traps, as a cursory examination of the membership of the CVEWG—from National Defence to Immigration to the Canadian International Development Agency—can demonstrate. But importantly, while the symbolic use of “traps” evoke a representation of enclosure, contemporary entrapments of security are not governed by a logic of enclosure that are evident in past practices of security.⁵ For contemporary security traps, such as discourses of radicalization, are not enclosures: their governing rationality is one of eminence and they are better characterized as dispositifs of power without boundaries or exteriors.

Underlining the eminent logic of security gives exceptional weight to scholarship on the sociology of surveillance. Surveillance Studies, and *Surveillance & Society* in particular, have advanced the theoretical understanding of Western “surveillant societies” (Bennett et al. 2014; Surveillance Studies Network 2006; see also Murakami Wood 2009) and the ubiquity of surveillant practices in our everyday lived experiences (Lyon and Haggerty 2013). Given the entrenchment of surveillant infrastructures (Monahan 2010), research on surveillance has built upon core themes of visibility and circulation (Foucault 1979, 2007) to underline how discursive framing of “surveillance problems” create a field of intelligibility where these problematizations can only be addressed through surveillant solutions (Dandeker 1990; Scott 1998; see also Bigo 2008; Lyon and Haggerty 2013).⁶ There is no exterior to the gaze, particularly with the disciplinary rationalities that operate on massifying and individualizing planes. In keeping with the disciplinary nature of surveillance, it is worth noting that while the CVEWG—and the contents of this article—focus on the infrastructures of security that are rationalized through discourses of radicalization, there are also a host of psycho-social initiatives that aim to develop a psychological understanding of the “radical” with an aim to intervene and reform a radical deviant’s “wayward self” (to borrow from Rose’s (1999) terminology). These developments have been outside the scope of this article, but can be illustrated by examples like the Correctional Services Canada’s de-radicalization programs (see Monaghan 2013a), and nonetheless underline the value of Surveillance Studies in understanding how security traps translate into a material form of practice: Surveillance *is* the “security trap” in practice. As documents from the

⁵Canada has a long history of deploying enclosure strategies: from the reservation system imposed on indigenous people (see Smith 2009; also Monaghan 2013b); to the internment of Japanese and others during war time (Sunahara 2000); to the current “security certificate” regime (see Larsen and Piché 2009).

⁶ While there have been efforts to articulate an anti-security politics (see Neocleous and Rigakos 2011), Huysmans’ (2004) “normative dilemma” remains an occupational hazard for any critical engagement with surveillance and security practices.

CVEWG demonstrate, the invocation of radicalization as a dominant paradigm of the “war on terror” necessitates increased calls for surveillance as a solution to insecurities.

As Western countries continue to grapple with the amplification and intensification of surveillance assemblages that are organized around the logics of security, populations are at greater risk of invasive policing (Haggerty and Gazso 2005; Innes and Sheptycki 2004; Lyon and Murakami Wood 2012). This is particularly true for populations that are deemed risky as opposed to simply at risk. For Muslims in Canada—and other Western countries—the risks of profiling, harassment, and criminalization are immediate (Awan 2012; see also Elghawaby 2013). Additionally, proliferating apparatuses of surveillance present a significant “chilling effect” across the social field (Boycott 2007; Deflem 2008), particularly social movements at odds with government policies (Monaghan and Walby 2012a). Worse, the reliance on surveillance practices as the materiality of security traps represents a potential “boomerang effect” (Foucault 2003; Graham 2010) where the policing of Western societies become more militaristic, borrowing heavily from the “cultural turn” (Gregory 2008) in counter-insurgency knowledge developed through imperial warfare (see also Gonzales 2012). Again, the result will point towards an intensification of repressive state practices targeting risky populations, most notably, Muslims.

Conclusion(s)

This article argues that discourses of radicalization and violent extremism represent a new—and very powerful—terrain for the allocation of resources in the “war on terror.” Given that the current configuration of the “war on terror” is in the midst of a transformation from its original post-9/11 September 2001 character of foreign invasion, into a domestic campaign that combines innovative fusion of Cold Warrior policing and contemporary counter-insurgency practices, security and policing agencies have employed radicalization discourses to demonstrate a continuity of threat and to press the need for continued counter-terrorism resources and powers. The article offers a unique empirical demonstration of how security networks are developed according to powerful discursive formations, in this case, the emergent threat of radicalization. It details the emergence of radicalization discourses in Canadian policing and security agencies, while contributing to methodological debates on accessing data on contemporary security practices. Finally, an examination of the empirical data on the CVEWG contributes to critical scholarship in the field of Surveillance Studies by showing how security traps function as tropes to expand state surveillance practices across a growing field of everyday life.

Employing domestic radicalization as a security trap for accelerated surveillance is especially relevant given the critical attention given to both security spending in Canada and the tangible threat presented by domestic radicalization. Only one year after the release of Canada’s revamped Counter-terrorism strategy (Canada 2012), the Auditor General of Canada released a scathing assessment of the flagship post-9/11 September 2001 Public Security and Anti-Terrorism (PSAT) Initiative (Auditor General 2013). As a vehicle for numerous counter-terrorism projects, the PSAT allocated, between 2001 and 2009, \$12.9 billion to 35 departments and agencies. The Auditor General’s analysis showed that at least \$3.1 billion of that spending went unaccounted. The money was spent, yet it was not properly documented or reported. In reviewing the various reports, evaluations, and summaries of PSAT project spending, the Auditor General (2013:13) concluded starkly: “In all cases, we noted that only limited information was available on spending and results under the Initiative.” Giving a very appropriate “security” character to what Flyvbjerg (2005) has described as “Machiavellian Megaprojects,” initiatives like the PSAT—and anti-terrorism programming more generally—insulate themselves from critique on the grounds that they are protecting the public from terrorism. In other words, they use security traps.

Use of discourses of radicalization have emerged as the new discursive frame for articulating the threat to the Canadian public, yet the expression of the new menace of radicalization rests on non-articulation of the inconvenient and often unspoken truth facing security governance agencies: the threat of terrorism in

Canada is very remote (Bartlett et al. 2010). Contra the claims of Canadian security governance agencies who warn of mounting threats posed by radical Muslims like those associated with “Toronto 18”—but also domestic protest groups, such as environmentalists (Monaghan and Walby 2012a) and indigenous people (Crosby and Monaghan 2012)—security scholars have pointed out the challenges to carrying out coordinated terrorist attack in North America, making the risk of large-scale attacks very remote (Brooks 2011; Vidalis 2009; Wolfendale 2006). In Canada, the threat of coordinated terrorism attacks causing mass civilian casualties is even less serious. Harking cynically to Isin’s “neurotic citizen” (2004), one could point out that—despite the attention given to Muslim extremism—texting will likely kill far more Canadians than terrorism ever will.

Research efforts to detail the emergence of expanding fields of security represent an opportunity to illustrate the eminent logic of security traps as they continue to expand and accelerate. Likewise, using the *ATIA* as a method of data collection to “study up” reclusive security networks allows researchers to gain access—albeit mediated—to some of the vast textual records produced by networks like the CVEWG. While remaining cognizant of the limitations, *ATIA* as a tool can provide unique data which would otherwise be sequestered off in government archives for decades, as has happened with much Cold-War security-related materials (see Gentile and Kinsman 2009). As part of a toolbox of research tactics available to critical security scholars and sociologists of surveillance, the *ATIA* can provide an “archive of the present”—to adapt from the Foucauldian fold—that embodies similar advantages and disadvantages to dominant methodologies, but presents a tangible reward of timely and detailed disclosure on contemporary security practices. For scholars in contexts where information battles are simmering, the risks might be worth the rewards.

Efforts to detail the emergence of the CVEWG and the security trap of radicalization, demonstrate that—contra assertions by Canadian security governance officials—discourses of radicalization and violent extremism have become largely de-territorialized from Canadian experiences and context and, instead, have become new abstractions to articulate and expand the “war on terror.” Within a grand “whole of government” approach to standardizing a new “war on terror” lexicon, the CVEWG risks painting a one dimensional figure of Islamic extremism in Canada that epitomizes the type of racial thinking Sherene Razack (among others) has described as marking groups “as belonging to the realm of culture and religion, as opposed to the realm of law” and resulting in calls “for secular peoples [to] protect themselves from pre-modern, religious peoples whose loyalty to tribe and community reigns over their commitment to the rule of law” (Razack 2012: 221, Razack 2008). In a context of pre-emptive risk policing that surveillance scholarship has been especially critical towards (Aradau and Van Munster 2007; Ericson 2007), state practices of racial profiling, discrimination and violence become increasingly normalized. Mimicking long-standing Orientalist constructions of Muslims as inherently fanatical and prone to violence (see Gregory 2008), security governance agencies in Canada have used “radicalization” and “violent extremism” as a net-widener for the expansion of national security resources. In the transformation spatial and discursive terrains of the “war on terror,” tropes of radicalization and violent extremism have served to—and will likely increasingly be in the service of—promoting a generalized fear of menacing Islam and expand the security resources and preoccupations of the “war on terror.”

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