

RESEARCH

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RECOMMENDATIONS

BRITISH MULTICULTURALISM, SOCIAL COHESION AND PUBLIC SECURITY

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This paper will draw upon recent research to illuminate the many ways in which policies of managing diversity and addressing the challenges of threats to security interact in contemporary societies. The story will be told in relation to the history and current context of the United Kingdom, but the claim will be made that the elements of the story developed here can be usefully applied in other national contexts.

We live in a world where diversity has been the norm within national populations. The claims of nationalists that their particular country is uniquely ethnically homogeneous and founded upon an unbroken stream of cultural isolation have typically required a creative 'invention of history' (Hobsbawm and Ranger, 1983) and on occasion a genocidal expulsion of large numbers of people whose existence within the national terrain acted as a living challenge to the nationalist myth. Contemporary archaeology increasingly reveals artefacts that demonstrate the long history of human transhumance and trade. In the decades following the Second World War, the processes widely labelled 'globalisation' have contributed to a flow of peoples across borders and between continents. Currently, where the flow of migration for labour has in many ways diminished, there is nonetheless a continuing flow of asylum seekers and refugees who contribute to the increasing diversity of nation states populations. Added to this there is the ongoing impact of family reunion and new patterns of trans-national marriage formation.

Across Europe and elsewhere, we have seen a political fixation with tightening the control of borders and a complementary growth of neo-

nationalist sentiments, which have frequently become expressed in terms of reaction to the multicultural policies that have developed in differing ways across many states since the 1970s (Fekete, 2009, Lentin and Titley, 2011). David Cameron in Britain and Angela Merkel in Germany are equally content to loudly announce that multiculturalism has failed. It may be true that at the level of national politics a consensus in support of developing progressive policies to sustain equitable coexistence in multi-ethnic societies has radically waned, but at the level of specific towns and neighbourhoods, diversity of ethnicity and sexual preference and gender expression have become normalised, and *de facto* forms of cultural diversity and civic co-existence are in place. In other towns and neighbourhoods across Europe, strong xenophobic sentiments and a powerful assertion of a dominant cultural identity are also to be found. What has become increasingly non-negotiable is the *de facto* ethnic diversity of countries and townships. *Multiculturalism* as a moral commitment and an active policy may have suffered a major onslaught, but the demographic reality of ethnic diversity has not been erased by this policy shift.

It is in this context that this paper is being written. It starts from an expectation that ethnic diversity, along with other expressions of diversity, is a concrete feature of contemporary societies and that consequently the management of diversity will remain a key theme within the governance of states and townships. The Council of Europe, for example, has a major programme on social cohesion which seeks to address the challenge of managing such diversity, and there is across Europe, and elsewhere, a fixation with confronting the threat of terrorism, which very typically is itself enwrapped in a wider concern with *securitization* (see, for example, Huysmans, 2006, and Noxolo and Huysmans, 2009). Whether it is in relation to addressing ethnic diversity or whether it is in relation to developing strategies to counter terrorism, the policies developed by nation states are framed by what Charles Taylor (2004) has called 'modern social imaginaries': those deep seated cultural eddies of belief and affect that inform the bedrock of assumptions which underpin shared perspectives on the world and *our place* in it. For this reason that which may appear on the surface to be common strategies for managing diversity across Europe will, in their formulation, justifications and expression be heavily shaped by these historically embedded beliefs and values.

The Heavy Hand of History

In his critique of the use and abuse of the term 'Islamophobia', Halliday (1996), in developing his account of the many faces of what he prefers to call 'Anti-Muslimism,' stresses the absolute centrality of the significance of each nation and each community's historical engagement with Islam. Knowledge of the specific historicity of the particular stereotypes, feelings and values that shape particular expressions of Anti-Muslimism is central to understanding their ramifications and resilience. As recent scholarship indicates, for example, the German and the British experience of Orientalism and their development of their distinctive relationships with Islam have quite different trajectories (Marchand, 2008). Thus too, any attempt to understand current efforts to develop policies around diversity must access the same historical context in depth in order to be able to map the sentiment and ideologies which inform contemporary popular and political thinking.

In this context, diversity is not a new phenomenon in the United Kingdom. It is something of an irony that Little Englander nationalists have a tendency to invoke their 'Anglo-Saxon heritage' without any sense of awkwardness at the history of invasion and occupation that is encapsulated in that dual identity (see, for example, Miles, 2005 for an account of the early transitions in the ethnic identities of Britain). Colour too has a long historical presence as a marker in British ethnic/racial signification. The Roman Legions almost certainly brought an influx of different skin colour into the British gene pool, and the triangular trade of slavery resulted in the settlement of substantial numbers of Africans in eighteenth and nineteenth century Britain. Shakespeare's Othello would not have had the resonance it had with its contemporary audiences had colour not carried a significance beyond a mere designation of skin tone. Even in the realm of Queen Elizabeth 1, the presence of 'coloured people' in England generated popular resentment; as this proclamation of the time indicates.

'Whereas the Queen's majesty, tendering the good and welfare of her natural subjects, greatly distressed in these hard times of dearth, is highly discontented to understand the great number of Negroes and blackamoors which (as she is informed) are carried into this realm...who are fostered and powered here, to the great annoyance of her own liege people that which covet the relief which these people consume, as also for that the most part of them are infidels having no understanding of Christ or his Gospel; hath given a special commandment that the said kind f people shall be with all speed avoided and discharged out of this her majesty's realms'(quoted in Walvin, 1971, p 64).

Having settled in Britain, they are accused of consuming resources which the 'true' British citizens resent, and they are infidels, which in current parlance is politely rendered as 'Muslim'. The tropes of colour, national identity and religion have a long and continuous history in the construction of Britain's imagined community, and they have been rehearsed and revitalised as new flows of immigrants have come into Britain (see Winder, 2004, and Solomos, 2003). The long history of the black diaspora has been outlined by (Hiro, 1973, Segal, 1995) and the particular history of the Black presence in Britain has been outlined by (Fryer, 1984). The fact that much of this history is not readily retrievable by many contemporary British citizens does not mean that that history has not left deposits in the weft and woof of British culture. Just as Colley (1993) argued that British Protestant identity had been significantly shaped by the long English conflict with Catholic France, so too the absorption of, and resistance to, the sequential flows of new residents into Britain had laid down layers of memory and sentiment that are expressed in British literature, the arts and everyday speech. The notion of *island Britain* remains relevant to the anti-European Union sentiments that are so easily co-opted by current political interests. The xeno-racism that is described by Fekete (2009) as a growing phenomenon in contemporary Britain does not flourish in untilled soil. Much of the appeal of the United Kingdom Independence Party and the English Defence League and the cynical exploitation of the 'race ticket' by all mainstream British parties lies in sentiments and stereotypes that have long and different histories within Britain's regional populations.

Empire - Colonialism and National Self Regard

Within the contemporary 'social imaginaries' that inform current thinking about diversity, the historical legacy of nations in tracing 'their destiny' over time is heavily shaped by any past engagement in Imperial expansion overseas. Whether it be the long history of Swedish expansion across Europe or the Imperial exploitation carried out by Britain, France, Belgium or Germany in different continents, the presence of an Imperial past provides a frame of reference for the national self image that contains a reservoir of imagery about past glory and its legitimating belief systems. Thus, for example, the extensive empires of France and Britain in different ways provided the context for the construction of legitimating beliefs about the export of democracy, Christianity and Enlightenment values that juxtaposed the supposed infantilism and cultural poverty of the occupied territories with the 'civilised' and modern nature of the occupier (Kiernan, 1969, Grewel, 1996, Inden, 1992). In the British context this history left a wide repository of belief and affect regarding British self regard and stereotypes of *the other* that were deep seated and far from simple (see, for example, Young, 1995, Cannadine, 2002). Britain's engagement in its imperial and colonial exploitation of

overseas territories provided a context for the extensive elaboration of, amongst others, racist theories of superiority which served to legitimate the brutal treatment of others. This ideological work was not confined to the realm of the political, but was also widely permeated throughout literature, the arts and contemporary science. Thus the work of post-colonial scholars in the last five decades or so has done much to reveal the deeply embedded nature of these stereotypical ideological deposits. The significance of this history for particular nations was revealed by the traumas of decolonisation, where the once omnipotent European state found itself confronted not only by a loss of economic and political advantage, but crucially also engaged in a sometimes bitter internal debate about the integrity of its long established self regard and the overseas abuse of its own much vaunted value base. Thus, for example, the French expulsion from Algeria was a profound and enduring assault upon the French *amour propre*.

In Britain, of course, the extension of control over other territories and nations was not only exercised in far distant lands. The United Kingdom is itself a fusion of different peoples in what Michael Hechter (1976), for example, referred to as '*Internal Colonialism*'. The hegemonic triumph of the English over the Scots, the Welsh and the Irish may have allowed the English to routinely use Britain and England as interchangeable synonyms, but this was a usage that the Scots, the Welsh and the Irish were unlikely to copy. The development of the exercise of independent political powers by the Scottish Parliament over recent years has acted as a powerful challenge to this historical English hegemony, and it is now being increasingly echoed by the Welsh assembly. Additionally, in a previous decade 'the troubles' in Northern Ireland robustly revealed the tenuous nature of the *United Kingdom*. Thus in recent years in mainland Britain the increasing challenges to English hegemony and to the implicit co-identity of the English with Britain, have created a somewhat neurotic concern with English identity. The Scots, the Welsh and the Irish have always had the anvil of English presumed superiority against which to beat out their own self-conscious national identity, whilst the English have felt no need to carefully nurture their own identity in the same way - although in many cases regional identities have remained ferociously significant. The fact that currently Scotland has been passing legislation and implementing policies on, for example, education and social care, which stand out as being opposed to the legislation enacted in Westminster, has provided a focal point for English distress that Scots Members of Parliament, based in Westminster, may vote on legislation affecting the English electorate, whilst English Members of Parliament have no say over the legislation enacted in Scotland. Thus issues of identity and sovereignty are in the context of contemporary Britain peculiarly sensitive.

If the language of race and of the destiny of British greatness was inherent in the trajectories of British Imperialism, we should not neglect to note that the British psyche was in other ways attuned to hierarchical ways of ordering the world. Gender distinctions were embedded in British culture historically, which until the twentieth century remained powerfully intact as an ideological apparatus that ubiquitously established the primacy of the male of the species. Class too has a long history in British life and culture. As a society with a long history of Monarchy and a powerful and enduring aristocracy, the 'natural ordering' of privilege has been deeply rooted in British culture. The early industrialisation of the British workforce and its production of an urbanised and poor working class further developed the embedding of class inequality in British life. This is an inequality that has not been eroded by the affluence of the twentieth century, which has seen Britain sustain its position as one of the wealthiest countries in the world. Class inequalities and the associated radical differences in life chances and quality of health remain scandalously concrete in twenty-first century Britain (see for example, Dorling et al 2007, Dorling , 2010, and Marmot, 2010). One of the ideological triumphs of Blairism's 'Third Way' was the effective removal of class from the forefront of Parliamentary discourse. Thus in Britain there are a number of intersecting strands of social categorisation that cumulatively normalise the acceptance of hierarchies of privilege and of the operation of ideologies of dominance (see Sidanius and Pratto, 2001 re the social psychology of dominance).

A Policy Dualism Based on the Internal Contradictions of British Self Regard

If one implication of the history briefly sketched above is a strong nationalist sentiment with embedded historical stereotypes of out-groups who have been regarded as different and often inferior, then it is also the case that one element of British self regard rests in a conviction of the British strong commitment to tolerance and justice. There are key historical realities which are invoked to underpin the self image that not only is Britain the 'Mother of Parliaments', but that also she has been a haven to refugees. The historical acceptance of Huguenots and the late nineteenth century admission of Jews from Russia are just two of the examples that may be invoked to sustain this self image, regardless of the fact that the realities were much less extensive and unproblematic than their remembered form. The reality remains nonetheless that a significant element in British self regard resides in the belief in British decency and tolerance. This assertion of a humanistic inclusiveness sits uncomfortably with its companion sentiments of racial and xenophobic

resentment of the immigrant. Thus, since the development of the British post-Second World War experience of immigration and settlement there has been something of a schizoid pattern of policy development, where a cumulative growth of increasingly draconian immigration legislation has been paralleled by a cumulative growth of increasingly robust and far reaching anti-discrimination policies. Given the politics of ethnic relations in Britain, it would have to be said that the political discourse around the passage of the anti-immigration legislation was much more extensive and vehement than that associated with the development of anti-discriminatory policies. In British public opinion, there has been a consistent anti-immigrant sentiment that has been capable of spontaneous eruption around moments of radical change in the flow of immigrants into Britain. One occurred in the late 1960s with the rapid entry into Britain of people of Asian ancestry who were being forcibly ejected from Kenya and Uganda as a consequence of the national policies of Africanisation in those countries. Specific newspapers were central in creating moral panic (Cohen, 1972, Critcher, 2006) around these events and national political parties out flanked far-right attempts to exploit this populism by incorporating explicit anti-immigrant rhetoric into their political discourse. At one level the political failure of the far right in Britain to mobilise populist support around racism has been a consequence of the extensive incorporation into the *reasonable* discourse of mainstream parties of exactly such sentiments (Solomos, 2003, Kundnani, 2007). At the same time, the political will to seek to limit expressions of racial sentiments in attitudes and discrimination was driven politically by the energies of committed NGOs and political activists within Parliament, who could not be said to enjoy the same wide popular support as the anti-immigrant policies. Thus the party political interest in loudly proclaiming their success in cumulatively addressing racial discrimination in Britain was at best ambiguous. This situation led this author to describe the political dualism that resulted as “*doing good by stealth whilst flirting with racism*” (Husband, 2005). However, the passage, and more importantly, the ubiquitous implementation of anti-discriminatory legislation in employment and throughout public bodies did not go unremarked, and an extensive public repertoire of counter-narratives to such policies, typically described as *political correctness gone mad* flourished in the media and in popular discourse (Hewitt, 2005, Husband, 2010). It could reasonably be argued that over the period from 1965 to 2010, the British state had put in place a robust policy of legislation **and** practice that compared to many other European countries had gone beyond a rhetorical claim to respect diversity, and had in fact taken substantial steps to facilitate the continuity of minority cultures through state policy and, furthermore, had taken steps to limit, though certainly not erase, the impact of racism in British life. Thus there was a basis for the British, through comparison with others, to continue to rehearse their long established

belief that they were particularly nice people.

Thus in setting the context for a discussion on the development of British policies of community cohesion in 2001, we can note the importance of the framing context of British policies for ethnic relations since the 1960s, and the dualism in British values which had made the British actively compromised in their engagement in xenophobic border policies, whilst at the same time being open to the state's promotion of a progressive form of multiculturalism, underpinned by a framework of anti-discriminatory legislation. Comparable developments in legislation to protect the rights of women, the disabled and gay and lesbian Britons had provided a wider range of support for legislation aimed at outlawing discrimination.

The Emergence of a Very British Form of Social Cohesion – *Community Cohesion*

The emergence of social cohesion as a focus for political policy development within the British government did not erupt *ab initio* from a policy void. British social policy had a long concern with community development and the concepts which became central to the language of British policy in this area had an extensive pre-existence elsewhere. The language of social capital that came to be so pivotal to the definition of social cohesion had an extensive prehistory that in fact rendered the concept potentially ambiguous and contradictory (Field, 2003, Arneil, 2007). In the British case much of that ambiguity was extinguished by the arrival of social capital already pre-digested in the writings of Putnam, and particularly though the transatlantic impact of his book *Bowling Alone* (Putnam, 2000). Thus the concrete events to be sketched here were rapidly encapsulated in a specific repertoire of concepts that shaped both the understanding of these events and the shaping of the policy response to address them. The recognized trigger for the British development of an urgent policy agenda around social cohesion was the eruption of civil disturbances in cities of Northern England in 2001. Extensive rioting in the cities of Bradford, Burnley and Oldham in 2001 took place preponderantly within inner city areas and caused very considerable damage. A critical factor in the subsequent development of attempts to account for these events was the fact that the participants in these riots were largely from the Muslim communities in these towns. Thus these were not just highly distressing civil disturbances, but rather they were perceived as – *race riots* – a phenomenon with which the British public and, more particularly, the British political system had some prior experience (see, for example, Benyon and Solomos, 1987, Joshua, et al, 1983). The riots of the 1980s were associated with British African-Caribbean youth, whilst the events of 2001 were clearly associated with Muslim youth.

There has been a long and diverse Islamic presence in Britain, but the current demography is very largely a consequence of the emigration into Britain of migrant workers from the British Commonwealth as a reserve pool of labour to fuel the economic recovery of post-war Britain. Thus their current demographic location in specific cities in Britain is an enduring consequence of the industries which recruited them and the then contemporary discrimination in the housing market. During their arrival and for the decade that followed the communities that developed were essentially labelled by the majority population in terms of racial and national identities. They were; *coloured immigrants*, or *Pakistanis*, or *Bangladeshis*. Thus the racist assaults upon members of these communities in the 1970s were popularly called *Paki-bashing*. Their faith was not necessarily the most salient part of their identity. However, over time their faith identity came to be the most salient feature of their difference. A number of events contributed to this shift, amongst which were the *Rushdie Affair* and the Gulf Wars. The furore over the publication of Salman Rushdie's *Satanic Verses* was an international phenomenon, but had a quite dramatic effect upon British ethnic relations (Aktar, 1989, Malik, 2009, Modood, 1990, Ruthven, 1991). It energised the latent British Orientalist repertoire of views about Islam and specifically juxtaposed notions of the British liberal commitment to freedom of speech with notions of a traditional closed minded theism. Thus by the time of the 1997 publication of the widely influential Runnymede Trust Report, *Islamophobia: A Challenge for Us All*, it could be argued that the Muslim presence in Britain had become a significant area of populist concern.

Consequently, the political response to the riots of 2001 was very heavily driven by a concern with the Muslim identity of the participants. From the outset the emerging policies of social cohesion were explicitly targeted at Muslim communities. In Britain at that time (and indeed now), there are very considerable differences in life experiences and health profiles that are reflections of individuals' class and social location in society. There is a strong association between ethnicity and quality of life which has resulted in the growth within British inner city neighbourhoods of relatively high concentrations of specific ethnic minority communities who may share considerable economic and social deprivation (Loury et al 2005, Dorling and Thomas, 2004). To a significant extent, in some locales, this has been related to the collapse of the industries to which these communities were initially attracted. Certainly in the towns where these riots occurred, the near total collapse of the once thriving textile industries had had a deleterious impact on the economic and labour opportunities of the Muslim population. However, in the accounts of the riots and in the policy literature that emerged following them, it was the characteristics of the Muslim communities themselves that became central to the explanatory accounts of the riot

and to framing the policy initiative that was developed: *community cohesion* (see Burnley Task Force, 2001; Oldham Independent Review, 2001; the Community Cohesion Independent Review Team [the Cattle Report], 2001, Ouseley, 2001). The key issues identified in the development of the challenge to be addressed by community cohesion were the asserted *self-segregation* of Muslim communities and their predisposition toward living in *parallel cultures*. This analysis found the explanation for the breakdown in social relations in these cities in the dysfunctional cultural characteristics of the Muslim communities. It was their *bad* bonding social capital that resulted in them having an inward looking social orientation and a fixation with retaining their 'traditional' culture; the policy solution was to promote their acquisition of *good* bridging social capital (see, for example, McGhee, 2003). It was a policy of assimilation not too effectively disguised in the language of social science.

As a policy package, the emergence of community cohesion as a rapidly developed and urgently implemented political programme was consistent with both past and current tendencies in British social policies. Margaret Thatcher's radical experimentation with a perverse fusion of neo-liberalism and strident Little Englander nationalism (Jessop et al, 1988) had produced the deeply divisive category of the '*Enemy Within*'. This convenient category of the politically problematic non-believers in the benefits of Thatcherism included, amongst others, trade unionists, immigrants and sections of youth who provided convenient scapegoats for the social distresses of the time. Thatcherism employed a dichotomous discourse of 'those who are for us' and 'those who are against us', which was employed to promote an emotive personalisation of political analysis in terms of human motivation and shared culture and values. It was an effective ploy to subvert discussion of the structural bases of inequalities and social unrest. It certainly did not allow for the possibility of reflexively exploring whether current political policies might themselves be contributory factors to these phenomena. Certainly in relation to the 'race riots' of 1981, the government, anticipating the response that would later emerge in relation to the 2001 riots, found it congenial to find the cause of the disturbances in the dysfunctional culture and family structure of the young African – Caribbeans involved (CCCS, 1982, Solomos, 2003). And again setting a precedent for the political response to events twenty years later, as Solomos (2003, p164) argued, the Thatcher government strenuously sought to avoid any linkage being made between their policies and the outbreak of violent disorder. As Levitas' (2005) analysis of the role of a *moral underclass discourse* in New Labour's political practice reveals, accounting for events in terms of the moral and behavioural delinquency of the excluded themselves is an effective and much used political strategy when faced with recurrent challenges of inequity in society. Additionally, within the politics of New Labour there was an extant concern with regulating the behaviour of unruly urban youth, which also

provided a supportive context for the development of Community Cohesion policies (Atkinson and Helms, 2007).

The particularity of the 2001 riots turned upon the Islamic identity of the communities from which the participants predominantly came. In the context of a world shaped by a political ferment around Huntington's (1993) Clash of Civilisations thesis, and particularly by its reframing within the context of 'the War on Terror' post 9/11, then *the difference* of Britain's Muslim citizens was not just an interesting cultural observation, it had also become a perceived challenge to the integrity of British society and to British internal security. Thus community cohesion as it developed was an intrinsically assimilationist programme of interventions that sought to make these Muslim communities more British. Its cultural rather than structural –economic focus is revealed in Cattle's distinction between social cohesion as a generic policy that is discussed across Europe and the British conception of Community Cohesion. As someone centrally involved in the development of this policy, it is telling that he states that:

'social cohesion' has tended to be used more broadly and aligned particularly with general socioeconomic factors, whereas 'community cohesion' has emerged as a more specific term to describe the societal features which are based on identifiable communities defined by faith or ethnicity, rather than social class (Cattle, 2008, p50).

Thus the practical focus of the policy is not on addressing socio-economic inequalities that might be expected to be associated with class divisions, exacerbated by racial discrimination, but is rather based upon addressing expressions of faith and identity within a framework in which the culture of the Muslim communities has already been identified as the fundamental problem (for relevant Government policy, see, for example, Home Office, 2004, HMG, 2005, DCLG, 2008). Despite what became the very evident inability of the Government or its agencies to provide a viable substantive definition of the constituent parts of British culture, the policy of community cohesion proceeded with the assimilationist expectation of making Muslims more British (Kundnani, 2007, Flint and Robinson, 2008).

COUNTER-TERRORISM: CONTEST AND PREVENT

In Britain, as in any other nation, the state provision of policies and practices to guarantee state security and the individual security of their citizens did not begin with Al-Qaida and 9/11, although that event did mark a critical turning point in the acceleration of state counter-terrorist policies and a re-positioning of the balance of security against liberty. In Britain 'the troubles' in Northern Ireland had seen the British security

services refine policies, develop technical means of surveillance and shift the collective tolerance of intrusive counter-terrorist measures that would lay down much of the ground work for the very rapid innovations of the twenty-first century. Additionally, in the Thatcher era of the politicised rhetoric of 'law and order under threat', the very considerable civil disturbances that accompanied the radical assault upon the trade union movement, as well as the social challenges of urban law and order, saw an extensive development of state securitization of everyday life that was accompanied by a considerable erosion of extant civil liberties (Gearty, 1990; Hillyard and Percy-Smith, 1988). The bitter struggle with the coal miners and the coal miners' strike of 1984-5, for example, was an instance of the draconian use of state powers and the political invoking of 'exceptional circumstances' that would become characteristic of a range of policy issues in the 2000s (Milne, 2004).

In simple language, the British government and the British people were no strangers to exceptional measures when in 2001, following the shocking events of 9/11 in the United States, the British Government rapidly passed through Parliament the *Anti-Terrorism, Crime and Security Act*. Elements of this legislation were in violation of the European Convention on Human Rights to which Britain is a signatory; and this marked just the beginning of a process whereby Parliament would invoke exceptional circumstances to justify attempts to legitimate the use of previously unacceptable procedures, including torture (see the *Report of the House of Lords/House of Commons Joint Committee on Human Rights (2010)* for a troubling account of the struggle of the judiciary to counter the British Government's attempts to violate international human rights principles and judgements). The policy arena in which counter-terrorism measures were to be developed and through which they would be transformed into specific forms of practice at the level of the local state was also concurrently undergoing a rapid institutional change. Following extensive flooding and a fuel crisis in 2000, and a foot and mouth crisis in farming in 2001, the British government became aware of their significant lack of preparedness to deal with major emergencies, and in particular this 'triple whammy' of crises had revealed the absence of adequate inter-agency ways of working (Mottram, 2007). Thus the *Civil Contingencies Act 2004*:

"...swept up and revised existing emergency powers and civil defence legislation, fusing them, in a single statute, with the generic capabilities needed to deal with the consequences of a terrorist assault upon people, infrastructure, essential services and systems" (Hennessy, 2007b, p13).

Linked with parallel developments that had been promoting 'joined up action' in the agencies dealing with health and social care, the development of routine inter-agency collaboration and contact will prove to be a significant feature of the context that has shaped the simultaneous implementation of community cohesion and counter-

terrorism measures, as we shall see below.

The event which rapidly accelerated and changed the urgency attached to the implementation of the United Kingdom counter-terrorism policy was the bombings in London on the 7th of July 2005. The sudden and devastating emergence of 'home grown bombers' in the national capital produced a rapid quantum shift in the British policy response to terrorist threats. The Government White Paper of 2006, *Countering International Terrorism: The United Kingdom's Strategy*, laid out the national counter-terrorism strategy, which it called *CONTEST*. In that document the government was brutally frank about its perception of the likely threat faced by the British people. It stated that:

"The Government assesses the current threat in the UK from Islamist terrorism is serious and sustained. British citizens also face the threat of terrorist attack when abroad. Overall we judge the scale of the threat is potentially still increasing and is not likely to diminish significantly for some years.....it is not possible to eliminate completely the threat of terrorist attacks in this country"(H.M Government 2006, p8).

Maintaining a high level of perceived threat has remained a feature of Government rhetoric around terrorism, for in the absence of an imminent threat the public may be less willing to accept the intrusions into their civil liberties that have been characteristic of the counter-terrorism measures. Thus the media are a necessary hand maiden of both terrorism and the counter-terrorist strategies of government since for both, publicity and the shaping of public opinion are an essential element of their strategy (Norris et al, 2003, Barnett and Reynolds, 2009). The fact that in the United Kingdom the home grown bombers were Muslim certainly added a very significant ingredient to the perceived threat. The segment of the population that was now being identified as the host communities within which the home grown bombers were nurtured was exactly the same communities targeted by community cohesion on the grounds that they were not properly British, and it was their Islamic faith which was central to their perceived detachment from mainstream Britain. The long history of the Islamophobic representation of Muslims in the media (Karim, 2000; Poole, 2002; Poole and Richardson, 2006) now had a new and potent agenda, defined in relation to the Islamist threat, through which the Muslim communities were now framed (Morey and Yaqin, 2011). British Muslims were again explicitly the focus of current Government policy, and this time they were perceived not as a cultural threat but as a threat to life and limb.

The policies of *Contest* were sub-divided into four interlinked, but distinct areas of action: the four Ps. As the updated statement on *Contest* explained:

“CONTEST *is intended to be a comprehensive strategy: Work on Pursue and Prevent reduces the threat from terrorism: work on Protect and Prepare reduces the UK’s vulnerability to attack*”(Home Office, 2009).

‘*Prepare*’ aims to ensure the existence of an adequate organisational and resource capacity to address the consequences of terrorist attack.

‘*Protect*’ aims to guarantee the protection of the public, key national services and British overseas interests.

‘*Pursue*’ is directed at pursuing terrorists and those who sponsor them.

And

‘*Prevent*’ will be the focus of our further analysis here, and it is given a slightly more extensive description. Thus Mottram (2007, p50) defined Prevent in the following terms:

The ‘Prevent’ element of the Government’s counter-terrorism strategy identifies three principal strands of effort whose breadth illustrates the extent of the challenge:

1. *Tackling disadvantage and supporting reform-addressing structural problems in the UK and overseas, such as inequalities and discrimination.*
 2. *Deterring those who facilitate terrorism and those who encourage others to become terrorists—changing the environment in which seeking to turn others towards extremism and terrorist violence can operate.*
 3. *Engaging in the battle of ideas—challenging the ideologies that extremists believe can justify the use of violence, primarily by helping Muslims who wish to dispute these ideas to do so.*

Just as the Community Cohesion agenda effectively failed to engage with the institutional reproduction of class inequalities as a feature of the construction of urban environments, so too the Prevent agenda, as it was developed, very substantially ignored the challenge of tackling disadvantage and addressed *the problem within* the Muslim community once again, this time defined as the *radicalisation* of Muslim youth.

With both Community Cohesion and Prevent policies being implemented by local authorities in specific neighbourhoods across Britain, the British Muslim population found themselves being explicitly targeted by two potentially contradictory policies. In vulgar terms, Community Cohesion said to them that they were problematically detached from British

culture and civic life, and the government wished them to become more active citizens: by becoming *more like us*. At the same time, the Prevent agenda was saying to the same communities, we recognize you as being defined by your faith, and that consequently as Muslim communities we have identified you as the location for the emergence of the next wave of home grown terrorists. Thus you must expect that it is reasonable that the state should put you under extensive and intrusive forms of surveillance, which are justified by our legitimate suspicion of your communities. For Muslim communities that already had a long experience of being the object of quite specific governmental interest about the forms of Islam that were present within them, and the forms of expression of faith that might be regarded as legitimate or illegitimate in the British context, this dual exposure to intense intervention could hardly have been expected to have been experienced as benign or unproblematic (Modood, 2005, 2006, Blick et al, 2006).

In the next section, drawing on recent research (Husband and Alam, 2011), we will briefly explore the consequences of the implementation of these two contradictory policies in five large metropolitan authorities in the North of England [for much greater analysis in depth than can be offered here please consult that text].

CAUGHT IN THE CROSS FIRE: Muslim communities and the interaction of Community Cohesion and Prevent

At the core of the difficulties that arose from the simultaneous implementation of Community Cohesion and Prevent within local authorities was the fact that at the point of implementation the overlap between the two policies had become inherently ambiguous. As one manager phrased it:

“I could imagine that there is nothing that you can do in social cohesion that can’t be perceived as a front for Prevent.”

If there had been no resistance to Prevent then this situation might have been somewhat less problematic, but the reality was that from the outset Prevent was regarded as deeply politically problematic by many local authority personnel, and met with considerable resistance from local Muslim communities and national Muslim organisations. One local councillor with responsibility for Prevent said:

“When the document came out from the Home Office I was aghast. I threw it out. I said we are not having this. It was racist. Quite clearly racist.”

Another said:

“When you are required as elected representatives to gain the respect... of the community and drive through values: the values of education, care of the elderly, standards in life – a clean environment – basically promoting and encouraging the greater well-being of the populace; to also be the Big Brother that is actually spying on part of the community – then there is a contradiction.”

Yet another councillor pointed out the contradictions between the historic efforts of local councils to build good relationships with Muslim communities and the implications of implementing Prevent. He said:

“It’s like you’re talking with a forked tongue. That’s the thing and the community’s not stupid. They know what the public agenda is, what the Government agenda is and they know that their Muslim community is under the spotlight: under the heat.”

There was a very explicit and widespread local political objection to the stigmatising of the whole Muslim community that was inherent in the formulation of Prevent. This was accompanied by a recognition that the surveillance functions that were at the core of its practice placed the local council staff in an invidious position. Staff who had conscientiously built up trust with local Muslim communities were presented with a situation where their routine work might be an element in the surveillance of these Muslim communities. As one worker phrased it:

“So of course it’s a difficult situation: information gathering/collecting – then are we then a reporting centre? Are we then working outside our own remit, you know? And what’s somebody going to do with the information? So how much control and confidentiality? All those issues arose.”

As the analysis in Husband and Alam (2011) demonstrates, at the level of the local authority, in practice the operation of Community Cohesion and Prevent became highly overlapping and the perceived permeation of Community Cohesion work by the insidious surveillance priorities of Prevent resulted in the compromising of the daily work of local professionals. For one group of professionals, this pressure was felt acutely: namely, Muslim staff in the local authority, who in many ways possessed exactly the competences that the local authority required for the implementation of either of these policies. But as one Muslim worker observed:

“There is going to be that level of suspicion, you know. Anyone who works with communities now, on Community Cohesion or whatever, it all comes back to Prevent”

For some Muslim staff, the costs of being compromised by engaging with this work were such that they took steps to seek to avoid engaging with it. One of them expressed their feelings in these terms:

“I think that there is a lot of pressure, and to be honest that’s why I’ve shied away from being involved with it; because it’s loaded. I can’t go straight faced to my community and say, I’m here to help you. I know

what they want me to do. It's like working as an informant, a spy, at the same time. It goes against my morals to do that."

The permeation of the engagement of the local authorities with Muslim communities by the insidious anxieties created by counter-terrorist measures was also inevitably reflected in the ways in which members of these Muslim communities experienced their lives framed by these policies. It was not only the endemic suspicions driven by the processes of intelligence gathering and surveillance; there was also considerable local resentment felt when the Counter Terrorism Unit (CTU) raided people's homes in the night and took young men away for extended questioning with no subsequent arrests. Muslim communities were realistically sensitive and resentful at being stigmatised by these policies and by the intrusion into their lives of their implementation. As one senior manager with extensive community experience put it:

" It's created suspicion about what's your real agenda: and particularly among younger Muslim men...you know, expressing the view that their phones are being tapped, they're worried that they are being spied on. They worry about where they'd spy on them and they don't know who's going to be arrested next in their community. And there's a feeling that wider concerns about international events-disagreements with government policy in terms of Iraq and Afghanistan-are then perceived as a support for terrorism."

The multiple intersections of the implementation of the practicalities of Community Cohesion and of Prevent demonstrated how policies developed by different departments of central government, with their own political priorities, institutional routines, and dominant ideological perspectives, could at the local level be experienced as profoundly contradictory.

CONCLUSION

There was a time when tracing your religious faith throughout the whole fabric of your daily life would have meant that you would be regarded as being *devout*. In the Britain shaped by CONTEST, and routinely experienced through the prism of an Islamophobia given a new edge by the *War on Terror* and its more recent derivatives, being a devout Muslim places you at risk of being identified as being *radicalised*. And if recent governments have in different ways sought to promote a more *active citizenship*, then expressing that activism by critiquing British foreign policy in relation to Iraq, Palestine or Afghanistan might similarly generate unfortunate opinions of your reliability should you be a young Muslim. The ambivalence felt by local authority staff and the suspicion and resentment felt by members of Muslim communities are not unreasonable in a world that has found the logics of securitization stretched in ways that have challenged both the rule of law and the capacity for all citizens to feel equally British - which was after all the aim of Community Cohesion. The targeting of British Muslim

communities by two discrete government policy initiatives in both cases identified the problem to be addressed as being fundamentally to be found within the religious and cultural characteristics of these communities. Not only did this stigmatise these communities in the context of a political milieu where Anti-Muslimism was already a highly developed phenomenon, but in each instance it also meant that through scapegoating the Muslim communities, policies that might have addressed the foundational bases of these problems were not addressed.

The roll out of these two policies in the first decade of the twenty-first century took place within a generic politics of exceptionalism. Huysmans (2009, p198) has described this in the following terms:

“Events are framed as endangering the survival of the political unit, which if it wants to survive, needs urgent counter-measures which cannot be contained within the normal rules of the political game.”

Globally, following 9/11 we have seen the erosion of an unambiguous commitment to universal human rights principles (Wilson, 2005, Cole and Lobel, 2007). In the British case, Gearty has noted the pressure brought upon the judiciary by the executive to collude in the erosion of established rights in the pursuit of new repressive measures. In his words, speaking of the new political sensibilities that are in place, he said:

“This amounts to a shift in sensibilities from anxiety about the repressive nature of such proposals to proud justifications of them, an assertive transformation that has been laced with contempt for those who in the words of the Home Secretary Dr. John Reid just ‘don’t get’ how little the old rules matter any more”(Gearty, 2007, p353).

Acceptance of torture as a legitimate means of gaining intelligence and the erosion of civil liberties in the name of security have become a defining feature of the British political environment. Securitization of everyday life and intrusive surveillance of peoples’ banal activities have made Britain into one of the most surveilled societies in the world (Kundnani, 2009). In this context, where ‘the Muslim threat’ had become a normative part of the political rhetoric of the time, the sensibilities that could be called upon to challenge the explicit stigmatisation of British Muslim communities by both community cohesion and counter-terrorism policies were limited. The fact that the permeation of community cohesion by counter-terrorism policies should have such deleterious consequences was a further demonstration of the impact of the non-critical importation into policy of a generic Islamophobia that has become a feature of British life. Where the rights of all have become negotiable, the rights and dignity of a marginalised and stigmatised minority are inevitably vulnerable.

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