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Author: [Jytte Klausen](#)

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Abstract

After the Madrid and London train-bombings, perceptions of the sources of Islamic terrorism changed. The British response to domestic jihadism was to apply community-policing principles to counter-terrorism enforcement. This essay describes the origins and intentions of the community-based policing of terrorism and partnership programmes with Muslim faith organisations. Collaboration with Muslim partners has helped to build confidence within government agencies that Muslim leaders are keen to curb terrorism, but has failed to build trust among the general Muslim public. The application of community-policing principles is, it is argued, an effort to bridge steep trade-offs between effective prevention and the social and political integration of Britain's Muslims.

Keywords: Counter-Terrorism; Britain; France; Muslims; Policy-Making; Community Policing

The Madrid train-bombings on 11 March 2004 and the 7 and 21 July 2005 attacks on the London Underground caused European authorities to make broad changes to terrorism laws and counter-terrorism policies. Both attacks were unique in the history of European terrorism for a number of reasons. The casualties were high: 191 dead and 2,050 injured in the Madrid attacks; 52 dead and 700 injured in the London attacks. In Madrid, four trains were bombed in coordinated explosions using backpacks full of explosives. In London, three trains and one bus were bombed, also using backpacks packed with explosives but, in this case, suicide bombers rather than remotely controlled detonations were used. The second plot in London also targeted the Underground but failed due to the bombers' ineptness.

Already accustomed to terrorism, governments had previously been content to adapt existing legislation to the new terrorism threat made apparent by the 9/11 attacks on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon. The Madrid and London attacks caused European authorities to reconsider how terrorism laws were used and to add new terrorism offences to existing laws. The Council of Europe amended the Convention on the Prevention of Terrorism on 16 May 2005 to the effect that member-states would be required to criminalise 'recruitment and training for terrorism'. Tracing and seizing accounts involved in the financing of terrorism were made legal at the same time. Policing strategies also changed in response to the new perception of the nature of the threat.

The London attacks, even more than those in Madrid, were seen as the result of 'home-grown' terrorism and the authorities focused on the domestic Muslim communities. The British response to domestic jihadism was to apply community-policing principles to counter-terrorism enforcement. I describe in this contribution the origins and intentions of the community-based policing of terrorism in Britain, and also some of the problems associated with the application of those principles. The argument proceeds through a description of the main ideas and changes informing British counter-terrorism policies since the July 2005 bombings to a discussion of the terrorist threat itself. Recent court cases and new evidence about older cases, including the provenance of the July plots, have somewhat contradicted the idea that jihadi terrorism is 'home-grown'. If social alienation is *not* the reason why young British Muslims join the jihadi movement and become terrorists, what is the point of joining social policy and policing? It is beyond the scope of this essay to answer such questions. Raising them nonetheless suggests that community policing will play at best a supporting role as part of the current expansion of counter-terrorism efforts.

A note on terminology is required. 'Jihad' has many meanings, ranging from improving oneself in the image of God to taking up armed struggle for Allah. 'Jihad' refers here to terrorism—violent acts or the threat of violence with a political purpose—in the name of Allah. The term 'jihadi' is used in place of the more common terms, 'Islamist' or 'Islamic', because it captures the movement's rejection of democracy and existing state institutions in favour of a political religious utopia. It is also the term that Al Qaeda and the terrorists inspired by Al Qaeda use to describe themselves.

New Approaches to Counter-Terrorism

The Terrorism Act was passed in 2000 and remains Britain's primary anti-terrorism legislation, with amendments made in 2001 and 2005, and again in 2006. At each juncture, the definition of terrorist offences and the police's powers have been expanded. The additions criminalised incitement to terrorism, providing assistance to terrorists, and providing instruction in the use of firearms and explosives. The Home Office has also been given greater leeway to proscribe political groups, and much debate ensued in 2006 when it was thought that the minister, Charles Clarke, would ban two groups, Hizb ut-Tahrir and Al Muhajiroun, that are active on university campuses. In the end, neither group was banned. Efforts to further expand police powers undertaken by Gordon Brown, who assumed office as Prime Minister in June 2007, were rebuffed in 2008. In April a High Court judge declared that new Treasury powers to freeze terrorism suspects' bank accounts—introduced by Brown when he was Chancellor—were unlawful and, in October, the House of Lords decisively squashed plans to extend the length of the detention period during which the police can hold suspects before filing charges to 42 days.

Public criticism of counter-terrorism enforcement has ebbed and flowed with the tide of arrests. The new model for an integrated and community-based approach reflects a changed understanding of the sources of terrorism. The Intelligence and Security Committee, a parliamentary oversight committee which reports to the Prime Minister, concluded, in its investigation into the failure to prevent the 7 and 21 July 2005 attacks, that the police and the security agencies had failed to adjust sufficiently fast to the growth of domestic terrorism:

We remain concerned that across the whole of the counter-terrorism community the development of the home-grown threat and the radicalisation of British citizens were not fully understood or applied to strategic thinking (Home Office **2006a**: 108).

In mid-August 2005, several ministers undertook a so-called 'listening tour' in towns and cities with large Muslim communities and the government launched a consultation with Muslim community representatives. A task force consisting of seven Working Groups and involving over 100 Muslim community leaders was created to make recommendations for combating political extremism.

In November 2005, the Home Office produced a report, *Preventing Extremism Together*, with 64 recommendations ranging from proposals to improve relations between the police and Muslim communities to the creation of a British *imam* education and accreditation procedures for mosques (Home Office **2005**). The initiative signalled a shift from counter-intelligence to

prevention. Sir Ian Blair, the then Chief of the Metropolitan Police, endorsed a partnership between Muslim associations and the government in order to 'separate the extremists from the faith'. The government also announced a 12-point programme to amend anti-terrorism legislation to include 'the glorification of terrorism' as a criminal offence and to extend police powers to detain terrorism suspects beyond the 14 days then permitted. The revised terrorism act was passed belatedly and after resistance in the House of Lords in April 2006.

A July 2006 report, *Countering International Terrorism: The United Kingdom's Strategy*, stressed the need to counter domestic radicalisation among British Muslims. The report is noteworthy for its sensitive discussion of extremism and praise of the British Muslim community's 'great contribution to our society'. 'The principal current terrorist threat is from radicalised individuals who are using a distorted and unrepresentative version of the Islamic faith to justify violence', it states at the outset. 'Such people are referred to in this paper as Islamist terrorists' and they are 'a tiny minority' (Home Office **2006b**: 3).

The report announced the government's strategy, known as Operation Contest, and used four buzzwords, always capitalised in official documents, to summarise the approach: PREVENT, PURSUE, PROTECT and PREPARE. The report endorsed the view that social policy is the best prevention. The core elements of prevention include addressing 'structural problems' such as inequality and discrimination, changing 'the environment' to deter radicalisation and 'engaging in the battle of ideas'. This is no endorsement of the 'clash of civilisation' thesis that the problem is Islam itself. The preventive war of ideas is to be carried out 'primarily by helping Muslims who wish to dispute these ideas to do so' (Home Office 2006b: 2).

The Metropolitan Police—or The Met, as it is commonly described—is, despite its name, responsible for counter-terrorism operations throughout the country. The Met has grown by leaps and bounds as the tasks have piled up—it had around 30,000 officers in 2006; another 6,000 community officers were added in 2007. Increased effort implies increased budgets. Spending on the three security services has likewise ballooned. By 2010/2011, annual spending on counter-terrorism, operations, and risk-assessment and intelligence will have tripled since 9/11 (90 per cent of the total budget of £3.5 billion/US\$5.4 billion are spent on counter-terrorism and protective security).

The government was slow to take action on many of the original recommendations made in the November 2005 *Preventing Extremism* report, and others have been much altered in application. Mosque oversight has been charged to the voluntary Mosques and Imams National Advisory Board (MINAB), formed in June 2006 with the support of the main Muslim associations and a number of other smaller groups. Cabinet changes brought about shifts in policy. John Reid, who replaced Clarke on 5 May 2006, was less enthusiastic about the partnership approach to counter-terrorism, and he and other Labour ministers criticised Muslim associations for being placid about weeding out the extremists in their midst. Jacqui Smith, who became Home Secretary in Gordon Brown's reshuffle of the cabinet in June 2007, has been criticised for her insensitivity to civil liberties. She pushed the 42-day-detention law through the House of Commons against strong opposition and supports the creation of ID-cards. In 2006, Blair created a new Department for Community Affairs which, in 2007, assumed responsibility for the government's programme for de-radicalisation and the 'Preventing Extremism' agenda. Hazel Blears now heads the renamed department—Communities and Local Government (CLG). In July 2008 Blears announced the publication of a follow-up to the November 2005 report—*Preventing Violent Extremism: Next Steps for Communities*—and a breathtaking range of new measures aiming to counter radicalisation and, to quote the department's press release, 'to stop Islamic theology being abused by those who seek to divide communities' (Home Office **2008**). The government allocated £80 million (\$124 million) to be spent over three years on the new initiatives, which range from the development of citizenship education programmes for 'madrassas' to pamphlets distributed to teachers explaining the signs of radicalisation in students and the creation of a 'theology board' consisting of 20 Islamic scholars charged with explaining how Islam 'fits with being a citizen in the UK'.

Britain has faced a far greater threat from jihadi terrorism than other European countries and was forced to reconsider how existing terrorism policies—developed originally to address terrorism stemming from the conflict in Northern Ireland—worked in this new context. In the past few years, British policies have become a model for other countries. When the

Danish authorities uncovered a plot in October 2005 involving a group of Danish-born Muslim teenagers, experts recommended expanding enforcement policies using community-based principles (Statsministeriet 2005). Dutch and Spanish authorities likewise looked to Britain for ideas on how to tackle domestic recruitment. But not all European governments have been equally impressed.

The French authorities reject the idea that the Muslim community should be a 'partner' in counter-terrorism and continue to use preventive arrests and extradition as primary counter-terrorism measures. The French government also relied upon past experience: the policy of early disruption of group activities by means of forcible removals is regarded as having been successful in countering the terrorist wave perpetrated by the Algerian GSPC in the 1990s. In practice, it means that individuals suspected of involvement with terrorism or terrorist groups are expelled without access to trial. French citizens, even if of immigrant origin, can naturally not be subject to administrative removal—in this case suspects are 'taken off the streets' on other charges. 'Parking fines, credit-card debts, anything we can find', is how a French counter-terrorism official explained the approach. ¹ The French policies are strongly criticised by human rights groups (Human Rights Watch 2007).

It is hard to say if they work because, while the French have not seen any attacks similarly to the Madrid train-bombing or the 7/7 London Underground attack, who is to say that policing policies are the reason? The question is whether British policies represent an alternative which is more respectful than the French model is of the civil liberties and civic rights of the sub-population from which the terrorist movement draws its members. Can there be such a thing as 'democratic counter-terrorism'?

Community policing has not lacked critics when applied to ordinary policing, and its application to counter-terrorism has been no less controversial. Community policing was conceived from the beginning as part of a larger campaign to win 'the hearts and minds' of British Muslims, the main idea being to engage British Muslims as 'stake-holders' in the campaign against 'violent extremism'. The new language that emerged was typical of Blair's 'third-way' policies and is vulnerable to the general criticisms applied to the 'third way'—being Orwellian and obfuscating the coercive realities of new policies—especially since much of what was promised in the way of actual community involvement never happened.

Principles of Community-Based Counter-Terrorism

Community policing is a response to the 'broken windows' thesis that most crime is the result of public disorder and best countered by a 'tough love' approach based upon a partnership between the police and community-actors affected by the crime (Kelling and Coles 1996; Kelling and Wilson 1982). Advocates of community policing argue that improved community relations are essential for good police work, they improve efficiency and may even help to save money in the long run, but their application to counter-terrorism is untested and carries obvious inherent risks (Richman 2004-05).

Community policing is not new, although the application to counter-terrorism is. Policing was always about theft, crime—both serious and mid-level—and low-level community trouble. 'We listen and solve crime in the neighbourhood. Terrorism is not so different', a high-ranking official from the Metropolitan Police explained to me at a meeting in 2007. 'Terrorists live somewhere. They park their car and store their stuff somewhere. There are people who know about this. National security will in the end depend upon solving neighbourhood crime'. An integrated approach is required, s/he concluded, which works with the Muslim community as 'stakeholders'. Improved relations between the police and the Muslim community are needed to enhance efficiency, prevent radicalism, and mitigate the damage in families and communities resulting from operations and arrests, in particular when the police 'get it wrong'.

The sociological approach to combating terrorism was underscored when the official drew a parallel between contemporary Islamic radicalism and revolutionary socialism. About ten years ago, the Met official said, Muslims arrived at a moment like that described by Karl Marx—the moment when the workingclass becomes conscious of itself. That identity can be radical or it can be moderate. The current policy is based upon the assumption that the police, the Home Office, and other government agencies all have a role in promoting national cohesion.

The scale of Muslim radicalisation in Britain has made counter-terrorism extraordinarily demanding of police resources and some problems cannot be addressed without active community involvement. The problem of a 'circle of tacit support' (as described by Sagar, this volume) has become a large concern for counter-terrorism officials and policy-makers. The *Report of the Official Account of the Bombings in London* describes how one of the 21 July bombers, Hussain Osman, had three safe houses in London and received help to escape to Italy, where he was arrested.

Such 'safe houses' were not thought to be part of a highly organised support network, but rather people who were willing to turn a blind eye and not ask too many questions. In a recent poll of 500 Muslims in the UK, about 20 per cent of UK Muslims felt sympathy with the 'feelings and motives' of the July bombers; 1 per cent felt the attacks were 'right'. However care is needed that a myth is not built up around the '1 per cent', i.e. potentially 16,000 of the 1.6 million Muslims in the UK (Home Office **2006c**).

The polling data cited are from an ICM Opinion Poll published in *The Sunday Telegraph*, 19 February 2006. Subsequent polling largely confirmed the poll's result, although the exact percentage of respondents who expressed support for Al Qaeda varied with the phrasing of the question. The extrapolation from the polling data to an estimate of 16,000 potential recruits for terrorism is problematic. First, the Census data are from 2000 and significantly underestimate the actual number of Muslims living in Britain today, perhaps by as much as 500,000. This would suggest that many more potential recruits exist, but the logic behind the estimate is seriously flawed. Children and the elderly have not been recruited as suicide bombers in Europe and, thus far, few women have been involved. Moreover, significant psychological distance exists between deciding to become a terrorist and expressing support for Al Qaeda to an interviewer from a polling organisation. A more likely estimate is that there is a pool of around 6,000 individuals who are 'hard core' Al Qaeda sympathisers. Reportedly, the security agencies monitor 'thousands' of individuals. Current estimates of primary targets for surveillance (understood to be individuals involved with active plots) are that there are 800 such individuals, up from about 250 immediately after 9/11.

The concern about tacit support is nonetheless appropriate. Botched raids and difficult prosecutions are often seen as evidence that the terrorism charges are false or that the threat is invented by government authorities. Dr. Mohammad Naseem, a parliamentary candidate for the Respect Party and chairman of the trustees for the Birmingham Central Mosque, used a joint press conference with the local police after one of the July 21 bombers was arrested in Birmingham to declare that the suspected bombers were innocent passengers who had been framed by the government. Muslims, he said, could not trust 'the process' to give them a fair trial. Eerily echoing the rumours that the 9/11 attacks on Washington DC and New York were planned by the CIA to make Muslims look bad, he went on to say that 'Muslims all over the world have never heard of an organisation called Al Qaeda' (*The Daily Telegraph*, 28 July 2005).

British Muslims nonetheless more often agree with the government's policies. When I asked Maulana Mohammed Raza from the Muslim College in Ealing—also executive secretary of the Muslim Law Council UK—if the emphasis upon reforming faith communities in the ramped-up 'Next Steps' agenda unfairly blamed the faith for the actions of extremists, his answer was that only good would come from having the Friday *Khutbahs* delivering a message of peace and tolerance every Friday across the country.

'Who Did It?' Policing Strategies and the Origins of Terrorism

The basic idea in community policing is that, if you catch the small criminals, eventually you will get to the big ones. Community-based counter-terrorism is regarded as the solution to many overlapping problems: the need to improve communication with Muslim communities, to find ways to marginalise the extremists and, ultimately, to promote social integration. It is the British answer to American critics who argue that European governments' failure to promote integration is creating 'a hard core for terrorism' within Europe (Fukuyama **2005**; Leiken **2005**). **It is an answer also to a different criticism from terrorism experts, who say that 'networks have to be fought with networks', and point out that surveillance and border control are ineffectual when the terrorists are already in the country and can hide in the community (Sageman**

2004). Using community policing for the purpose of fighting terrorism presumes that terrorism is a community problem. It may be an inaccurate understanding of the nature of jihadi terrorism.

A principal problem is that community-based policing assumes that recruitment to crime is a community problem. Community policing seemed appropriate when it was assumed that the problem was 'home-grown' but, several years after the London bombings, perceptions about Al Qaeda's role in the Madrid and London train-bombings have changed. Why police Leeds if the plans for attacks in London are made in Waziristan? As more plots have been uncovered and new evidence has come to light, the official story now is that 'Al Qaeda did it'. An official Spanish inquiry into the Madrid attacks concluded that they were carried out 'in the manner of Al Qaeda' and established that a number of the accused were members of the Moroccan Islamic Combatants Group (Audiencia nacional **2004**: 1412). This group renamed itself 'Al Qaeda in the Mahgreb' in 2006.

The degree of Al Qaeda involvement in European terrorism is hotly debated among analysts and academics. A suicide-bomb attack against the *USS Cole* in Aden Harbour, Yemen, on 12 October 2000—which left 17 sailors dead and 39 injured—and the events of 9/11, were clearly hierarchically organised and attributable to Al Qaeda. Richard Reid, the shoe-bomber arrested in December 2001 on American Airlines flight 63 from Paris to Miami, and his little-known 'twin', Saajid Badat, obtained their shoe-bombs in Afghanistan in November 2001, and were directly tied to Al Qaeda. Badat was sentenced in April 2005 to 13 years in prison even though he had second thoughts and never carried out the attack.

The July 2005 bombers were instead seen to have relied on Al Qaeda as inspirational influence and needed little outside ideological or technical support. An official inquiry into the July 7 bombers found that two of the perpetrators visited Pakistan from 19 November 2004 to 8 February 2005. Nonetheless, the *Report of the Official Account of the Bombings in London* found that the group was self-financed through heavy drafts on credit cards and a car loan. They probably mixed the bombs themselves, and the official report simply concludes, 'the extent of Al Qaeda involvement is unclear' (Home Office **2006c**: 26). A parallel inquiry conducted by the Intelligence and Security working for the Prime Minister reached the same conclusion (Home Office **2006a**).

Only the London attacks involved suicide bombers. The first attack, carried out on July 7, involved four British Muslims: Hasib Hussain, Mohammad Sidique Khan, Germaine Lindsay and Shehzad Tanweer. Three were from Leeds, in West Yorkshire, of Pakistani origin; Lindsay was an Afro-Caribbean convert. A second attack, carried out on July 21, failed because the bombs did not detonate. Six individuals, several of Somali origin, were quickly arrested and four were convicted of conspiracy to murder.

The picture formed in 2005 of a 'home-grown' threat has been cast into doubt as open trials have revealed the importance of the terrorists' Pakistani connections and their direct or indirect links to Al Qaeda.

Al Jazeera aired Khan's suicide statement on 1 September 2005, and lamentations over how 'British lads' could go wrong dominated the media. The tape also featured Ayman Al Zawahiri, Al Qaeda's Number 2 (presuming Osama bin Laden is still alive) but the view that this was a domestic problem nonetheless prevailed. It can be watched on YouTube. Speaking in a distinct Yorkshire accent, Khan spewed Al Qaeda doctrine:

I and thousands like me are forsaking everything for what we believe. Our drive and motivation doesn't come from tangible commodities that this world has to offer. Our religion is Islam, obedience to the one true God and following the footsteps of the final prophet messenger. Your democratically elected governments continuously perpetuate atrocities against my people all over the world. And your support of them makes you directly responsible, just as I am directly responsible for protecting and avenging my Muslim brothers and sisters.

Tanweer's suicide video was aired a year later, also on *Al Jazeera*, on the first anniversary of the July 7 bombings. On the video, Ayman Al Zawahiri states that Tanweer and Khan had

been trained 'in the manufacture of explosives' at Al Qaeda camps.

The roots of the present wave of terrorism go back to a statement Al Qaeda released in February 1998 with the title, 'The World Islamic Front for Jihad Against the Jews and Crusaders', which said that it was the duty of all Muslims to kill Americans, civilian or military, and their allies. The statement was a merger agreement between bin Laden's Al Qaeda of Arab veterans from the war in Afghanistan and Ayman Al Zawahiri's Egyptian Islamic Jihad, *Al Gama'at Al Islamiyya*, and three minor Pakistani, Egyptian and Bangladeshi groups. Other groups joined later: Musab Al Zaqarwi allegedly in 2004 and the Algerian GSPC in 2006. The 1998 statement in retrospect marks an important shift on the part of Islamic liberation movements to a strategy of de-localised violent Jihad. It also established Al Qaeda's ideological leadership based upon an ethos of self-sacrifice in the name of Allah.

According to Home Office figures, 1,166 people were arrested between 11 September 2001 and 31 December 2006 on suspicion of terrorism. Of these, 221 were charged and 40 convicted (*The Independent*, 6 March 2007). A further 60 people were transferred to the immigration authorities for deportation. According to a Europol report, 156 arrests were made in 2006. Officials have acknowledged the existence of at least 100 back-logged cases (TE-SAT **2007**). A total of 43 people were arrested in connection with the 21 July 2005 attack. It is almost impossible to keep track of the number of arrests and trials as new plots are uncovered, and a large backlog of terrorism cases yet to go to trial has piled up.

More evidence has come to light in recent months of direct Al Qaeda involvement in Britain. At the same time as a group of doctors were put under arrest for trying to blow up cars in London and driving a burning jeep into Glasgow Airport on 30 June 2007, two other terrorism conspiracy trials ended in convictions. Younis Tsouli, who used the screen name Irhabi (Holy Warrior) 007, was given ten years in prison. Tried with two accomplices, Tsouli was, among other things, accused of having helped design a new logo for Al Qaeda in Iraq. It was the first time a jail sentence was given in Britain for Internet terrorism.

The failed car-bombing attack in London imitated a plot uncovered in 2004, which ended in convictions in late April. Known as 'Operation Crevice' after the name given to the surveillance by MI5, five suspects were found guilty of planning to use rented limousines to bomb various destinations in London, including parliament and a disco, 'The Ministry of Sound'. Some of the men arrested in August 2006 for the airline plot came to the attention of the police in connection with the 7 July 2005 investigation. In the Crevice trial, a surveillance video from 2004 was shown on which Khan, the July 7 plot leader, was meeting with Khyam, the Crevice plot leader. The video linked the leaders of two of Britain's worst jihadi plots. Khyam grew up in West Sussex in a secular Muslim family. In 1998, he joined Al Muhajiroun, a radical group run by Abu Hamza Al Masri. Two years later, he went to Pakistan to join an Al Qaeda training camp. It now appears that he met Khan, the 7/7 leader, there.

The perception that terrorism had become 'home-grown' provided a powerful motive for changing the way counter-terrorism enforcement was conducted. Domestic policing and 'the cop on the beat' suddenly became the most important bulwarks against terrorism. But if Al Qaeda 'did it' and terrorism really is the result of a global jihadi campaign against Britain, what purpose does community policing have? Since then, security officials are taking a very different view and argued in 2006 that the 7 July bomb attacks were 'just the beginning' of a new wave of terrorism organised by Al Qaeda and with Britain as the 'Number 1 target' (*The Guardian*, 19 October 2006).

Policing as Social Policy: Who Benefits?

Community-based counter-terrorism presumes that the terrorist threat is located in the community. But is domestic terrorism about locally-born kids 'acting up' and being amenable to preventive strategies involving community groups and social workers?

The connection between socio-economic variables and terrorist recruitment is tenuous. Most Muslims in Britain are of Bangladeshi and Pakistani origin, but not all. This means that there is great danger that when one speaks of 'British

Muslims' one speaks really of Pakistani and Bangladeshi Muslims. Of Bangladeshi households, 68 per cent live below the official poverty level; in London 40 per cent of Muslim children live in poverty. It is the Bangladeshis and Pakistanis who do much worse than other Muslims, and who drive the averages showing significant socio-economic deprivation among Muslims. The situation of Bangladeshis and Pakistanis is quite different from that of Indians and East African Asians. This means that the profiles of disadvantage are driven by structural factors rather than by religion. Essentially, British Muslims live in eight or nine localities, with 85 per cent living in London, Manchester, Yorkshire, the Midlands, Scotland and Wales. Regional differences are important. London has a majority of non-Pakistani and Bangladeshi Muslims, but Pakistanis predominate in the Midlands and the North.

Unemployment among young Muslim men is very high, yet the terrorists are not disproportionately drawn from these socio-economic groups. Bangladeshi and Pakistani men are under-represented in prison. Indian Muslims have the highest incarceration rates. There *are* reasons for concern, however, as the total number of Muslims in prison has risen by 200 per cent over 10 years and Muslims are three times more likely to be imprisoned than other Asians.

It is agreed that socio-economic deprivation does not transform radicalisation into suicide terrorism, but British authorities have accepted that inequality and discrimination are factors driving political anger, and that addressing social issues is nonetheless inevitably a component in preventive policies. Moreover, prison recruitment among juvenile offenders and gang members suggests that current socio-economic factors may be the seedbed for future trouble. The link between terrorist recruitment and petty crime is confused by what police officials describe as 'crime dressed up as Al Qaeda'.

An apparent danger is that community-based counter-terrorism might become a victim of 'mission-creep' if security objectives are seamlessly blended into prevention and the need to build social cohesion. Policing and social policy have different time horizons. A report issued by the AIVD—the Dutch security service—used the word 'social' 33 times over 60 pages and pinpointed alienation among young Dutch Muslims as the key cause of jihadi recruitment. Somewhat contradicting its own sociological diagnosis of the problem, the report concluded that counter-terrorism policy has to be made to work immediately (Ministry of the Interior and Kingdom Relations **2006**). Nonetheless, long-term social goals with respect to integration and the need to develop working relationships between the police and particular Muslim community groups in the context of engagement with extremist groups have undoubtedly worked to link policing and social policy.

'Theological Fire Brigades': Working with Fundamentalists against Terrorists

Several pilot programmes are under development in collaboration between the Metropolitan Police and mosque groups. Individuals in prisons who are deemed at risk of involvement with extremist groups are identified prior to release and selected for remedial intervention. The mosque intervention group then attempts, through intensive theological intervention, to dissuade the individual from taking the path of radical Islam. In other cases, mosques assume responsibility for religious education in the prisons. The groups are humorously described as 'theological fire brigades'. Participants speak about fielding 'good theology' against 'bad theology'.

The partnership with mosque leaders is an attempt to reverse harm done in the 1990s. A number of now-notorious clerics operated freely at the Finsbury Park Mosque and other Salafist mosques in London in the late 1990s and 2000, and many known terrorists from Britain and other European countries crossed paths there in those years. The clerics included Abu Hamza Al Masri (sentenced to seven years for incitement to murder in February 2006), Abdullah el-Faisal, a Jamaican-born convert (sentenced to nine years in 2003), Omar Bakri Mohammed, known as the 'Tottenham mullah', who started Al Muhajiroun together with Abu Hamza (now living in Lebanon), and Abu Qatada, who was deported to Jordan in 2005. Abu Hamza Al Masri is known to have given over 100 talks at mosques across the country in 1999 alone.

Richard Reid and Zacarias Moussaoui are both known to have been influenced by Abu Hamza. A recent example of the British-based clerics' reach is a group of four Danish-born Muslim teenagers, who were convicted in February 2007 for

participating in plans to blow up the US embassy in Sarajevo and other unspecified attacks in Copenhagen. They took part in a group of 12 who participated in a jihadi 'summer camp' with Omar Bakri Muhammed in 2004.

The Foreign Office and the Home Office launched a campaign to 'tackle extremist misinterpretations of Islam' in December 2005. It was organised in collaboration with four Muslim groups and became known as the 'Scholars' Roadshow'. The initiative was linked to a website providing religious instruction and answers to questions about Islam.² A Home Office official said the project aimed to install good religious values by inviting internationally known scholars and preachers of Islam to address audiences of young Muslims. Conservative Muslims refute that there can be such a thing as 'theology'; the organisers say they use 'traditional Islam' to counter extremist and 'wrongful' interpretations of Islam. British Muslim groups and government officials have argued that extremism is the result of the collapse of Islamic religious authority, and rebuilding it will help to stamp it out. The programme aroused bitter criticism in the press because the government, by funding the invited speakers, threw its lot in with conservative interpretations of Islam. 'The problem with Islam is that theological thinking has been stagnant for too long. We need to encourage more *Itihad*, rethinking of the faith in contemporary societies', a former Hizb ut-Tahrir member told me. The 'Roadshow' of foreign scholars was an example, in his view, of potential problems created by the government's embrace of conservative Islam. 'If we bring in 25-35 foreign Islamic scholars a year, how do we know we'll not have another Al Qaradawi situation?'

Historically speaking, Jonathan Yahya Birt, a scholar at the Islamic Foundation in Leicester, England, has argued that there are two paths to violent extremism. The movements for Islamic sovereignty, the Muslim Brotherhood, Jama'at-i Islami, and Wahhabism exemplify one path. Their descendants include Hizb ut-Tahrir, Hamas, and more recently Al Muhajiroun and other splinter groups. The second path starts with the puritan movements, the Deobandis, Sufism and Twelver Shiism, and end up with the Taliban, Kashmir Jihadis, and Hezbollah. The groups converge in their emphasis upon millenarianism and the glorification of suicide but their political narratives are nonetheless different. Adherents of the political path attract individuals who are concerned with arguments about political models and Muslim empowerment. The puritans instead start with theological and moral arguments.

In response to questions raising concerns about the utility of using salafism as an antidote to political extremism, a Salafist mosque manager, who works with the government to convert young prisoners to peaceful Islam, told me that Salafists have successfully fought back against violent extremism for centuries. It is 'counter-productive to ignore the groups who have the most experience with the issue', he said, and he and his colleagues have 'engaged in dialogue with the extremists and tried to change their minds for a long time'. His credentials are excellent. He warned the police about the clerics' activities long before public attention was aroused.

Political Risk and the Failure of 'Partnership' Policing

Community-based counter-terrorism is fraught with built-in risks. One is political. Governments worry about becoming 'entrapped' by Muslim groups and the political consequences of embracing Muslims as 'partners'. Muslim groups have the same worry about the authorities. The need to build partnerships with community representatives has put the police in the unenviable position of having to pick partners and, while Muslim groups have been receptive to the challenge, working with one group often excludes working with another. Weary of getting involved with the 'high politics' of the national Muslim associations, the police opted instead to work with community groups. But as is inevitable when the government chooses 'partners', other groups are left out. The decision to go for what an official from the Metropolitan Police described as 'a small-chip rather than a blue-chip strategy' sheds light on the complaints from Muhammad Abdul Bari, the Secretary General of the Muslim Council of Britain, that his organisation is being sidelined. The British government, he complained in a 15 October 2006 letter to Ruth Kelly, the then minister for the Department for Communities and Local Government, is trying to divide the Muslim community by 'fostering and promoting new sectarian bodies with barely concealed links to US neo-cons'.³

Not surprisingly, the embrace of Muslim groups caused offence among Christians. The Church of England complained that

the government was showing 'favouritism to Muslims' and that tax money was used to promote Islam.⁴ The long-standing links between national churches, either Protestant or Roman Catholic, put European governments in a difficult dilemma, when they pursue public policies aiming to promote the integration of Islam, and find that this goal invariably implies allocating public revenue and official recognition to Muslims.

Our evaluation of the efficiency of faith-based counter-terrorism hinges on the answer to a variant of the larger question about how recruitment to terrorism takes place: is it 'political' or 'religious'? The idea that you can use 'good' Islam to fight 'bad' Islam assumes that religious interpretation drives the radical theology. Even if we accept this to be the case, it is unclear whether or not theological education will help to moderate political views and to reduce the risk of an individual harbouring such 'wrong ideas' actually progressing to violent action. Another problem is that the policy is based upon the idea that counter-terrorism objectives can be pursued through collaboration with faith groups, and young potential terrorists can be reached through mosque groups or long speeches on how to correctly read the Koran. General agreement is that terrorists do not meet in mosques, and that domestic recruitment today takes place in prisons, on university campuses, in Internet cafés and jihadist video stores, and among petty criminal networks (Khosrokhavar **2004**). If so, the justifications for faith-based counter-terrorism are weak.

The Labour government's decision to rely on faith-based community groups in the domestic struggle against extremist theologies raises difficult questions about the definition of what constitutes a 'moderate' Muslim. The term is used in a non-discriminatory way by government agencies justifying 'partnering' with one group or another. And every Muslim group, including Hizb ut-Tahrir and the Muslim Association of Britain, which is linked to the Muslim Brotherhood internationally, now refers to themselves as 'moderates'. An unintended consequence of the decision to 'partner' with conservative religious leaders against extremism is also that the government has lost its ability to criticise those same leaders. As a consequence, the government seemed to speak out of both sides of its mouth when the Gender Equality Unit promised to stamp out discrimination against women and gays and the Communities and Local Government Unit praised the contribution of conservative faith groups—which staunchly condemn homosexuality—for their positive contribution to integration.⁵

Community-based counter-terrorism is a strategy for building trust, but whose trust is being built? The collaboration with Muslim partners has helped to build the belief within government agencies that Muslim leaders are keen to curb terrorism, but will community-policing strategies help to build trust among the general Muslim public? There is little evidence that this has been accomplished. The ambition of community policing is to prevent alienation and encourage involvement and social integration, yet strengthened enforcement has undeniable negative externalities experienced only by the Muslim community. Successful prosecutions of conspiracies are essential to trust-building and to refuting suspicions that charges are 'trumped up' by the police, who are intent on making Muslims 'look bad'. The growing time-lag between arrests and prosecutions is a critical problem. The lag between arrests and prosecutions now exceeds two years. Long detentions and often difficult and only partially successful prosecutions fuel reports of police abuse and complaints about 'Islamophobic' policing.

Finally, questions persist about the fit between community policing and the nature of current terrorism. Islamist terrorism is a global movement, and it is simplistic to say that recruitment to suicide terrorism is simply the product of 'home-grown' disaffection or 'good Muslims gone bad'. Why worry about the *imams* if terrorist recruitment takes place in prisons and training camps abroad rather than in local mosques and prayer halls?

Conclusion

The most serious criticism of the community-policing model for counter-terrorism enforcement would be that it did not work. On balance, British counter-terrorism has scored successes and failures; it cannot be said that it has *not* worked. Critics would say that this is because, luckily, community policing was never fully implemented. Participatory counter-terrorism is not possible, and the idea that counter-terrorism had to be done in partnership with Muslims was modified to mean ethnic

hiring practices and selective collaboration with some leaders. The trade-off was, as Shamit **Saggar** has pointed out, that the government was prevented from forcefully addressing chauvinistic narratives of Muslim victimhood and conservative denial because Salafists and other conservative Muslim groups were immunised against criticism by the partnership rhetoric (2006: 320). The Blair government also opened itself up to accusations of 'Islamophobic policing' by saying that Islam was not 'the problem' but then by acting as if it was and denouncing 'bad theology'.

The positive consequences of community-policing principles and 'partnership' programmes become apparent only in the bigger picture and compared with the alternative approach as pursued by France. The French approach to counter-terrorism has been recognised as invasive but effective, and for the same reasons that it is admired by conservatives, human rights advocates have been highly critical (International Crisis Group **2006**; Schmitt and Gerech **2007**; Shapiro and Suzan **2003**: 92).

French officials frequently note that they have not had an attack in ten years, and have had a string of successes in connection with foiled attacks. The ten-year record statement appears to ignore a non-deadly bomb explosion at the Indonesian embassy in Paris in October 2004, but it is clearly the case that France has avoided a wave of terrorism comparable to what has taken place in Britain. Several foiled plots involved transnational links, where the French have assisted other governments. The French provided the information needed to foil the plot for the Millennium attack on Los Angeles Airport, when Ahmed Ressay was arrested on the Canadian border on 14 December 1999 with explosives in the boot of his car. Ressay was an Algerian native and a Canadian resident plotting an attack in the US, but nonetheless the French knew who his associates were and provided the information needed to convict Ressay in an American court. He was related to the so-called 'Roubaix gang', which was also responsible for the foiled attack on the Strasbourg Christmas market (Crumley **2001**). In this case, the plotters' bases were in France and in Frankfurt, Germany, and convictions were pursued in both countries. Foiled plots in Denmark and Germany in 2006 and 2007 also involved transnational networks.

Arrest statistics suggest increased reliance on preventive arrests to break up networks. In an article praising the French use of 'pre-emptive arrests' as a primary counter-terrorism instrument, Jean Chichizola, a journalist for *Le Figaro*, cited the French arrest statistics since 9/11 (Chichizola **2006**). Out of just over 400 arrests in relation to Islamist terrorism, around 150 resulted in indictments or imprisonment of the suspects. The article also cites the *Renseignements Généraux* (RG), the counter-terrorism unit of the French police, in estimating that there are about 500 'hard core' targets of surveillance in France, out of a general population of extremists estimated at 5,000 (0.01 per cent of a total Muslim population estimated at 5 million).

In a podcast available from the Department of Homeland Defense and Security Center at the Naval Postgraduate School, François Thullier, a senior counter-terrorism expert, contrasted the French approach as crime-focused compared to the American 'war against terror'. The French state behaves in the 'Latin model', he noted, and does not need to consult or seek public approval when acting in the sovereign realms of the state, which includes policing. The institutional consequences are an emphasis upon the city police, the courts, apprehension and prevention. There are consequences for civil society, and they include a generalised lack of discussion of the origin of threats, and the implications of enhanced policing on civil and human rights (Thullier **2007**).

Thullier's account leaves out the significant changes made to the enforcement system in the late 1990s, when the French authorities realised that they were unaware of the campaign of attacks prepared by Algerian terrorist groups in Paris. The turn-around came when the police put an end to a series of attacks in 1995 on the Paris Metro, a case that ended in 21 convictions of co-conspirators in 1999. In fact, suspected terrorists are not treated as ordinary criminals. Terrorism cases are supervised by a specialised terrorism magistrate, and the counter-terrorism section of the Court of Paris is granted national jurisdiction. The judge, Jean-Louis Bruguière, is an exception to the general rule of no publicity and speaks frequently to both the French and the foreign press.

In 2006, prior to the election of Nicolas Sarkozy to the presidency, the French government announced the preparation of

reforms to counter-terrorism enforcement, which will reportedly strengthen the police's surveillance powers and also emphasise the prevention and monitoring of the social consequences of counter-terrorism (Secrétariat Général de la Défense Nationale 2006). If so, we may see a convergence take place between the British and the French approaches. Human Rights Watch has stated its opposition to aspects of Britain's anti-terrorism policies, particularly the so-called control orders which impose administrative restrictions on terrorism suspects' freedom of movement and even house arrests (2007: 79). Restrictions are imposed by the Home Office and amount to punishment in the absence of judicial procedure. Still, France's routine application of house arrests and the forced removal of suspects are used at a far greater rate than similar administrative measures in Britain and elsewhere in Europe. The French policies represent a greater threat to Muslims' civil liberties than the Blair government's confusing mix of partnership programmes, increased criminalisation and enhanced police powers.

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Notes

1. High-ranking Met or counter-terrorism officials were guaranteed anonymity and confidentiality.
2. See www.radicalmiddleway.co.uk where a list of the invited speakers can be viewed.
3. The letter was posted on the MCB's website at http://www.mcb.org.uk/media/presstext.php?ann_id=228
4. 'Drive for multi-faith Britain deepens rifts, says Church', Jonathan Wynne-Jones, *The Telegraph*, <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/main.jhtml?xml=/news/2006/10/08/nfaith08.xml> (Filed: 08 October 2006).
5. The Communities and Local Government Unit was made a separate ministry in May 2006, with Hazel Blairs as the Minister.

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