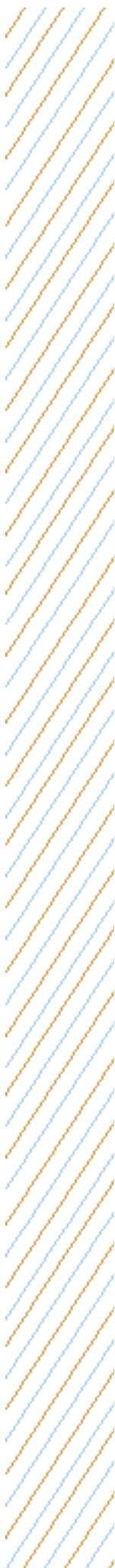


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POLICING INSECURITIES AND MARGINAL GROUPS IN THE SHADOW OF TERRORISM

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Within the framework of workpackage 4 of CRIMPREV: ‘Assessing Deviance, Crime and Prevention’, the fifth of six planned meetings was held at the University of Leeds on 19-20 September 2008. The central theme for the meetings in workpackage 4 focuses on *Perceptions of Crime and Insecurity*. The various seminars and conferences organised within this workpackage are concerned with a variety of allied topics related to the development of contemporary insecurities and fear of crime from a comparative perspective. As well as exploring the research into fear of crime and the causes of crime-related insecurities, the meetings are considering the extent to which perceptions of crime and insecurity inform diverse forms of governance, policy initiatives and social relations. The first meeting – held in



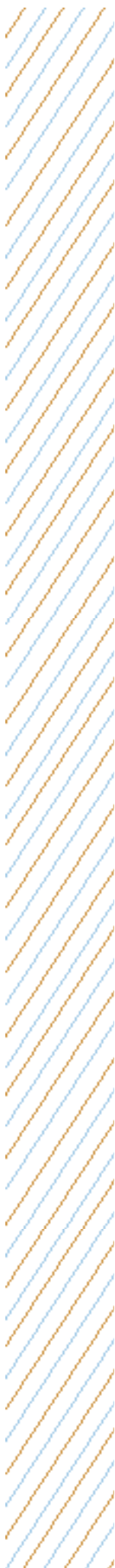
Hamburg on 16-17 March 2007 – focused on the state of empirical research on fear of crime across Europe, as well as the methodological and conceptual issues and problems raised by such research findings. The second seminar was held on 1-2 June 2007 in Esslingen am Neckar. It explored the role of social and cultural transformations in constructing contemporary insecurities. The third meeting was held on 11-13 October 2007 in Ljubljana. It was dedicated to the topic of media, insecurity and the fear of crime. The fourth meeting in Liege on 11-12 April 2008 focused on questions about the implications of contemporary insecurities and perceptions of crime for social fragmentation, discrimination and segregation. The final meeting has been held on 15-17 January 2009 in Porto and has explored public policy responses to perceptions of crime and insecurity. The fifth meeting hosted by the University of Leeds on 19-20 September 2008 analysed the impact of perceptions of crime and insecurity on marginalised groups with particular reference to policing insecurities in the shadow of terrorism and political violence¹.

In essence, the presentations and discussions at the workshops have revolved around three core concerns :

1. Questions of measurement and conceptualisation, including what we mean by public perceptions of insecurity and fear of crime, how we measure insecurity and interpret research findings, and how valuable these measurements are.
2. The causes of perceptions of insecurity involving the influence of the media, social and political transformations, cultural phenomena (including the role of specific cultural dramas and traumas).
3. The consequences of perceived insecurity for policy, politics and social relations, including the enactment of new laws, policing and criminal justice reforms, urban governance and allied developments as well as the implications of these responses for particularly marginal groups and social segregation.

It is the latter theme that constituted the primary focus of the Leeds meeting. The aim of the meeting was to focus on policy responses to perceptions of insecurity and crime with a particular emphasis on: (i) insecurities prompted by fears of political violence and terrorism; (ii) policing responses to public insecurities; and (iii) the

¹ The meeting was attended by 25 delegates. Core workpackage members were joined by a number of invited experts including: Frédéric Esposito University of Geneva, Liz Fekete Institute for Race Relations, Emily Gray Keele University, Gordon Hughes University of Cardiff, Elizabeth Johnston European Forum for Urban Safety, Martin Innes University of Cardiff, Basia Spalek University of Birmingham, Clive Walker University of Leeds and Sandra Walklate University of Liverpool. Core members included Anna Barker and Adam Crawford Leeds, Sophie Body-Gendrot Sorbonne, Paris, Carla Cardoso Porto, Bertrand Fincoeur and André Lemaître Liège, Axel Groenemeyer Dortmund, Magnus Hörnqvist Stockholm, Krzysztof Krajewski Kraków, Helmut Kury, Freiburg, Anabel Rodríguez Barcelona, René van Swaaningen Rotterdam, Sirpa Virta Tampere, Maggie Wykes Sheffield as well as Genevieve Lennon and Peter Traynor from the University of Leeds.



impact of policy and policing responses on marginal groups. These themes were brought together under the colloquium title : *Policing Insecurities and Marginal Groups in the Shadow of Terrorism*. This paper does not seek to provide a comprehensive overview of the presentations and discussions held over the two-day meeting but rather to reflect upon some of the themes and insights highlighted within the debates.

I - SOME WORKING HYPOTHESES

As a result of the first four meetings of workpackage 4, it is possible to identify two loose hypotheses that have informed (although not always been supported by) much of the discussion. They have prompted comparative insights and highlighted important correctives and countervailing tendencies. These working hypotheses are :

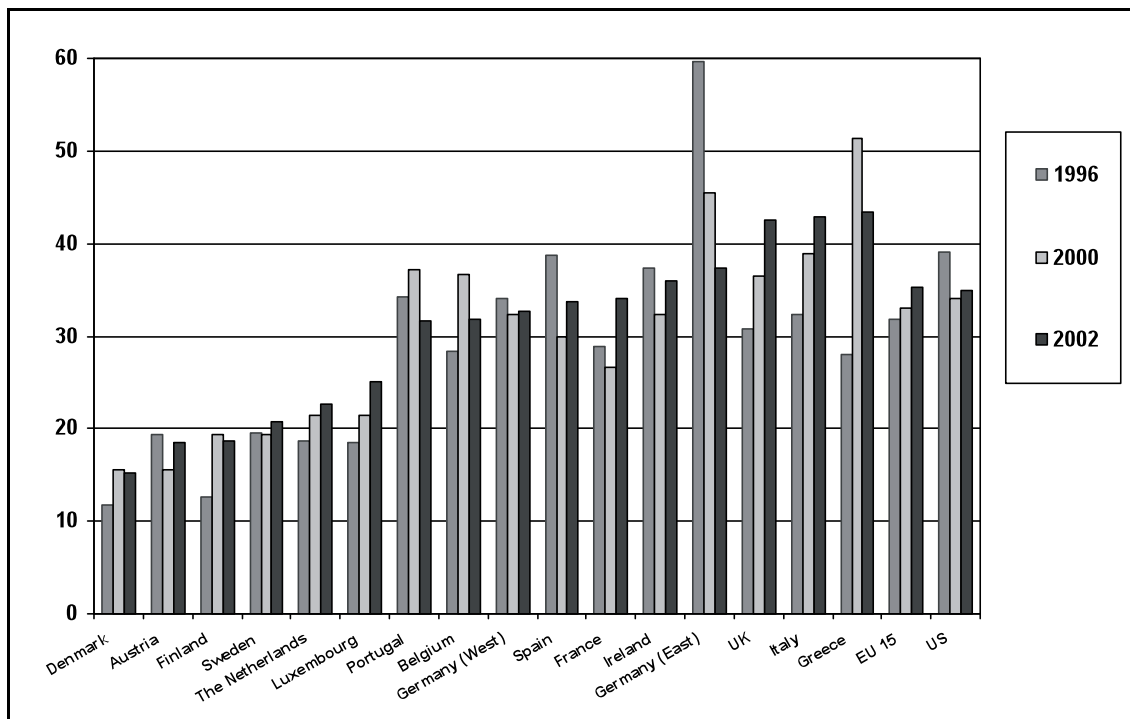
1. First, we are living in an age of increased insecurity and uncertainty in which public perceptions of crime and insecurity are becoming more prominent and more salient.
2. Second, perceptions of crime and insecurity are having a growing impact on social life and public policies, as a result of which societies are ‘governed through’ perceptions of crime and insecurity (Simon, 2007).

The deliberations and reviews afforded by the workpackage have shown that there remain important divergences in experiences across Europe. They have demonstrated the importance of local political trajectories, social transformations and cultural forces. They have also identified that much attributed to the role played by perceptions of crime and insecurity actually is informed and influenced by wider referents.

Notwithstanding the obvious measurement and methodological limitations of ‘fear of crime’ survey findings, available data show an upward trend in most Member States in feelings of insecurity. Figure 1 plots Eurobarometer data showing the proportion of respondents saying that they felt unsafe (*either a bit unsafe or very unsafe*) over time. Respondents in Scandinavian member states, Denmark, Finland and Sweden, were most likely to report the greatest feeling of security. This was especially strong in Denmark, where the majority of respondents (60%) felt *very safe*. At the other end of the scale, respondents in Greece, the UK and Italy reported the greatest feelings of insecurity i.e. feeling *either a bit unsafe or very unsafe* (42% in the UK and in Italy, 43% in Greece). Nearly one in five respondents in the United Kingdom (19%) and over one in five of Greek respondents (22%) said that they felt *very unsafe* (European Commission, 2003, 3).

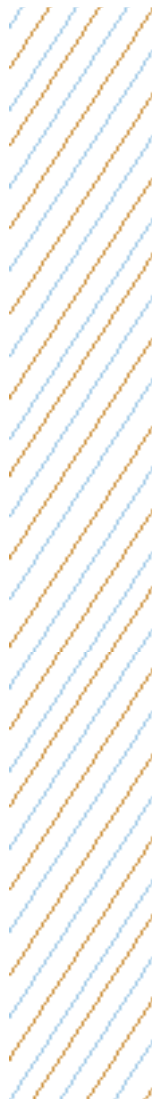


Figure 1 : Fear of Crime in the EU and US 1996 – 2002



Percentage of people who feel a bit unsafe or very unsafe in response to the question: 'How safe do you feel walking alone in the area where you live' (very safe, fairly safe, a bit unsafe, very unsafe).

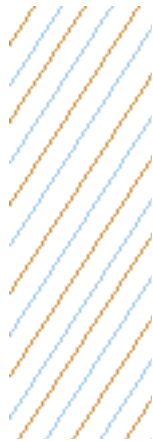
Database: Eurobarometer 44.3 (1996), 54.1 (2000), 58.0 (2002).



Across the European Union as a whole, there has been a small but consistent increase in the feeling of insecurity over the period, with 32% of respondents in 1996, 33% in 2000 and 35% in 2002 saying that they felt either *a bit unsafe* or *very unsafe*. The only Member State where there has been a continuous decline since 1996 in 'fear of crime' is Germany. This trend is particularly marked in the East German länders that formerly comprised the GDR. The data show three broad clusters of countries: first, those countries where the feeling of insecurity has increased since 1996 (notably the United Kingdom, Italy, France, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Sweden, Finland and Denmark); second, those countries where insecurity increased between 1996 and 2000, but then decreased (notably Greece, Ireland and Belgium); and third, those countries where there has been an overall decrease in the feeling of insecurity (notably Germany, Spain, Portugal, Austria and the United States).

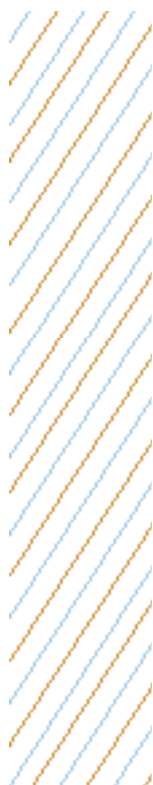
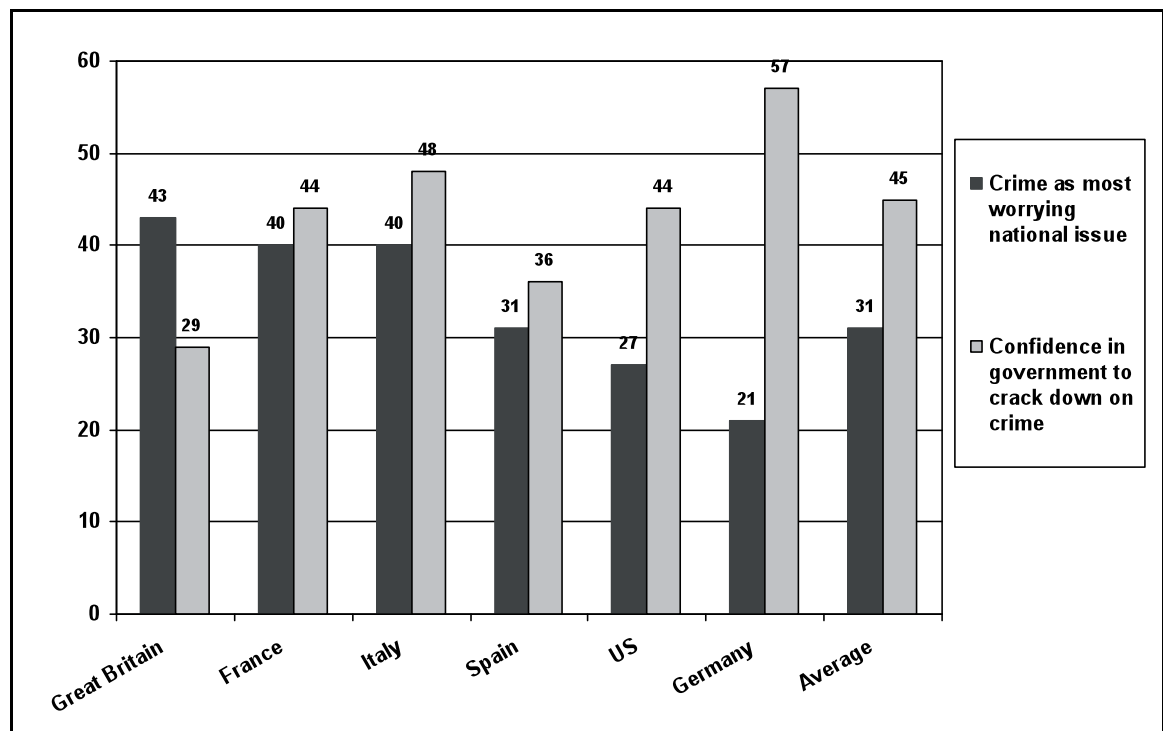
The results of an Ipsos Mori International Social Trends monitor of the US and the five largest countries in the European Union, namely Germany, Spain, France, Italy and Great Britain, provide some additional insights into public perceptions of insecurity (see Figure 2)². The survey, conducted in September 2006, reveals that when asked

² Approximately 1,000 telephone interviews were conducted with representative samples of adults in each country [<http://www.ipsos-mori.com/content/britons-most-worried-by-crime-and-government-is-le.ashx>] (last accessed 31.12.2008).



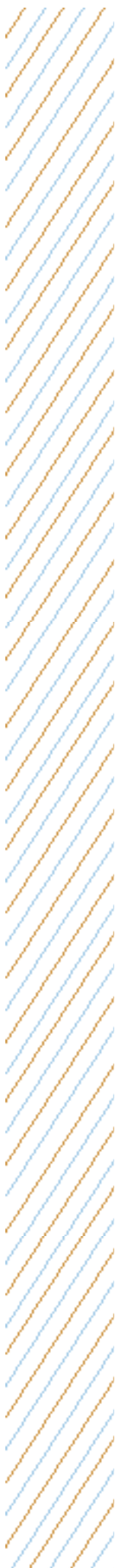
to identify the three most worrying national issues from a list of eleven topics, over two-fifths of British people said crime and violence was one of the most worrying issues (43%), double the level in Germany (21%). Moreover, whilst British people appeared the most concerned about crime, they also have the lowest confidence in their government to tackle the crime problem (with only 29%). Conversely, whilst German respondents were least concerned about crime as a national issue – only identified by one-fifth (21%) – they were the most confident (57%) in their government’s capacity to manage the crime problem.

Figure 2 : Public Perceptions of Crime and Confidence in Government



II - RESPONDING TO PERCEPTIONS OF INSECURITY : UNCERTAINTY AND PRECAUTION

It seems apparent that for a wide range of reasons politics and public policies have become increasingly sensitive to public perceptions of crime and insecurity in ways that have implications for traditional understandings of individual liberty and the role of the state in public affairs. It is in governmental responses to perceptions of insecurity that we see the allied notions of uncertainty and precaution coming to the fore in policy debate and political initiatives. The attacks in the US on 11 September 2001 significantly influenced and re-oriented much international debate, which in a European context was given further salience in the light of the subsequent bombings in Madrid in 2004 and London in 2005. Sacrificing individual civil liberties in the name of increased security has become a recurring theme of national (local and regional) governments (Walker, 2007). It has



fore-grounded questions about the appropriate balance to be struck between security and freedom. It has prompted concerns about the political ‘uses of fear’ – of ‘governing through terrorism’ (Adura, van Munster, 2007) – in strengthening political authorities and legitimising the exercise of power.

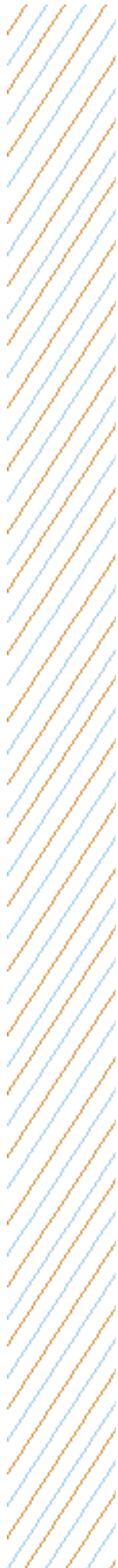
In a much-quoted statement, the former US Secretary of Defence, Donald Rumsfeld speaking in early 2002, assessed the so-called ‘new’ terrorist threats in the light of the 9/11 attacks and the failure to predict or prevent them, in the following memorable turn of phrase :

Reports that say that something hasn't happened are always interesting to me, because as we know, there are known knowns; there are things we know we know. We also know there are known unknowns; that is to say we know there are some things we do not know. But there are also unknown unknowns - the ones we don't know we don't know³.

Whilst his comments were much derided at the time, Rumsfeld intimated a deeper set of concerns and (by implication) challenges for governments in responding to perceptions of crime and insecurity (notably those associated with terrorist violence). He drew attention to the changing shape and source of contemporary threats to societies, highlighting the limits of expert knowledge about risks, underscoring the unknowability of the future and raising questions about how to govern under conditions of uncertainty. By implication, it is the ‘known unknowns’ and the ‘unknown unknowns’ – not simply the ‘known knowns’ that should be the focus of our concern and hence that we should fear. Crucially, the challenge for governments is how to respond to these ‘unknowns’. What is inferred is the need for intervention and action before a threat or risk becomes a ‘known known’. It is a clarion call for early intervention – for pre-emptive governance – even before risks have expressed themselves or become acknowledged. It proclaims the need to anticipate and forestall potential harms. Interestingly, of course, Rumsfeld omitted to mention a fourth category of ‘unknown knowns’; the things we know but do not admit to knowing! This is the ‘silent evidence’ (Taleb, 2007) that governments ignore, discard, shade from view or lock away. This reminds us of the political nature of knowledge claims and the uses of knowledge.

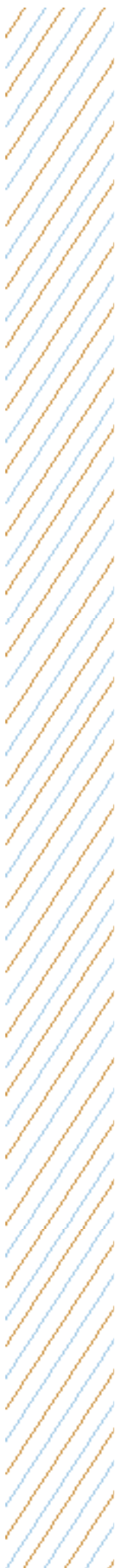
Determining where risks arise from and who presents a risk test the limits of our ability to predict the future. The science of ‘prediction’ has begun to enter the world of governing human affairs, including crime control (Feeley, Simon, 1994; Harcourt, 2007). Risk-focused approaches to crime prevention have become increasingly dominant particularly with regard to early intervention programmes with young

³ US Department of Defense News Transcript, 12 February 2002: [<http://www.defenselink.mil/transcripts/transcript.aspx?transcriptid=2636>] (last accessed 31.12.2008).



people and families (Farrington, 2007). Yet, in reality, the scientific knowledge-base for prevention and pre-emption remains too ambiguous to be reliable. Even in the context of childhood risk factors, developmental criminological research shows substantial flows *out of* as well as *in to* the pool of children who develop chronic conduct problems (Sutton *et al.*, 2004). As a consequence, false positives and false negatives abound. In governing the future, uncertainty prevails. The limitations of knowledge serve to magnify uncertainty. Under conditions of uncertainty a pre-emptive and preventive logic implies a precautionary approach. The 'precautionary principle' has an established role in policy decisions concerning environmental protection and management. In some legal systems, such as in laws of the European Union, the precautionary principle is a general and compulsory legal principle. It imposes upon public bodies a duty to act to avert serious or irreversible damage (Sunstein, 2005). The principle implies a responsibility to intervene and protect the public from exposure to harm where scientific investigation is insufficient, inconclusive or uncertain but where there are indications of possible adverse effects or plausible risks. Protections should be relaxed only if further evidence emerges that supports an alternative explanation. It is applied in the circumstances where there are reasonable grounds for concern that an activity is, or could, cause harm but where there is uncertainty about the probability of the risk and the degree of harm.

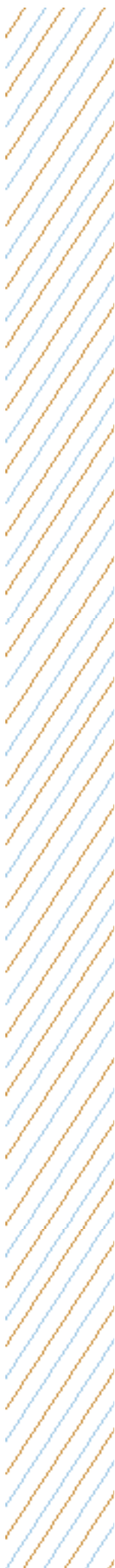
The precautionary principle has significant implications in the field of security. Anticipating and forestalling potential harms, insecurities and disorder, particularly in a risk-averse 'culture of fear' (Furedi, 2002) will frequently imply erring on the side of caution. From this perspective, people are to be judged in terms of what they *might* do. Suspicion becomes actionable intelligence. Intelligence, after all, is simply information with value-added analysis (Walker, 2007, 1455). When insecurity interacts with uncertainty in diverse arenas of policing, *rumours arise and shape how individuals and communities think, feel or act* (Innes, 2008). These rumours, whether real or not, can shape people's perceptions and trigger significant social reactions. In conditions of uncertainty, policing rumours becomes a challenge both for managing people's sense of security and for assessing preventive action. As Zedner notes, *precaution places uncertainty - not knowledge - centre stage* (2009, 37). In contemporary quests for security, it is 'uncertainty' that comes to constitute an increasingly dominant *justification for governmental action...: It is now our not knowing, our inability to know, or unwillingness to prove what we think we know that provides the reason to act before that unknown threat makes itself known* (Zedner, 2009, 58). As Zedner argues, what Rumsfeld is highlighting is a subtle shift from 'risk' to 'uncertainty' as the lens through which states construct the social problems they seek to govern.



Whilst risk assessments seek to predict the future on the basis of knowledge about how people performed and events unfolded in the past, the logic of security decisions under uncertainty focuses on the questions ‘what might be?’ or ‘what if?’ (Walklate, Mythen, 2008). Uncertainty and not knowing, rather than being constructed as a cause for fatalistic inertia, however, are invested with the urgent need for vital and potent pre-emptive measures, as well as a radical rethinking of the legitimate grounds for early interventions. Uncertainty privileges security and provokes preventive action before risks express themselves (O’Malley, 2004). This has significant implications for traditional principles of criminal justice, notably the presumption of innocence, due process protections and proportionality. Mythen and Walklate note: *Once one assumes a projective ‘What if?’ position, presumption of innocence metamorphoses into presumption of guilt* (2008, 234).

The larger the scale of the risk and the more harmful its consequences might be, the more indefensible inaction becomes. In such circumstances, the question ‘what if?’ prompts action; ‘just in case’. Uncertainty, by demanding precaution, invokes action even in situations where it is not possible to know the precise nature or extent of the potential threat that is posed. This is where decision-making about security is facilitated, ‘not in a context of certainty, nor even of available knowledge, but of doubt, premonition, foreboding, mistrust, fear and anxiety’ (Ewald, 2002, 294).

Yet as Zedner (2009) notes, ‘uncertainty’ does not displace ‘risk’. Rather, they work in parallel at the evident boundaries of knowledge. Whilst not knowing can be a powerful justification for intervention, so too, risk assessments allow the narrowing of risk pools such that the inconveniences of universal precautions can be displaced onto certain (often marginal) groups alone. Hence, whilst uncertainty might license ‘undifferentiated measures that target everyone’, as Zedner (2009, 45) argues, and the targets of surveillance are increasingly arbitrary, there are strong political and economic incentives to reduce this burden to the most ‘risky’ groups in society. The pressures to target resources and minimize the burdens of security to the general public are likely to result in the sacrifice of ‘other people’s’ freedoms to make ‘us’ (the dominant majority) feel more secure. In legitimising and informing the process of targeting, knowledge (or a least certain knowledge claims) about risk remains vital. As Ericson astutely notes, *risk assessment is rarely based on perfect knowledge, and typically frays into uncertainty* (2005, 659). Whilst we all might be inconvenienced at airports by the routine (post-9/11) security checks, these have not displaced more targeted forms of screening nor the quest for ‘fast-track’ procedures for less risky groups – for example, on the basis that they buy into schemes that require the provision of personal and biometric data (such as a



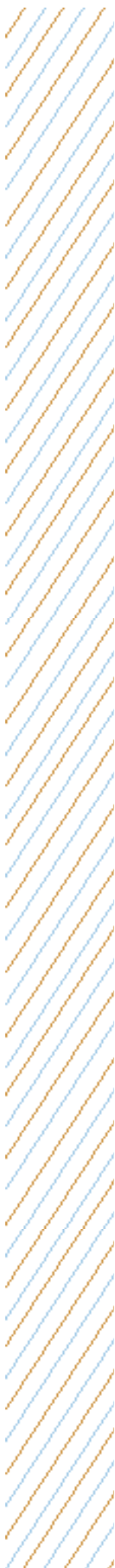
fingerprint and/or an iris scan)⁴. Rather than sidelining knowledge (as Zedner implies) responding to conditions of uncertainty prompts the search for and legitimises imperfect and less robust knowledge claims. Thus, subjective perceptions (rather than objective risks) become more important in informing reassurance strategies. Aradau and van Munster are therefore correct to assert that *the war on terror displays an insatiable quest for knowledge: profiling populations, surveillance, intelligence, knowledge about catastrophe management, prevention, etc.* (2007, 91). Risk here is reconceptualised as ‘precautionary risk’, which *has given birth to new configurations of risk that require that the catastrophic prospects of the future be avoided at all costs (ibid.)*.

It is in this context that the last decade or so has seen considerable government activity in introducing new laws and implementing novel strategies in the name of domestic and international security. The precautionary logic has prompted forms of, what Ericson calls, ‘counter-law’ whereby: New laws are enacted and new uses of existing laws are invented to erode or eliminate traditional principles, standards and procedures of criminal law that get in the way of pre-empting imagined sources of harm (2007, 24). Allied to this is the greater use of data pools, the storing of DNA records and risk profiling. In the face of uncertainty, the presumption of innocence, the burden of proof beyond reasonable doubt and the requirement of proportionality, all appear ill-at-ease with the precautionary approach (Zedner, 2009). Across Europe, similar concerns have been expressed about the rebalancing of security and liberty within criminal justice systems (Patane, 2006; Safferling, 2006).

III - THE SHADOW OF TERROR

Given the scale of threats constituted by terrorism and political violence in the light of 9/11, responses to terror threats have been at the forefront of much recent debate concerning the policing of insecurities. The incalculability of the risk of terrorism and the catastrophic consequences of mass incidents mean that government preoccupation with, and responses to, terrorist threats take on very particular forms (Aradau, van Munster, 2007). There are, however, evident links between government responses to terrorism and other contemporary insecurities, ranging from trans-national organised crime to low-level local incivilities and anti-social behaviour. For instance, there are close parallels and deep connections between British government responses to perceptions of insecurity in the context of terror and anti-social behaviour as evidenced in the use of Control Orders and Anti-Social Behaviour Orders (Macdonald, 2007). One consequence of the ‘war on terror’ has been to (further) blur the distinctions

⁴ For example, Frankfurt airport started a biometric scheme in February 2004 as part of the European Union’s Border Check initiative and Heathrow announced the establishment of such a scheme in Terminal 3 in late 2006. America’s Transportation Security Administration - set up to improve security after 9/11 - launched its Registered Traveler Pilot Program at five airports in 2004 (Frary, 2004).



between international and domestic security (or ‘homeland security’ as Americans prefer to call it). However, it would be inaccurate to suggest that the recent spate of Al Qaeda-linked bombings, and specifically 9/11, have somehow fundamentally altered perceptions of insecurity and responses to them. First, the threat of terrorism and political violence – notably in a European context – is by no means novel. Unlike America, mainland Europe has a long history of political violence and terrorism and of security responses to perceived terror threats. There are dangers in failing to learn from the past, even in cases where the conflict’s origin and context are different, such as Northern Ireland, the Basque region etc. In many senses, the ‘cultural trauma’ (Alexander *et al.*, 2004) induced by the highly symbolic events of 9/11, the Madrid bombings and 7/7, crystallised and brought to the fore sensibilities, developments and trends which were already either emergent or considerably underway.

Nevertheless, from the exceptional status of Guantanamo Bay, extraordinary renditions and preventive detention to biometric databases, increased surveillance and enhanced security, the post 9/11 period has heralded a diverse array of practices introduced in the name of, and licensed by, the ‘war on terror’. Many of these have awkward relations with both ‘war’ and ‘criminal justice’ (Aradua, van Munster, 2007). Official reaction to contemporary terror threats is frequently fuelled by a narrative of fear that encourages people to regard terrorism as uncertain, incomprehensible, senseless and beyond meaning (Furedi, 2007). In so doing, it authorises acts of speculation and demands technologies of precaution.

What is evident and, perhaps, somewhat novel is the manner in which perceptions of, and responses to, terror and political violence have come to inform, and be informed by, developments and trends in the policing of low level incivilities, border controls, immigration policies and community cohesion more generally. In the process the precautionary principle, traditionally associated with serious, irreversible damage and environmental catastrophe, has leaked into the regulation of low level inconveniences, social disorder, incivilities and disruptions to quality of life. These developments have been allied with the politics of ‘zero tolerance’, the quest for risk-free environments and absolute security and the construction of policies on the basis of the ‘worst case scenarios’. Furthermore, anxieties generated in relation to terrorism have prompted policy responses with considerable implication beyond the policing and regulation of terrorist threats to more mundane and routine acts of crime, disorder and (political) dissent – such as DNA databases, profiling and pre-employment screening.

IV - MARGINALISED GROUPS

Whilst there is a universalising tendency of control under conditions of uncertainty, anxieties about insecurity around terrorism merge with and incorporate existing categorisations of ‘problematic populations’. Suspicion easily becomes connected with particular marginalised groups – most notably in the context of terrorism young male Asian Muslims (or those assumed to look like them) – who find themselves defined as in Britain ‘dangerous’ (Mythen, Walklate, 2008, 229). In the context of precautionary actions in the face of unknown threats of terrorism, ‘radicalisation’ regardless of whether it leads directly to active recruitment into terrorist-motivated violence has been defined as a serious threat in and of itself. This is implicit in the EU Strategy on *Combating Radicalisation and Recruitment* (European Union, 2005) and many national strategies. Radicalisation as ‘pre-crime’ prompts the search for identifiable indicators of (Islamist) radicalism, which may take the form of changes in ideology, behaviour, practices and/or appearance.

The spectre of suspicion also incites forms of self-surveillance and self-regulation – as evidenced by the role of the Muslim Contact Units and the Muslim Safety Forum in the UK. Here, ‘communities defeating terrorism’ is becoming an accepted counter-terrorism maxim in which Muslim communities are enlisted into partnership endeavours to prevent violent extremism (Spalek *et al.*, 2008). More generally, citizens are to be vigilant and attentive to signs of suspicious behaviour or activity. Particular burdens of responsibility and assumptions about active surveillance have been placed on mosques, faith and community groups and universities. Intelligence-led policing demands heightened levels of (low level) intelligence. However, more intensive policing and information gathering often provokes and provides evidence of suspicion. Hence, the more proactive forms of surveillance of suspect populations that have been instituted have generated an abundant supply of information and an over-prediction of risks and threats (Levi, Wall, 2004).

Nevertheless, the policy discourse of combating radicalisation and preventing extremism in many countries has been cast in much wider terms than surveillance and policing alone. However, the dissonance and conflict between the diverse policies – police surveillance and community cohesion at one level and local strategies and international relations at another level – may undermine efforts to integrate marginalised and estranged groups. The deleterious impact of counter-terrorism responses is widely recognised. The House of Commons Home Affairs Select Committee concluded that there is *a clear perception among all our Muslim witnesses that Muslims are being stigmatised by the operation of the Terrorism Act: this is extremely harmful to community relations* (2005, § 153).



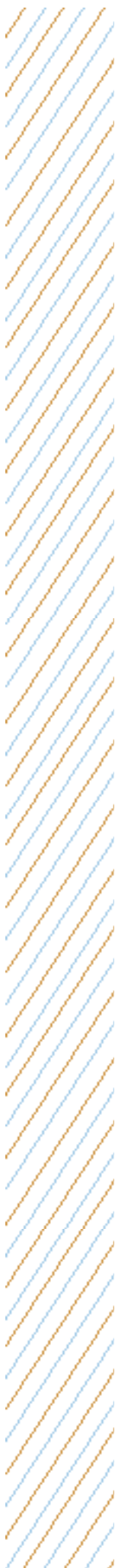
V - CONCLUDING THOUGHTS

Contemporary security threats from terrorist violence, through ‘ordinary’ crime to acts of disorder and anti-social behaviour, undoubtedly present real and pressing challenges for governments, businesses and citizens alike. But there are real dangers that in the way in which we both interpret risk and ‘unknown dangers’ and respond to them, we may be undermining some of the core values and principles of democratic societies, whilst eroding relations of social trust and mutual toleration. As a consequence, the balance between security and freedom has become possibly the most prominent contemporary challenge for European politics. The demand for security in societies where individuals have come to experience ever greater ‘freedom’ is a vexed one. The concern is that it frequently means sacrificing ‘other people’s’ freedoms to make ‘us’ feel more secure. This has adverse implications for marginal and marginalised groups within societies, those upon whom dominant groups project their fears and anxieties. Hence, the questions ‘whose fears?’, ‘whose security?’ and ‘whose freedoms?’ are particularly salient albeit often less evident in debates about threats of terrorism and political violence as well as other contemporary fears and responses to them. In the political confrontation between fear and liberty, where necessary, actions that infringe liberties are more evidently justifiable if those who support the actions are burdened by them and their impacts are not restricted to members of identifiable minority groups - whether implicitly or through differential implementation.

In governmental responses to perceptions of crime and insecurity, notably terrorism, precaution is becoming a key driver, in a way that licenses early interventions before our ‘unknown unknowns’ express themselves. In a context of uncertainty and in the search for (an unattainable absolute) security, mere suspicion, the perceptions of others, the appearance of potentially risky behaviour and worst case scenarios may be sufficient grounds for pre-emptive action. There is a need to consider and challenge the evidence and assess the different courses of action available. As Sunstein asserts : *Democratic governments care about facts as well as fears... they take careful steps to ensure that laws and policies reduce, and do not replicate, the errors to which fearful people are prone* (2005, 226). In ‘governance through precaution’, we may be in the process of discarding cherished civil liberties and legal principles in order to intervene at the earliest possible stage to stop our unknown demons surfacing. In so doing, we are in the process of widening our apparatuses of control and overloading these with information from diverse data-banks, in the hope that this will allow us to ‘join up the dots’ to identify potential risks and pre-empt the future. Whilst deliberate inaction in the face of evidence of possible serious and irreversible harm is understandably hazardous, so too over-reaction can at times present greater dangers, particularly where this generates unintended consequences and results in the consumption of resources that might have been deployed in more beneficial endeavours.

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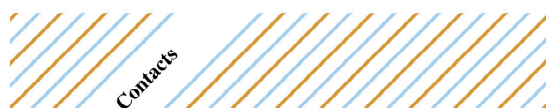
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