

Making Terrorists Racist: Drift, Layering, and Synchronization of Multicultural and Domestic Counter-Terrorism Policies in Britain, 2000-2008

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Previous studies indicate the creation of social policies requires the manipulation of cultural schema or “symbolic boundaries.” Yet the bounded rationality of policy elites trapped in path dependent processes suggests the creation of policy is relatively rare. Far more common is the incremental expansion or combination of existing policies to address new social problems. Synthesizing the literature on symbolic boundaries with ecological extensions of path dependency theory, I explain how British policy elites responded to the threat of “home-grown” terrorism by integrating multicultural and counter-terrorism policies between 2000 and 2008. Archival analysis, in-depth interviews, and ethnographic observation of the policy process reveal policy elites control the vector of policy paths by “breaching,” “bridging,” and “yoking” the symbolic boundaries of social problems. In so doing, policy elites must provide evidence of the interconnectedness of social problems, or the unintended consequences of ageing policies across multiple policy domains. These findings address outstanding questions in the literatures on policy change, historical emergence, and boundary change. I conclude with directions for future research in other policy environments beyond the British case.

INTRODUCTION

The cultural schema policy elites use to interpret social problems have critical implications for the evolution of social policies (e.g. Lamont and Small 2008; Skrentny 2006; Steensland 2006; Berezin 1997; Dobbin 1994).² Social problems are divided by “symbolic boundaries” or cognitive categories that provide “recipes for social action” (Sewell 1996: 842) necessary to construct institutions and define the roles of actors who inhabit them. But symbolic boundaries often blur. Symbolic boundaries are tested when policy elites are confronted with unprecedented social problems—or the unintended consequences of ageing policies (Prasad 2005; Portes 2000).³ The contradictions that result from blurry symbolic boundaries are fertile ground for policy entrepreneurship (Skrentny 1998). Yet sociologists are only beginning to

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² For reviews see Lamont and Small (2008) and Berezin (1997).

³ Following Skrentny (2006), I define policy elites as “state actors with some influence over the direction, shape, and timing of policy making” (1765).

understand when and how shifts in the symbolic boundaries of social problems bend the social boundaries of policies as well.

I argue that previous studies have been unable to unravel the complex relationship between symbolic and social boundaries they focus on the creation or reform of a single policy. But the bounded rationality of policy elites trapped within path dependent processes suggests policies are rarely created *tabula rosa* (Thelen 2004). Far more common is the harmonization or combination of existing policies to address new social problems (Laumann and Knoke 1982; Mehta 2009). For example, many policies “drift” off course towards other policy domains (Hacker 2004). Others are “layered” on top of existing policies to bridge institutional rivalries (Schickler 2001). Finally, policies can be simultaneously reformed or “synchronized” (Bruce and Wilcox 1998). This ecological perspective highlights the role of competing institutions within the state that constrain opportunities for policy entrepreneurship (Heimer 1999).⁴ Yet the ecological perspective employs an outmoded model of cognitive processes that treats symbolic boundaries as the byproduct of policy reform. Below I explain why a theoretical synthesis is needed to specify how symbolic boundaries enable and constrain policy drift, layering, and synchronization.

The theoretical framework is used to explain the co-evolution of multicultural and domestic counter-terrorism policies in Britain between 2000 and 2008. The interdependence of citizenship and security policies has been well documented in early European history (e.g. Brubaker 1992). But in recent decades, large-scale migration has trapped states between the *Scylla* and *Charybdis* of ontological obligations to pluralism, on the one hand, and practical concerns for security, on the other (Turner 2007; Bleich 2009). While European policy elites regularly make connections between multicultural policy and terrorism, sociologists continue to study each domain separately. This research strategy obscures the case of Britain, whose *laissez-faire* multicultural policy was being blamed for the radicalization of second-generation immigrants even before the London bombings of July 7th, 2005.

A brief history of the case study is necessary to contextualize my empirical puzzle. Britain’s post-war multicultural policy was designed to accommodate—and not assimilate—an influx of migrants from its former colonies by providing state funds to minority groups to develop their own institutions (Favell 2001; Bleich 2003). The policies were primarily designed to prevent discrimination towards West Indian immigrants, since Pakistani, Indian, and Bangladeshi immigrants were not politically organized (Statham 1999). In fact, South Asian immigrants were publicly defined as “black” until the 1980s, although they themselves did not embrace the term (Modood 1994). At the end of the decade, Muslim immigrants from South Asia continued to be among the poorest, least educated, and most segregated minority groups in Britain. Many argued multicultural policy had encouraged the relative deprivation of Muslims by financing parochial “faith schools” and *Sharia* courts offering adjudication with Islamic law. In

⁴ These approaches are often described as “historical institutionalism” (e.g. Mahoney and Thelen 2009). I borrow the term “ecological” from Abbott (1988), who uses the metaphor to map changing relationships between professions. I prefer the ecological analogy since it describes the size of spaces between policy domains, as well as the cardinal direction of policy paths.

1989 a small group of self-described Muslims vowed to enact a death warrant against British author Salman Rushdie, who had written a book that criticized Islamic fundamentalism. This and similar events thrust British Muslims into the spotlight of debates about the limits of British tolerance.⁵

Multicultural and security policies were set on a collision course in 2000, when an influential report criticized institutional racism within the British Police and other government agencies. Before 2000, Britain's domestic counter-terrorism policy had evolved in response to the protracted campaign of the Irish Republican Army (Donohue 2001).⁶ In early 2001, mounting conflict between South Asian and nativist gangs sparked massive riots in several of Britain's Northern cities. Instead of reforming existing multicultural or security policies, however, policy elites created a "Community Cohesion" policy because they believed the violence had resulted from declining social capital between ethnic groups. The policy sanctioned a team of bureaucrats to identify municipalities with low social capital and develop rapid interventions to encourage social cohesion.

Although Community Cohesion policy was not designed for counter-terrorism purposes, policy elites began privately linking the two policies in the wake of the September 11th attacks, and subsequent "home-grown" plots involving British citizens including the infamous "shoe bomber." By 2004, Community Cohesion policy was publicly recognized as part of the government's counter-terrorism agenda. In the wake of the 2005 London Bombings, however, policy elites discovered the suspects were well-integrated members of British society who played cricket and worked with local youth. Faced with evidence that discredited the relationship between social capital and terrorism, policy elites shifted their focus towards "Islamophobia" or discrimination towards Muslims. Between 2005 and 2008, policy elites simultaneously reformed multicultural and counter-terrorism policy by invoking anti-racist principles in a "battle for the hearts and minds" of British Muslims.

Below I address three empirical puzzles raised by the case study. First, why did policy elites not reform multicultural policy when first confronted with its connection to terrorism? Second, why did policy elites invent Community Cohesion policy instead of reforming multicultural or counter-terrorism policy? Finally, why were multicultural and counter-terrorism policies eventually reformed simultaneously, and not independently? To answer these questions I use a nested research design (Lieberman 2005) that combines archival analysis, in-depth interviews, and ethnographic observation of the policy process. The analysis reveals three processes through which the symbolic and social boundaries of policies become decoupled: *breaching*, *bridging*, and *yoking*. Social boundaries are realigned with symbolic boundaries only if policy elites can provide evidence of the interconnectedness of social problems, or the unintended consequences of policies across multiple domains. These findings have important implications for the literatures on the policy process, historical emergence (e.g. Clemens 2007), and boundary change (e.g. Tilly 2006).

⁵ In addition to the "Rushdie Affair," British Muslims were accused of failing to accept the "British Way of Life" in high profile debates about the ritual slaughter of animals in public places, the burial of the dead, and blasphemy laws

⁶ This article focuses exclusively on domestic counter-terrorism policy. Below I use the terms "domestic counter-terrorism" and "counter-terrorism" interchangeably for ease of presentation.

THE BOUNDARIES OF THE POLICY ENVIRONMENT

Ecological Extensions of Path Dependency Theory

Most explanations of the policy process rely explicitly or implicitly on path dependency theory. The “weak” version of path dependency suggests the commonsense notion that “events occurring at an earlier point in time will affect events occurring at a later point in time” (Djelic and Quack 2007: 161). Or, in Skocpol’s (1995) terms, “politics makes policies, and policies make politics.” The more recent “strong” version of path dependency describes how historical contingencies or “critical junctures” allow policy elites to exploit “lock-in” mechanisms that determine the degree of path dependency (e.g. Mahoney 2000). While the strong version provides badly needed specification of the mechanisms of path dependency, it does not acknowledge how relationships between multiple policies constrain the direction of policy paths (Thelen 2004; Hacker 2004). This is a critical omission since the paths of most policies eventually become crooked in order to navigate new social problems within a broader policy environment (Djelic and Quack 2007). Below I describe three extensions of path dependency that describe how the policy environment constrains policy change.

DRIFT. Policy *drift* occurs when changes are made in the “operation or effect of policies without significant changes in those policies’ structure” (Hacker 2004: 246). In practice, most policies drift from their intended applications, but policy elites often prefer to work “from within” the existing policy structure rather than assuming the risks or collecting the resources necessary for official policy reform. “The major cause of drift,” writes Hacker (2004), “is a shift in the social context of policies, such a... intensified social risks with which existing programs are poorly equipped to grapple” (246). For example, Gottschalk (2000) shows that American policy elites faced with a health care crisis in the 1970s chose not to reform state regulatory practices because doing so would require them to accept responsibility that was shouldered by corporations. Instead of conducting official reform, policy elites negotiated informal policy revisions with corporations. Hence, policy drift “occurs largely outside the immediate control of policy elites, thus appearing natural or inadvertent” (Hacker 2004: 246).

LAYERING. Policy *layering* occurs when elites “[add] new institutions rather than dismantling the old” (Schickler 2001: 13). Layering is a common alternative to policy reform because it does not threaten the mandate of actors and organizations sanctioned by old policies. For example, Thelen (2004) shows that German policy-elites faced with growing demands for vocational training by labor unions elected not to attempt major reform of educational policy protected by strong institutions. Instead, policy elites layered a new policy about curriculum design on top of existing education legislation that mandated trade union participation, without changing the basic tenets of educational policy. “While each individual change is consciously designed to serve specific goals,” writes Schickler (2001), “the layering of successive innovations results in institutions that appear more haphazard than the product of some overarching master plan” (15).

SYNCHRONIZATION. Policies that drift—or policies that are layered—no longer evolve orthogonally to other policies. Often, the crooked paths of policies collide. Examples include the

integration of U.S. alcohol and firearms policy after prohibition encouraged smuggling by criminal gangs (Bruce and Wilcox 1998). Or, the coordination of incentives for “green business” after environmental and macro-economic policies collided under the threat of global warming (Judge 1993). I term this type of policy change *synchronization*, since it requires simultaneous—but balanced—reform of two policies.

Drift, layering, and synchronization are a welcome typology of policy paths, but it remains to be determined *why* policies follow different trajectories through time. Political scientists have explained change as the product of voting coalitions, veto-players, and the distribution of increasing returns (Hacker 2004; Pierson 2004; Thelen 2004). Yet these structural explanations ignore antecedent processes of interpretation that allow elites to determine their self-interest, build coalitions, and analyze their returns (Wedeen 2002; Lamont and Small 2008). The process of interpretation is equally—if not more—important than subsequent political behavior for several reasons. First, policy elites are often unaware of the unconscious processes that determine the range of possibilities for political action such as voting (Steensland 2007; Skrentny 2006). This is particularly important when policy elites are confronted with unprecedented social problems during “unsettled periods” (Swidler 1986) characterized by extreme uncertainty. Second, contradictions in processes of interpretation can generate powerful historical contingencies *in themselves*. As Haydu (1998) argues, processes of interpretation “may embody contradictions that generate later crises” but also “bequeath[s] tools and understanding with which later actors confront those crises” (354). Finally, states are comprised of multiple communities of interpretation. In Bourdieu’s (1999) famous formulation, the punitive “right hand” of the state is often unaware of what the beneficent “left hand” is doing.

The Symbolic Boundaries of Social Problems

The distinction between symbolic and social boundaries is a useful point of departure for developing predictions about how the process of interpretation shapes policy paths. Symbolic boundaries are cognitive distinctions that encircle certain “people, groups, and things” (Epstein 1992: 232) by excluding them from others. Social boundaries are “objectified forms of social differences” (Lamont and Molnár 2002: 168) such as laws or institutions. Symbolic boundaries are a “necessary but insufficient” condition for the construction of social boundaries since they define coherent social entities that can be acted upon (Gieryn 1999). Welfare policies, for example, require symbolic boundaries that define groups as “worthy” of government benefits (Steensland 2007; Lamont and Small 2008), and affirmative action policies targeted minority groups that were “threatening” to law and order (Skrentny 2006). These studies borrow from the literature on symbolic boundaries and collective identity (Douglas 1966; Lamont and Molnár 2002), instead of a parallel tradition that explains how symbolic boundaries delimit academic fields and professions (Bourdieu 1975; Gieryn 1983; Abbott 1988).⁷ Building upon the latter tradition, the following sections explain how the symbolic boundaries of social problems shape the paths of policies through their environment.

The analytical focus of the literature on academic fields and professions is to unravel the complex relationship between symbolic and social boundaries. Drawing upon Abbot’s (1995) explanation of the emergence of the field of social work, I assume all new policies require

⁷ For a review see Lamont and Molnár (2002).

symbolic boundaries that define their jurisdiction over social problems vis-à-vis other policies. Following Gieryn (1983), I assume that the symbolic boundaries of social problems are more malleable than the social boundaries of policies represented by laws or government organizations. These assumptions generate a new set of questions that are useful in determining the direction of policy paths. First, how do symbolic boundaries become decoupled from social boundaries? Are certain symbolic and social boundaries more tightly coupled than others? Second, do changes in the symbolic boundaries of social problems threaten the social boundaries of one or more policies? Finally, when and how do changes in the symbolic boundaries of social problems create changes in the social boundaries of policies?

Previous studies of symbolic and social boundaries provide three useful insights for addressing these questions. First, symbolic boundaries are seldom imposed *tabula rosa*. More often, existing symbolic boundaries are stretched, contracted, divided, or combined (e.g. Tilly 2006). This is because previous studies suggest social cognition is syncretic or iterative (Cerulo 2006; Douglas 1986). Second, symbolic boundary changes can result from both intentional and unintentional action by social actors. Bourdieu (1990), for example, showed that academic fields have magnetic properties that often mean attempts to police one side of a symbolic boundary can result in unexpected incursions by actors on the other side. Finally, symbolic boundary change only leads to social boundary change when actors are able to provide evidence of relationships between actors both inside and outside a social boundary. A vast literature in science studies, for example, shows how scientists distinguished themselves from other intellectual fields by demonstrating practical relationships between groups of scientists pursuing complimentary research agenda (e.g. Latour 1988). But evidence can be hidden or presented selectively in order to legitimate social boundaries (Gieryn 1983).

Symbolic Boundaries and the Paths of Policies

Together, these insights can be used to explain how the relationship between symbolic and social boundaries enables and constrains policy drift, layering, and synchronization. Below, I describe three ways in which symbolic boundaries become decoupled from social boundaries, leading to different types of policy change: *breaching*, *bridging*, and *yoking*. Table 1 summarizes the theoretical synthesis, described in detail below.

[TABLE 1 ABOUT HERE]

BOUNDARY BREACHING. Policy drift requires boundary breaching (Douglas 1966; Rao, Monin, and Durand 2005) or expansion (Gieryn 1999). Steensland (2006) has already extended the concept of breaching to the policy process, showing how policy elites dissolved distinctions between categories of poor people during debate over American Guaranteed Income Policy. I extend his approach towards the categorical breaching of social problems. For my purposes, breaching is the expansion of symbolic boundaries used to construct an old policy to encircle a new social problem. Like policy drift, breaching may be gradual, as policy elites slowly decouple the symbolic and social boundaries of policies erected by previous generations. Symbolic boundary breaching will only change social boundaries if policy elites can provide evidence of relationships between social problems inside and outside the symbolic boundary originally used

to construct the policy in question. They may be particularly successful in so doing if they find evidence that the new social problem is an unintended consequence of the policy itself.

BOUNDARY BRIDGING. Policy layering appears haphazard because it is not simply the product of problem solving or “policy learning” (Hall 1993) but political contestation (Bartley 2007). Layering requires policy elites who recognize symbolic space between rival policy domains fertile for what I call symbolic boundary *bridging*.⁸ Like a collision of billiard balls, new policies can dislodge other policies that have drifted too close to one another. Unlike boundary breaching, policy elites conducting symbolic boundary bridging will be more likely to succeed if the boundaries between rival domains are heavily contested (Frickel and Gross 2005). This is because the creation of new symbolic and social boundaries can resolve tension between elites in rival policy domains eager to formalize the blurry boundaries between them. Bridging requires evidence that addressing a new social problem with existing policies would be ineffective or inefficient.

BOUNDARY YOKING. Policy synchronization requires what Abbott (1995) calls boundary yoking. Boundary yoking is the “connection of two...boundaries such that one side of each becomes defined as “inside” the same entity” (871). To yoke boundaries, policy elites in rival domains must be convinced of their shared fate. Skrentny (1998), for example, shows how social movements leveraged criticism about race-relations towards the U.S. government generated by the Soviets during the Cold War. The yoking of symbolic boundaries will result in changes in social boundaries only if policy elites can provide evidence that attempts to address a new social problem within one policy domain are affecting the function of another policy.

NESTED RESEARCH DESIGN

My goal is to determine how British policy elites manipulated the symbolic boundaries of social problems to reform the social boundaries of multicultural and counter-terrorism policy when confronted with the new threat of “home-grown” terrorism. The theoretical predictions above cannot be evaluated using conventional linear methodologies that describe the co-variance of variables at separate points of time (Isaac and Griffin 1989). Instead, it requires analysis of the emergence of new social forms via the interpenetration of “multiple orders” (Clemens 2007). This process-oriented methodology requires the identification of turning points (Abbott 1997) where relationships between social actors and their environments shift, enabling certain policy elites to “switch” the paths of social processes that were once orthogonal—in this case, social policies.

A conventional approach would compare distinctive cases of policy change and analyze the symbolic and social boundary change preceded them. While this comparative method enables thick description of case studies, it often produces idiosyncratic explanations that emphasize contextual factors (Ragin and Becker 1992). Often, this is because attempts to redraw symbolic boundaries are constrained by earlier processes of interpretation and categorization (Steenland 2008). Or, in Haydus’s (1998) terms, “[h]istory’s switchmen come along for the ride” (353). What is more, comparing distinctive cases does not allow identification or the interpenetration of

⁸ This prediction is motivated by Eyal’s (2009) theory of how actors navigate the space between fields.

multiple orders, key to my theoretical agenda. Building upon Haydu, I compare a set of policies within a single case study over time. This approach has two advantages. First, it allows for the identification of turning points where multiple orders meet. Second, it reveals how changes in symbolic and social boundaries are constrained by the “boundary-work” of policy elites during previous turning points.

To identify time periods for comparison and illuminate changes in the symbolic and social boundaries of policies I used a “nested” research design (Lieberman 2005). In this approach, “large N” data are used to guide the sampling strategy for “small N” data. I employed large N archival data to guide nested samples of in-depth interviews with policy elites. The policy elites interviewed helped me identify opportunities for ethnographic observation in turn.

DATA

ARCHIVAL ANALYSIS. I analyzed all domestic policies, legislative debates and hearings, official and independent government reports, executive statements, and government press releases on the subject of multiculturalism, domestic counter-terrorism, or Muslims between 2000 and 2008. The documents were collected via the “HANSARD” government archive that includes the proceedings of Parliament and the House of Commons, as well as the press releases archive of the Home Office and 10 Downing Street, the central domestic and executive branches of British government.⁹ This preliminary sample allowed me to make a timeline of major policy changes and a list of key organizations and actors involved in policy reform. I then conducted a snowball sample of all reports from these government agencies, declassified government documents, and media coverage of press releases from key policy elites for the same time period. The total sample includes roughly 8,000 pages from seven hundred and forty four documents.

IN-DEPTH INTERVIEWS. I conducted in depth-interviews with thirty-two policy elites identified in the archival analysis between 2006 and 2008.¹⁰ The sample includes ten elected officials, twelve government administrators and legislative aides, and ten government consultants. Together, these respondents represented three political parties, five government agencies, and five non-governmental organizations. Respondents were first asked why they—or the organization they represent—became involved in the reform of multicultural and counter-terrorism policy. They were then asked which policy domain(s) they thought should be responsible for addressing the threat of home-grown terrorism, and why. Finally, they were asked to identify the actors or institutions that resisted their attempts to address home-grown terrorism within one policy domain or another. These questions were designed to distinguish boundary breaching, bridging, and yoking as well as the type of evidence used in respondent’s attempts to decouple symbolic and social boundaries. Three respondents paraphrased non-public documents including inter-governmental memos and classified reports. Others directed me towards classified documents

⁹ The Internet Archive was used to obtain reports and press releases for government agencies not included in the HANSARD archive. The Internet Archive has archived millions of sites monthly since 1999, allowing users to obtain old information from websites that have been updated or deleted.

¹⁰ Interviews ranged from 0.5 to 2 hours. Most interviews were recorded and transcribed, but several interviews with senior government officials were not recorded to prevent biased responses caused by fear of attribution. Several follow-up interviews were conducted by telephone.

that had already been leaked to the public domain which were added to the sample of archival documents.

ETHNOGRAPHIC OBSERVATION. Because the archival analysis and in-depth interviews abstracted from the *interaction* of policy elites from separate policy domains, I conducted ethnographic observation of six inter-governmental meetings during 10 months of fieldwork in three British cities between 2007 and 2008. Four of these meetings were open to the public, and two were by invitation only. After each meeting I wrote detailed field notes. Although I did not obtain regular access to government agencies or classified hearings, the ethnographic data allowed me to identify disputes about organizational turf that were not reported in archival documents or in-depth interviews.

ANALYSIS AND CROSS-VALIDATION. Archival documents, interviews, and fields notes were systematically analyzed using Atlas.TI.¹¹ A significant limitation of the data is the possibility that respondents either misremembered the past or gave self-serving interpretations of the policy process in order to protect their political identities. Three steps were taken to mitigate these limitations. First, I cross-validated conflicting evidence in the archival data using non-public documents, ethnographic data, and interviews (in that order).¹² Second, I cross-validated conflicting evidence from the interview data by privileging data from legislative aides, government administrators, non-elected officials, and elected officials (in that order). Finally, ethnographic observation of meetings allowed me to ask questions of policy elites with competing agenda in public, thereby encouraging debate between them.

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

MULTICULTURAL POLICY BEFORE 2000. A brief historical background of multicultural and domestic counter-terrorism policies before 2000 is needed to contextualize the empirical results that follow. Britain's commitment to pluralism derives from its colonial policy that emphasized co-existence of minority groups through "local rule" (Bleich 2003; Favell 2001). A series of Race Relations Acts between the mid '60s and '70s codified these principles within multicultural policy by creating laws against racial discrimination and a Commission for Racial Equality (CRE), responsible for their enforcement (Solomos 2003). While a detailed history of this legislation and the CRE is not feasible here, two key features of multicultural policy before 2000 are noteworthy.¹³ First, as previously discussed, multicultural policy was "racialized" as part of government focus on the integration of minorities from the West Indies, and not South Asia (Modood 1994). Second, the Race Relations Act promoted "equality of opportunity" by providing state funds to racial minorities that wished to develop their own schools or community centers (Koopmans and Statham 1999). Although the policy was designed to guarantee equal participation in local government that would create mutual tolerance, critics of multiculturalism accused the policy of encouraging racial minorities to self-segregate by the early 1990s.

¹¹ Copies of the coding scheme and interview schedule are available from the author.

¹² It is possible, however, that respondents selectively gave me access to classified information in order to advance their own political agenda.

¹³ For a comprehensive review of British multicultural policy see Solomos (2003), or Modood and Ahmad (2007).

DOMESTIC COUNTER-TERRORISM POLICY BEFORE 2000. Britain's modern counter-terrorism policy evolved in response to the violent campaign of the Irish Republican Army, whose aim was to challenge British control of Northern Ireland. The Terrorism Act of 1973 was passed in response to a series of IRA bombings in the 1960s.¹⁴ The act enabled counter-terrorism officials to arrest suspects without a warrant and increased their capacity to deport suspected terrorists. The harsh tactics of the British Secret Service in subsequent decades prompted international criticism and critics argued the draconian measures only encouraged further violence from the IRA (Graham and Smyth 2000). Subsequent reform of counter-terrorism policy in the 1980s adopted a two-pronged strategy that included "hard" military tactics against IRA operatives directed by "soft" measures to improve intelligence through community policing (Geraghty 2002; Innes 2006). A cease-fire was signed with the IRA in 1994, followed by the 1998 Good Friday Agreement that gave the IRA political representation in Northern Ireland.

PRESENTATION OF THE ARGUMENT

I identified three periods of policy change using archival analysis: drift (2000-2003), layering (2003-2006), and synchronization (2006-2008). Figure 1 describes the paths of three policies analyzed: multicultural policy, Community Cohesion policy, and domestic counter-terrorism policy.¹⁵ Drift occurred within both multicultural and counter-terrorism policy between 2000 and 2003. Between 2003 and 2006, community cohesion policy was layered on top of multicultural and counter-terrorism policies. Between 2006 and 2008 policy elites began synchronizing multicultural and counter-terrorism policy, while Community Cohesion policy began to drift.

[FIGURE 1 ABOUT HERE]

My central claim is that none of these three policies should be analyzed without reference to the symbolic and social boundaries of the other two. Figure 2 summarizes my argument, illustrating how symbolic and social boundaries changed during each period. When first confronted with the threat of home-grown terrorism in 2000, policy elites neither reformed existing policies nor invented entirely new ones. The symbolic boundaries of multicultural policy were breached between 2000 and 2003 as policy elites questioned whether religious and racial discrimination were separate social problems. The symbolic boundaries of counter-terrorism policy were also breached as policy elites questioned whether home-grown terrorism was similar to that of separatist groups like the IRA. The social boundaries of both policies ultimately remained unmoved, however, since policy elites within strong institutions systematically ignored or refuted evidence that home-grown terrorism was the unintended consequence of either policy.

The very strength of the social boundaries of multicultural and counter-terrorism policy enabled the symbolic boundary bridging necessary for the layering of Community Cohesion policy between 2003 and 2006. During this time, policy elites identified a new social problem: declining social capital. Drawing new symbolic boundaries around this problem allowed policy elites to steer multicultural and counter-terrorism policy off a collision course. They succeeded by collecting powerful evidence from surveys and academic studies that suggested that

¹⁴ Earlier versions of British Counter-terrorism policy were designed to address anarchist attacks in the 1930s. For a detailed history of British counter-terrorism policy see Donohue (2001).

¹⁵ Hereafter "multicultural policy" refers to the laws and institutions created by the Race Relations Act.

discrimination and integration were distinctive social problems. Although policy elites within Community Cohesion and counter-terrorism policies privately collaborated, they hid evidence that linked the problems of social capital and terrorism in order to prevent the incorporation of the two policies. They did so because they believed public incorporation would threaten the quality of intelligence collected by Community Cohesion policy.

When the connection between social capital and terrorism was later discredited, policy elites did not reform Community Cohesion Policy. Instead, they began designing a domestic “winning hearts and minds” campaign that yoked the symbolic boundaries previously used to distinguish racial discrimination and domestic terrorism. This new strategy grouped home-grown terrorists and far-right nativist groups as part of the same problem of racial intolerance. By the end of 2008, policy elites yoked the social boundaries of multicultural and domestic counter-terrorism policies as part of new “PREVENT” policy, while the symbolic boundaries of Community Cohesion policy were breached away from the problem of terrorism and toward the problem of integration.

[FIGURE 2 ABOUT HERE]

RESULTS: DRIFT (2000-2003)

“ARRESTING RACISM”: THE 2000 AMENDMENT TO THE RACE RELATIONS ACT

My analysis begins in 2000, when the Race Relations Act was amended in response to influential reports of pervasive institutional racism in the British Government (MacPherson 1999; Parkeh 2000). The “Lawrence Inquiry” attempted to explain why police had failed to adequately investigate the brutal murder of a teenager of West Indian origin. During legislative debate about the report, a member of the House of Lords summarized a view characteristic of his peers: “It is not just the police who failed in the case of Stephen Lawrence; indeed, we must all share the blame for what happened on that dreadful night. *We have failed to arrest racism* [emphasis added].”¹⁶ The 2000 Amendment strengthened public authorities statutory *duty* to promote “race equality” by establishing penalties for government institutions that could not demonstrate pro-active attempts to reduce institutional racism. The Commission for Racial Equality (CRE) was mandated to audit other government agencies, further strengthening its role at the center of what Koopmans and Statham (1999) called the “race relations industry.”¹⁷ The Amendment had two important implications for the symbolic and social boundaries of multicultural policy. First, the amendment coupled the symbolic boundaries drawn around racial discrimination to the social boundaries of multicultural policy even more tightly. Second, it represented mounting attempts by policy elites within the CRE to breach the symbolic boundaries of multicultural policy to encircle not only the problem of racial discrimination in the labor market, but within institutions responsible for security as well.

FROM IRELAND TO AL-QAEDA: THE TERRORISM ACT OF 2000

¹⁶ Lord Dhokia, House of Lords Debate, April 15th, 1999 vol 599, 841-905.

¹⁷ See also Winddance Twine (2004).

In 2000, lawmakers also passed a new Terrorism Act, which codified the symbolic boundaries of terrorism as “acts of persons acting on behalf of, or in connection with, any organization that carries out activities directed towards the overthrowing or influencing, by force or violence, of Her Majesty’s government in the United Kingdom or any other government *de jure* or *de facto*.” The Act expanded the social boundaries of domestic-counter-terrorism policy to allow increased detention and “stop and search” powers of police, and mandated the Home Secretary to maintain a list of terrorist organizations that had been created by temporary legal provisions in response to the IRA campaign (Walker 2002). The Act revealed policy elite’s widening concern about terrorist groups outside of Ireland that had emerged since Libyan nationals hijacked a plane flying from London to New York in 1988. One respondent told me, “[t]his was seen as a new thing... You know—when I was in the Police Authority one of the things I convinced the commissioner to do was to change the language.” While the symbolic boundaries and social boundaries of counter-terrorism policy were expanded to address terrorist groups from the Middle East such as Al-Qaeda, they continued to view such groups as a threat to Britain’s foreign interest, and not domestic security.¹⁸

“RACE” RIOTS?

In the summer of 2001, massive riots erupted between far right groups and minority gangs in several of Britain’s Northern cities. Violent use of petrol bombs and other projectiles resulted in hundreds of arrests, injured policemen, and millions of pounds in damage. The riots shocked policy elites in the CRE and the Home Office, who had previously touted the success of British multicultural policy to European neighbors struggling with similar challenges.¹⁹ While Britain had experienced “race riots” involving minorities of West Indian background in the early 1980s, South Asian minorities were primarily involved in the 2001 riots. Of particular concern to policy elites was that most of these minorities lived in highly segregated neighborhoods with concentrated poverty than one respondent described as “‘no go’ areas for non-Asians.” Other respondents rejected such claims as “rubbish,” but held more tempered beliefs that high levels of segregation might be an unintended consequence of multicultural policy at the time.

After the riots, several retired politicians were commissioned to produce independent inquiries. Of these, Ted Cantle’s report was most extensive. Cantle and his co-authors interviewed more than 2,000 people in the communities affected and presented sixty-seven recommendations to prevent future unrest. The central diagnosis of the Cantle report was that migrant and non-migrant communities had been living “parallel lives,” not only due to residential segregation, but also because of “separate educational arrangements, community and voluntary bodies, employment, places of worship, language, [and] social and cultural networks.”²⁰ A quote from a man of Pakistani origin interviewed underscores this diagnosis “When I leave this meeting with you I will go home and not see another white face until I come back here next week.” The report recommended increased efforts to build “community

¹⁸ Another respondent interviewed suggested the Act passed with bi-partisan support primarily because it formalized the counter-terrorism strategies used in the successful campaign against the IRA, and not because of widespread concern about terrorist groups from the Middle East.

¹⁹ The Home Office is the government organization responsible for most domestic affairs in Britain. Its primary responsibilities include immigration, police, counter-terrorism, and narcotics.

²⁰ Cantle et al. 2001. “Community Cohesion: A Report of the Independent Review Team” Home Office, p. 9

cohesion,” a vague concept defined as “common values and a civic culture... social order and social control...social solidarity and reductions in wealth disparities... social networks and social capital... place attachment and identity.”²¹ In response, the Home Office arranged an exploratory Community Cohesion Unit to assess whether and how the recommendations could be implemented through policy.

The Cattle Report created controversy between police elites because its recommendations challenged the laissez-faire principles of multicultural policy. Cattle’s call for an “open, honest debate about multiculturalism,” received mixed reaction from the Commission for Racial Equality (CRE).²² One respondent described the Cattle report as the beginning of a “schism between multiculturalists.” In response to the Cattle Report, CRE chair Gurbux Singh interpreted the riots as part of the problem of racial discrimination:

“The past few weeks seem like a 20-year-old echo for race relations—violence on the streets, fear and mayhem. Is this the Britain of 1981, with a long hot summer of discontent ahead? ... [W]hen people get angry, they look for a scapegoat. That scapegoat is diversity—being different, being unlike each other.”²³

Sir Herman Ouseley, former CRE chair who was an author of another independent inquiry echoed Singh’s comments, arguing that institutional racism was the root cause of the riots.²⁴ By 2002, the CRE had produced its own inquiry, which admitted “the disturbances...suggest that diversity is dividing communities in some places,” but insisted that racism was the primary cause of such divisions.²⁵ Downing Street charted a middle course between the CRE and the Cattle Report, exemplified by Home Secretary David Blunkett who insisted “[t]here is no contradiction between retaining a distinct cultural identity and identifying with Britain.”²⁶

SEPTEMBER 11TH

When Tony Blair learned of the World Trade Center attacks on September 11th, he was so concerned Britain had been targeted as well that he instructed an aide to “make sure no planes are coming to Downing Street” (Seldon, Snowdon, and Collings 2007: 4). This and similar reactions among policy elites revealed the high levels of concern about terrorism from the Middle East that had become heightened since the Terrorism Act of 2000. Soon after September 11th, policy elites in the Home Office clandestinely lobbied parliament for increased anti-terrorism powers beyond the 2000 Terrorism Act. These actions strengthened the symbolic boundaries of terrorism as part of a foreign—and not domestic—threat. In November 2001, parliament passed an emergency legislation entitled the Anti-Terrorism, Crime, and Security Act

²¹ *Ibid.*

²² “Race segregation caused riots” BBC, December 11th, 2001.

²³ “Gurbux Singh: People are angry and looking for scapegoats” *The Independent*, July 5th, 2001.

²⁴ Sir Herman Ouseley “Community pride, not prejudice: Making diversity work in Bradford” Bradford Vision. <http://www.bradford2020.com/pride/report.html> (Accessed May 2009).

²⁵ The CRE report explained ethnic segregation as the result of racism among real estate agents, as well as ethnic minorities attempts to avoid racism by clustering together. It recommended the creation of “race equality councils” to identify and redress institutional racism. See “A Place for Us All: Learning from Bradford, Oldham and Burnley” CRE, London 2002.

²⁶ “Downing Street” refers to the executive branch of the British government. For Blunkett reference see, “Full Text of David Blunkett’s Speech,” Home Office Press Release, December 11th, 2001.

with bipartisan support. The act gave British police authority to freeze financial assets of suspected terrorists, loosened restrictions on government surveillance, and gave indefinite internment powers to the Police and Secret Intelligence Service (MI5).

Although policy elites in the Intelligence Service were confident in their decision to monitor groups like Al-Qaeda, my respondents suggested they were mostly unaware of British Muslim's reaction to September 11th. Policy elites in Downing Street only chose to consult the Muslim Council of Britain (MCB), an umbrella of British Muslim organizations, to assess the reaction. As a result of the meeting, Blair asked all members of government to avoid the term "Islamic terrorism" arguing that "[w]hat happened in America was not the work of Islamic terrorists... it was the work of terrorist, pure and simple."²⁷ This quote illustrates the view of most policy elites at the time, who drew sharp symbolic boundaries between terrorism and the integration of minorities. While the symbolic boundaries of multiculturalism had been breached to address the Northern riots, they had not yet been expanded to encircle terrorism.

THE SHOE BOMBER AND THE "HOME-GROWN" THREAT

Soon after September 11th, a second-generation Jamaican immigrant who had converted to Islam in Britain attempted to destroy a plane en route from Paris to Miami with explosives hidden in his shoe. While the "shoe-bomber" was viewed as the first bona fide "home-grown" terrorist by most police elites, the Intelligence Service was flooded with similar threats at the time.²⁸ Most of these threats remained classified from the public and the majority of policy elites until 2006, when an independent inquiry revealed the Intelligence Service was monitoring more than two hundred and fifty threats in the year after September 11th *within* the U.K.²⁹ Strengthening concern about home-grown terrorism was one declassified foiled plot involving eight British-born men of Pakistani origin who had purchased half a ton of explosives to attack local targets.

Publicly, policy elites continued to focus on the international threat of terrorism in the years following September 11th. Privately, however, policy elites in the Home Office began worrying that the focus on international groups overlooked the more dangerous threat of "home-grown" terrorism. Between 2001 and 2003 the Home Office conducted a classified report on the threat of terrorism by British citizens entitled "Young Muslims and Extremism." The report suggested segregation and economic deprivation of young British Muslims could lead to radicalization.

A number of extremist groups are actively recruiting young British Muslims. Most do not advocate violence. But they can provide an environment for some to gravitate to violence. Extremists target poor and disadvantaged Muslims through mosque and prison contact. But they also target middle class students and affluent professionals through schools and college campuses... The Pakistani and Bangladeshi communities, which make up nearly two-thirds of

²⁷ "Blair says fight is not with the Islamic Faith" *The Independent*, September 28, 2001.

²⁸ The Intelligence Service refers to MI6, MI5, the Government Communications headquarters, and the Defense Intelligence Staff under the direction of the Joint Intelligence Committee.

²⁹ Rt. Hon. Paul Murphy MP. 2006. "Report into the London Terrorist Attacks on 7 July 2005" *Intelligence and Security Committee*. Cm 6785 (May): www.official-documents.gov.uk/document/cm67/6785/6785.pdf (Accessed November 2008).

Muslims in the UK, experience very high levels of economic and educational disadvantage. Overall, Muslims have unemployment three times above the wider population, poor qualifications (over two fifths have none) and high representation in deprived areas.

The report was based on focus groups conducted with young Muslims, as well as public opinion surveys and consultations with Muslim leaders. The report does not blame multicultural policy for the segregation and deprivation thought to radicalize young Muslims. Instead, the report breaches the symbolic boundaries used to define the problem of terrorism by showing that Britain's use of harsh counter-terrorism measures at home and abroad may contribute to the perception that the government is unfairly targeting Muslims, many of whom were already skeptical of government hidden agenda.

RESULTS: LAYERING (2003-2006)

COMMUNITY COHESION AND THE "PREVENT" AGENDA

In early 2003, policy elites in the Home Office and the Intelligence Service began designing a new counter-terrorism strategy that would later become known as the "four P's" strategy: PREVENT, PURSUE, PROTECT, and PREPARE. This non-public change in strategy represented further stretching of the symbolic boundaries of terrorism away from pro-active international strategies towards preventative domestic strategies. Several respondents interviewed remembered struggling to convince their colleagues that international strategies were ill equipped to deal with domestic community relations. At the same time, however, public awareness of home-grown threat grew following the Madrid bombings of 2004 conducted by second-generation Spanish immigrants. A separate minority of policy elites were concerned that Britain's involvement in the war in Iraq risked radicalizing British-born Muslims, but were mostly ignored by counterparts in Downing Street and the Foreign Office.³⁰ In 2004, the groundwork of the PREVENT strategy was publicly announced when the Home-Secretary announced the government's belief that "terrorism must be *prevented*, as well as punished."³¹ Although symbolic boundaries had been stretched, however, the social boundaries of counter-terrorism policy remained unmoved.

While designing the PREVENT agenda, policy elites struggled to assess the relationship between multicultural policy and home-grown terrorism. To avoid head-on collision with policy elites in the CRE, policy elites in Downing Street, the Home Office, and the Intelligence Service began exploring connections between terrorism and community cohesion instead. In a classified memorandum dated May 10, 2004, Permanent Secretary John Gieve summarized the results of a

³⁰ In a May 2004 classified memo Michael Jay, the Foreign Office Permanent Under-Secretary, told Cabinet Secretary Sir Andrew Turnbull that "British Foreign policy and the perception of its negative effect on Muslims globally plays a significant role in creating a feeling of anger and impotence among especially the younger generation of British Muslims"

³¹ "Terrorists Must Be Prevented As Well As Punished – Home Secretary" Home Office Press Release, January 29, 2004. See also "Speech by Home Office Permanent Secretary for Counter-Terrorism, Leigh Lewish" Police Federation Conference, May 2004. The Four P's policy was official announced by Home Secretary David Blunkett on July 2004, See "Prevention, Pursuit, Protection And Preparedness: A Strategy To Reduce The Risk From Terrorism" Home Office Press release, July 8, 2004.

classified Home Office briefing paper that illustrates how he and his colleagues explored the relationship between social capital and terrorism.

Extremism can be a symptom of disaffection, the riots in some northern towns three years ago were another. We need policies to handle the symptoms and limit their impact but the broader task is to address the roots of the problem... Our Community Cohesion team has set up a system for monitoring community tensions in key areas around the country. Muslim communities appear to have low levels of civic participation and volunteering, mixed attitudes towards integration and (fairly small) minorities who do not feel loyal or patriotic towards Britain... but this may reflect demographic rather than faith-specific factors.

Gieve, who had co-authored one of the Northern riot inquiries, goes on to argue the PREVENT strategy must include attempts to create social capital between Muslims and non-Muslims through government sponsored cohesion meetings. Gieve and colleagues in the Intelligence Service believed that coordination of Community Cohesion and counter-terrorism policies would address the root causes of terrorism *and* improve communication between the Muslim community and police.

Meanwhile, policy elites in the nascent Community Cohesion unit resisted attempts to link the problems of social capital and terrorism. Describing the impact of 9/11 on Community Cohesion programs, a member of the Unit interviewed remembered, “[w]e realized that there were implications...but we didn’t make any special provisions.” The Unit’s 2004 report did not make a single mention of the September 11th attacks, the “home-grown” attacks in Madrid, or foiled terrorist plots on U.K. soil. Even though policy elites resisted attempts to yoke the two social problems, they were public accused of having a hidden agenda. Describing community cohesion policy, one respondent said, “it was all about Muslims. And you can tell because when you go to...a...think thank, and they say let’s discuss Britishness, who do they have on the panel? Hey we’ve got 4 Muslims today. Isn’t that exciting?” Wary of such accusations, policy elites in the Community Cohesion Unit were able to convince the Intelligence Service that linking the two problems compromised their legitimacy with the Muslim Community. Even Gieve agreed: “[s]ome agencies and parts of government might be better able to establish a rapport with disaffected groups than others—a perception that this is only driven by a counter terrorist (law and order) agenda might be detrimental.”³²

Despite the private compromise between policy elites in Community Cohesion and the Intelligence Service, elected officials began publicly questioning the symbolic boundaries of social capital and terrorism in response to mounting public concern about home-grown terrorism. In November 2004, parliament conducted public hearings entitled “Terrorism and Community Relations.” Over four months, a panel of Ministers of Parliament (MPs) asked government administrators, religious leaders, and media whether deteriorating community relations were negatively affecting counter-terrorism. During this time, policy elites struggled to separate the two policy domains. The following exchange between MP Gwyn Prosser and Home Office Minister Hazel Blears illustrates this tension.

Mr Prosser: How successful would you say your efforts to promote community cohesion have been? We have been skating around this subject quite a bit...

³² Classified Memorandum from John Gieve to Turnbull, May 10, 2004,

Ms Blears: I think it has been successful in energising government. Whether or not this has translated to fully achieve our ambitions on the ground I think is perhaps another matter...

Blears continues to avoid discussing the relationship between social capital and terrorism, instead suggesting lawmakers revise education and citizenship outreach programs. Even the official report that summarized the hearings was vague, suggesting only that “[t]he Home Office should review links between its work on community cohesion and anti-terrorism.”³³

The MPs who conducted the hearings were unable to yoke the symbolic boundaries of social capital and terrorism because they could not provide compelling evidence of a relationship between social capital and terrorism. Describing the hearings, one MP I interviewed remembered “I think part of the problem for me in this was that a lot of intelligence material... I didn’t have access to a great deal... [We were] unable to give people a sense of ‘is government responding in a way that’s appropriate?’” Hence, policy elites responsible for Community Cohesion bridged the symbolic boundaries of counter-terrorism policy by hiding evidence of the relationship between social capital and terrorism. The following sections explain how these same policy elites bridged the symbolic boundaries of multicultural policy.

COMMUNITY COHESION AND THE COMMISSION FOR RACIAL EQUALITY

By the beginning of 2003, the Commission for Racial Equality (CRE) continued to police the symbolic and social boundaries of multicultural policy even though they had grudgingly participated in the Community Cohesion Unit following the Northern riots. A former senior administrator at the CRE told me “you know we never really had adequate multiculturalism... [M]ulticulturalist people say community cohesion is *watered down multiculturalism* [emphasis added].” Her view was typical of other elites in the CRE who believed that the anti-racist principles of the 2000 Amendment were never fully implemented. Furthermore, they argued that the emphasis on pro-active integration in Community Cohesion policy threatened the function of tolerance in existing race-relations legislation. Policy elites in the CRE insisted that the function of tolerance required Muslims to work within the existing race-relations framework. Remembering her attempts to win the CRE chair’s approval of community cohesion policy, an elected official told me: “I had gone to see Trevor Phillips... to talk to him about Muslim alienation. And why the [CRE] wasn’t working on race factors more [with the Muslim Community]... And Trevor Phillips turned around to me and he said, ‘[y]our community doesn’t want to work with me. *Because they don’t think race is an issue for them*’ [emphasis added].”

Policy elites in the Community Cohesion Unit bridged the disputed symbolic boundaries of multicultural policy and Community Cohesion Policy by arguing that racial discrimination and integration were separate but complimentary social problems. The first page of the Community Cohesion Unit’s first report reads: “The [Community Cohesion Unit] shares the Government’s commitment...to developing a successful multi-cultural society...there is no choice in our view—*multiculturalism is a fact of life* [emphasis added].”³⁴ The report goes on to suggest that greater racial and ethnic diversity requires even greater tolerance and institutional

³³ House of Commons Home Affairs Committee, “Terrorism and Community Relations: Sixth Report of Session 2004-05” March 22, 2005, p. 3.

³⁴ “The End of Parallel Lives? July 2004. The Report of the Community Cohesion Panel” p. 7.

protection against discrimination, but also pro-active measures to increase social capital across ethnic groups:

The social and psychological needs of communities must be managed with a new approach... Opposition to migration should not simply be condemned as 'racist'. Those living in more deprived areas often perceive themselves as being in competition with migrants for limited resources. Additional resources should be made available much earlier and the 'host' community should be more involved in responding to the needs of newcomers.

Key to this strategy was to demand both natives and newcomers be pro-active in facilitating integration. This strategy presented racial discrimination as a barrier to the creation of social capital, but also argued that a lack of social capital could exist absent racial discrimination.

Rival policy elites in the CRE responded by arguing that the principles of racial discrimination in multicultural policy could simply be expanded to address religious discrimination as well. Home Office Minister Fiona MacTaggart, illustrates this view:

There has been a long running controversy in France...about symbols and the role of faith in a secular society. This is a debate we had a long time ago, and with our very different traditions and with sensitivity displayed by all faiths, we have been able to find within our own culture a way of celebrating diversity without controversy... The key to fighting prejudice is to build understanding...³⁵

Policy elites breaching the symbolic boundaries of racial discrimination to include religious discrimination had made several unsuccessful attempts to stretch the social boundaries of multicultural policy as well. These elites attempted to introduce legislation that extended anti-racist principles towards the prevention of religious discrimination in 2002, but were rebuffed by others who insisted that distinctions between minority groups would only stigmatize religious minorities further. Eventually, religious discrimination was addressed in a generic Equalities Bill in March 2005 and a "racial and religious hatred bill" in June 2005. Even then, opponents of the legislation questioned the need to extend protection towards religious minorities: "Religion, unlike race," said one elected official, "is a matter of personal choice and therefore appropriate for open debate... Aggravated crimes against religious groups were already protected through existing legislation."³⁶

THE LONDON BOMBINGS: SLEEPWALKING TO SEGREGATION

On the morning of July 7th, 2005 four men detonated bombs on subways and buses in London killing fifty-six people and injuring hundreds of others.³⁷ Three of the four were born and raised in Britain by parents who migrated from Pakistan, and the fourth came from Jamaica at a young age and later converted to Islam. The revelation that the attack was "home-grown" brought the symbolic boundaries of multicultural and community cohesion policy to the center of public debate. For example, a prominent Muslim member of the House of Lords argued, "The Muslim community must move beyond condemnation and fear of victimization. If we are to

³⁵ Fiona MacTaggart "Expression of Religious Freedom is a Core British Belief" December 18, 2003.

³⁶ "New effort to ban religious hate," *BBC News*, June 11, 2005.

³⁷ On July 21st the Intelligence Service foiled an unrelated plot to bomb a London nightclub by immigrants from Africa.

tackle extremism in our midst, we need to answer some difficult questions: Should segregation, and its isolation from the mainstream be tolerated under the guise of multiculturalism?”³⁸

The CRE remained quiet for months after the London Bombings, choosing only to participate in logistical emergency preparedness measures with local government. In September 2005, however, CRE chair Trevor Phillips gave a landmark speech in which he expressed unmitigated approval of the community cohesion agenda:

Some people have been surprised, I think, by what they would see as the Commission’s relative silence over the past few months... It is true that after the initial reaction...we played little part in the public debates which followed about the causes of 7/7, multiculturalism, and the place of Muslim communities... This was partly because on some of the underlying issues—such as the “meaning” of multiculturalism—we already have a public position, which has been stated and debated many times... The fact is that we are a society which, almost without noticing it, is becoming more divided by race and religion. We are becoming more unequal by ethnicity... This is not only or even principally about Muslims. But the aftermath of 7/7 forces us to assess where we are. And here is where I think we are: *we are sleepwalking our way to segregation*. We are becoming strangers to each other, and we are leaving communities to be marooned outside the mainstream [emphasis added].³⁹

This view bridged the symbolic boundaries of community cohesion policy by admitting that measures to prevent discrimination could not address segregation facilitated by overconfidence in multicultural policy. Other policy elites followed suit, bridging the symbolic boundaries of multiculturalism and community cohesion policy. During a speech I witnessed, MP Sadiq Kahn said “...white British people congratulate themselves on tolerating me. I don’t want to be tolerated. You tolerate a tooth-ache...the laissez-faire attitude to Britishness... cannot continue.” Another respondent remembered, “...the political appetite for multiculturalism had been dented.”

The symbolic boundaries of community cohesion policy were transformed into social boundaries gradually between 2003 and 2005, as policy elites in the Community Cohesion Unit collected mounting evidence that declining social capital could not be addressed by either multicultural or domestic-counter-terrorism policies. While the London bombings heightened the stakes of the symbolic boundaries between the policies, they occurred after the social boundaries of Community Cohesion policy were cemented through a gradual process of policy elites competing to explain the relationships between social problems. Asked about the effect of the event, a respondent told me,

I think it made government more aware of how detached its migrant communities are from its value system...even if we hadn’t had 7/7 there was very great concern at the highest levels of government about the potential for things to go wrong within this migrant community. So I think a change was, in any event...foreseen. We weren’t looking into crystal balls.

By the end of 2005, Community Cohesion became official policy, combining the efforts of roughly 200 policy elites from the Local Government Agency, the Home Office, and the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister, into a Commission on Integration and Cohesion with a multi-million pound budget. The Commission’s mandate was to “explore how different communities

³⁸ Kishwer Falkner, “Where now for the Muslim community?” *The Independent*, 12 July 2005.

³⁹ Trevor Phillips, “After 7/7: Sleepwalking to Segregation” September 22, 2005. Speech at Manchester Town Hall

and places in England are getting along, and what might be done to bring people together.”⁴⁰ It was modeled after the exploratory Community Cohesion Unit’s findings about best practices for creating social capital in problem areas identified through public opinion surveys and focus groups.

RESULTS: SYNCHRONIZATION (2006-2008)

CRICKET-PLAYING TERRORISTS

By the end of 2005, numerous policy elites had cited declining social capital as a root cause of the London bombings. Yet an independent inquiry into the London bombings commissioned by the government did not support this interpretation. First, the inquiry revealed three of the four London bombers lived in Luton, a community with one of the highest levels of social capital according to government public opinion surveys (See Figure 3). They had been raised in the slightly less prosperous neighborhoods of Beeston and Leeds, but were part of middle class families in ethnically mixed neighborhoods. None of the four bombers attended Islamic “faith schools” frequently accused of radicalizing young Muslims. To the contrary, the inquiry discovered that all but one of the bombers were highly integrated members of their communities.⁴¹ Mohammad Sidique Khan was “much involved” as a teaching assistant and youth worker. “He was highly regarded by teachers and parents, and had a real empathy with difficult children [who] saw him as a role model.”⁴² Shehzad Tanweer wore “fashionable hairstyles and designer clothing.”⁴³ Together, the bombers had gone “camping, canoeing, white-water rafting,..[and] paintballing,” and several were talented cricket players.⁴⁴

[FIGURE 3 ABOUT HERE]

Nor were the attacks the result of extensive planning or transnational coordination address by Downing Street’s immediate reaction to the bombings.⁴⁵ A Home Office source later described the London bombings as “a modest, simple affair by four seemingly normal men using the internet.”⁴⁶ Meanwhile, counter-terrorism police, who had already killed an innocent Brazilian immigrant wrongly suspected of terrorism two weeks after the London bombings, shot an innocent Muslim man in a botched terrorism raid one year later. The immediate response of policy elites in the Home Office was to begin a public relations campaign to quell the anger of the Muslim community. This included several high profile meetings between policy elites and Muslim leaders—described in further detail below—and a major “Islam Expo” in London.

⁴⁰ “Your chance to tell us what you think,” Press Release by Commission on Integration & Cohesion, 2006, p. 3.

⁴¹ Only Hasib Mir Hussain had shown early signs of extremist views after graduating high school. Before then, however, he was described as “living a very ordinary life” as part of a “very nice family.” See “Profile: Hasib Mir Hussain” *BBC News*, May 11, 2006.

⁴² Official Report into the London Bombings, p. 14.

⁴³ *Ibid.* p. 15.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.* p. 17.

⁴⁵ Blair’s “12 point” plan of action strengthened immigration controls thought to disrupt transnational networks such as extradition, deportation, and asylum. The domestic reaction (the “Preventing Extremism Together Workshop”) is described in further detail below.

⁴⁶ Mark Townsend, “Leak reveals official story of London Bombings” *The Guardian*, April 9, 2006.

THE BATTLE OF IDEAS: MAKING TERRORISTS RACIST

Because of the striking evidence that declining social capital did not explain the London bombings, the symbolic boundaries of home-grown terrorism were highly permeable in early 2006. During this time, policy elites began retesting the symbolic boundaries of multicultural policy and counter-terrorism by focusing on the diffusion of radical ideas. This approach is exemplified by a March 2006 speech by Tony Blair: “This terrorism will not be defeated until its ideas, the poison that warps the minds of its adherents, are confronted, head-on, in their essence, at their core.” This speech occurred amidst classified reform of the PREVENT agenda designed to engage terrorists in a “battle of ideas.” This interpretation was made public in July when the Home Office proposed its new approach to Parliament.⁴⁷ Although concerns about the international spread of ideology had been voiced by policy elites much earlier, this new report was among the first public proclamations of the government’s concern about the spread of extremist ideology *within* Britain.

The notion that terrorism could be prevented through a battle of ideas was popular because it resonated with the existing symbolic boundaries of social problems. In particular, the battle of ideas could be linked to the problem of racial and religious discrimination. Policy elites began yoking the symbolic boundaries of racial discrimination and terrorism in public and private. A March 2006 speech by Blair evinces this process:

We like our diversity. But how do we react when that "difference" leads to separation and alienation from the values that define what we hold in common? For the first time in a generation there is an unease, an anxiety, even at points a resentment that our very openness, our willingness to welcome difference, our pride in being home to many cultures, is being used against us; abused, indeed, in order to harm us.⁴⁸

Blair goes on to explain that while the London bombers were “integrated... in terms of lifestyle and work,” they had not learned the core British value of tolerance. The challenge facing Britain, he argued, was “defining our common values.” In order to tightly yoke the symbolic boundaries of discrimination and terrorism, however, policy elites had to first distinguish multicultural and counter-terrorism policy from community cohesion policy. They accomplished this by comparing terrorists to far-right nativist groups. An exploratory report by a commission of policy elites from the Department of Local Communities and Government first made the connection:

There has always been a tiny minority who oppose tolerance and diversity. From Mosley’s brownshirts, to today’s far right, they represent values that have no place in a civilised society...[but] This is a relatively new challenge...It is not the same as a wider concern for community cohesion...

At its heart, building community cohesion is about building better social relations – this improves wellbeing, reduces disorder, and makes communities more resilient and able to solve their own problems. Cohesive communities help in our efforts against extremism of all varieties, but work

⁴⁷ “Countering International Terrorism: The United Kingdom’s Strategy” Prime Minister and the Secretary of State for the Home Department, July 2006, p. 10.

⁴⁸ Tony Blair “Our Nation’s Future: Multiculturalism and Integration” December 8, 2006.

on preventing violent extremism in the name of Islam requires something else as well.⁴⁹

In April 2007 the exploratory commission published a report that further yoked the symbolic boundaries of racism and terrorism: “As a society we must defend and promote our shared and non-negotiable values... This is how we have isolated the far right. And it is now how we must stand up to terrorists and their supporters.”⁵⁰ According to one respondent, policy elites shifted their focus toward “a clash of ignorance, rather than a clash of civilizations.”

By mid 2007, policy elites in the CRE and Home Office began arguing that religious discrimination or “Islamophobia” was a root cause of home-grown terrorism. This argument gained even more credence as the link between social capital and terrorism was further challenged by the attack on the Glasgow airport by two well-integrated doctors of South Asian background in mid 2007. Yoking the social boundaries of multicultural and counter-terrorism policy required evidence that actions in one of the policies was affecting the function of the other. Key to the strategy was to show that effective multicultural policy could enlist “moderate” Muslims against their “extremist” counterparts to improve the collection of counter-terrorism intelligence. Policy elites even began accusing terrorists of racism towards Muslims. In January 2008, Home Secretary Jacqui Smith insisted government officials to use the phrase “anti-Islamic activity” instead of “terrorism.” These anti-racist principles, borrowed from multicultural policy, were later used to develop a list of “extremists” that included not only self-described Muslims but also far-right politicians from the United States and the Netherlands.

Between 2007 and 2008 the social boundaries of multicultural and counter-terrorism policy began to be yoked. First, the Commission for Racial Equality was renamed the Equality and Human Rights Commission, in part to display the government’s commitment to preventing religious discrimination. Later that year, the Religious and Racial Hatred Act received royal consent, firmly extending the principles of anti-racism to protect religious minorities as well. Most importantly, the Home Office conducted a major audit of the PREVENT strategy, which resulted in a “Winning the Hearts and Minds” campaign that synchronized multicultural and counter-terrorism policy. In June 2008, the Home Office announced £12.5 million pounds to implement these reforms through collaboration with faith leaders in local communities. By the end of the year, the Home Office had budgeted more than £70 million pounds towards the synchronization of multicultural and counter-terrorism policy.

COMMUNITY COHESION CHARTS A NEW COURSE. Immediately after the London Bombings, the government had bolstered community cohesion policy by announcing £7 million to fund the development of cohesion in “faith communities.” But following the revelation that the London bombers came from cohesive communities, those responsible for the policy reasserted their wish to be removed from the counter-terrorism agenda. In its 2007 report, the Commission on Integration and Cohesion argued:

[a]ddressing political extremism must be distinguished from addressing issues relating to integration and cohesion...Nevertheless what happened on 7/7 has led politicians and wider

⁴⁹ “Preventing Violent Extremism Pathfinder Fund: Guidance Note for Government Offices and Local Authorities in England” Department for Communities and Local Government, February 2007, p. 1-5

⁵⁰ “Preventing violent extremism—Winning the hearts and minds.” Department of Communities and Local Government, April 2007.

society to reassess problems of alienation within particular communities, and the sense of the “parallel lives” that remain in some places... Although the Government rightly takes a particular approach when working with Muslim communities to prevent extremism, work to build integration and cohesion is something separate – and something that has to be about the relationships between all different groups, and the bridges between them. We therefore ask that Government set out a clear narrative about the difference between the two agendas.... We would argue that without this clear statement, cohesion will languish as an add on to wider policy areas, or will continue to be confused with [other policies].⁵¹

By the end of 2008, most policy elites believed the symbolic boundaries of community cohesion had been stretched too far. Asked about the future of the policy one respondent said, “[h]ow long you got? Oh yeah, I’m cynical of it.” Another respondent elaborated upon this view “it had become easier to make terrorism a segregation problem...why? Cause these things we can tackle... And no one can say to us we haven’t done anything.” Despite widespread cynicism of the goals and efficacy of Community Cohesion policy, the social boundaries of the policy remained in tact by the end of 2008.

DISCUSSION

THEORETICAL IMPLICATIONS OF THE ECOLOGICAL APPROACH

These findings have multiple implications for the study of policy change and symbolic boundaries. First, the findings provide much-needed specification of the role of social cognition in path dependent processes. By and large, the “strong” version of path dependency treats cognitive processes as a byproduct of policy reform or “feedback” (Pierson 1995). While there are undoubtedly relationships between the cognitive processes of policy elites during each of the periods analyzed above, they are not linear. British counter-terrorism policy has veered far off the path charted by previous generations against the IRA. So too has multicultural policy followed a crooked path from its original goal of integrating West Indian immigrants. The paths of these policies changed course because policy elites stretched the symbolic boundaries of social problems in the face of unprecedented challenges. Key to my argument is that hidden relationships between the cognitive processes of policy elites can set policies on a collision course. My case suggests symbolic boundary change has the most powerful effect on policies when it is *not* the intentional work of actors. Policy elites policing the symbolic boundaries of racial discrimination in the Commission for Racial Equality, for example, did not realize that their behavior would partially enable the creation of Community Cohesion policy.

Symbolic boundary change is also not always intentional because elites cannot control crises. But my findings do not support the prediction that all crises create “critical junctures” (Collier 1999), or “punctuated equilibrium” (Baumgartner and Jones 1993) in the policy process. The most consequential policy reforms occurred *before* September 11th as well as the London Bombings. Like Haydu (1998), however, I find that contradictions in the interpretation of crises are inextricably linked to the interpretation of previous crises. One cannot explain policy elites’ reaction to the London bombings without reference to the Northern riots four years earlier. I have shown that elites do cite crises as evidence for their attempts to manipulate symbolic boundaries.

⁵¹ The Commission on Integration & Cohesion. 2007. “Our Shared Future”

Most importantly, however, I have argued that policy elites in separate policy domains draw different symbolic boundaries around crises. Community Cohesion policy was enabled in part because policy elites in the Commission for Racial Equality and the Intelligence Service drew different symbolic boundaries around the September 11th attacks. Likewise, contradictions in the interpretation of September 11th between these two domains partly enabled the symbolic boundary bridging necessary for the creation of Community Cohesion policy.

The boundary processes identified above are also distinct from “policy learning” (Hecló 1974; Hall 1993). This approach holds that “[p]olitics finds its sources not only in power but also in uncertainty – men collectively wondering what to do ... Governments not only ‘power’ ... they also puzzle” (Hecló 1974: 304). While my analysis suggests policy elites faced considerable uncertainty, *they did not puzzle together*. Community Cohesion policy represents a remarkable case of evidence-based policy, but one that resulted primarily from activity within the Department of Local Communities and Government and the Home Office. Although the Intelligence Service clearly studied the results of the Community Cohesion pathfinder unit, they also conducted their own research that revealed the negative effect of foreign policy on home grown terrorism. The results of this research did not culminate in policy reform. Although the Intelligence Service had worried about foreign policy as early as 2003, Tony McNulty, Minister of State, said in 2008: “As far as I am aware, no one in the Government has ever said that what we are doing in Iraq or Afghanistan or anywhere else is not used as a motivator or driver by those who would radicalise people.”⁵² These findings suggest that while puzzling generates evidence, symbolic boundary work is necessary to make evidence legitimate. During this process, policy elites can selectively withhold evidence, as exemplified by the 2004 “Terrorism and Community Relations” hearings.

My findings also do not support political process theory, which explains policy change as the result of strategic action by non-state actors such as social movements or interest groups (Meyer and Minkoff 2004). Political process theory argues such groups influence policy by accessing sympathetic elites during periods of political instability when states have little capacity to repress civil society. But the British Labour Party held a stable majority for the entire period analyzed. What is more, my case suggests that policy elites manipulated social movements, and not vice versa. Policy elites were able to do so by exploiting disunity within social movements themselves. The government’s choice to engage the Muslim Council of Britain (MCB) after September 11th is a case in point. Although policy elites publicly explained these consultations as attempts to engage the “Muslim community,” a 2006 public opinion survey showed that less than 4% of British Muslims viewed the MCB as representative of their views.⁵³ Following its attempts to challenge British foreign policy, and accusations of association with terrorist groups, the Home Office broke its relationship with MCB in early 2005.

Immediately after the London Bombings, policy elites in the Home Office invited prominent members of Britain’s Muslim Community to discuss the appropriate government response. After this meeting, the Home Office invited more than one hundred Muslims and non-Muslims from NGOs, Mosques, elected offices, and government agencies to participate in a

⁵² Public Bill Committees, “Counter-Terrorism Bill,” April 22, 2008.

⁵³ See: <http://www.channel4.com/news/articles/dispatches/kenan+malik+analysis+of+the+muslim+survey/158240> (Accessed November 2008).

“Preventing Extremism Together” Workshop from August to November 2005. The goal of the workshop was to produce recommendations on subjects identified by the Home Office ranging from Islamophobia and gender to education. Five of my respondents were present at this meeting. Each respondent described the meeting as a sham. One elected official told me “the... senior [civil] servants were very aware as to which of the recommendations from the start that they would want to concentrate on, and they were very keen for those recommendations to be seen to come out of the working group.” Others lamented conflict between Muslim Leaders themselves at the meeting: “Muslims are not a homogeneous group. If you set us up as your handpicked leaders of the ‘Muslim community’ to solve the problems of religion and alienation, you set us up to fail.”⁵⁴ The workshop report, published at the end of 2005, made sixty-four recommendations ranging from citizenship education to foreign policy. By 2009, government had only enacted three of the recommendations, one of which appears to have been suggested to the Workshop participants by the Home Office itself.⁵⁵

DIRECTIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

I have argued that the symbolic boundaries of social problems guide the paths of policies. But policy elites do not simply draw symbolic boundaries across *terra incognita*. Symbolic boundaries are constrained by the ecology of policies and their relationship to social problems. In order for symbolic boundaries to become social boundaries such as laws or institutions, policy elites must determine where one social problem ends and another begins. Explaining how this “boundary-work” enables and constrains the paths of policies required in-depth analysis of policy elites in multiple policy domains across time. Because such case studies are limited in their generalizability, additional research is needed to validate the mechanisms of boundary breaching, bridging, and yoking identified above. Other pressing questions may also be answered by applying this approach to other policy environments, for example: 1) Does boundary yoking always follow boundary breaching or bridging? 2) How do symbolic boundary breaching, bridging, and yoking affect the implementation and delivery of policies themselves?

Sociologists have identified numerous empirical puzzles that might be addressed with the approach above. The skyrocketing rate of incarceration in the U.S., for example, is often linked to the failure of welfare policy (Wacquant 2009; Guetzkow and Western 2007). Likewise, welfare policy’s negative effect on single mothers is frequently blamed for poor educational outcomes (e.g. Bouffard, Little, and Weiss 2006). Refugee policy is often studied as a byproduct of foreign policy (e.g. Castles and Miller 2003). Such puzzles are not limited to individual countries. Consider, for example, the transnational coordination of North American Trade Policy (Kay 2005), E.U. pension reform (Bonoli 2003), or domestic and international counter-terrorism policies (Mandaville and Williams 2003).

⁵⁴ Kishwer Falkner. “Another taskforce will solve nothing” *Telegraph*, July 24, 2005.

⁵⁵ The proposal for a “Muslim Scholars Roadshow” designed to allow Muslim leaders to publicly rebuke extremist interpretations of Islam was first proposed in a letter dated August 16, 2005, from Riaz Patel, an advisor on Islamic Affairs to the Foreign Office” to his supervisor Andrew Jackson, Deputy Director of the Engaging with the Islamic World Group. The letter even identified a shortlist of Muslim NGOS to be consulted in the identification of appropriate Muslim leaders.

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TABLES AND FIGURES

Table 1. Boundary Processes Necessary for Three Types of Policy Change

	Type of Policy Change		
	Drift (Changes in the operation or effect of policies without reform)	Layering (Creation of new policy without elimination of old)	Synchronization (Simultaneous reform of two existing policies)
Boundary Process	Breaching (Expanding the symbolic boundaries used to construct an old policy to encircle a new social problem)	Bridging (Drawing symbolic boundaries around a new social problem that resolves tension between existing policies)	Yoking (Collapsing the symbolic boundaries used to distinguish two social problems)
Mechanism of Change	Proving that a new social problem is an unintended consequence of an old policy.	Proving that addressing a new social problem with old policies would be ineffective or inefficient.	Proving that attempts to address a new social problem using one policy affect the function of another policy.

Figure 1. Paths of Three British Policies, 2000-2008

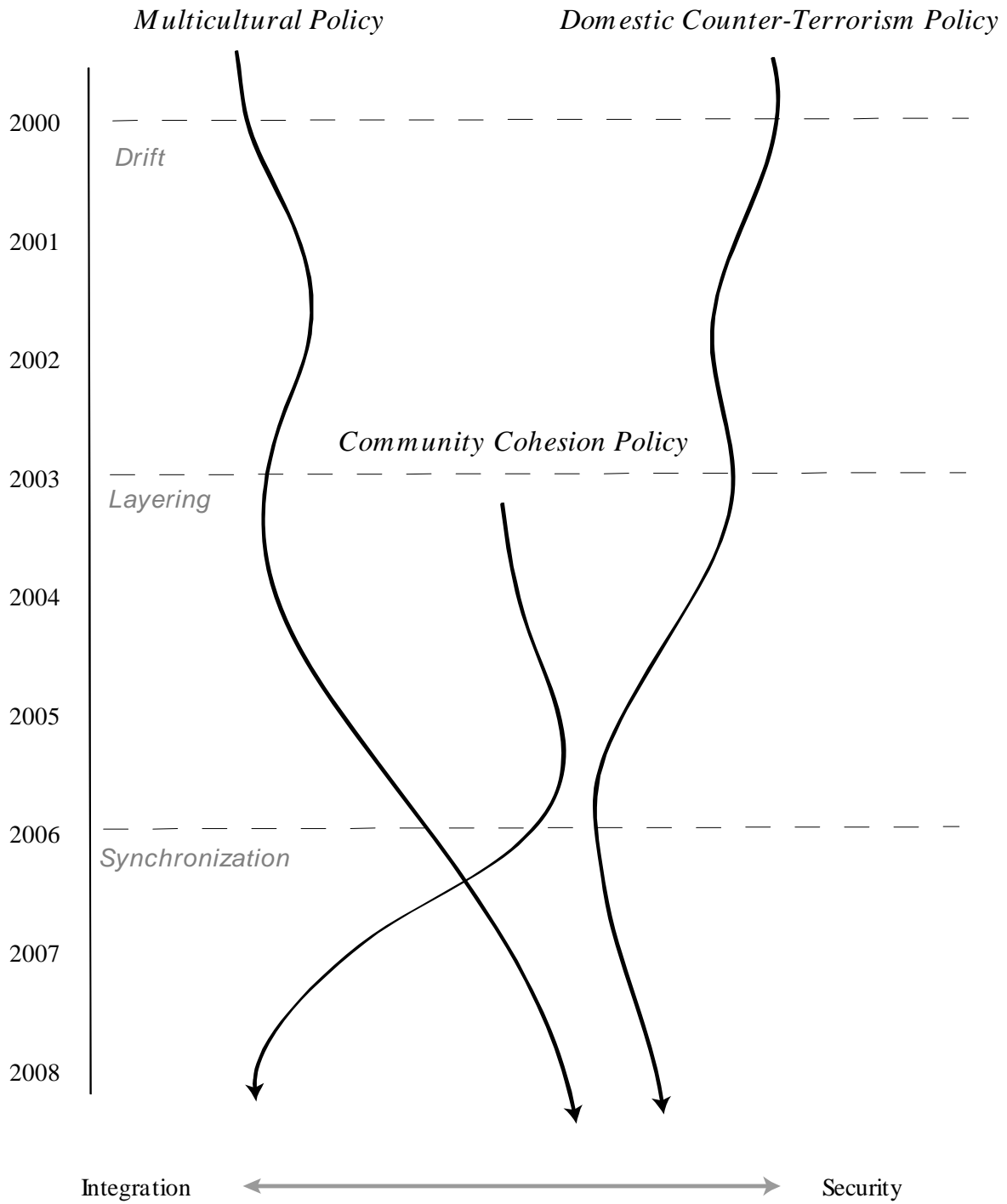


Figure 2. Summary of Boundary Change across Three Periods

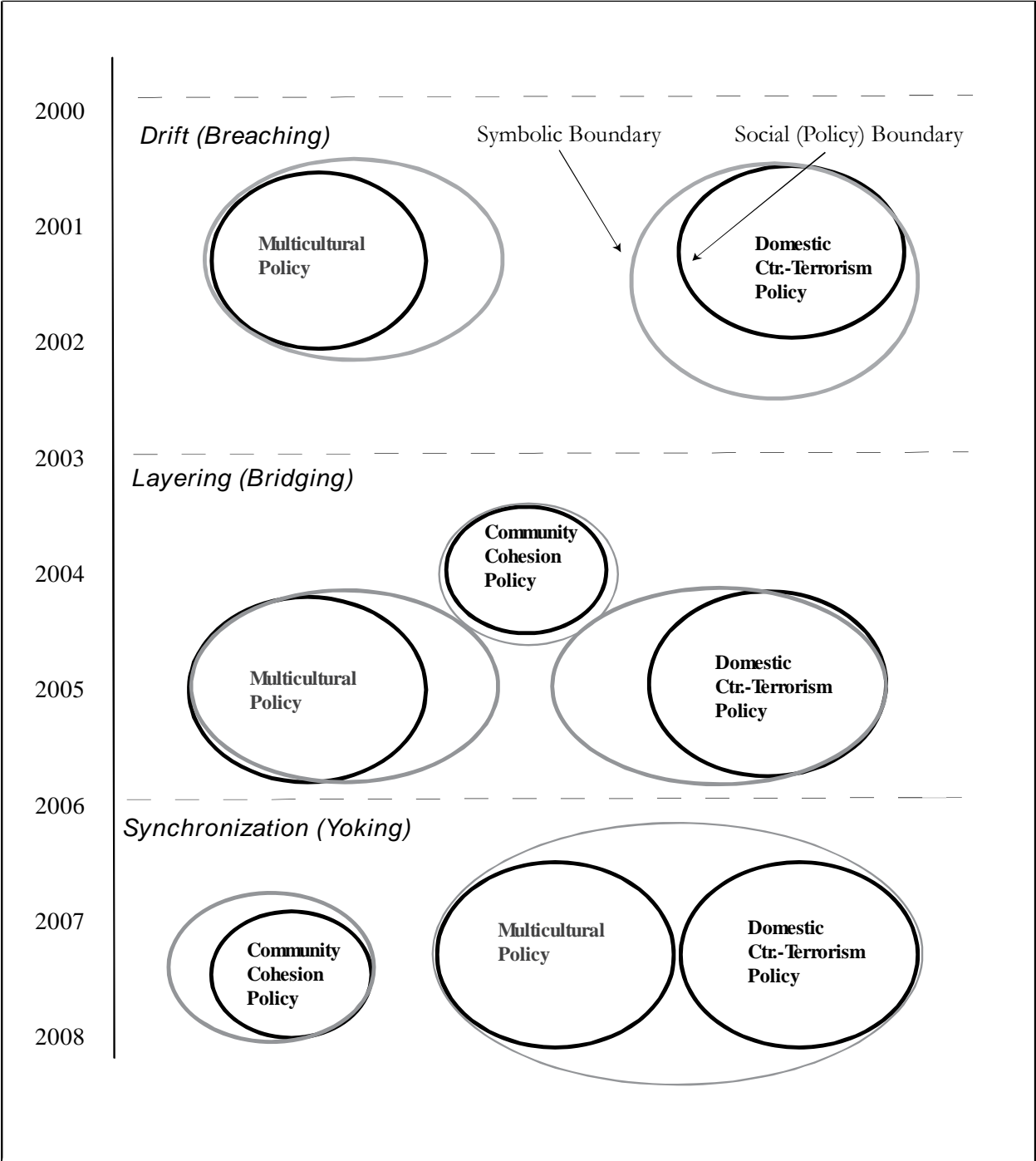
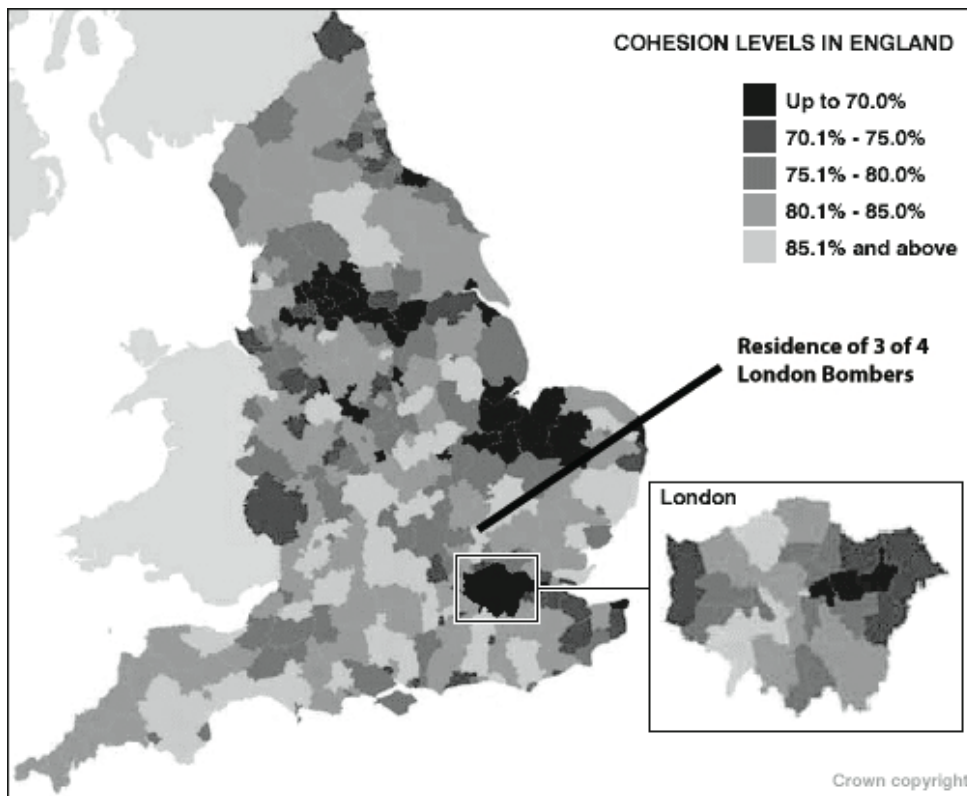


Figure 3. Percentage of People who “Get Along Well with Their Neighbors”



Source: Home Office 2005 Citizenship Survey