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Tell MAMA Reporting 2014/2015:

Annual Monitoring, Cumulative Extremism, and Policy Implications

By Dr Mark Littler and
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June 2015

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Executive Summary

This report builds upon previous work with the third sector organisation, Faith Matters, undertaken by Teesside University's Centre for Fascist, Anti-fascist, and Post-fascist Studies (CFAPS). It presents the results of analysis conducted using data collected as part of the Tell MAMA (Measuring Anti-Muslim Attacks) initiative during the 2014/15 reporting period (1 March 2014 to 28 February 2015), More specifically, it presents ongoing monitoring statistics around a number of key measures relating to anti-Muslim hatred as expressed both on and offline. Also included is a case study on 'cumulative extremism', using data from the periods surrounding recent attacks by self-styled jihadi Islamists in Paris, Copenhagen and Sydney in late 2014/early 2015. The report's principle findings are as follows:

Overall

- The overall level of anti-Muslim cases reported to Faith Matters during 2014/15 was broadly consistent with that reported in the 2012/13 year, though showing a significant reduction in the overall number of reports compared with 2013/14 (quite possibly due to the well-documented spike in the reporting of attacks following the murder of Drummer Lee Rigby).
- Online incidents continue to make up the bulk of cases reported to Faith Matters (402 of 548 cases, or roughly two thirds).

Online Incidents

- Of the 402 online incidents recorded, the majority were coded as anti-Muslim abuse (385), with significant numbers of attacks also coded for the dissemination of anti-Muslim literature (372). Threats of offline action remained comparatively rare (only 78 cases in total).
- Where recorded, the victims of online incidents were generally reported to be male.
- Less than half (186 of 402, or c.45%) of all recorded online incidents were coded as having been reported to the police.

Offline Attacks

- Offline anti-Muslim attacks were overwhelmingly reported to be perpetrated by white (68, versus 5 BME) males (59, versus 21 female perpetrators).
- The victims of offline anti-Muslim attacks were generally female (48 reports).
- A significant number (44) of victims reported being targeted while wearing distinctively Muslim dress.
- The offline attacks reported were overwhelmingly characterised by abuse (103 cases). Significant numbers were also coded for property damage (15), threats (29), and assault (21).
- Less than 10% (7) of cases reported the use of extreme violence.

Cumulative Extremism

- Through an analysis of data from the periods immediately before and after jihadi Islamist attacks in Sydney, Paris and Copenhagen, this report provides further empirical evidence in support of the 'cumulative extremism' hypothesis. If of varied magnitude, the data nevertheless registers a spike in the number of reported anti-Muslim cases in the periods immediately following each high-profile jihadi Islamist attack.
- When disaggregated, spikes were only consistently present in the reporting of online incidents, with the number of reported offline attacks falling after both the Sydney and Copenhagen murders.

- Differences in the scale of 'cumulative extremism' may reflect the influence of a number of considerations, including geography, salience, social proximity, number of casualties, and, perhaps above all, the framing of media coverage.

Recommendations

In light of these findings, our report identifies several potential policy implications. Specifically, we suggest that policy makers should consider the following:

- Take steps to foster increased engagement with the Muslim community in order to build trust, enhance credibility, and overcome persisting reticence to the reporting of anti-Muslim hatred.
- Implement a broader programme of education aimed at tackling the underlying root causes of anti-Muslim extremism.
- Vigorously prosecute the perpetrators of anti-Muslim hatred, in order to reinforce perceptions within the Muslim community that *all* forms extremism are a high-priority policy issue.
- Engage with online providers (ISPs, social networks, hosting companies etc.) to better identify the perpetrators of online hate crime.
- Engage with the media to promote a more nuanced understanding of terrorist motivations, in order to reduce the impact of coverage relating to, or even fuelling, instances of 'cumulative extremism'.

Background

The rise of anti-Muslim prejudice has been amongst the most serious political issues of the 21st century. In Western Europe and the US, the post-9/11 era has been characterised by a hardening in attitudes towards the Muslim 'other'.[1] There are widespread concerns around the erosion of traditional national cultural identity, combined with the ongoing effects of the recession.[2] These have been stoked by far right fears of an Islamic fifth column, or attempted 'Islamicisation of Europe' (and by extension, Britain).[3] In turn, this has collectively helped to birth a social environment throughout Europe in which anti-Muslim prejudice has flourished.[4]

Initially the preserve of populist political movements at the fringes of acceptability (for example, the EDL, Pegida, or Liberty GB), the low level rhetoric of anti-Muslim prejudice has increasingly spilled over into mainstream social and political debates, gaining greater traction and political capital as it becomes a more ingrained part of British political discourse.[5] Particularly in the run-up to the 2015 elections (during which time the data in this report was analysed), politicians of all stripes have been keen to adopt the language of 'soft' nationalism and the promotion of 'indigenous cultural identity', ranging from ministerial calls for the Muslim community to root out extremism,[6] to MEPs slurring Muslim a colleague by referring to them with the name of a known extremist.[7]

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[1] Rachel Steele, Michael Parker, M., and Brian Lickel, 'Bias Within Because of Threat From Outside: The Effects of an External Call for Terrorism on Anti-Muslim Attitudes in the United States', *Social Psychological and Personality Science*, 6/2 (2015), pp. 193-200.

[2] As with ensuing footnotes, academic texts on this subject published since the appearance of CFAPS's last report include Salua Fawzi, 'Social and political Islamophobia: stereotyping, surveillance, and silencing', *Routledge Handbook of Islam in the West*, ed. Roberto Tottoli (London: Routledge, 2015), pp. 229-243; and Matthew Goodwin, David Cutts and Laurence Jant-Lipinski, 'Economic Losers, Protestors, Islamophobes or Xenophobes? Predicting Public Support for a "Counter-Jihad Movement"', *Political Studies* (2014), 1-23.

[3] See Aristotle Kallis, 'The Radical Right in Contemporary Europe', SETA Analysis 13, Foundation for Political, Economic and Social Research (Dec. 2014), 16ff; Derek O'Callaghan et. al., 'An Analysis of Interactions Within and Between Extreme Right Communities in Social Media', *Lecture Notes in Computer Science* 8329 (2013), pp. 88-107; and in the American context, see Amy Adamczyk et. al., 'The Relationship Between Hate Groups and Far-Right Ideological Violence', *Journal of Contemporary Criminal Justice* 30/3 (2014), pp. 1-23.

[4] See Lars Erik Berntzen and Sveinung Sandberg, 'The Collective Nature of Lone Wolf Terrorism: Anders Behring Breivik and the Anti-Islamic Social Movement', *Terrorism and Political Violence* 26/5 (2014), p. 759-779; Acar Kutay, 'Dominant Pluralism and Discursive Strategies of Contemporary Racism against Muslim Minorities in Europe', *Journal of Muslim Minority Affairs* 35/1 (2015), pp. 1-16; Farid Hafez, 'Shifting borders: Islamophobia as common ground for building pan-European right-wing unity', *Patterns of Prejudice* 48/5 (2014), pp. 479-499; and in the American context, Matthew Duss et. al., 'Fear Inc., 2.0: The Islamophobia Network's Efforts to Manufacture Hate in America', Center For American Progress, Feb. 2015, online at: www.americanprogress.org/issues/religion/report/2015/02/11/106394/fear-inc-2-0/ (all websites last accessed 20 May 2015).

[5] See, for example, Alexander Oaten, 'The cult of the victim: an analysis of the collective identity of the English Defence League', *Patterns of Prejudice* 48/4 (2014), pp. 331-349; and George Kassimeris and Leonie Jackson, 'The Ideology and Discourse of the English Defence League: 'Not Racist, Not Violent, Just No Longer Silent', *The British Journal of Politics & International Relations,* 17/1 (Feb. 2015), pp. 171–188.

[6] As with the letter issued by Eric Pickles, former Communities and Local Government minister, in the aftermath of the *Charlie Hebdo* murders (reported in *The Scotsman*, online at: www.scotsman.com/news/uk/cameron-defends-pickles-extremism-letter-to-muslims-1-3665391).

[7] In this instance, David Coburn, a UKIP MEP, referred to an SNP minister with the name of a known terrorist (reported in *The Herald*, available online at: www.heraldscotland.com/news/home-news/did-ukips-david-coburn-deliberately-muddle-name-of-asian-snp-rival-in-euro-elections.120684795).

In the UK, this ratcheting up of political rhetoric has been accompanied by some evidence suggesting a rise in violent anti-Muslim activity.[8] The socially marginal and politically disenfranchised have increasingly seized upon the Muslim community as a scapegoat for their broader social and political grievances,[9] sometimes with violent consequences. However, mistrust of the police has deterred reporting – particularly amongst the BME communities that make up the bulk of the British Muslim population[10] – while barriers to the access of services (particularly linguistic barriers, as well as social and cultural norms) have also reduced rates of reporting. Consequently, official statistics may significantly underestimate the scope and severity of the problem.[11]

Against this backdrop, Faith Matters' continuing work through the Tell MAMA (Measuring Anti-Muslim Attacks) reporting initiative, launched in 2012, provides a valuable resource. It represents a significant opportunity both to gain insight into a much underexplored phenomenon, and to provide vital support to the victims of hate crime. Modelled on the work of the Community Security Trust (CST), Tell MAMA allows the victims of anti-Muslim hatred to report details of the abuse they have suffered via phone, SMS or online (via Twitter, Facebook or the Tell MAMA website), and to access support, both in dealing with the problem and in bringing it to the attention of the authorities (Faith Matters act as a third party reporting partner).

As part of their commitment to transparency, and in the interests of ensuring that the data they collect is analysed and made available to the public in a way that is both transparent and academically rigorous, Faith Matters have retained CFAPS as paid independent consultants since 2013. With reports published each year since, CFAPS have developed a strong relationship with Faith Matters that allows us to feed into the reporting and data collection process, offering insight and – where appropriate – constructive critique. As a result, the data coding and approval process has continued to evolve over the course of our partnership, and we now believe that a good degree of confidence may be placed in the robustness of their data handling processes.[12]

About this Report

This is the third annual report on Tell MAMA's data, and analyses reports collected during the period 1 March 2014 – 28 February 2015. It has been written by Dr Mark Littler and Professor Matthew Feldman, and is part of an ongoing series of reports that examines Tell MAMA data.

The 2014/15 reporting period has been characterised by increasing inter-community tensions: from jihadi Islamist attacks such as those in Paris, Sydney and Copenhagen, to claims of rising anti-Muslim

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[8] See Emma Hanes and Stephen Machin, 'Hate Crime in the Wake of Terror Attacks: Evidence From 7/7 and 9/11', *Journal of Contemporary Criminal Justice* 30/3 (2014), pp. 247-267; and Peter Hopkins, 'Islamophobia, racism and white supremacy: gendered violence against those who look Muslim', *Race, Religion and Migration Working Papers Series 4* (2014), online at: https://research.ncl.ac.uk/youngpeople/workingpapersseries/racereligionandmigration/Islamophobia,%20racism%20and%20white%20supremacy%20-%20gendered%20violence%20against%20those%20who%20look%20Muslim.pdf.

[9] See Jamie Bartlett and Mark Littler, 'Inside the EDL: Populist Politics in a Digital Age' (London: Demos, 2011).

[10] See demographic data from the 2011 Census provided by the Office of National Statistics, online at: www.ons.gov.uk/ons/guide-method/census/2011/index.html?utm_source=twitterfeed&utm_medium=twitter.

[11] See, for example, HMIC, 'Crime-recording: making the victim count: The final report of an inspection of crime data integrity in police forces in England and Wales', Justice Inspectorates, Nov. 2014, online at: www.justiceinspectorates.gov.uk/hmic/wp-content/uploads/crime-recording-making-the-victim-count.pdf.

[12] For more on this point, see the methodological discussion provided in Appendix 1.

prejudice in the UK[13] – contended by some to be fostering 'a climate of systematic hostility to Muslims'.[14] This has taken place against a backdrop of political unrest in the UK, with the social salience of immigration having notably increased since the previous report.[15]

Indeed, government statistics suggest that, despite a nationwide drop in recorded crime rates, 2014 saw a significant increase in the occurrence of certain types of racially and religiously motivated offences.[16] Alongside this, evidence also suggests that religiously motivated hate crime has risen year upon year since 2012,[17] and that three quarters of all recorded hate crime are now religiously or racially motivated.[18] All of this points to the need for further research.

Accordingly, this report offers the opportunity to empirically evaluate several current trends that have been highlighted as relating to specifically anti-Muslim hate crime.[19] It also explores the phenomenon known as 'cumulative extremism', building on our work in the 2013/14 report. To this end, the aims of this paper are:

- To offer an analysis of trends and patterns in the 12-month period as reported by the Tell MAMA data.
- To examine the reporting of anti-Muslim data in the wake of the three acts of jihadi Islamist violence during the reporting period.
- To provide a critical overview of Tell MAMA's methodology and data collection methods.

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[13] Leon Moosavi, 'The racialization of Muslim converts in Britain and their experiences of Islamophobia', *Critical Sociology* 41/1 (2015), pp. 41-56.
[14] Arun Kudnani, 'A Decade Lost: Rethinking Radicalisation and Extremism', Claystone (2015), cited p. 26, online at: www.claystone.org.uk/publications/.
[15] See www.theguardian.com/politics/2015/apr/29/immigration-enoch-powell-wolverhampton-south-west-jobs-economy-more-important.
16 See the ONS report 'Crime in England and Wales, Year Ending December 2014', online, at: www.ons.gov.uk/ons/dcp171778_401896.pdf.
[17] Bryan Creese and Deborah Lader, 'Hate Crime, England and Wales, 2013/2014' (London: Home Office, 2014), online at: www.report-it.org.uk/files/home_office_hate_crime_data_201314.pdf.
[18] Ibid.
[19] For an excellent example of a recent report on anti-Muslim hate crime based on verified media accounts, see Øyvind Strømmen, 'Hating Muslims: Anti-Muslim hate crimes and terrorism, 2010-2014', Hate Speech International (Feb. 2015), online at: www.hate-speech.org/hating-muslims-a-report-from-hsi/.

Annual Monitoring

The data employed in this report cover the annual monitoring period that ran from 1 March 2014 to 28 February 2015 inclusive. During this period Faith Matters received 729 reports, of which 548 were externally verified and approved (for further information on the approval and verification process, please see Appendix 1 as well as the appendixes to our 2013/14 report). This represents a sizeable reduction in the overall level of reporting relative to the 734 cases recorded in the 2013/14, a fact likely accounted for by the significant spike in anti-Muslim hate crime recorded in the aftermath of Drummer Lee Rigby's gruesome murder.[20] Indeed, the overall number of reports was broadly consistent with the picture presented in the 2012/13 reporting period, when 584 cases were recorded.

Of the verified and approved cases that make up the current data, 402 were coded as having taken place online, with 111 reported to have taken place offline.[21] As distinct phenomena, our analysis considered each of these separately.

Online Incidents

Types of Incident

As with our previous reports, online incidents comprised the bulk of the data (Terminologically, online expressions of anti-Muslim hatred are described as 'incidents' while those offline are described as 'attacks'; this is not intended to reflect the level of severity in either online or offline cases, but is simply a means of separating the two). As many commentators have noted, online hate incidents can be frightening and are often connected to the various forms of far right extremism that have appeared digitally.[22] The overwhelming majority of these online reports were coded as involving anti-Muslim abuse (385) or the dissemination of anti-Muslim literature (372). Less than 25% (78) of cases were coded as involving threats, presenting a picture broadly consistent with the data from previous years (see Figure 1, below).

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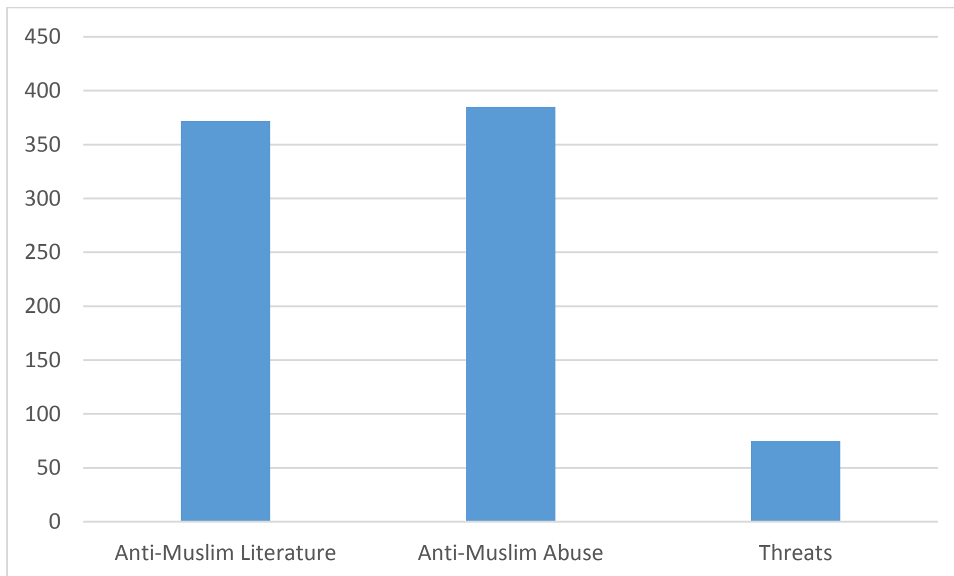
[20] A possibility explicitly identified in official statistics, see Creese and Lader, *Hate Crime, England and Wales, 2013/2014*.

[21] The total number of cases in the data exceeded the combined total for online and offline events. This reflects the fact that, in several cases, records were marked as approved and verified, yet left without a code for online or offline. In keeping with previous reports, the authors took the decision not to engage in the completing of coding where data was missing, with the effect that total scores may exceed the sum of their constituent parts. This is discussed further in Appendix 1.

[22] For digital approaches to mapping online extremism, see Richard Rogers et. al. 'Right-Wing Formations in Europe and their Counter-Measures: an Online Mapping', Digital Methods Initiative, Amsterdam, (2013), pp. 1-89, online at: https://wiki.digitalmethods.net/Dmi/RightWingPopulismStudy. See also Mattias Ekman, 'Online Islamophobia and the politics of fear: manufacturing the green scare' *Ethnic and Racial Studies* (2015), pp. 1-17, online at: www.tandfonline.com/doi/pdf/10.1080/01419870.2015.1021264; and for the more extreme case of Stormfront, see Heidi Beirich, 'White Homicide Worldwide', Southern Poverty Law Center (Apr. 2014), online at: www.splcenter.org/sites/default/files/downloads/publication/white-homicide-worldwide.pdf.

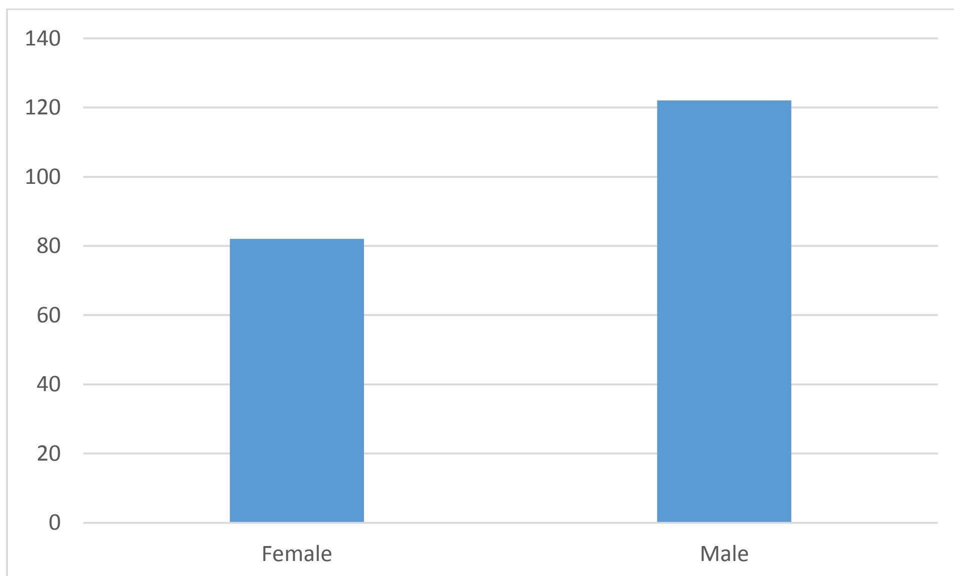
Figure 1 – Online Incidents by Type



Victims

In terms of victims, while incomplete data prevents the provision of a comprehensive picture, and it remains important to be circumspect when examining online identity and victimhood – for reasons outlined in previous reports[23] – the data suggests that male victims were more likely to report incidents to Tell MAMA, with 82 victims identifying as female compared to 122 victims identifying as male[24] (see Figure 2, below).

Figure 2 – Online Incidents by Victim Gender



Of the 402 online incidents, 186 claimed to have reported the incident to the police, while 12 indicated that they were prepared to talk to the media.

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[23] For further discussion, see Appendix 1.

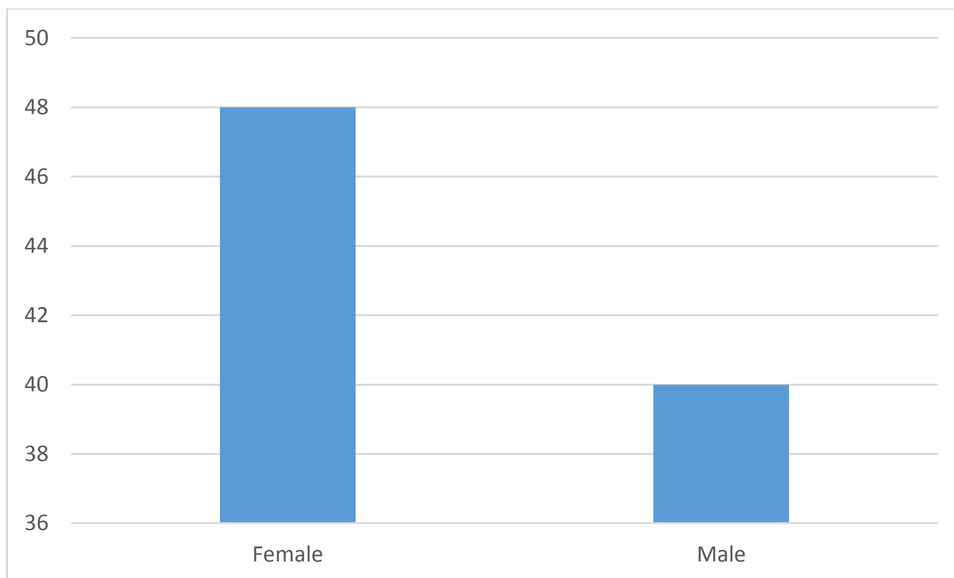
[24] Again, missing data on victim identify means that the sum of male and female victims falls short of the total number of cases coded as online incidents.

Offline Attacks

Victims

The picture presented by data on offline attacks was, again, consistent with that shown in previous reports. A disproportionately large number (around 20%) of cases came from repeat victims, with attacks mostly perpetrated against women (48 cases) as opposed to men (40 cases).

Figure 3 - Offline Attacks by Victim Gender



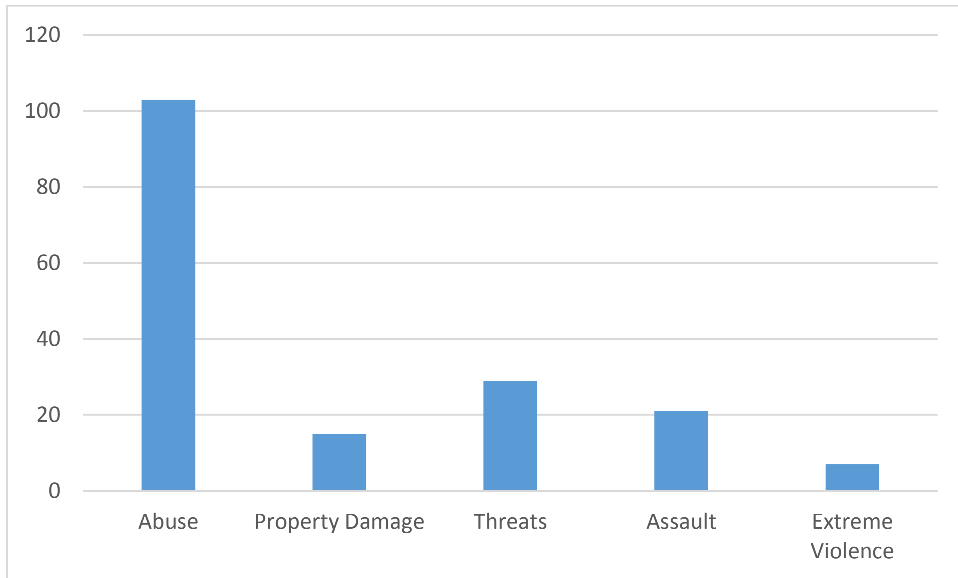
Revealingly, 44 cases reported that the victim was, at the time of the attack, wearing religiously distinctive clothing. This is something that, when taken alongside the small number of cases involving language characterised as ‘race hate’, may be taken to suggest that the attacks possessed a specifically anti-Muslim, rather than traditionally ‘racist’, character.

Of the 111 offline attacks, only 46 were reported to the police, with 7 cases indicating that they would be prepared to speak to the media about their experiences.

Types of Attacks

Attacks were generally coded as abuse (103 cases), although significant numbers were coded for property damage (15), threats (29), and assault (21). A small, but nonetheless very concerning, sub group (7 cases) recorded instances of extreme violence (see Figure 4, below).

Figure 4 – Offline Attacks by Type



Attacker Demographics

Perpetrators were overwhelmingly reported to be white (68 see Figure 6, below) and male (59, see Figure 5, below), with relatively small numbers of cases coded as involving female (21), black (2) or Asian (3) attackers.

Figure 5 – Offline Attacks by Attacker Gender

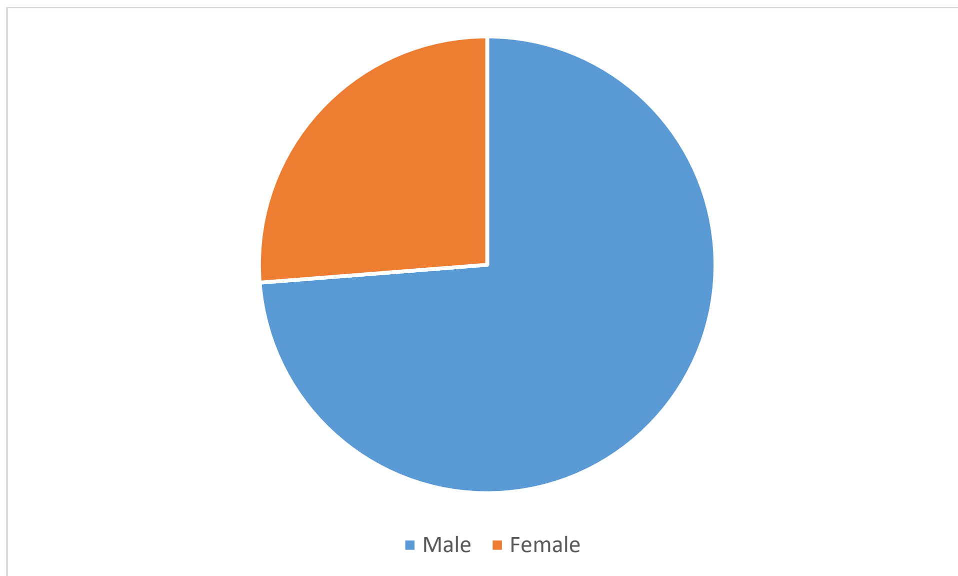
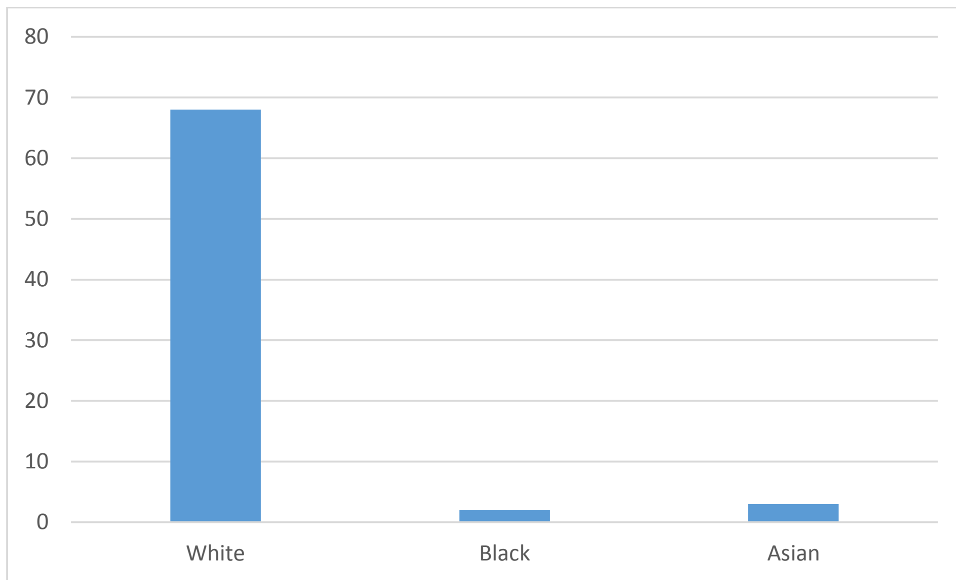


Figure 6 – Offline Attacks by Attacker Ethnicity



The evidence also indicated that, in general, perpetrators tended to be older, with the single largest demographic identified as those aged 40+ (see Table 1, below).

Table 1 – Offline Attacks by Attacker Age

0-9	10-20	21-30	31-40	40+
1	9	16	8	21

Given the 111 recorded and verified online attacks, this suggests that just under 10% of the attacks were committed by those perceived to be under 20 years of age.

Case Study: Cumulative Extremism

Perhaps the most striking aspect of the 2014/15 data was the phenomenon known as 'cumulative', or reciprocal, extremism. First coined by Eatwell in 2006, the term is used to refer to the cyclical ratcheting up of violent activity between opposing communities, with acts of violence perpetrated by a sub-group (however small) of a given community against members of another community, triggering acts of violent retribution by members of a sub-population of the second community against members of the first community.[25] This process is seen to be self-perpetuating, akin to a downward spiral, with each act of violence triggering a response that triggers further violence.[26]

Despite the widespread usage of the term 'cumulative extremism' in policy and academic debate, little empirical evidence has been provided to discern the existence of a relationship. In our 2013/14 report, we isolated one of the first concrete examples of the phenomenon, identifying an alarming rise in anti-Muslim attacks in the 7 days that followed the murder of Drummer Lee Rigby. While the nature of the data prevents the identification of a directly causal relationship, and there remained a number of possible alternate explanations for the spike – for example, an increase in sensitivity to attacks amongst members of the Muslim community – our analysis nevertheless shows a clear pattern.

To date, the most important work on the subject of 'cumulative extremism', Joel Busher and Graham Macklin's 'Interpreting "Cumulative Extremism": Six Proposals for Enhancing Conceptual Clarity', cites four groups of actors bearing upon this phenomena (conflicting social groups, the state, the mass media, and 'symbolic' individuals like Drummer Lee Rigby). The role played by the media 'and those who set the media agenda' is, furthermore, described by Busher and Macklin as 'shaping the "discursive opportunities" for political violence, [meaning that] these actors mediate between political opportunity structures and political action', especially where 'media agendas might coincide with and therefore fuel activist narratives and grievances.'[27]

As this suggests, media 'framing' remains pivotal in the selection, tone and presentation of contemporary political issues.[28] Of these, recourse to anti-Muslim stereotypes in some sections of the press may serve to fan the flames of prejudice and unfounded generalisations toward nearly 3 million BME residents in the UK. In this way, sensationalist reporting via traditional or social media platforms can contribute to an atmosphere of intolerance, where anti-Muslim tropes and the inductive tarring of entire communities can flourish.[29] Albeit demanding further research on this

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[25] See Roger Eatwell,'Community cohesion and cumulative extremism in contemporary Britain', *The Political Quarterly* 77/2 (2006), 204-216.

[26] For the most recent texts on this subject, see Douglas Pratt, 'Islamophobia as Reactive Co-radicalization', *Islam and Christian-Muslim Relations* 26/2 (2015), 1-13; Graham Macklin and Joel Busher, 'The missing spirals of violence: four waves of movement–countermovement contest in post-war Britain', *Behavioral Sciences of Terrorism and Political Aggression* 7/1 (2015), pp. 53-68; and Rocio Cifuentes, 'Challenging far-right extremism: the other side of the coin?, *Counter Radicalisation: Critical Perspectives*, eds. Christopher Baker-Beall, Charlotte Heath-Kelly and Lee Jarvis (Routledge, London, 2015), pp. 123-138.

[27] Graham Macklin and Joel Busher, "Interpreting 'Cumulative Extremism': Six Proposals for. Enhancing Conceptual Clarity", *Terrorism and Political Violence* 26/4 (2014), cited, p. 11.

[28] For an excellent summary of media 'framing', see D.A. Scheufele, 'Framing as a theory of media effects', *Journal of Communication* 49/1 (1999), pp. 103-122.

[29] In terms of media representations, see the recent overview by and Gabriel Faimau, 'The Conflictual Model of Analysis in Studies on the Media Representation of Islam and Muslims: A Critical Review', *Sociology Compass* 9/5 (May 2015), pp. 321-335. More specific findings of late include Jamie Matthews, 'Framing alleged Islamist plots: a case study of British press coverage since 9/11', *Critical Studies on Terrorism* 8/2 (2015); Christine Ogan

critical point, it may be initially speculated that, especially following a high-profile terrorist attack, media 'frames' act as important barometers of public and political discourse, potentially able to embolden 'cumulative extremist' actions undertaken by hate crime perpetrators.

The Data

During the 2014/15 reporting period three self-proclaimed jihadi Islamist attacks took place – in Sydney, Paris, and Copenhagen – allowing for a further test of the 'cumulative extremism' framework. Taking the date and time of each attack as a starting point, we compared the number of reports of anti-Muslim attacks in the 7 days following each attack, as against the number of reports in the preceding 7 days. The data was separated out into online and offline attacks, in order to present a more nuanced picture of this phenomenon. The results of this analysis are presented below.

The Results

Figure 7 shows the total number of attacks reported in the 7 days immediately before and after the onset of the 14 December 2014 (Sydney hostage crisis),[30] the 7 January 2015 (*Charlie Hebdo* attacks), and 14 February 2015 (Copenhagen shootings). Briefly, the first attack in 2015 saw a mass shooting at the offices of the French satirical magazine, *Charlie Hebdo*, followed by a related anti-Semitic assault on a kosher grocery store. In all, 17 victims were murdered and three gunmen were killed; it so rocked France that millions took to the streets on 11 January, including dozens of European leaders assembling in Paris, under the banner 'Je Suis Charlie'. A month later, another jihadi Islamist assaulted a public event in Copenhagen, followed by a shooting outside the city's Great Synagogue, which left a total of two dead and five injured. Although like the Paris and Copenhagen attacks – perpetrated by an adult male with a violent criminal past, with assailants ultimately killed by police – in the case of the 14 December 2015, 18-hour Sydney hostage standoff, the circumstances were somewhat different. There, while Man Haron Monis claimed ISIS affiliation he was swiftly identified as having a history of mental illness, thus providing an alternative frame for the ongoing media coverage. Collectively, these acts of terrorism were closely covered by the international media, from leading evening news broadcasts to events trending on social media for days thereafter.

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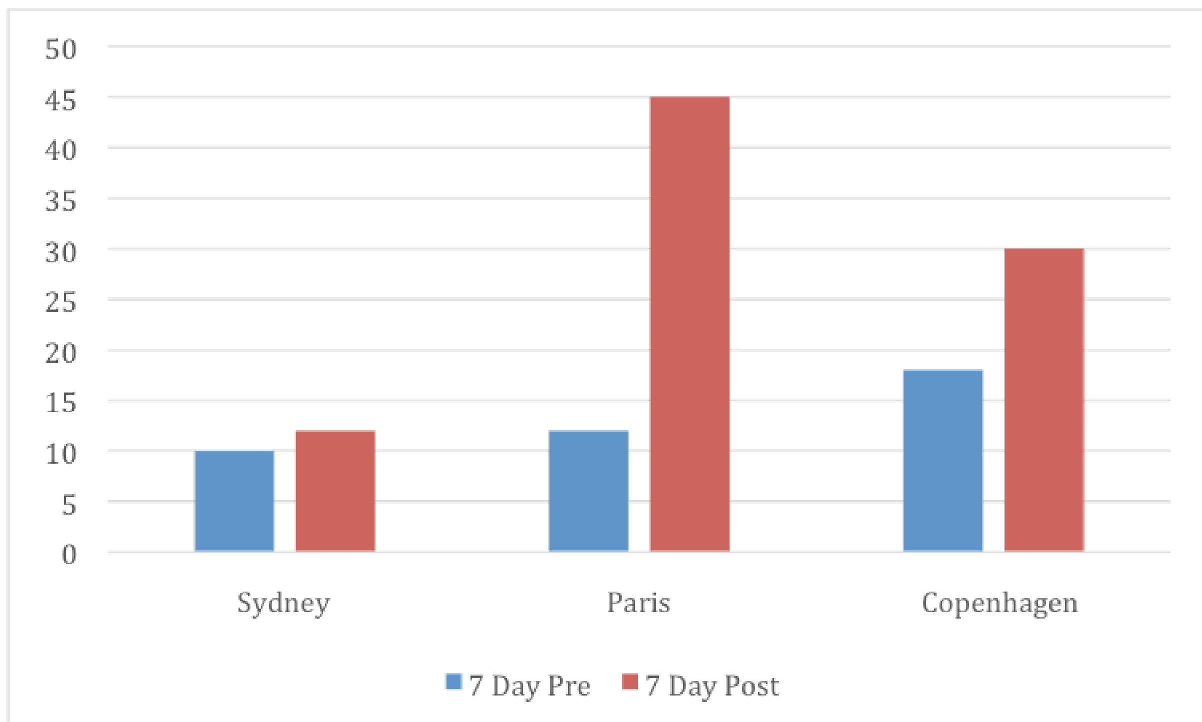
et. al., 'The rise of anti-Muslim prejudice: Media and Islamophobia in Europe and the United States', *International Communication Gazette* 76/1 (2014), pp. 27-46; and in the American context, Anlene Stein and Zakia Salime, 'Manufacturing Islamophobia: Rightwing Pseudo-Documentaries and the Paranoid Style', *Journal of Communication Inquiry*, 39/3 (2015).

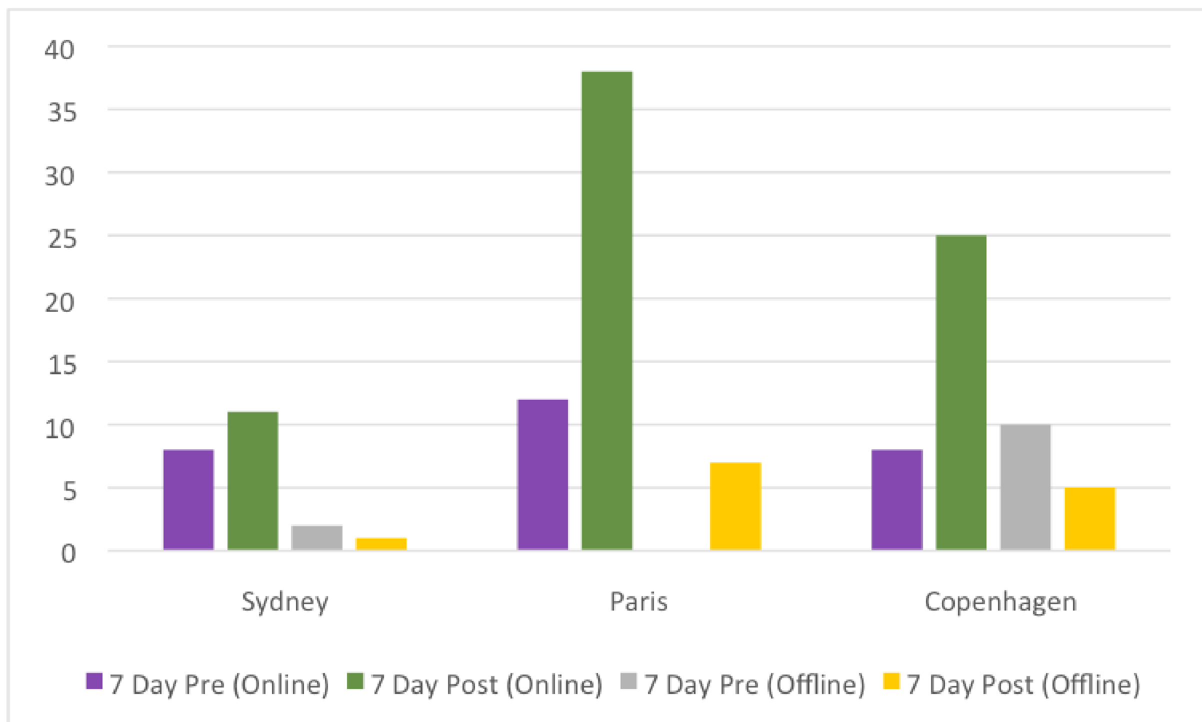
[30] The attack took place at 10:44am on at Sydney local time on 15 Dec. 2014.

Figure 7 – Comparison of Total Number of Attacks in the 7 Days Preceding and Following the Sydney, Paris and Copenhagen Terror Attacks



In the case of each terrorist attack, a rise in the overall number of reported anti-Muslim attacks is clear in the 7 days that followed, although the magnitude of the pre and post-attack difference varied significantly depending on the event in question. In particular, the *Charlie Hebdo* attacks evidenced the most significant shift. A smaller spike was evident following the Copenhagen shootings, with the Sydney hostage crisis showing a very small increase in the level of reported anti-Muslim hate cases (from 10 to 12).

Figure 8 – Comparison of Total Number of Attacks in the 7 Days Preceding and Following the Sydney, Paris and Copenhagen Terror Attacks, separated into Online and Offline Cases



More detailed interrogation of the data may reveal a more complex picture, with figures differing significantly between online and offline activity (see Figure 8, above). While all cases saw a rise in the reporting of online incidents, only the Paris attacks saw an increase in the reporting of cases of offline attacks, with the period following both the Copenhagen and Sydney attacks showing a modest decrease. It may be speculated that this differences owes to the nature and round-the-clock coverage of events in France and, for that matter, in Denmark, with geography no doubt playing a part. By contrast, the attack in Sydney were often framed as being perpetrated by a psychologically-disturbed attacker *who happened to be* Muslim, with real-time events largely unfolding in the middle of the night for British viewers (GMT +11).

Policy Implications and Discussion

While it is important to be cautious when interpreting our results – particularly given the inability of the data to sustain the making of causal inferences, the statistically biased nature of sample, and the sometimes inconsistent coding of some key metrics – we believe that they nevertheless raise a number of timely questions.

The annual monitoring statistics, in particular, identify that overall levels of anti-Muslim hate crime have remained broadly unchanged since the first report in 2013. If our data are taken to be indicative of the broader picture, then they suggest that recent government programmes aimed at fostering inter-community relations have failed to make a meaningful difference to the overall level of anti-Muslim hate crime. While the PREVENT agenda has, in recent years, been amended to broaden its focus to include far right extremism, our findings suggest the need for a fresh approach, moving beyond the counter-terrorism paradigm to offer a broader programme of interventions. In particular, a focus on education and the building of links between communities, as a means of lowering inter-community tension, must be an important theme.

Similarly, the low number of victims reporting to the police is equally troubling, suggesting that the picture presented in official government statistics may significantly underestimate the scope and scale of the problem.[31] As we identified earlier in this report, years of counter-terror policing and poor relationships between the police and the ethnic minority groups in Britain – the latter comprising the bulk of the British Muslim population – has led to low levels of trust in the police.[32] This potentially discourages victims of anti-Muslim violence from coming forward. The suspicion amongst many Muslims is that the police may not take anti-Muslim hate crime seriously.[33] Regardless of whether or not this view has grounds, such a perception may compound the problem by further impeding reporting.[34] Linguistic barriers and cultural norms against hate crime reporting may also play a similar role.[35]

Taken in this context, our findings may be seen to underscore the need for police to engage in a broad programme of relationship building with Muslim community organisations, aiming to foster trust and build the partnerships necessary to bridge the cultural and linguistic barriers that prevent reporting.[36] Alongside this, government officials must work to tackle the perception that anti-Muslim

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[31] See, for instance, a damning report by the House of Commons Public Administration Select Committee, 'Caught red-handed: Why we can't count on Police Recorded Crime statistics', Thirteenth Report of Session 2013/14, Apr. 2014, online at: www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201415/cmselect/cmpubadm/645/645.pdf.

[32] Basia Spalek, 'Community policing, trust, and Muslim communities in relation to "new terrorism"', *Politics & Policy* 38/4 (2010), pp. 789-815.

[33] Robert Lambert and Jonathan Githens-Mazer 'Islamophobia and anti-Muslim hate crime: UK case studies', (Exeter: Europeans Muslim Research Centre, 2010), p. 115, online at: https://lemosandcrane.co.uk/resources/Islamophobia_and_Anti-Muslim_Hate_Crime.pdf.

[34] Further discussion is provided by Vidhya Ramalingam, 'On the Front Line: A Guide to countering far-right extremism', *Institute for Strategic Dialogue* (2014), pp. 40-44, and 55ff on building community trust, online at: www.strategicdialogue.org/On_The_Front_Line_Far_RightHANDBOOK.pdf; see also 'Old Threat, New Approach: Tackling the Far Right Across Europe', *Institute for Strategic Dialogue* (2014), pp. 17-23, online at: www.strategicdialogue.org/ISD_New_Approach_Far_Right_Report.pdf.

[35] Daood Hamdani, 'Triple jeopardy: Muslim women's experience of discrimination' (Toronto: Canadian Council of Muslim Women, 2005), online at http://archive.ccmw.com/publications/triple_jeopardy.pdf.

[36] For details of an ongoing project on this theme, see Alistair McFadyen and Melanie Prideaux, 'Effective Community Policing: Negotiating Changing Religious Identities", Project Report (Leeds: University of Leeds, 2014), online at: www.leeds.ac.uk/arts/download/804/effective_community_policing. In the wider EU context see the position paper by Edpol, 'Diversity Policing and Management Roadmap: Challenges, Opportunities and

hate crime is a low priority, something they may demonstrate by pursuing – to the full extent of the law – those accused of such crimes. Rising prosecution rates will doubtless have a knock-on impact regarding trust in the police. Indeed, a recent assessment by Donald P. Green and Amber D. Spry asserts that 'effective public messaging might stress these sanctions and the importance of reporting hate crime incidence to [the] police for investigation.'[37]

The results of analysis on 'cumulative extremism' have similarly relevant implications. In particular (and subject to the caveats identified above and in Appendix 1), the data seems to offer broad support for this interpretative framework, showing an overall increase in the reporting of acts of anti-Muslim hate crime in the 7 days following each attack. If these results are taken to be indicative of a causal relationship – as we believe they likely are – then the implications, both for policymakers and academics, are far-reaching.

Despite the failure of the data to show a clear rise in the number of reports of offline attacks, the presence of a spike in the reporting of online hate speech suggests a need to develop a response addressing the unique challenges presented by online spaces.[38] While the cross-border nature of the Internet renders traditional legislative approaches largely impotent in this arena, our results suggest that social networks in particular (as the medium through which many incidents of online hate-speech take place) must improve their internal policing and regulatory practices, particularly around periods of heightened risk; for example, in the immediate aftermath of a terrorist attack.

While questions persist around the extent to which online hate-speech constitutes an offence meriting police resources (and it is not the intention of this report to attempt to provide an answer), it is worth considering the possibility of closer co-operation between police and the providers of online services (ISPs, social networks, web hosting companies etc.), with organisations such as Twitter, Facebook and others voluntarily sharing relevant information with the authorities about the identities of the perpetrators of online hate speech; facilitating quicker identification; and speedier prosecution. Relatedly, the police may wish to consider ways in which they may enact reforms that make it easier to informally report online hate speech, perhaps via a dedicated website.

Finally, our findings also raise questions about the role of the media in mediating and framing the news coverage that seems to be a vital pre-requisite for 'cumulative extremism'. Acts of jihadi Islamist extremism come to the attention of far right groups via the mainstream media, filtering through a complex network of blogs, social media pages and forums before reaching their final audience.[39] While only touched upon in this report, our findings are consistent with evidence suggesting that the severity of the 'cumulative extremism' cycle is, in part, determined by the level and tone of media coverage. Where the media stress the *jihadi Islamist*, or even *Muslim*, nature of an attack, devoting significant coverage to this interpretation, the violent response is likely to be greater than in cases where the religious background of the attacker is downplayed, or rejected in favour of an alternative explanation (as with the Sydney attacks, where the attacker was identified as mentally unwell). Similarly, where a terror attack receives greater or more sustained media

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Barriers', European Diversity in Policing (2013), p. 17 on 'Islamophobia', online at: http://ed-pol.eu/site/wp-content/uploads/2012/12/EDPOL-Research.pdf.

[37] Donald P. Green and Amber D. Spry, 'Hate Crime Research: Design and Measurement Strategies for Improving Strategic Inference', *Journal of Contemporary Criminal Justice* 30/3 (2014), 228-246, cited p. 232.

[38] For recent work advancing initiatives to address online 'hate speech', see Raphael Cohen-Almagor, 'Countering Hate on the Internet', *Annual Review of Law and Ethics* 22 (2014), pp. 431-443, online at: http://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract_id=2543511.

[39] Mark Littler, 'Truth, Lies, and the Internet: Inside the Social Media Echo Chamber' (University of Central Lancashire Impact Paper, 2014).

attention (as with the 60-hour, multisite, coverage of the attacks in Paris in January 2015), it is likely to generate a more hateful and inductive response than where the media offer lower levels of coverage (as in Copenhagen and, especially, Sydney). While not advocating restrictions on the rights of a free press, our results nevertheless raise important questions about the effects of irresponsible journalism, and the dangers of uninformed speculation as to terrorist motivation. While it is naturally important for the media to present honest and impartial coverage, granting greater voice to more nuanced or alternative explanations of terrorist motivation – as in Sydney – may do much to reduce the ferocity of the 'cumulative extremism' backlash and ensure that the wider Muslim population in the UK remains trusted, heard, and protected.

Appendix 1: Methodological Overview and Commentary

This report presents the results of simple descriptive statistical analysis, using verified and approved cases of anti-Muslim attacks recorded by Faith Matters's Tell MAMA project. Inclusive dates ran between 1 March 2014 and 28 February 2015. Analysis used SPSS to calculate raw, percentage and average scores for each of the variables employed, with Microsoft Excel used to provide data visualisations in the form of charts and tables.

As detailed in our 2013/14 report, case validation and approval is undertaken by Faith Matters, in accordance with protocols introduced after the publication of 2012/13 report. In addition to self-report data, Faith Matters also have a national memorandum and working agreement with the Association of Chief Police Officers (ACPO) to share information anti-Muslim hate incidents and attacks reported to the police. This enables Faith Matters to code both self-referred incidents as well as those received from the 43 police forces in England and Wales. Irrespective or origin, all cases must have a secondary source to provide verification – for example, a link to online content or a witness for offline attacks – with those lacking this further proof excluded from the data. Regular checks by a senior member of Faith Matters staff ensure that this process is adhered to and consistently applied.

The data provided is, as a result, a complete resource, and no further coding or data cleaning was undertaken by the authors. Consequently, cases lacking complete coding were excluded from some elements of the analysis, with the effect that – as in previous reports – the sum of individual units of analysis may total less than 100% of the overall sample size.

Relatedly, inconsistencies in the format of location coding for cases of offline violence (sometimes given as a postcode, sometimes a city, and occasionally even a UK region), mean that this data could not be analysed as provided, and as such this report offers no analysis of the geographical dispersion of attacks, despite the presence of data which, if recorded, might tentatively allow for such analysis.

Caveats

While we believe that this data represents an important resource with significant potential to help us better understand anti-Muslim hate crime, it is nevertheless important to be honest about its shortcomings. In particular, it is vital that readers be cautious when using this data as a basis for making broader claims about the prevalence and nature of anti-Muslim attacks across the UK. This is because, as an overwhelmingly self-select sample, there can be no philosophically robust basis for claiming that it represents the overall prevalence of anti-Muslim attacks in Britain.

Alongside this, as the body of the report highlights in the context of police data on hate crime, there are serious barriers to reporting in terms of access, trust, and awareness of the Tell MAMA service. It therefore remains possible – and, indeed, very likely – that many hate crimes and incidents will be missing from the data. Where cases are reported, they are likely to represent only a small fraction of the anti-Muslim attacks that took place in the UK during 2014/15, reported either by motivated outliers or because of factors peculiar to the individual case; for example, its particularly serious nature. As a result, the sample cannot be deemed representative of the UK as a whole. Statistically speaking, it lacks external validity.

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