Prologue

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The papers presented in this issue of COLLeGIUM have their origin in a two day seminar organised at the Helsinki Collegium for Advanced Study on Social Cohesion in the Context of Counter-Terrorism Policies. The debate in that seminar made very explicit the degree of intersection between a range of current social policies deployed across Europe, and elsewhere, which claim to promote civility and participation in multiethnic societies. It revealed the often problematic co-existence of these policies in terms of practice; and in terms of the legitimating political discourse surrounding them. The quite distinct contributions made to this dialogue, by arguments positioned within distinctly different academic disciplines, was one of the pleasures and challenges of this shared experience. The papers presented in this issue echo that experience. Each paper is written from within a particular disciplinary analytic repertoire and with very evident different styles.

As the debate within the seminar developed three recurrent themes emerged as providing a force field of potent policy agendas that had their own internal ambiguities and strong degrees of practical overlap: these were social cohesion – as a concern with managing the politics of cultural diversity, securitization – as an expansive concern with the regulation of social life in the name of security, and counter-terrorism – as a specific area of policy necessitated by the impact of the fear of terrorist violence in contemporary societies. The papers presented below provide a variety of perspectives on this contemporary contested area of politics and policy.

These papers did not set out to comprehensively trace the many issues, both theoretical and practical, that could be realistically envisioned. They are, however, invitations to read across the different foci that have shaped each contribution in order that the reader may explore for themselves something of the intellectual and political ferment that currently characterises contemporary multiethnic societies.

Newey, as a philosopher, challenges the ways in which the issues of liberty and security have been conceived in opposition to each other; whilst Hancock
grounds something of the concrete realities of this discourse in her examination of the permeation of securitization into the formulation of urban policy. Within this policy frame she reveals the consequences of these current policies in the marginalisation of specific communities. In looking at the construction of a discourse around the call for a ‘debate’ around migration Titley continues to require us to follow Hancock’s lead in looking at political process, and the discourses driven by it, with an eye for what is obscured, rather what is revealed and foregrounded, by policy. Moring continues to explore broad aspects of the current societal context with his examination of the dynamics shaping the relationship between the media and terrorism, and counter-terrorism. This too is a paper which invites us to consider how it is we have a domain of policy framed by specific priorities, and understood through particular ‘self-evidently appropriate’ discourses.

Pędziwiatr begins a process of narrowing the frame of analysis by examining how, within European Muslim communities, new modes of seeking to develop a theory and practice of ‘Muslim civicness’ may be developing. His case study concretely seeks to explore forms of Muslim response to the politics of marginalisation and Islamophobic exclusion that have been a feature of aspects of counter-terrorism and of social cohesion. From a very different academic perspective, and with a very different focus, Mescher explores how the routine experience of being a police officer may impact upon their potential for possessing Islamophobic sentiments. This study very concretely draws on a social psychological approach to the banal experience of inter-ethnic contact in the context of policing a multiethnic society. This too is a world framed by the concerns described by the earlier authors. Finally, Alam and Husband draw upon a specific qualitative study of five large metropolitan authorities to reveal something of the very specific contradictions that emerge when social cohesion and counter-terrorism policies are implemented within the same neighbourhoods.