

Terrorism and social work: perceptions of what social workers need to know

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Complex and contested relationship with political violence and conflict

Assessments for Nazi regime

Peace campaigns

Work with military personnel; work with refugees; work with terrorists

Social Work & Terrorism

- US papers
 - 11th Sept
 - Impact on ethnic groups
 - Washington sniper (domestic terror)
 - Association with stalking
- Israel papers
 - Arab-Israeli conflict
 - Gendered reactions
- Value based approaches – Hong Kong

Little written in UK

refugees/ asylum seekers/
counterterrorism

London bombings

Disaster planning

The 'Troubles'

- therapeutic work
- secondary trauma

The Study

Qualitative studies
2 year cohorts (2010/2011)
5 seminar group discussions (40 students)
4 in-depth interviews
Ethical issues
Thematic analysis



Findings

1. Defining terrorism:

- a. The 'other'
- b. Extreme acts, desperate, perceptions of oppression
- c. Individuals, groups or states
- d. Complex and contested, e.g., Mandela, Arab Spring
- e. Unpredictability
- f. Fear
- g. Irrationality
- h. Understood through well-known incidents – isomorphic definitional process

2. What do social workers need to know and what should they do?

- a. history and biography
- b. individual/therapeutic, community, international development
- c. impact of terrorism through personal experience
- d. secondary trauma
- e. crisis intervention knowledge, grief work and skills
- f. building positive community cohesion
- g. unfair social division, poverty or marginalisation, focusing on Islamophobia
- h. law and policy
- i. plurivocality and global awareness

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Ripples in a pond: Do social work students need to learn about terrorism?

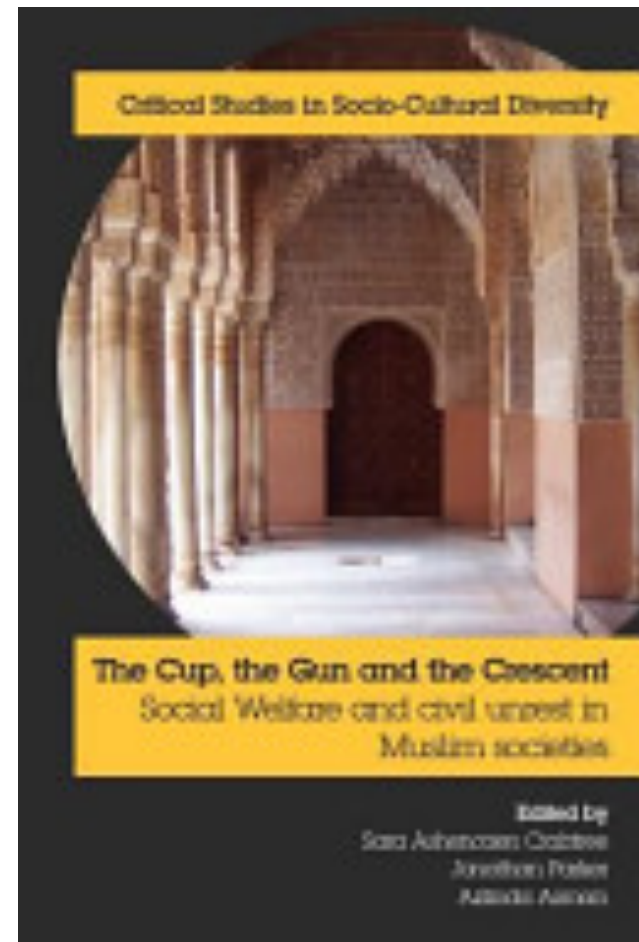
Abstract: *In the face of heightened awareness of terrorism, however it is defined, the challenges for social work are legion. Social work roles may include working with the military to ensure the well-being of service-men and women and their families when bereaved or injured, as well as being prepared to support the public within the emergency context of an overt act of terrorism.*

This paper reviews some of the literature concerning how social work responds to conflict and terrorism before reporting a small-scale qualitative study examining the views of social work students, on a qualifying programme in the UK, of terrorism and the need for knowledge and understanding as part of their education.

Keywords: *terrorism; social work; education*

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Questions?

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