



Living with Uncertainty

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**Comparing responses to violence and
uncertainty in Brazil and the UK:**

Background to a collaborative project

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Comparing responses to violence and uncertainty in Brazil and the UK: Background to a collaborative project

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Abstract

This article situates a collaborative project between Brazil and the UK that aims to compare people's responses to violence in the two contexts through a report of the method and findings of the original UK study. The 'Perception and Communication of Terrorist Risk' project investigated responses to terrorist risk by focus groups of Muslims and non-Muslims in London and Leeds, some months after the London bombings of July 2005, which were carried out by young Muslim men. Metaphor-led discourse analysis revealed people's feelings of fear, and their use of metaphors to talk about: the impact of terrorism, the actions of terrorists, the effect on British Muslims, how the media and authorities responded to the attacks, and the social landscape. The Brazil study will compare these findings with Brazilian focus group responses to urban violence in two cities. I reflect on how the collaborating team have addressed methodological challenges of working bilingually and look forward to the emerging findings.

Introduction

In July 2009, a collaborative project on responses to violence and uncertainty was initiated between Brazil and the UK. As the UK side of the project, I was in receipt of a Fellowship award from the UK Economic and Social Research Council that allowed me to research the idea of 'Living with Uncertainty' in a range of contexts, that include the USA and UK. With Ana Pelosi of Universidade Federal do Ceara, in Fortaleza, Brazil and later Heloísa Pedroso de Moraes Feltes of Universidade de Caxias do Sul, Rio Grande do Sul and Luciane Corrêa Ferreira of Universidade Federal de Minas Gerais, in Belo Horizonte, Brazil, we now planned a study that would gather together groups of Brazilian adults to discuss, not terrorism, but the high levels of urban violence that were being experienced in the fast-growing cities of Brazil. In the context of the much broader project set up by Ana Pelosi and colleagues, and entitled *Representações Sócio-cognitivas de Violência em Centros Urbanos Brasileiros*, we are carrying out a joint UK-Brazil study of responses to violence and uncertainty. In this article, I describe the original UK study that formed the background to the Brazil collaboration and how we set about our collaborative work.

Perception and Communication of Terrorist Risk (PCTR)

The original study was carried out as part of a UK research project with colleagues at the University of Leeds, which we called 'Perception and Communication of Terrorist Risk'.¹ Data came from focus group discussions in which people talked about their

reactions to recent terrorist attacks in London and how they dealt with the risks that terrorism had brought into their everyday lives. Before describing the empirical work, some background is given.

Background to the PCTR study

The first suicide bombings ever experienced in Britain took place on 7 July 2005, when four young Muslim men exploded bombs on an Underground train and on the upper deck of a bus. 52 people were killed and over 700 injured. The nation was shocked by the violence, by the apparent spread of terrorism from the USA, but was also deeply shocked to discover that three of the four perpetrators of violence had been born and brought up in Britain; these were ‘home-grown’ terrorists. The three came from Leeds, a city in the north of England that has experienced changing demographics as a result of invited immigration in the 1960s and 70s of workers from the West Indies, Pakistan and Bangladesh, later of people looking for work from eastern Europe countries that joined the European Union, alongside smaller numbers of people given asylum from conflict situations globally. The earlier immigration produced Muslim communities that tended to live together in particular areas of the city with their own places of worship (mosques), shops, doctors and other facilities. A national policy of multiculturalism, which developed in education and social life more broadly from the 1970s onwards, accepted such parallel communities as preferable to assimilationism, and it is only very recently that its knock-on effects on nationhood, social identity and belonging are being discussed. When British manufacturing industries declined in the 1980s and 90s, unemployment in urban areas rose and life expectations for younger people became less positive. Underlying currents of racism, UK participation in global conflicts such as the war in Iraq, and changes in the spread of information through the Internet, all contributed to increasing dissatisfaction and rifts between communities. However, that young men would be willing to kill themselves in the act of killing others was still extremely shocking to British people.

Using metaphor to analyse talk about violence

In political rhetoric, metaphor is seen as a key tool for influencing listeners. For example, the inaugural addresses of charismatic US presidents contained twice as many metaphors as those of non-charismatic presidents (Mio, Riggio, Levin & Reese, 2005), suggesting that charismatic politicians use metaphor to inspire or persuade. A number of studies have looked at the metaphors used by President George W. Bush when talking about security issues. An analysis of metaphors used by the US government following 9/11 shows that they are very consistent with US foreign policy but, as metaphor inevitably conceals as well as reveals, also hide some aspects of the international relations agenda (Zhang, 2007). In Bush’s speeches from 2001 – 2004, a conflict frame was used alongside a strategy of fear as a persuasive device to garner support for war (Ferrari, 2007). Within the conflict frame, a number of metaphors were used, including personification of the victims of the 9/11 attacks, and metaphors of *wounds* and *struggle*.

Discussions of terrorism in the US and beyond have largely been framed by the idea of a ‘war on terror’. Krebs and Lobasz (2007) argue that as the meaning of 9/11 became fixed as ‘war on terror’, this created a limited discursive space in which people could talk about the war in Iraq. Specifically, they argue that opposition politicians were rhetorically “coerced”: given the dominance of the War on Terror

discourse, opponents of war with Iraq had few rhetorical resources with which to challenge these ‘logical’ steps leading down the path to war (Krebs and Lobasz, 2007, p.444). Media coverage of terrorism has tended to use pre-existing discourses about crime and control in an uncritical way (Altheide, 2007). Comparing the US and the UK in the immediate aftermath of 9/11, there were many similarities in the way that Bush and Blair talked about terrorism and the war on terror (Johnson, 2002). In the UK, press coverage of emergency measures to counteract terrorism have used a discourse which re-frames freedom as a freedom from fear, rather than freedom of action (Tsoukala, 2006).

Studies of issues connected to terrorism, including racism and immigration report overwhelmingly negative metaphors about minority groups in US and UK society (Charteris-Black, 2006; Santa Ana, 1999; O’Brien, 2003; Van Teeflen, 1994). The nastiness and negativity reflected in the findings of these studies is quite extreme, and, although there is no doubt that such views are held, we can also enquire how far the general public share the negative metaphorical framings of issues that affect their everyday lived experience or whether they may also use more positive frames and metaphors.

A potentially simplistic assumption of metaphor studies of media and political discourse, particularly of those generated within the remit of Critical Discourse Analysis, is that public perceptions of social issues and international events are strongly shaped by the dominant metaphors, critiqued by Deignan (2005, p.131). Apart from the claim that politicians sometimes use an argumentation strategy in which they invent words and claim that they represent the views of ‘ordinary people’ (Charteris-Black, 2006, citing van Dijk, 1993; 1998), there is little discussion in the literature of how people may influence politicians and media, or even much on what people do with the metaphors that they experience in the media or from their politicians. In one suggestive study, Edy and Meirick (2007) show that, although the media used two main metaphors when talking about terrorism (TERRORISM AS WAR and TERRORISM AS CRIME), residents of Tennessee used these metaphors in idiosyncratic ways. In particular, these metaphors were adapted and mixed in complex ways, and the range of reasons for support for war in Afghanistan was very diverse. It is important therefore not just to collect categories of metaphor but to examine the interplay of metaphors in use.

In a more dynamic framework of social interaction and discourse (Cameron, 2007; Gibbs & Cameron, 2008) the directions of influence are not just ‘downward’ from media or politicians to people, but also outward and upward. In the ‘outward’ direction, individuals’ metaphors will interact with the metaphors of their peers, those who share their cultural identities and influence. In an ‘upward’ direction, metaphors used by people to describe and frame their everyday experiences should interact with and influence the discourse of media and politics, e.g. contributing to political planning or to more effective communication. The detailed, qualitative work undertaken in our projects aims to assist this upward influencing by contributing to understandings of how people respond to terrorism and other forms of violence.

A key connection between violence and metaphor lies in affect – emotions, feelings and moods (Damasio, 1999). Emotions connect into our embodied experience and are stored in memory attached to images or mental patterns (Damasio, 1999). Since metaphors activate affect as well as conceptual information (Cameron, 2003), we can expect that metaphors are of particular importance in talk about violence, risk or threat, and it is of interest to find out what kinds of emotional meanings and memories are activated or carried by metaphors.

Data collection

We employed a market research company to gather together groups of 8 people from different sectors of the community. To allow people to express their views frankly, separate groups were convened for Muslims and non-Muslims. Because of Muslim cultural/religious conventions, separate groups were used for men and women².

A list of questions was designed to ask participants about the effects of terrorism on everyday decisions and on their feelings towards other communities. Trained moderators asked each group the same questions in the same order, ensuring that all participants had a chance to respond but not otherwise contributing to the discussion. A Muslim woman, skilled in group work, moderated all the Muslim groups; a member of the research team moderated the non-Muslim groups

The focus group discussions lasted between one and one and a half hours, were audio-recorded and transcribed prior to analysis. The full dataset contained 213,000 words.

Data analysis

Metaphor-led discourse analysis was applied to the data. Metaphor analysis proceeds through a three-stage coding process: identification, vehicle grouping and key topic coding. The method is close to constructivist grounded theory in that it “assumes the relativism of multiple social realities, recognizes the mutual creation of knowledge by viewer and viewed, and aims towards interpretive understandings of subjects’ meanings” (Charmaz, 2001, p.509). Codings and categories are constructed to keep the data alive and meaningful as it is condensed, through “flexible, heuristic strategies rather than formulaic procedures” (ibid, p.511). At each stage, a proportion of each transcript was blind-coded by a second researcher in order to ensure reliability; agreement was reached through discussion. Inter-rater reliability was also strengthened through training of raters and keeping a record of decisions made for future reference.

The identification of verbal metaphor followed the procedures developed in Cameron (2003). Metaphor identification requires difference or incongruity between the contextual meaning of the vehicle term and a more basic, often concrete meaning of the term, and potential transfer of meaning or interaction between the two meanings. Our procedure differed from the pragglejazz procedure (Pragglejazz Group, 2007) in identifying vehicle terms rather than words, on the principle that the individual word is not always a unit of talking-and-thinking but that units might be words or phrases of varying lengths. Vehicle terms ranged from highly figurative and ‘obviously’ metaphorical phrases – *round ‘em up*, *put a spanner in the works*, *pawns in a game*³ – to single closed-category words, such as the preposition *in* (when used in phrases such as *in the UK*, or *in society* to conceptualise a country or social group as a contained space). There is not room here to describe fully how we made all decisions about metaphor identification; such details can be found in Cameron et al. (2009) and in Cameron & Maslen (2010).

Vehicle grouping involved assigning each metaphor vehicle to a grouping according its literal semantics (similar to a source domain, but remaining close to the data): *pawns in a game*, for example, was assigned to the vehicle grouping *GAMES OF CHANCE*⁴. The level of groupings between general and specific was kept just beyond that of language used by speakers, e.g. *lottery*, *odds*, *pawns in a game* were collected

in the *GAMES OF CHANCE* rather than *GAMES* or *COMPETITION*, since the affect of metaphors often comes from this level of specificity and can be lost in over-generalization.

As the twelve transcripts were coded, a final set of 59 vehicle groupings emerged that was checked for internal consistency and for consistent application across all transcripts. The ‘other’ category is small, as considered desirable in inductive coding. The groupings are a mix of source domains familiar from conceptual metaphor theory, such as *MOVEMENT* and *SEEING*, and domains more specific to the type and topics of this discourse, such as *VIOLATE / LIMITS* (*she was taking it to extremes*), and *CRAZY-WILD* (*our lives would be chaos*). The importance of a vehicle grouping to the study of terrorism justified keeping separate some groupings that could have been combined: for example, *GIVING/TAKING* could be seen as a kind of *PHYSICAL ACTION* but was an important way of talking metaphorically about communication and belief, e.g. *how can they give the truth?; gain the trust back*.

Since evidence of metaphorical conceptualization lies principally in topic-vehicle mappings, and above all in mappings that are systematic, it was necessary to establish both the vehicle semantics and topic of a metaphor, the topic being the ‘real’ referent of the word or phrase being used metaphorically. Identifying a topic for each vehicle is extremely difficult since many, if not most, vehicles in spoken discourse occur without explicit topics. To solve this problem, we used five ‘key discourse topics’ relating to our research questions. For each vehicle, we asked which of the key discourse topics was being talked about when the vehicle was used. The key topics were:

1. terrorism, including acts, risk, causes, perpetrators;
2. communication, by the authorities and by the media;
3. responses to terrorism, including responses by the authorities and responses by, or particularly likely to affect, Muslims;
4. society and social groups, including Muslims;
5. topics outside the project’s main areas of interest, including the focus group discourse itself.

The combinations of vehicle groupings and key topics produced ‘systematic metaphors’ for this data⁵, such as *RESPONSES TO TERRORISM AS PHYSICAL ACTION*; *SOCIETY AS CONTAINER*. The systematic metaphors are not conceptual metaphors, rather they are emergent metaphor groups that reflect the contextualized discourse. The systematic metaphors served as an intermediate level of analysis that allowed quantitative comparisons by gender, religion and socio-economic status, and qualitative, interpretive analysis of how metaphors were used. Combinations of systematic metaphors sometimes work together in metaphor scenarios (Musolff, 2004) to construct larger narrative conceptualizations of topics.

Identifying and interpreting systematic patterns of metaphor use was an iterative procedure that moved back and forth between the verbal metaphors in context and the larger groupings. We examined the conceptual content of metaphors and their affective senses. We examined the discourse work of the metaphors as well as their types: how they positioned and framed people, events and ideas; the values and attitudes of the speakers that they carried; the feelings and emotions they prompted; how they were accepted or challenged in the dynamics of the talk. A claim of shared metaphorical conceptualization rests on common use of the same vehicle / source domain for the same topic. Claims about metaphorical affect may rely on evidence of metaphors from different source domains that convey the same emotions

or attitude about a topic. To make more general claims about affect, non-metaphorical language was also examined.

Findings of the UK PCTR study

The impact of terrorism

Metaphors of *VIOLENT ACTION* were used to describe the emotional impact of terrorism on people, families and society: people are *crushed*, *knocked down*, *mashed up*; *impacting on people's lives*; families are *ripped apart*; terrorism *shook the whole world up*. Similar metaphors were also used in talk of social and governmental responses to terrorism: Muslim communities in the UK were seen as vulnerable to a *backlash*; as a result of the war *Iraq is completely broken up*; and as a result of prevention measures *human rights have been squashed*. The metaphors suggest that the uncertainties generated by terrorism produce a strong, negative emotional effect, even on those not directly involved.

The emotional effect is also spoken of in terms of *BALANCE* metaphors, particularly by women participants. In this systematic metaphor, peaceful normality for individuals, communities and society is seen as equilibrium. Acts of terrorism violently upset this emotional equilibrium for individuals: terrorism is *upsetting*, *stirs things up*, makes you *a bit more edgy*. For society too, it brings disruption from the norm: *the world's out of balance*; it *upsets the fragile peace or harmony*. After a period of time, things *settle down* and go *back to normal*. There is a connection or coherence at least, with *UP/DOWN* metaphors for risk and threat. *UP* implies the balance has been disturbed, *messing up the country*, whereas *DOWN* marks the restoration of equilibrium, *but I think it calmed down a lot*.

The most spoken about emotion was fear, and in particular, fear produced by an *invisible* and *silent enemy*, who not only attacks locally but may also live locally: *we had terrorists on our own doorstep*. The terrorist *enemy* is *invisible* and *silent* in several ways: attacks cannot be predicted, and no advance warning is given; there is no conventional declaration of war, no organisation with uniforms or other visible military status; the July 2005 bombers were young British Asian men and looked like any other tube passengers on the CCTV pictures seen afterwards. The invisibility, and thus the unknowability, of this enemy evoke a particular kind of fear that made both Muslim and non-Muslim participants feel helpless. Lack of agency was voiced through *GAME OF CHANCE* metaphors, preferred by non-Muslim men: *we get caught up in a poker game*, *it's like a lottery*, *if my number's up*, *we're pawns in a game*. Loss of agency and lack of control over the outcomes of the game is accompanied by determination not to be beaten: *don't let them bea- beat you*; *don't let the system beat you*, and a sense of the un-fairness of such a game: *it's not a level playing field*; *on the total sense of fair play*. Superficially, these metaphors might seem to underplay the seriousness of terrorism risk by comparing it to something trivial like a *poker game*. However, examining the talk around the metaphors shows a context of accepting grim reality rather than of light-heartedness.

Both Muslims and non-Muslims feared for themselves but speak much more about the fears they have for their families, particularly if they work in the city and travel by tube. Muslim women participants emphasised the emotional impact of these multiple fears produced by terrorism by speaking of it in terms of *MENTAL HEALTH* metaphors, particularly *paranoia* and *nightmares*, as in *that's what makes you paranoid*; *it was like a nightmare*.

The terrorists themselves were frequently described as *brainwashed* and *mentally ill*; participants seemed to resist the possibility that they could have been acting with full mental capacity and responsibility.

Explanations of terrorism used *PHYSICAL ACTION* metaphors to explain the relation between religion (Islam) and terrorism as deliberate employment of a tool: *terrorism is using Muslim religion* (Muslim participant); *the way they use their religion*; *they use it as a shield*; *religion is used by some people*. The systematic metaphor was set as: *RELIGION AS A TOOL USED TO JUSTIFY TERRORISM*.

Terrorism and war

After 9/11, terrorist violence was described by the media and politicians in terms of *WAR*, rather than for example crime (Lakoff, 2001). In the focus groups, however, *WAR* metaphors were restricted to talk about other people's conceptualisations, not their own. Politicians and terrorists are held to conceptualise *TERRORISM AS WAR* but ordinary people in conversations with others were more likely to characterise it as cowardly violence, using metaphors such as *bullying*, *bribery*, *blackmail*, or *hit and run*. However, some language from the domain of *MILITARY ACTION* has entered people's ways of talking. *MILITARY ACTION* metaphors of *aiming* and *target* were used in phrases such as *old people are a target*; *they're aiming at innocent people*. *Target* has become conventionalized as a way to talk about people or buildings that are or potentially are affected by acts of terrorism (57% of *MILITARY ACTION* metaphors). The original use of *target* as noun, something specific and concrete aimed at physically with a weapon such as bow and arrow or gun has been metaphorically and metonymically extended to mean something like: 'non-specific people or buildings or institutions whom terrorists intend to harm through bombing or who are harmed contingently', and is often used as a verb rather than a noun.

The juxtaposition, as in the examples above, of *MILITARY ACTION* terms such as *target* or *aim* with *old* or *innocent people* produces affect through contrast. Although terrorists might see what they are attacking as an abstract symbol of what they oppose, those on the receiving end of terrorism understand the action in terms of real people, *old* or *innocent*. The phrase *soft target*, as in *they do seem to go for soft targets*, encapsulates this contrast through figurative collocation: *soft* as metonymy for the softness of human bodies jars with the concrete and impersonal *target*.

Quantitatively, *MILITARY ACTION* metaphors were used more by non-Muslims than Muslims. Significant gender differences were found in the use of these metaphors by Muslims, but not for non-Muslims. The gender and religion differences illustrate the need to go down to the specific level in interpretation; Muslim women use more *MILITARY ACTION* metaphors than Muslim men but this does not mean they are more militant, since most instances involve *target* as vehicle, as above. *Target* is also used to talk, not about acts of violence, but about abuse or official measures in response to terrorism: *why are Muslims being targeted?*

NATURAL WORLD metaphors

NATURAL WORLD metaphors are used in talk about the processes and causes of terrorism, and about issues that people connected to terrorism such as asylum seekers and refugees, often contributing a sense of inevitability: *terrorism doesn't just stem from one person*; *there are bad onions in every sack* (i.e. wicked people in every community). The potentially vast source domain of the *NATURAL WORLD* is only partially drawn on, with vehicles including animals and animal actions, and more

abstract natural processes such as growth, breeding, and flow of water. Groups of terrorists were described in terms of *NATURAL WORLD* aggregates: *a bunch of terrorists*, *a cell*, or as cunning animals that hide away: *they worm their way in*. The subset of *NATURAL GROWTH* metaphors—*the community has bred this*; *a virulent strain of Islamic fundamentalism*—conceptualizes terrorist violence as growing like natural organisms in some medium that support this growth. In this metaphor, growth happens naturally and, in a potentially dangerous implication, must be controlled by external force: *the community must root them out*; *it should have been nipped in the bud*.

Metaphors used about government action after the London 2005 bombings also draws on the domain of difficult-to-control animals in allusions to culturally conventionalised scenarios: *it's locking the stable door after the horse has bolted*; *how many times can you cry wolf?*

Part of the negative affect of these *NATURAL WORLD* metaphors comes from its combination with social group (the UK, the community) as *CONTAINER* – if something grows out of control inside a container the outcomes are potentially much more serious. At the time of the study, a US spokesman was heard to use the phrase *home grown terrorists* to describe Muslims who have lived since childhood in European countries and then turn to terrorism. A sinister antonymic resonance is created between terrorism and the goodness conventionally attributed to *home grown food* or *home baked cakes*. Terrorism that comes from something that is supposed to be cosy and reassuring is even more terrifying.

Focus group participants often compared terrorism with other sources of violence in society, in particular groups of young men roaming the streets looking for trouble: *like a gang of wolves*.

The labelling of Muslims in response to terrorism

A major theme in the talk of Muslim focus groups concerned changes in attitudes and behaviour of non-Muslims, more specifically the majority white British, towards Muslims. Muslim groups spoke of *BEING LABELLED* to describe the simplistic ways in which they were talked about after the attacks: *Muslims are labelled as terrorists*; *brand*; *trademark*; *we get a bad name*; *everyone's being painted, tarred with the same brush*.

An increase in suspicion towards those who outwardly appear Muslim was widely reported as a response from non-Muslims, and sometimes from Muslims too, to the new situation in which anyone might be a terrorist. Distinguishing features of the bombers – the rucksacks in which they carried the explosives and their beards – became symbolic and generated a new voice of suspicion in people's minds. Non-Muslim participants did not necessarily like this new suspicious voice that they experience, and some expressed empathy by imagining its effect on those suspected. This empathy with Muslims experiencing the new suspicion was supported by an important factor that influenced people's responses to terrorism – their personal connections with Muslims. Throughout the data, person-person relationships ensured stability following disruption from terrorism; where individuals had a strong work relationship or friendship, they found ways of maintaining it through the social disruption of terrorism.

The media and terrorism

SEEING metaphors were frequent in talk about media, communication and ideas, and played an important role in creating coherence across metaphors from

different source domains. The common cultural metaphorical model of *UNDERSTANDING AS SEEING* appeared in talk about *aspects* and *points of view* around an issue; *hidden* information remains unknown, whereas what is known to all is *obvious*. We asked people about communication by official authorities, such as the government and police, and about communication through the media. Radio and TV were the most frequently mentioned *sources* of information, but also newspapers and the internet. *SEEING* and *CONCEALMENT* metaphors combine with the control of information – what was not known was a *cover up* or *hidden*; they (authorities) *keep us in the dark and then they come out with these stupid little things*. The metaphor of *profiles* fits with this scenario in combination with *UP/DOWN*: *they have a high-profile police; raising the profile*. However, there was sometimes explicit recognition, voiced non-metaphorically, that for security reasons the authorities cannot reveal all that they know.

In talking about media responses to terrorism, metaphors with largely negative affective sense prevailed, as people expressed the idea that they could not expect to be given full or accurate information. This was done through negatively evaluated choices from the domains of *FLUID* (*you've listened to all this drivel; it was so saturated*) and *OBJECTS / PHYSICAL ACTION* (*they make a story out of it*), combined with use of *SEEING* and *BALANCE* metaphors. Full information from the media would be a *wider picture* or a *balance* and to be desired: *I read it because I do believe, / on the whole that they give, / a balanced viewpoint, / as a newspaper*.

BALANCE is disturbed when one *side* is accessible or visible and the other is not: *which side do you believe?; you get one side of the story; while we get the sensational side of things*. The media are suspected of *bias* in only showing *one side of a story* or in making one side more visible than another: *it's the media who can highlight it; blowing it out of proportion*.

Despite a generally negative view of the British media, they were also seen as *powerful* and capable of extracting information through *PHYSICAL ACTION* that others might prefer hidden: *they're very good at digging out; I think they're great at probing*. Sometimes *PHYSICAL ACTION* metaphors tip over into *VIOLENT ACTION* metaphors, with a sense of disapproval at media action: *I think they whip up frenzy unnecessarily; they're breaking that newsflashes; it was drummed into us*.

The THEATRE metaphor and responses to terrorism by authorities

An important metaphor that captures the feelings of ordinary people towards the government acting in response to terrorism is the metaphor: *OFFICIAL COMMUNICATION AS THEATRE*. The *THEATRE* metaphor includes metaphors of *ACTING* and *STORIES*, together with allusions to culturally-familiar characters and scenarios. In the metaphorical *THEATRE* scenario, ordinary people are watchers in the audience as people in authority act their roles in a performance on stage. A *POWER IS RELATIVE POSITION* metaphor places the authorities as actors on stage at a distance and higher than their lay audience. The audience are aware of activity *behind the scenes*.

The *THEATRE* metaphor is overwhelmingly negative in its evaluation of government action and communication in response to terrorism. The audience are not, on the whole, impressed by what they see on the stage; they seem to feel that authorities act inappropriately: *someone's acting shady*, or make fools of themselves: *it's a fucking farce*. The role labels applied to the actors are more pantomime than prestigious: *Billy the Kid* (George Bush), *baddie*, *Captain Hook* (radical Muslim cleric Abu Hamza) and metaphors applied to events emphasise the farcical nature of what is observed:

*like a shotgun wedding (the political alliance between Bush and Blair);
this country is the laughing stock of the world;
it's just a PR stunt (suicide bombing).*

The government is described with *BODY* and *PHYSICAL ACTION* metaphors, using personification, either acting through embodied simulation (Gibbs, 2006) to metaphorically suggest weakness: *bend over backwards*, *spineless*, or that compare their actions to those of weak animals, is seen as *pussyfooting around* or *chicken to America*.

The *THEATRE* metaphor is likely to be influenced by people actually watching members of government and the authorities on television in the wake of acts of terrorism. They do literally watch officials perform in front of their eyes, and appear to judge them quite harshly. An implication is that communication between authorities and public needs to reach across the distance imposed by power and by screen, somehow connecting with people in ways that encourage more trust. Turning around the negative affect of the *THEATRE* metaphors, we can infer that lay people would like their authority figures to act with more authority and literalizing the metaphors, it may be that a strong physical posture and presentation matters in presenting a reassuring presence to the public.

SOCIAL LANDSCAPE metaphors

Talk about terrorism often touched upon society and social groups, and this topic was picked up in the Living with Uncertainty project to further investigate social empathy. A set of connected spatial metaphors served to conceptualize relations between society and various social groups, principally as *LANDSCAPE*, *MOVEMENT* and *CONTAINER* metaphors. Despite the apparent contradiction between *LANDSCAPE* as horizontal and *CONTAINER* as vertical, these highly conventionalized metaphors were used together without any apparent problems of coherence. The scenario constructed by this set of metaphors offers a rich resource for talking-and-thinking that allows people to express and adjust their views of how social groups interact and come to form a society. There is a metonymic sense to this metaphor in that social groups are often found in physically different locations, e.g. different social classes may occupy different areas of town and, for socio-historical reasons, some industrial cities have areas where Muslim families live in close proximity to each other forming homogeneous communities.

In the *LANDSCAPE* metaphor, society is seen as composed of groups co-located in a landscape: physical positioning represents social positioning and events, and the distance between groups stands for the degree of connection between them. Social groups and their geographical places are talked of as *CONTAINERS*, with prepositions *in*, *over*, *into*, *out of*, etc, contributing to these metaphorical conceptualizations:

*things are happening all over the world;
last week I was over in the Czech Republic;
the situation over there;
since it's come over here;
everyone's been in different situations.*

Terrorism as activity was talked of in terms of *MOVEMENT FROM A SOURCE* somewhere on the landscape: *it starts from somewhere; this is where terrorism starts from*. The source of recent terrorism in London was Muslim communities within the UK, so that, in people's minds, place and ideology become co-positioned.

Within this *LANDSCAPE* scenario, *CONNECT/SEPARATE* metaphors were used to express relations between social groups as *SOCIAL CONNECTION IS PHYSICAL CONNECTION*:

you are at the interface ..of this ..situation (Muslim participant);
build the bridges;
people close to you;
community cohesion;
and everybody's intermingled... integrated .

or as *SOCIAL SEPARATION IS PHYSICAL SEPARATION*:

divisions between the nations;
I think it must have a divided community;
and they kept themselves to themselves;
hatred on both sides;
that's why I'm opposed to war;
one side of your family was Irish.

Distance on the *LANDSCAPE* represented degrees of disconnection, with *EXTREME* as far away from accepted norms in thinking and ideology. Imposing *LIMITS* to prevent extremes was generally seen as positive for a society:

she was taking it to extremes though;
I think there definitely are limits;
you're crossing a line there.

The *LABELLING* metaphors that we saw earlier on also fit into this *SOCIAL LANDSCAPE* scenario; in response to recent acts terrorism carried out by young men from Muslim communities in British cities, Muslims were lumped together in a *CONTAINER* that is labelled and that is thus further disconnected from mainstream society.

Conclusions from the PCTR study

The study employed metaphor as a research tool, applied to focus group discussions as data. The research process revealed systematic metaphors that capture people's talking-and-thinking and their emotions, feelings and attitudes. A range of metaphors were found to be employed in talk about terrorism. Unlike some other studies, we did not find one or more dominant metaphors but multiple metaphors that interact and intertwine. Our findings questioned some of the dominant metaphors such as *TERRORISM AS WAR*, *TERRORISTS / IMMIGRANTS AS ANIMALS* that have been suggested by studies in other contexts, and identified metaphors not previously discussed, including *TERRORIST RISK AS GAME OF CHANCE*, *AUTHORITIES' RESPONSES TO TERRORISM AS THEATRE*.

Some metaphors suggest dangerous entailments that need to be kept in check. For example, the consequences of some *NATURAL WORLD* metaphors may need to be explicitly challenged.

Affect is found to work across linguistic metaphors rather than being attached consistently to all expressions of particular conceptual metaphors: for example, the following metaphors across domains of *NATURE*, *CONCEALMENT*, *SEEING* and *SPEAKING* all express the same attitude towards terrorists who, in a cowardly way, keep themselves unknown to their target victims, both physically and metaphorically:

they hide themselves away;
they hide behind a god;

*an invisible enemy;
they don't declare themselves.*

The removal of agency and control from people through terrorism emerged as a key affective theme in the study.

The subtle patterns of metaphor in use that we found endorsed our view that, in trying to reveal patterns of thought through applied metaphor analysis, it is not sufficient to work with generalized conceptual metaphors extracted from discourse. Metaphors need to be examined in their context of use, in a continual moving across levels of discourse, from the macro level of similar affect expressed through different metaphors or larger metaphorical scenarios, through the intermediate level of systematic metaphors, to more micro levels of verbal metaphors in their collocations, intonation units and episodes of interaction.

Living with Uncertainty and urban violence in Brazil

The Living with Uncertainty project began where the PCTR project just described left off. It focused particularly on talk in the focus groups about other people and social groups, re-analysing the data in terms of the labels given to social groups and how people talk about relations between groups, their 'social empathy' (Cameron, 2010 a, b).

What motivated the Brazilian study was the opportunity to contrast terrorism with violence of a different kind – the everyday urban violence of mugging, kidnapping and theft that is experienced by so many people in Brazilian cities, and seems to be a constant topic of conversation when groups of Brazilians get together. The collaboration allows us to compare and contrast the impacts of these different kinds of violence on people's lives in the two societies, and thus hopefully to understand more about both.

The original schedule of focus group questions was adapted for the Brazilian context, changing references to terrorism into references to urban violence, and making cultural adjustments as necessary. Two focus groups, containing mostly students, were held in Fortaleza, and later added to by focus groups in Belo Horizonte. The Fortaleza data has been transcribed, and analysed for metaphors and the discourse dynamics of categorising other people.

Methodological challenges of working in two languages

Working across languages has been a methodological challenge, particularly when identifying metaphors, that we have addressed in various ways. While the Brazilian researchers can work bilingually, my Brazilian Portuguese is limited, albeit growing. The Brazilian data was analysed in Portuguese; a translation of the transcripts into English helped me to understand the contexts of words identified as metaphorically used, and we had many discussions about the etymology versus contemporary use of words and phrases in Brazilian Portuguese in order to make decisions collaboratively about metaphoricity. Different languages make metaphor differently out of their verbal resources, and I have found that I can easily over-estimate metaphor. Because I know Latin, I sometimes see metaphor in Portuguese words where a native speaker would not. Usually that means that the metaphoricity has been lost over time; just sometimes, I notice something that passes my colleagues by.

Once metaphors were identified we used the software Atlas.ti to help with qualitative data analysis, building up a shared coded dataset over the course of a year.

The coding here was done in English on the Portuguese text. For example, in the extract below, the metaphor *driblar* identified in the last two lines was coded as MetV: dribble, and then included in the systematic metaphor *GAME*.

2255. *ou quando você é assaltado*
 2256. *... eu até recebi um email*
 2257. *... cômico*
 2258. *... sobre as dez formas de,*
 2259. *de,*
 2260. *de*
 2261. *[Mod Se executar um assalto?]*
 2262. *Não,*
 2263. *de driblar um assalto*
 2264. *... de se driblar um assalto.*

English translation:

or when you're robbed
 ... I even got an email
 ... funny one
 ... about ten ways of
 of
 of
 [Mod: of robbing?]
 No,
 of getting away from robberies
 ... of avoiding that.

We are fully aware of the dangers of assuming that meanings are shared across languages and cultures, but by using the same coding labels as the project in the UK, we are able to make approximate quantitative comparisons as well as in-depth qualitative comparisons between the metaphors used in talking about violence in the two contexts. For example, while the British groups talked about the risk of violence as a *GAME OF CHANCE*, the Brazilian groups don't use these metaphors at all. The small number of *FOOTBALL GAME* metaphors, such as *driblar* above, are used with various topic or target domains, including a *bola da vez* used to describe a 'hot' topic in the media.

Our results are, as I write in early 2012, being finally analysed and written up. One set of metaphors that is proving particularly interesting is to do with *LOCATION* and feelings of threat. In the UK, people feel safe if they are literally and metaphorically far away from danger – something threatening is felt to be *too close to home*. In Brazil, people feel safe if they are inside, and a barrier, even a car window, reduces threat:

eu vou abrir pô vidro do carro pra quem ta do lado de lá
 will I open the car window for [someone who] is over there or [someone who]
 is outside [the car]

We have many more examples of this difference, in both metaphor and metonymy, from the data that support our claim that it is important as a finding. The metaphors that people use to talk about their responses to violence and uncertainty come out of their everyday lived experiences. They use metaphor in dialogue to describe those experiences and, by doing so, often express their attitudes and emotions about the violence and uncertainty they live with,

We have already talked about our project to several groups, and hope that the findings, when written up, will be of interest to policy makers and planners, to those

concerned with policing and the justice and prison systems, and to those in the media who contribute to the stories about violence that are told and re-told in our data.

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Notes

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2 We also separated groups by socio-economic status but that is not further elaborated here.

3 Italics denote quotes from the data; metaphor vehicles are underlined.

4 Italic small capitals are used for systematic metaphors, rather than the small capitals conventionally used for conceptual metaphors, indicating they are discourse-data based.

5 The discourse dynamics approach used here does not subscribe to a strong version of conceptual metaphor theory but instead examines actual verbal metaphors used in the talk and how these connect with each other. Systematic metaphors are assembled from discourse evidence, not, as in CMT, assumed to have prior existence in the minds/brains of participants.