

## 'SHOCK COULD BRING COMMUNITIES TOGETHER'

Bath Chronicle, 07 July 2006

The shock waves of the London bomb blasts reached far into all communities in the UK.

Stefan Wolff, pictured, is an expert in international politics and says it was not just members of the white middle-class who were alarmed by the fact that the bombers turned out to be British Muslims.

Professor Wolff specialises in international affairs, ethnic conflict and conflict resolution, at the University of Bath.

He said: "There was great shock and surprise among British people in general when it turned out that the bombers had not been foreign terrorists but were young British Muslims.

"They had grown up in this country and had developed such a huge hatred of it that they were willing to blow themselves up on the London transport system."

Prof Wolff said that large numbers of Muslim immigrants were still concentrated in their own neighbourhoods.

"There is a certain degree of isolation which goes both ways. To some extent there is very little interest on both sides - among Muslims themselves and the rest of British society - to interact.

"They are very self-contained communities.

"Other people might just go to an Indian restaurant or maybe see a Muslim policeman or someone working in the Post Office.

"That contributes to conditions under which extremism can be bred and take hold in some parts of Muslim communities."

Prof Wolff believes that the level of shock felt across all communities could go some way towards starting a new integration in British society.

"The surprise was something that encompassed British society, including large parts of the Muslim community," said Prof Wolff.

"There is now more discussion both between and within British society as a whole, and the Muslim community. We do have a better understanding, but as we have seen, there is still a lot of room for misunderstandings."