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**Preventing Religio-Political Extremism Amongst
Muslim Youth: a study exploring police-community
partnership**

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SUMMARY OF KEY FINDINGS

Overt and accountable policing

- Counter-terrorism policing in the UK is undergoing a steep learning curve due to the introduction of overt community policing models. As a result, efforts need to be made to examine the extent to which policing efforts are community focussed and/or community-targeted.
- Accountability towards communities is increasingly a feature or indeed a challenge for policing: community focused, problem-oriented policing requires police to be responsive to citizens' demands, and as such, counter-terrorism police officers working with and within communities must also be accountable to them.
- Accountability is not only about being accessible and visible to communities, it is also about police officers being open about the fact they are counter-terrorism officers.
- A key aspect of this accountability is information-sharing, and currently police officers are grappling with what information to release to communities regarding terrorism and counter-terrorism related issues, how to go about sharing this and to whom this should be made available. They are attempting to change the secretive culture of traditional counter-terrorism policing to see how this can be made more visible and open.
- Overt counter-terrorism policing models can be used to gain valuable information from communities that may have, traditionally, been obtained through covert policing strategies. This highlights the real value of an open approach by police and highlights the importance of considering the balance and links between overt and covert approaches.

Police-community partnership

- Our study highlights the importance of relationship building between police officers and community members. It is important to stress that this study suggests that

relationship-building in a counter-terrorism context presents particular challenges, and therefore requires added sensitivity.

- Information-sharing is seen as a key way of building trust.
- In areas deemed at 'high risk' of violent extremism – by the authorities or communities - it is likely that both overt and covert policing is taking place. This creates a tension and challenge for community members who may be engaging with overt police officers whilst also believing that they are the subject of covert observation and other operations.
- Given the sensitivities around counter-terrorism, it may be that police officers working overtly should be specially selected for their skills in engaging with communities. Additionally, police officers may need to consider that counter-terrorism is distinct from other areas of policing due to the historical legacy and wider socio-political context.
- Community members can play a crucial role in helping to risk-assess those individuals who have come to the attention of the police or other agencies for a perceived vulnerability to violent extremism, for there may be aspects to individuals' lives that only community members can witness, understand and evaluate.
- It is crucial that partnership is pursued as a goal in relation to intelligence/information sharing between communities and police and other agencies. There may be a danger that statutory agencies enter into relationships and agreements with community members that may prioritise the risk and other needs of those agencies rather than the risks and the needs of community members themselves.
- The need to acknowledge and address the risks to communities as well as state agencies highlights the fundamental connection between state and community securities.
- This study found multiple layers to risk. One key issue relates to the identification of risk: who decides whether a set of vulnerabilities constitutes risk of violent extremism and how this is managed. In a situation where risk is being assessed by different agencies, it is important to consider whose voice carries most weight and whether there is a danger that community voices are marginalised.

- In relation to the notion of partnership and risk, the significance of equality, transparency and legitimate cooperation between partners increases in relation to cases that blur the boundary between prevent and pursue tactics.
- Distrust may, at times, be a good thing. For communities, distrust acts as a guard against unwitting participation in those covert operations where accountability may not necessarily be prioritized. It may be that a more realistic position is a balance between the trust required for engagement and partnership work and an element of caution and scrutiny.
- Trust can help to enable communities to begin to openly discuss any perceived vulnerabilities they may have in relation to violent extremism, an issue that carries with it much sensitivity.

Challenges: socio-political contexts

- The question of sensitivity has often been raised in relation to the social and cultural dynamics of Muslim communities, however, this study suggests that it is not necessarily the cultural dynamics of Muslim communities but rather that counter-terrorism presents wide-ranging challenges that are not necessarily as strongly present in other policing contexts.
- Part of this challenge relates to the ongoing politicisation of community engagement, particularly with regard to the theological and political standpoints of community organisations. There is a real danger that government discourse and related public debate may jeopardize the inclusion of key community experts, especially those identified by police officers as able to undertake hard-ended intervention work.
- Young people are acutely aware of the counter-terrorism agenda and related context: listening, including and addressing their issues as legitimate and significant is vital to the broader project of countering violent extremisms.

Innovations in countering terrorism

- As a result of the introduction of overt models and police-community partnership, innovative approaches to countering violent extremism have developed. This

includes preventative intervention work, mentoring and outreach with vulnerable individuals and groups.

- Community approaches to countering terrorism are continuing to develop with and without the support of state partners. However, the inclusion of grass-roots expertise through police partnerships has resulted in highly successful preventative interventions which highlight the value of state-citizen co-operation and respect.
- The role of specialist youth workers, able to tackle the multiple challenges facing vulnerable individuals, is key in such preventative approaches, which aim to avoid the escalation of counter-terrorism practices under the Pursue category.
- The frameworks for engaging young Muslim clients used by youth workers are inclusive of faith as belief and identity, and in many cases explicitly Islamic. Discussion and debate of theological concepts and practices are a key aspect of preventative work and intervention, including jihad. This challenges the appropriation and misinterpretation of religious tenets by Al Qaeda related ideologues and allows young people to understand, connect with and reclaim their faith.
- Preventative work with vulnerable young people in a counter-terrorism context carries risk by definition. However, it is the ability to take and manage risks that allows practitioners the space to deal with the complex and challenging issues relating to violent radicalization.
- Risk-averse state institutions, or opposition to community approaches due to ideological standpoints within government, inhibit the effectiveness of preventative work.
- Grass-roots led preventative approaches may therefore be significantly cost-effective, financially and socially. Interventions and mentoring for example, rely on expertise, knowledge and relationship-building within a community setting. Not only does this minimize the impact of counter-terrorism on communities and those identified as vulnerable, the financial implications are much lower than the covert, police led operations necessary when an individual's violent radicalization has been allowed to intensify.

Introduction

This project builds on a previous study undertaken collaboratively by the same research team, which examined police-community engagement and partnership in relation to counter-terrorism (Spalek, El-Awa & McDonald, 2009). The focus of the study being reported here is still very much upon police-community engagement and partnership in relation to counter-terrorism, but with the added dimension of the inclusion of Muslim youth.

The study set out here is a small-scale but in-depth study with 62 individuals who are closely involved or affected by the counter-terrorism agenda and the development of engagement between community members and police. The methodology included semi-structured interviews with: One set of interviews (15 individuals, 8 in London and 7 in Birmingham) involved police officers, to ascertain how partnership approaches are being developed and what these partnership approaches involve. Another set of interviews were carried out with Muslim community groups involved in such partnership approaches (14 individuals, 9 in London and 5 in Birmingham). Another set of interviews (approximately 13 individuals, 6 in London and 7 in Birmingham) involved other stakeholders in partnership approaches involving police: local authority representatives, youth agency workers, policy makers. We also accessed Muslim youth from diverse backgrounds, individually interviewing 9 Muslim young people and holding two focus group discussions with 6 young people in each, one in Birmingham the other in London. The following set of questions was explored:

- What empirical evidence exists of partnership with youth in preventing violence ?
- How do police work with Muslim communities to prevent religio-political extremism amongst Muslim youth ? To what extent is such work characterised by partnership ?
- To what extent is trust an important element of partnership work ? How, in what ways, and to what extent, are police officers and Muslim community members involved in trust-building activities when engaging with each other ? How does this work when involving Muslim youth ?
- What are the components to trust within partnership work ?
- Within a multi-agency environment, how, in what ways, and to what extent, are police involved in partnerships with other agencies like local authorities and youth services when working towards preventing violent extremism ?
- To what extent do police-community initiatives contain elements of de-radicalisation work ? What are the components to de-radicalisation work ?

- How do police-community initiatives link to wider policing and security structures ? Do police-community initiatives include an element of gathering community intelligence ? In what ways is community intelligence shared between police-community partners, between police involved in partnership work and wider policing structures, and between police and the security services ?

The interview data was transcribed and thematically analysed.

A Model Contextualising Police-Community Engagement

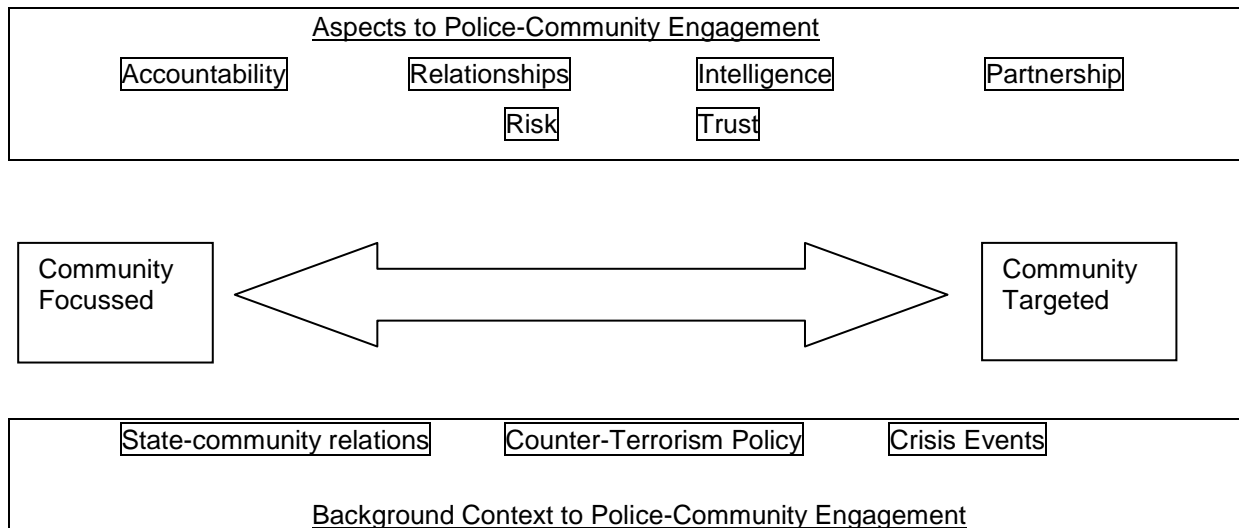
The key themes that have emerged from this study are that of accountability, relationship-building, intelligence, partnership, risk and trust. These themes are all aspects of police-community engagement in relation to counter-terrorism. Importantly, these themes reveal deeper layers of complexity, because how these aspects to police-community engagement are operationalised by police and experienced by communities will determine the extent to which counter-terrorism approaches involving police and communities are community-focussed and the extent to which they are community-targeted¹. Community-focussed and community-targeted approaches are not exclusive, in that there is likely to be overlaps between community-focussed and targeted approaches. It is important for police and policy makers to assess where a programme of activities, or a particular initiative or a set of initiatives, lies along the continuum in order for policing, community and other bodies to be able to implement future policies and practices. It is important to stress that the key aspects of police-community engagement themselves require considerable research for they are complex and require greater theoretical and empirical understanding. For example, the notion of trust is problematic for there are likely to be different types of trust and it might be useful for future research to examine what kinds of trust exist between police officers and community members and the implications of this for counter-terrorism.

Our data also suggests that the broader, background context needs to be considered as this will influence police-community engagement and the extent to which this is community-focussed or community-targeted. The background context consists of factors such as

¹ It is important to note that we have purposefully moved away from using the often utilised notion of community-based counter-terrorism because we argue that this is an over-used notion that fails to distinguish between community-based strategies that are targeted at communities and those community-based strategies that are focussed upon communities, and we argue that this distinction is fundamental to understanding counter-terrorism policy and practice.

historical and contemporary state-community relations, government counter-terrorism policy and legislation, crisis events and so forth. The model is presented as follows:

To what Extent is a Counter-Terrorism Initiative, or a Set of Initiatives, involving Police and Communities, Community-Focussed or Community-Targeted ?



‘Community’ – a contested, under-theorised, yet over-used term in relation to counter-terrorism

The notion of ‘community’ is problematic and highly contested. The term ‘community’ can be a catch-all phrase used as a way of simplifying, merging and combining complex social identities and groupings for the purposes of policy development and implementation. Furthermore, although the term ‘community’ gives the outward impression of neutrality, the ways in which the term tends to be used and operationalised suggests that it is loaded with assumptions about the kinds of social identities that are included, as well as fostered, for the purposes of community participation, engagement and scrutiny of performance.

Although the notion of community is problematic, and can only partially ever be understood in relation to micro and macro level fluctuations in relation to wide-ranging factors like history, politics, geography, religion, culture and so forth, it is important to stress that communities constitute sites at which the social world is experienced, acted upon and understood, even though these sites may be temporary, in constant flux, and underpinned by power relations. Many communities might be thought of being both locally and geographically specific, as well as consisting of connections between individuals across

wider spaces in relation to factors like ethnicity, culture, politics and so on. Some communities have been conceptualised as consisting of 'diasporas', which are both local and global in character, with the development of new technologies having enabled dispersed populations to interact and link together important parts of their social and cultural lives (Gilroy, 2002). In diasporas individual members gain a sense of belonging, devising narratives about themselves and their origins, about how they are linked to broader global religions, nationalities and/or ethnicities as well as to localities that are 'simultaneously home and a place of exile' (Rew and Campbell, 1999: 167).

Community might be thought of as a space of belonging, as consisting of shared meanings, comprised of one or more of a combination of geographical, imaginative, emotional, political, and other, ties (Lash, 1994; Kennedy & Roudemetof, 2004). Community might be thought of as a space undergoing constant transformation, as an organic process that matters as a site for social policy because it directly influences wide-ranging social issues, whilst also being shaped by these. Perhaps surprisingly, community as a concept has often been omitted from analyses of terrorism and counter-terrorism, despite the considerable focus upon identity. And yet community might be thought of as the space within which identities reside and operate, as a space that influences and is influenced by identities, the space where individual and group collective identities are expressed and contested.

Community-Focussed and Community Targeted Approaches to Counter-Terrorism

The mantra that 'communities can defeat terrorism' has generated much controversy and debate. The findings of this study suggest that there are differing perspectives between wide-ranging state and non-state actors in relation to communities and counter-terrorism, specifically in relation to community-focussed vis-a-vis community targeted philosophies and approaches. We conceptualise this as a continuum, on one side an initiative or programme of police-community engagement being comprised totally of a community-focussed approach, the other side of the continuum comprising of a wholly community-targeted approach. Of course, in reality initiatives and programmes lie along this continuum and contain a mixture of both community-focussed and community-targeted approaches, but it is important for police officers, policing authorities, communities and policy makers to know where the balance approximately lies.

A community-focussed approach might be conceptualised as characterised by community consent and participation in the governance of the various strategies and approaches that

are applied. A community-focussed approach is also likely to score highly on the following common features of police-community engagement: trust, partnership, bottom-up approaches, empowerment and overt forms of counter-terrorism policing. A community-targeted approach, on the other hand, might be conceptualised as characterised by a lack of community consent and participation in the governance of the various strategies and approaches that are applied. A community-targeted approach is likely to score highly on the following common features of police-community engagement: top-down, state-led approaches, covert policing models, police-community tensions, and to score lower on the following common features: trust, partnership, bottom-up approaches, legitimacy, empowerment, accountability and overt forms of counter-terrorism policing. The extent to which features such as power, accountability, legitimacy, intelligence, pre-crime strategies, risk and multi-agency approaches are community-focussed or community-targeted depends on how these features are conceptualised and operationalised. For example, the notion of accountability raises the question of accountable to whom? A community-focussed approach perhaps would score more highly on community accountability but less highly on accountability to those who are keen to develop community-targeted approaches.

The distinction between community-focussed and community-targeted approaches is helpful in that this allows us to go beyond the rather simplistic binary that is often portrayed in research literature in relation to 'top-down' and 'bottom-up' approaches to counter-terrorism. This is because top-down approaches, whilst predominantly and traditionally being community-targeted, might, with appropriate community consent, be community-focussed. Thus, tactics such as stop and search and the use of surveillance technology can be community-focussed where community consultation has taken place, where there are partnerships between security practitioners and community members and where trust has been developed. At the same time, 'bottom-up' approaches can be community-targeted rather than community-focussed where community participation is not based on real partnerships but rather is used to instigate state-led agendas. For example, the use of informants draws upon the skills and networks of community members, however, these often operate in secrecy with there being no wider community consent or involvement in the governance of these strategies. At the same time, 'top-down' approaches to counter-terrorism can draw upon communities as part of a strategy of counter-subversion, where counter-subversion involves strategies which aim to target and stigmatise those groupings deemed subversives in the same way that terrorists would be targeted. This can potentially add to intra and inter community tensions.

Some Background Context to Police-Community Engagement and Counter-Terrorism: a brief summary

The broader context to police-community engagement in relation to counter-terrorism is extremely important. One aspect of this is state-community relations. Counter-terrorism is an arena dominated by state-driven agendas and so it is reasonable to suggest that police-community engagement will be influenced and affected by state-community relations, with both historical and contemporary dynamics being key. 'New terrorism' discourse, the 'war on terror', Islamophobia, these are some of the aspects to state-community relations in relation to police engagement with Muslim communities. At the same time, other background influences include public opinion; the media portrayal of terrorism and of communities, counter-terrorism policies and legislation; crisis and other events taking place internationally, nationally and locally; also what state and non-state actors are involved in engagement and what the aims of engagement are perceived to be by different actors. It is of particular interest to note that within security policies and strategies tackling Al Qaeda (AQ) linked terrorism in the UK there are significant tensions between approaches that emphasise community cohesion, and those that emphasise liberal freedoms associated with liberal democracy. The former can problematise Muslim identities as a whole, for Islamic ideology here is portrayed as dangerous and in conflict with 'western values' (Jackson, 2005) and so Muslims are viewed as not integrating with wider British society. At the same time, particular political, religious and ethnic identities associated with being a Muslim and with a perceived increased risk of committing acts of violence are securitised, and so are responded to by the state above and beyond established rules and frameworks that exist within what might be termed 'normal politics', that might be viewed as comprising of counter-subversion. Approaches that emphasise liberal freedoms, on the other hand, seek not to problematise or securitise particular identities, but rather, they seek to enable individuals to draw upon the liberal freedoms associated with liberal democracy so that a wider range of actions are considered legitimate, so that individuals don't see violence anymore as a means to pursue their aims. This work includes wide-ranging activities like encouraging political participation from within Muslim communities, enhancing education about Islam among Muslims themselves, and supporting social and political activism. This work also seeks to draw upon individuals formerly and/or currently practising 'securitised identities' as mentors in order to attempt to rehabilitate those deemed at risk of committing acts of violence, so that they are no longer at risk from pursuing violent action.

Interestingly, law enforcement agencies and strategies are involved in both approaches to security. With respect to approaches that emphasise community cohesion, the role of

community policing within counter-terrorism has become more prominent since the July 7th 2005 bombings, under the Prevent strand of the UK's main counter-terrorism strategy. It has been argued that local policing, through the model of neighbourhood policing, can reduce insecurity and promote reassurance through a 'hearts and minds' strategy, designed to purposively impact upon peoples' beliefs and attitudes, so that they are less inclined to support (tacitly or explicitly) either the means or ends of those groups espousing the use of violence; and also through an 'eyes and ears' strategy – intended to persuade people to function as intelligence assets for the authorities (Innes et al. 2007: 13). Thus, neighbourhood police officers are expected not only to respond to ordinary, everyday, crimes but they are also expected to take an interest in the ideologies circulating within communities, particularly where those ideologies endorse violence. At the same time, police and the security services are also engaged in securitisation strategies involving surveillance, stop and search and the use of informants. With respect to approaches that emphasise liberal freedoms, some police officers and policing units are involved in partnership approaches with those community members who mentor and work with individuals deemed 'at risk' of committing acts of violence, and the identities of these community members are not problematised or securitised by these police officers and units. This may also involve mentoring schemes and multi-agency partnerships involving not only the police but other statutory agencies like probation or housing. It is important to examine the tensions and overlaps between these different styles of law enforcement approaches as part of a wider exploration of the complex refashioning of identity and affiliation within the 'new age of terror' in relation to sovereignty, 'extreme' identities, counter-subversion and counter-terrorism. Whilst there is limited space to discuss these issues in any detail here, we can draw attention to our previous publications which do discuss some of these issues in more detail in relation to police-community engagement and counter-terrorism (see Spalek, El-Awa & McDonald, 2009; Spalek & McDonald, 2010; Spalek, 2010).

Overt Policing Models and Counter-Terrorism

Since the introduction of the Prevent strategy, counter-terrorism policing has increasingly drawn upon overt models of engagement with communities. These models are varied, but it is probably fair to say that the most widespread model of overt counter-terrorism policing in the UK is one linked to the neighbourhood policing model. Under this model, police officers include within their remit a focus upon preventing violent extremism, and so alongside their everyday work in relation to preventing ordinary crime there is a focus also upon countering terrorism. The foundational basis of this model has been the work of Professor Innes, who has argued that in responding to individuals' routine security concerns around issues such

as anti-social behaviour or crime police officers will be more likely to persuade community members of the benefits of assisting them in relation to counter-terrorism (Innes: 2006).

A slight variation of the above model of overt counter-terrorism policing that we evidenced during our research is that of overt counter-terrorism officers who largely operate in uniform and who are based in neighbourhood police stations, and who are called Security and Partnership Officers. Nonetheless, when deemed inappropriate to wear uniform (for example, when community members may tell these police officers their presence in uniform is not welcome) these police officers will wear civilian clothes (see report by Silk, 2009). Within this model, police officers tell community members that they are counter-terrorism police officers. We also interviewed police officers and community members working for and with the Muslim Contact Unit (MCU), a counter-terrorism unit that has developed perhaps a unique model of partnership of engagement with key members of those communities that are encountering issues with violent extremism. The MCU differs from the more generic neighbourhood policing model in that partnership with communities is actively pursued, where 'partnership' might be defined as involving equality, transparency and legitimate cooperation between partners, which may involve participants with different interests forming a partnership to carry out work that they collectively decide to do (Spalek, El-Awa & McDonald, 2009).

The findings of our study comprise an interesting mix of interviews from police officers working within the Prevent strand of the government's main counter-terrorism strategy CONTEST 2. Some of these interviews were conducted with neighbourhood Prevent police officers in London, whose remit it has been to help introduce the Prevent strategy into local neighbourhood policing teams. Other interviews were taken with Security and Partnership Officers (SPOs), who are open counter-terrorism officers working within neighbourhoods of Birmingham, who are, it seems, operating a slight variation from the model we found operating in London. The MCU, on the other hand, is a small, specialist, unit largely operating in London. Therefore, the analysis of our data presents particular challenges, for at times the data raises issues that are perhaps more specific to the work of Prevent officers and neighbourhood policing in London, at times the data raises issues that are more relevant to the work of SPOs in Birmingham, and at times the data is clearly relevant to the work of the MCU. Rather than arranging the data around these policing models, we have decided to arrange the data according to key issues that arose from the data, and these issues are perhaps relevant, to lesser or greater degrees, to all models of overt counter-terrorism policing.

Key Aspects of Police-Community Engagement

Accountability

Accountability is a complex, if key, feature of police-community engagement in relation to counter-terrorism. Traditionally, policing models in relation to counter-terrorism have been driven by maintaining and trying to ensure nation state security rather than the security of particular communities. As a result, police officers working within the counter-terrorism arena have traditionally been accountable to their superiors, the security services and government officials. The wider context to this approach is that counter-terrorism has relied on the analysis of domestic and friendly foreign government intelligence information rather than the engagement of communities and the development of partnerships between communities and local law enforcement agencies. However, recently in the UK, alongside other international contexts, community policing models have been introduced into counter-terrorism. This has significant implications for issues of accountability, for according to Skogan and Hartnett (1997: 5) community policing comprises of:

Community policing ...assumes a commitment to broadly focused, problem-oriented policing and requires that police be responsive to citizens' demands when they decide what local problems are and set their priorities.

Policing is thus undergoing a significant learning curve due to the introduction of community policing models within the counter-terrorism arena. Accountability towards communities is increasingly a feature or indeed a problematic of initiatives, for if community policing is to involve problem-oriented policing that requires police to be responsive to citizens' demands then if police officers are working within areas that are deemed at high risk of vulnerability to terrorism they will need to be accountable to the communities that reside in those areas. A key finding of this study is that accountability is about being accessible and visible to communities, it is also about police officers being open about the fact they are counter-terrorism officers. For example, one police officer that we interviewed argued that:

The one thing I really hang my hat on is the visibility, accessibility and accountability face to face with local communities, in the context of your role as a counter terrorism unit officer working in the Prevent department. There's no half way house there, you're totally upfront, candid and open.

However, accountability is not without difficulties. Accountability can involve some challenging interactions between police officers and community members. Within the counter-terrorism arena, an arena that has been dominated by secrecy, police officers are now having to meet with community members and provide forums through which vital exchanges can take place, even if those exchanges are, at times, quite tense. A key aspect to accountability is information-sharing, and currently police officers are grappling with what information to release to communities regarding terrorism and counter-terrorism related issues, how to go about sharing this and to whom this should be made available. They are attempting to change the secretive culture of traditional counter-terrorism policing to see how this can be made more visible and open. Moreover, information-sharing is seen as a key way of building trust, for through openness it can be possible to dispel rumours regarding police operations as well as challenging media stereotyping, as the following quotation illustrates:

I remember ringing on the same day all our contacts telling them that an arrest had taken place. So I said to him, 'I told you about that for you to spread the word. So they've got facts. And when you talk about media and you say media portrays Muslims in a bad light, before the media can actually send out about it, you knew before it was printed in the newspapers. So you go out and tell people the truth and what it is, why we arrested somebody. Not we're beating him up or anything like that, because we haven't.'

Interestingly, our study has found that information-sharing can also be the responsibility of communities. It may be, for example, that stories of negative events are focussed upon by community members to the detriment of those positive encounters that take place between community members and the police. This is particularly salient for young people, who often bear the brunt of 'hard' policing tactics:

I went to a workshop with some Somalis recently you know, and they were talking about their experiences of stop and search, and the one guy said 'I've been stopped...' oh he was told how he was roughed up and thrown against the wall and he thought it was really outrageous, and he said 'but wary of where I live and the crime and what have you and of course we go round in a gang' he says 'we get stopped all the time', he said 'I've been stopped about a dozen times', and I said what happened in those dozen times you've been stopped? He said 'well you know, the police officers were very nice, they explained what they were doing, they're very polite. Thanked me for my time and sent me on my way and you know, there wasn't an issue', but I said 'you got roughed up and pushed against the wall?' I said 'how many times, how many people have you told that story to about when you got roughed up by that one bloke?', 'oh everybody, I tell them all', 'and how many times have you told the story about the 12 other

occasions where the police were really nice', 'oh no, I haven't bothered', so of course that goes round like wildfire then, 'oh you're all a bunch of bloody Gestapo, you get thrown up against the wall', well actually you know probably 99%, 90% of the time it's a pleasant confrontation, but probably a necessary confrontation, and everything's fine.

Relationship-building

Reflecting previous research in relation to overt models of counter-terrorism policing (Silk, 2009; Spalek et al. 2009), a key finding of this study was the importance of relationship building between police officers and community members. In relation to the generic model of neighbourhood policing being used for counter-terrorism, our study identified some excellent examples of police-community engagement in relation to building relationships and communication between police officers and community members. For instance, one case was highlighted how racial incidents against members of a particular community in London were not being reported to the police, but how neighbourhood police officers worked with community members to bring together an integrated approach to dealing properly with racial incidents and their impacts. It is important to stress that this study suggests that relationship-building in a counter-terrorism context presents particular challenges, and therefore requires added sensitivity. Within the context of neighbourhood policing, police officers have dual responsibility for responding to ordinary crimes and also for policing violent extremism. There is a danger for community policing to become co-opted into intelligence-led, covert, policing under the auspices of the neighbourhood policing model. Thus, there is a danger that neighbourhood policing is used as a means of developing trust between community members and police officers, for this trust to then be exploited as part of wider intelligence-gathering mechanisms rather than developing and building on any trust in order to enable long-term partnerships to develop between police and community members. Including the prevention of violent extremism in the everyday activities of neighbourhood police officers contains the risk that trust between communities and police is eroded. This is because counter-terrorism is an arena traditionally dominated by covert rather than overt policing models, and so communities may be sceptical of any interest shown in them by neighbourhood police officers in relation to issues of violent extremism. Police officers we interviewed who are working within overt counter-terrorism policing spoke about how they have spent a considerable amount of time trying to convince community members that they are not interested in spying on people, that they are not part of any surveillance mechanisms, and trying to clarify where the boundaries should be placed in terms of what information should come to the attention of the police. Due to the sensitivities involved in overt counter-terrorism policing models, our study suggests that it is of key importance for overt counter-terrorism police officers to build relationships between themselves and

community members, and for police officers to be reflective and to show sensitivity and delicacy in the approaches they make to community members. This is also about allowing time for trust-building activities, and to take the pace of engagement that communities feel comfortable with:

I think in the early days it may have felt as if the police and the local authority wanted to dominate things, to do things their way and we've constantly said no, you can't move quickly, you have to wait until the community are ready to move on these sort of issues, to accept the potential benefits, but in their own time and not to feel that you can impose yourself on people until they're ready to identify there maybe some value. But those values emerge through the process of engagement, trustworthy engagement with the communities and the communities feel reassured by this sense that there are powers but those powers are going to be used with a kind of wisdom and understanding rather than without sufficient thought and certain care really.

Building relationships can be difficult in situations where there is a high turnover rate of police officers, for it is personal relationships that matter. Nonetheless, it may be that a particular policing unit can establish a brand name for itself as a unit that communities can trust, which may overcome the barrier of high police officer turnover rates (see Spalek, 2010). Our study further highlights that in the relationship-building between police and communities, there needs to be sincerity, a genuine approach by police officers to help and to empower communities rather than to use them for intelligence-gathering purposes. It is about police officers being honest and open about their roles. There is a risk that any relationships that are built through overt approaches can be damaged by covert approaches. It is ultimately a question of trust – different police officers and different policing units may trust different community members in different ways. For example, whilst overt counter-terrorism police officers may build what to them seem to be open and trusting relationships with community members which yield information for the police, the extent to which this information is taken seriously by covert police officers and units deserves further research and analysis. It may be that where covert police have a lack of trust in the information that is provided by communities then covert policing is likely to be used. Indeed, in areas deemed at 'high risk' of violent extremism it is likely that both overt and covert policing is taking and so community members may be engaging with overt police officers whilst also believing that they are the subject of covert observation and other operations. Given the sensitivities around counter-terrorism, it may be that police officers working overtly should be specially selected for their skills in engaging with communities.

It is also important to highlight that this study found no direct evidence that neighbourhood policing has impacted on the 'hearts and minds' of communities in relation to issues around supporting or endorsing violent extremism. This may be because it is perhaps not a core role of policing to attempt to sway communities' 'hearts and minds' in relation to violent extremism, but rather, policing should be about impacting on the hearts and minds of communities in relation to relationship-building between police and communities. Communities can provide safe spaces in which extreme (meaning lying outside of the mainstream) views and actions can be expressed and supported. Communities will be ripe with dissenting viewpoints, alternative perspectives, it is important to highlight that if communities involve shared meanings then it is likely to be the case that shared emotions underpin shared meanings and so communities can also share emotions, whether those are of hope, fear and/or humiliation (Moisi, 2009). Struggles take place globally over the emotional-political landscapes of communities, so that 'winning hearts and minds' is a strategy adopted by terrorists. Equally, counter-terrorism is increasingly attempting to win 'hearts and minds' through helping to empower communities in relation to politics, religiosity, social and economic deprivation and so forth. Law enforcement can only ever perhaps be a small part of this wider process.

Intelligence

Intelligence is a key feature of policing, for this is the basis upon which crimes are both prevented as well as solved. Intelligence is not only relevant for intelligence-led models of policing, but also is relevant for community policing models in the form of community intelligence (Virta, 2008). Indeed, in Britain, since 9/11, and as a result of events, such as the urban disturbances in northern English towns in 2001, and the more recent spate of terror attacks in the United Kingdom, community-based and intelligence-led policing models have come to be viewed as being complementary, with police services engaging with communities as part of a wider strategy of securing community-based intelligence so as to respond to local, regional, national, and international security risks (Hughes and Rowe 2007). Community intelligence might be thought of as comprising of community sentiments and concerns, concerns that may be linked to more standard forms of intelligence that police gather in terms of information about criminal activities, but which may also go beyond this to include information concerning tensions between individuals and communities, tensions which may have cultural, geographical, religious, racial, and other underpinnings. Community intelligence also includes citizens' stories concerning their lives, which may, in a counter-terrorism context, be particularly pertinent given that some individuals may have first-hand accounts of their interactions with terrorist suspects, either in the United Kingdom or in other places around the world (see Haqq-Baker 2010 in: Spalek: 2010: 794).

This study found that the issue of community intelligence in relation to counter-terrorism is particularly sensitive, especially given the pervasive use of informants by intelligence and policing agencies within wide-ranging historical and international contexts (Hewitt, 2010). For police, intelligence is part of everyday policing, it is information that forms a fundamental aspect of policing. Intelligence that comes to the attention of the police, through the intelligence services or through other means, is checked with other sources of information, and the role of communities can be crucial here in helping to assess the validity of any intelligence that prevails. Community members can play a crucial role in helping to risk assess those individuals who have come to the attention of the police or other agencies for a perceived vulnerability to violent extremism, for there may be aspects to individuals' lives that only community members can witness and understand. However, it is important that partnership is pursued as a goal in relation to intelligence/information sharing between communities and police and other agencies. There may be a danger that statutory agencies enter into relationships and agreements with community members that may prioritise the risk and other needs of those agencies rather than the risks and the needs of community members themselves. Community members who work with the police and other agencies as part of multi-agency forums assessing risk may be placing themselves at high risk of reprisals from members of their own communities or any networks that they belong to. Therefore, agreements that fully represent both communities' and police and other statutory agencies' requirements and parameters of operation are crucial. It is important to take into consideration, and to acknowledge, that within multi-agency approaches to assessing and working with risks of violent extremism, community members may face risks that statutory agencies do not face, and vice versa, hence the need for clear discussion about how any protocols of engagement can capture both the needs of communities and those of statutory agencies (see also Haqq Baker, 2011).

Our study highlights that overt counter-terrorism policing models can be used to gain information from communities that may have, traditionally, been obtained through covert policing strategies. This highlights the real value of an open approach by police, that information is not only to be obtained through covert approaches, and that there is a value in considering the balance between overt and covert approaches and where that balance should lie. Moreover, it is also about police officers being open with community members as to what they do with any information that is given to them:

But then again those who do want to come on board and do give you information, you explain to them what you're going to do with that information. As long as, I think, that you're honest and open about what you're doing or the information that you gain, you explain to them how it's going to be used, they're more than happy for that. As long as I guess there's no lies or any - you don't put a face to, to meet their request and then later on go behind their back and do something else. So as long as you're open and up front, the majority of the time, in my experience, that's been really positive because they know how they stand with you and how you stand with them.

Our study further highlights that sometimes the overt counter-terrorism police officers working with communities on the ground may not be given all the information to a particular case from covert policing units, yet may be asked by the covert units to check out a piece of information with, say, a community member. This requires further exploration because this can mean that the overt counter-terrorism police officer is placing themselves at an unknown level of risk, and it may also mean that they are not quite sure why they are being asked to speak with particular community members. It may therefore be that there needs to be further discussion and analysis of the linkages between overt and covert approaches, and the information that is shared between them. Our study has also found that overt counter-terrorism police officers can play an important role in highlighting to covert counter-terrorism units the actual or potential impact of covert or any other policing operations upon communities. Future research needs to explore the extent of any influence that overt approaches are having on covert approaches, to explore the dialogue and interaction between the two in more detail. Future research can also address the extent to which counter-terrorism operations come from communities raising concerns themselves with police officers, the extent to which operations are driven by bottom-up, community focussed approaches rather than top-down, intelligence led approaches.

Partnership and Risk

This study found multiple layers to risk. First is the risk that individuals working for statutory agencies may themselves take during the course of their work. Individuals may engage in actions that they argue helps prevent violent extremism but that the agencies that they work for will perhaps discourage them from undertaking. This may be partly because the organisational cultures of the agencies themselves are more risk averse than the individuals working for them are. One example that might be drawn on here is that of a youth worker who took young, marginalised, disenfranchised Muslims to a Stop the War march because he thought that this was a positive way for the young people to display their anger at foreign policy. This was also an opportunity for building community cohesion in that when the young

people went on the march they noted how many of those who were on the march were not Muslim or from minority ethnic backgrounds but rather they were from white communities.

Another issue that comes from this study is that of who identifies risk, how this is managed and ultimately who decides whether a set of vulnerabilities constitutes risk of violent extremism. For instance, there is a danger that there can be a tendency for over-assessing vulnerability and for too many cases to be brought to the attention of neighbourhood police officers, who then have to decide whether a particular case is so insubstantial that it does not reach the attention of counter-terrorism units nor of intervention providers in relation to preventing violent extremism. At the same time, it may be that all cases deemed 'borderline' are passed on to counter-terrorism units or to intervention providers and so there is a potential here for net-widening, for bringing in greater numbers of individuals for intervention. Our study found that some police officers are adopting a minimalist approach, preferring other agencies and professionals to assess and deal with any dangers that individuals displaying inappropriate behaviours pose, for police to be brought in once the behaviours and the risks are deemed severe by those professionals already working with the individuals concerned. There is of course another inherent issue here: that in encouraging agencies and staff across wide-ranging sectors to look for signs of vulnerability in the first place this is encouraging a society to look for risks in relation to violent extremism. With the focus of the Prevent strategy having been on Muslim communities there is the inherent danger that Islamic beliefs and practices are stigmatised (Spalek & McDonald, 2010). Our research also raises a deeper question – in a situation where risk is being assessed by different agencies, whose voice carries most weight and is there a potential that communities' voices in particular are marginalised? Is there a very fine line in risk assessing cases that involve individuals who might be constructively dealt with under Prevent but who also might be dealt with under the Pursue strand of the government's counter-terrorism strategy? Who ultimately decides whether an individual has passed from the Prevent side of intervention to a Pursuit set of practices? Moreover, in relation to the notion of partnership, is there equality, transparency and legitimate cooperation between partners when cases that fall between Prevent and Pursue are apparent? At the same time, our interviews suggest that partnerships that are created can sometimes exclude community members from key decisions that are made, with community members having to 'chase up' statutory agencies. When linking this to the notion of risk, this raises the question of whether community members can at times be excluded even within engagement that is based on a model of partnership.

Trust

Firstly, the wider context to trust must be considered. In a previous study, the pervasive influence of 'new terrorism' discourse, whereby "Islamist" terrorism has been declared an unprecedented and unpredictable global danger, which has greatly contributed to the construction of Muslim minorities as "suspect," has been highlighted, and the challenges that this brings to trust-building between counter-terrorism police officers and members of Muslim communities (Spalek, El-Awa & McDonald, 2009; Spalek, 2010). The study presented in this report also highlights the difficulties of police officers working overtly within counter-terrorism to build trust with communities, for counter-terrorism is an arena that has been very much influenced by covert approaches whose remit has often been to create distrust amongst and between communities, rather than building trust. At the same time the media focus upon covert approaches can also add to a climate of distrust. This study highlights the importance of overt police officers to develop open and ongoing relationships with community members, so that community members themselves can make a judgement about the ethicality and honesty of the police officer concerned and the extent to which they will trust them. Sometimes in the course of interaction, a community member may decide that they distrust a particular officer:

... no doubt there are police officers that are very trustworthy, they are you know, it would be wrong for me to say otherwise...but I think sometimes one feels that there's more of a motive, an exterior motive, for the police than meets the eye... so you know and to be honest with you on a few occasions they have been, well I personally have said to a police, to senior officers, that this officer I do not want to have any further interaction with him. Because I feel that he is gathering intelligence. So he's probably gathering intelligence behind me but now he's gathering it in front of me as well. So you know in asking questions, and getting other stuff.

Indeed, distrust may, at times, be a good thing, for communities' distrust of police officers is not necessarily something negative, as this may prevent the penetration of civilians to be used as spying networks (Goldsmith 2005). It may be that a more realistic position is for there to be sufficient trust in order for engagement and partnership work to take place between community members and police officers, but for there also to be an element of ongoing scrutiny:

I don't think young people should automatically think they have to trust everyone, I think there's a kind of healthy scepticism that young people need and that's part of their way of surviving. They shouldn't automatically trust the police in every aspect of what the police are doing or saying. There needs to be sufficient trust, that's the thing. If you've got sufficient trust you can work with that and achieve certain things, but I think there needs to be a healthy scepticism as well.

It is also important to stress that trust should not be exploited by police officers for intelligence-gathering mechanisms. Trust can help to enable communities to begin to openly discuss any perceived vulnerabilities they may have in relation to violent extremism, an issue that carries with it much sensitivity:

Because you're talking about vulnerabilities and risk within their communities. And even though the community may feel they may know themselves that there is a risk within their communities, it's quite difficult for them to open up and admit to police officers. But if they ... if you've spent time building up trust with them, you get to that stage where you are able to have that difficult conversation with you. And for me that's the real crux of it is do they trust you enough to discuss those difficult issues with you ?

It is important to highlight that the sensitivity is not necessarily about the cultural dynamics of communities, but rather, it is as much about the sensitivity of counter-terrorism.

Trust is also about being open and transparent:

Well, with me definitely. Because I said, 'Well, you're Counter-Terrorism Unit,' and he goes, 'No, no, no, I'm not.' And instantly like, well I know you are. And now you're denying it. That's not a good place for me to, to start a relationship with you if you're going to lie about that basic information because that, that's something that I know, that's something that you shouldn't be denying and that, that means you're lying to me so that doesn't give me much really assurance to go back and say, 'Oh, this guy's the full deal.' So that didn't help. But it did change. I think he must have had a lot of questions from, from other sources and then he decided, okay, I might as well just say it how it is.

Trust may also involve including community members in intelligence briefings and for community members to feel that their opinions and ideas are taken into consideration by police:

I was taken behind the scenes to see everything, literally, all the intelligence briefings that were going on throughout the day, all the strategic operations that were going on in the main CCTV stations that were overlooking the whole operation, so it was very interesting. Their main gold command who is the strategic command that overlooks the whole operation on the day I sat in on their briefs and they took my opinions and ideas, which was again very heartening. That's the kind of work that really needs to be happening in terms of community and partnership engagement between the police especially.

Radicalization – De-radicalization: Concepts & Practices

Theorizing Radicalisation & De-radicalisation

A review of the literature relating to terrorism and its prevention reveals an extensive body of work aiming to define and describe the social, political, theological and psychological processes leading to an individual or group's violent radicalisation, and conversely, various theories of de-radicalization. The interest in these subjects is considerable and international, with contributions from a variety of academic disciplines, from government bodies and policy makers, think-tanks and political commentators. Material ranges from simplistic linear models corresponding to 'steps', 'pyramids' and 'paths' of radicalization, to more complex depictions in which individual cases are used to illustrate the situational and multifaceted nature of an individual's development of violent radical views or intentions. Others steer away from theorizing, aiming instead to complicate and challenge normative theories. A further category may be identified as practitioner based – models and handbooks that organisations – both state-based and community – use to position their perspectives and describe the practical, action-orientated work in identifying individuals and steering them away from violent radicalization in its various forms (for example, SIRAAT 2010; RecoRa 2009).

The preponderance of this work is of interest to this study in a number of ways. From an academic perspective, the lack of consensus in relation to definitions and explanations of de-/radicalization reveals the complex and problematic nature of both concepts. This divergence of opinion is not just related to the methodological challenges presented by the subject – the low numbers and lack of access to potential participants for primary research, the variant approaches of academic disciplines, and the subjective nature measuring variables - it is indicative of the broader context described within this report. Specifically, it is the sense of urgency and fear with regards to state-security in the face of AQ related violence, and the subsequent desire to understand, measure and thus control and prevent people – particularly Muslim people – from developing violent radical tendencies. This inescapably connects all work on this subject to the highly problematic socio-political context for which the Islamophobic War on Terror discourse acts as a useful metonym, so that each study must either ignore the context – and in doing so promote a false sense of neutrality, or declare – tacitly or explicitly – an ideological or politicised standpoint. It is important therefore to approach the literature both with a critical eye, and an understanding of its wider impact. This also applies to our own work: for a study aiming to explore the grassroots engagement of Muslim communities and the police, the context not only heightens the sensitivity needed in the approach and methodology of the research, but also in the writing and presentation of

data. To explore the ways in which engagement operates and impacts on communities and young people, and identify ways forward becomes potentially politicised and may as a result contribute to the barrage of negative interest which impacts on the communities and young people involved, and practitioners working in the area of prevention of terrorism. By being aware of such issues we hope to reduce this risk.

Practitioner perspectives

A further point of interest in the literature relates to its direct role in our research subject: the ways in which practitioners - police and community members - use the literature and in particular, models of radicalization and de-radicalization, to inform their work. Interestingly, although the data suggests that participants working with young people predominantly draw upon their practitioner skills and experiences of hard ended, specialist youth work with vulnerabilities including drugs, gang violence, sexual exploitation and abuse, and violent radicalization, individuals and organizations are highly informed, conversant in the literature to discuss, critique and use it to explain their work. Rather than the various theories simply informing practitioners, versions of models such as the 'Situational', the 'Supply and Demand' and 'Person in Environment' are used by practitioners to explain and illustrate their work, and – within the aforementioned politicized context – legitimize and position their expertise. This highlights the position of practitioners, who have the practical experience and knowledge, yet whose expertise and voice, and hence power to inform and influence debate, remain relatively unacknowledged. This is linked to the wider questions of authority and legitimacy – who defines the concepts of violent radicalisation and de-radicalization, and how and why they may choose to characterise the processes in a particular way.

From a practitioner perspective, approaches to understanding and dealing with violent radicalization are necessarily practical and flexible. While theory provides the benefits discussed previously, the need to develop ways in which to prevent violence on the ground drives activities. For both police and community focussed practices for example, the line drawn appears simple and stark – preventing crime is literally pre-crime – working with individuals who are vulnerable to or engaging with violent radical ideas and associated actions, before violence and hence actual crime occurs. This delineation between breaking the law and not breaking the law is however more complex and subtle than may first appear: British anti-terrorism laws create a very broad and sometimes unclear definition of what constitutes unlawful behaviour, while the line between prevention of radical violence and the pursuit of individuals is not always clear cut, relying on the willingness of practitioners to risk, trust and use professional judgment, as discussed earlier in this report.

...obviously terrorism is a clear line where there's an offence and what we need to do is we need to try and address the issues before we get to that stage. Now what you do to do that is you look at extreme views, and you look at people airing radical views. And both extreme and radical views aren't illegal and everyone holds extreme or radical views. Our problem is if we leave it until it gets to the stage where they are committing acts of violent extremism it's too far, we've lost them. And we haven't supported the individual. So we therefore have to look at the individuals who are displaying extreme and radical views. And that's where it gets a little bit uncomfortable for members of the public, because you're talking about pre-crime and you're talking about what tend to be people's, you know, inner thoughts. Which is where some of these allegations of spying on the community come from.

At the centre of these challenges lies the subjective and contentious process of identifying 'vulnerability'. With fear of stigmatization, discrimination and harassment amongst communities running high, there are ethical and practical concerns in deciding which individuals are of concern. With the mainstreaming of Prevent into most social arenas – education, housing, mental health services and youth work – actual examples and perceptions of over-zealous and ill informed flagging of individuals, unnecessary collection of personal data and blanket suspicion and spying on Muslim communities as illustrated by Project Champion in Birmingham, have led to even greater levels of apprehension. The notion that a young person who has not committed any crime might be identified within a counter-terrorism context raises serious ethical issues. As such, police practitioners and community-based organisations working with young people must utilise high levels of experience and practical expertise. The research points to a key principle in this area: proportionality. From the perspective of police officers involved in community partnership, it is not only practical, but an ethical necessity that any action is proportionate, and that any intervention with an individual is minimized.

This process of escalation is about trying to deal with things at the lowest possible level and whenever you're moving things up, perhaps moving it to a multi agency, you're recognising that it's necessary and proportionate to escalate it.

Community-organisations and youth-work: negotiating space

Similarly, community organisations are acutely aware of the fine line that they negotiate. In tackling such sensitive issues, ensuring that they support vulnerable individuals without alienating their communities or breaking the law is extremely challenging. An intervention

with a young person is thus undertaken by community organisations on certain conditions that not only safeguard their safety in relation to state law, but also in relation to their personal integrity and grassroots credibility. The research identifies a number of such conditions common to the community focussed individuals and organizations involved in the research, despite the different localities and contexts in which they work. Broadly categorized these are a commitment to uphold:

- State law
- Islamic framework and principles
- Community protection

State Law

Fundamental to the safety of all involved is the importance of working within the boundaries of state law. Whilst hard ended interventions which aim to support vulnerable individuals involved high levels of risk, especially when trying to prevent the escalation of cases which border the need for Pursue tactics, it is vital for community organisations to remain lawful both in partnering police, but also when an organisation has chosen not to involve police partners. In addition to the legalistic and safety aspects, law breaking would destroy the credibility and trust necessary for community organisations to carry out their work.

Islamic framework and principles

Of major import to individuals and organisations was the explicit commitment as Muslims to working within an Islamic framework, as variously defined. To summarize, this most frequently involved a clear standpoint in relation to non-negotiable Islamic principles. Of particular interest to the subject of violent extremism and its prevention was the importance of jihad as a concept to uphold and openly discuss. Conscious of the misuse and abuse of jihad as an Islamic principle by violent extremists and proponents of the New Terror discourse, youth workers and community organisations unequivocally reclaimed jihad, including its meaning in relation to physical struggle, as a positive and legitimate concept and action. It is also viewed as one of the central theological debates in challenging violent radical ideology, and thus a key tool in the process of 'de-radicalization'.

Community Protection

The motivation to protect communities – to uphold human security – was paramount for all community-based organisations involved in the research. All were very sensitive to the negative impact that the state security agenda, with which they were engaged, has at the

grassroots, particularly on young people. This tension, between the creation of security and insecurity by counter-terrorism practices, created a dilemma, which was partially rectified by the commitment to community protection. This included a non-negotiable rejection of acting as informers or spies on communities, with individuals prepared to disengage should they be asked to compromise. For youth workers in particular, the credibility on which their work is based, would crumble at any hint of 'collaboration', when engagement was viewed as going too far. Interestingly, the boundary drawn was variable, with some individuals suggesting that working for the police, for example, crossed a line and jeopardized community trust. This relates to internal community debate regarding the relationship with the state.

Youth perspectives

Central to the study's aims and ethics was the documentation of young Muslim people's perspectives, who, as the subjects of many counter-terrorism initiatives, are frequently talked about, but not to. During individual interviews and focus group discussions, it was interesting to note the reoccurrence of particular themes and areas of concern voiced by all the young people, irrespective of their diverse perspectives and social categorisations in relation to gender, ethnicity, religiosity, experience of criminality or locality. Of great import to the wider findings of this study were the occurrence of violence in young people's lives, the negotiation of personal and communal identities and relations:

Violence

A key theme that young people wished to discuss was the experience of violence in young people's lives. In particular, participants highlighted violence as something they felt was inflicted commonly and normatively:

Young people are naturally violent, it's normal to watch gruesome videos, I mean when you're a kid you play with power rangers. Violence is normal.

The violence between young people, and with police officers – and symbolically wider society - was of particular concern. Participants linked the wider context of violence and alienation to the process of violent radicalization.

They feel no one cares. You can relate to the victims, to the suffering, There's a lot of grievance. They relate to the people who suffer.

The picture that emerges is one of disempowerment – an acceptance that violence is normal, cyclical and inevitable. The relationship between young people and the police was viewed as extremely negative, not only a source of violence but of oppression:

Muslims are more targeted... they say that they are keeping the community safe but this is a large community of Muslims, the real reason there are so many police is that we're Muslims.

The sense of being targeted for being Muslim was strong, and poses questions in relation to the successes of police-community engagement: it would appear that while partnerships are happening, the wider relations between young Muslims and police remain negative and therefore likely to limit the success of prevention work with young people in which the police are involved.

Communal identities

The role of identity in the relations between young people, their peers, their communities and wider society appeared connected by the increasing negativity associated with each category. Young people described the hyper-connectedness of people through technology – mobile phones, facebook and YouTube, in contrast to alienation from direct social relations.

As the quotes above show, young people identified themselves with and as young Muslims, connected on a social and spiritual level with the Ummah, yet discussed the highest levels of trust in relation to tight knit peer groups. In contrast, relationships with wider communities and particularly leaders were depicted as negative and mistrustful. The role of identity and the relationships shaped by identities affects the ways in which young people engage and may be engaged, shaping their relationships with their peers, their communities and with the state. However, participants were keen to suggest ways forward, to start at the very beginning of the engagement process, and rebuild, with the trust, risk and personal relationships that the research has itself highlighted:

They need to start from scratch. They must build trust, so we go to them... to trust us before we trust them. We want to build relationships.

Conclusion

Police-community engagement and partnerships for preventing religio-political violent extremism amongst Muslim youth is a complex field, with wide-ranging perspectives and experiences both within and across policing and community arenas. This small-scale, in-depth and independent report highlights some of the complexities. Future research could focus on the following key questions:

- Are there different types of trust between police and community members in relation to counter-terrorism and what might this mean for any model of police-community engagement ?
- Are overt counter-terrorism policing initiatives influencing covert counter-terrorism policing, and if so, how and in what ways ?
- To what extent does a programme of initiatives involving police and communities within an area constitute a community-focussed approach ?
- To what extent does a programme of initiatives involving police and communities within an area constitute a community-targeted approach ?
- How and in what ways are prevention initiatives involving Muslim youth influencing wider community dynamics, in particular, the resilience of communities to withstand violent extremism?

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