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Police and Community Engagement and Partnerships for Counter-Terrorism

Introduction

Engagement and partnership are two key terms that feature significantly in the national counter-terrorism strategies of many countries, including EU member states, the US, Canada and Australia. Although these terms are often mentioned, with an implicit assumption that they are positive ways through which to achieve counter-terrorism strategies and goals, there is an absence of in-depth exploration of what engagement and partnership actually mean, and moreover, how those undertaking engagement and/or partnership are perceiving and experiencing these. This chapter aims to fill some of the gaps in knowledge regarding engagement and partnerships, particularly between community members and police officers who have been involved in counter-terrorism initiatives.

It is important to go beyond government rhetoric, to highlight the complexities and challenges of engagement and partnership work. As previously illustrated, the notion that ‘communities can defeat terrorism’ is prevalent within counter-terrorism policies and practices. Individuals, and the communities that they belong to, are being viewed as the moral agents of terrorism-prevention initiatives, responsible for building their own forms of resilience against violent extremism. How does this focus on communities, and the focus on responsible, active, citizens, as highlighted in the previous chapter, fit with engagement and partnership? Could it be that engagement and partnership, when applied to counter-terrorism and the focus on individual and community responsibility and resilience, is one-sided, in that it is communities that are expected to engage with state actors like the police,

and to partner them, on terms that have already been set by government and/or state-led agendas? How much space is afforded to understandings of engagement and partnership that go beyond government rhetoric? Given that, increasingly, policing is viewed as a notion that involves not only policing agencies, but also other statutory agencies, and crucially, communities, what opportunities and challenges are there for engagement and partnerships? If security is something that is shared between police and other statutory agencies, and involves communities, it is therefore co-produced. What then are the purposes of engagement and partnerships? Might they be important mechanisms through which to enhance democratic policing that involves paying due regard to human rights issues, and the fostering of community well-being?

This chapter begins to explore some of these issues. First, a brief review of the wider literature on engagement and partnership in relation to policing is provided. This is followed by a discussion of engagement and partnership in relation to counter-terrorism, drawing upon the wider research literature as well as the presentation and discussion of data that has been collected from interviews with police officers and community members. Whilst engagement and partnership can be carefully constructed with particular community members, it is key not to overlook the importance of police officers engaging generally with communities. Engagement and partnership can have several different interpretations and approaches, relating to enhancing the quality of life for communities, building inclusivity, developing connections with women, building relationships, engaging with wider political issues, moving at the community's pace, with respect and understanding. There can be tensions between 'hard-ended' intelligence-led approaches to counter-terrorism, in which community engagement and partnership are not priorities, and 'softer' community-focused approaches that are about relationship-building. Information sharing is a key issue for engagement and partnerships between police and communities.

Engagement and partnership in relation to policing

Unsurprisingly, there are many different understandings of what engagement and partnership mean and what they involve. For Wallerstein and Bernstein

(1988), community engagement suggests a process involving individuals, organisations and communities achieving power, not for domination but to act with others to implement change. The London-based thinktank, Demos, refers to police officers as needing to engage more substantially with political processes. This engagement is viewed as the ability of police officers 'to draw on work to which they are connected to shape explicit priorities on which they can focus and to allow other organisations and the public to help achieve them' (Edwards, 2006: 5). The work by Demos (Edwards, 2006) highlights the need for police officers not to view any engagement with politics as something negative, and equating this to political interference, but rather, to view political engagement as a means through which to share policing responsibilities.

Myhill (2004) offers the following definition of community engagement for policing policy:

The process of enabling the participation of citizens and communities in policing at their chosen level, ranging from providing information and reassurance, to empowering them to identify and implement solutions to local problems and influence strategic priorities and decisions. The police, citizens, and communities must have the willingness, capacity and opportunity to participate. The Police Service and partner organisations must have a responsibility to engage and, unless there is a justifiable reason, the presumption is that they must respond to community input (Myhill, 2004: iv).

For Myhill (2004), there are three basic levels of community engagement: at the 'democratic mandate' level through which the involvement of community members is pursued; at the level of the neighbourhood, with a focus on local issues and priorities; and at the intermediate strategic level, which involves wider police service, regional and national issues and priorities. The wider context is important to consider, for this impacts substantially on policing. For example, in Britain, it was the previous Labour Government's focus on civil renewal that placed added emphasis on police and community engagement. In a speech on 11 June 2003, the former Home Secretary, David Blunkett, argued that communities should be empowered and active, with individuals increasingly determining the shape of their lives for themselves and the state taking on a supportive and facilitatory role. More recently, in 2011, the Conservative-Liberal Democrat Coalition Government introduced the notion of the Big Society, which is a vision for individuals and communities

to have more power and responsibility to create better neighbourhoods and local services, in a radical shift of power away from the centre (Communities and Local Government, 2011). Whilst it is not the objective of this chapter to critique Big Society, the themes of responsibility and power shifting towards individuals and local communities seem to resonate with broader issues around engagement and partnership work in relation to policing. It may also be worth briefly mentioning Cook's (2006) analysis of community participation. According to Cook (2006: 124), community participation might be thought of as consisting of five levels: information (involves telling people what is planned), consultation (involves offering some options, listening to feedback, but not allowing new ideas), deciding together (providing opportunities for joint decision making), acting together (different interests form a partnership to carry out what they decide is best to do), and supporting independent community interests (local groups are offered funds, advice or other support to develop their own agendas within guidelines). For Cook, community participation often falls short, so that the fifth level, supporting independent community interests, is rarely put into practice. Importantly, managerial imperatives and strategic decisions on what can and cannot be done influence the scope of community participation. Moreover, market research-type consultation is often used, which for Cook (2006: 125) 'masks a patronising and complacent attitude to service users'. Furthermore, it is argued that communities, particularly Black and minority ethnic communities, might experience consultation overload, and at the same time might feel let down because the issues that they have raised during consultation have not been responded or listened to (Cook, 2006).

Edwards (2006) suggests that police need to improve on their partnership working as there is a diverse range of policing service providers, including the private sector, which can bring significant benefits. For Oppler (1997), partnership policing heralds a new development for policing which began in the 1980s, when the notion emerged of independent agents working together with formal structures that go beyond community policing models. The theme of localism features in Oppler's (1997) understanding of partnership policing, in that it is essential for partnership policing to be operationalised at a local level, which involves local actors adapting partnerships to fit their needs. For Oppler (1997), partnership policing, internationally, evolved out

of a wider social and policy context which stressed that individuals are active citizens rather than welfare recipients, and so protection of life and property is the responsibility of citizens, aided by police. According to Oppler (1997: 13), partnership policing can be defined as 'a proactive leadership role in bringing disparate community groups such as the public, elected officials, government and other agencies together to focus on crime and community disorder problems'. Partnership policing is therefore about consultation, about involving citizens in the planning of policing, and about involving community leaders in deciding the policing priorities of local areas.

Thacher (2001) highlights some of the challenges facing police and community partnerships. A key issue for partnership is that it can involve a wide variety of partners who have their own institutional, cultural, political and other values, and so there is the potential for conflict between partners as a result of competing values. It is not just a question of competing values but also of competing priorities, with different partners often having different sets of priorities. Thacher (2001) argues that some researchers suggest that partnerships within a policing context are not possible because values and goals can be so incompatible. For Thacher (2001), exploring how tensions are resolved and how competing values can be legitimately managed is a key area for research, policy and practice. For instance, it may be that police agencies can shift their priorities in order to make them more acceptable to communities (which may involve a movement away from 'crime-fighting' towards embracing a more holistic policing approach focusing on safety); it may also involve pursuing competing aims and thus working within a more pluralistic environment (Thacher, 1998). Partnership can also involve partner agencies making their resources available to each other, thereby enabling all partners to benefit. A key challenge to confront is that of where the balance should lie between liberty and order, with policing aims being defined broadly enough to encompass both (Thacher, 1998). It is also important to note that if we understand partnership to mean equality, transparency and legitimate cooperation between partners, then achieving this may be challenging because of power differentials: in the case of police-focussed work, community groups may not feel that they are actual partners in the process. In cases where there are power imbalances between partners it is important for those in positions of relative power to create spaces within which all partners are equals and included

(Spalek, El-Alwa and McDonald 2009). This is especially important in the context of police-community engagement as police officers are in positions of relative power over community members. The extent to which police and community engagement and partnerships involve supporting independent community interests, particularly within a counter-terrorism context, is an interesting question, and one which raises another: given that the notion of community itself is complex and contested, whose independent interests are being supported? As illustrated in chapter two, for counter-terrorism work to be effective it is important to include credible partners, and the independent interests of these partners might comprise radical approaches and solutions that national governments may find problematic. If police officers are to engage increasingly with politics, therefore, they run the risk of being criticised for supporting radical groups and interests, which may alienate wider communities from the police (Thacher, 2001).

Engagement and partnership in relation to counter-terrorism

The national counter-terrorism policies of many countries, including the UK, US, Canada and Australia, refer to the notions of engagement and partnership. Localism, the importance of connecting governments and communities, and connecting diverse state and non-state actors, are all themes that feature in national counter-terrorism strategies in relation to the notions of engagement and partnership. For instance, in the Australian Counter-Terrorism White Paper (2010) it is argued that 'the Government recognises that strong partnerships between all levels of government and communities are critical to success, and that solutions must be appropriate to local circumstances'. In *CONTEST*, the UK's main national counter-terrorism strategy, engagement and partnership is referred to on many occasions. For instance, on page 1 the document claims that 'the Government is therefore working in partnership with Muslim communities to help them prevent extremists gaining influence there'. *CONTEST* also refers to partnerships between police and other state agencies and also with the charitable and voluntary sectors, thus 'developing and delivering this counter-terrorism strategy involves all parts of

Government acting together and taking a joined-up approach to dealing with this complex and wide-ranging threat. Delivery also depends upon partnerships with the police and emergency services, local authorities, and devolved administrations, as well as with the private sector and the voluntary and charitable sector' (HM Government, 2006: 5). In the Prevent Review 2011, engagement and partnership is regularly referred to. An interesting aspect of the Prevent Review 2011 is that a distinction is made between criteria for funding and criteria for engagement:

We would emphasise that criteria for funding are different from criteria for engagement (such as contact and dialogue). There may be cases where the Government judge that there is a need to engage with groups or individuals whom it would never choose to fund. That may particularly be the case overseas, where we may need to engage with groups or individuals that are seen as moderate in their own country but not in the UK. (HM Government, 2011: 40)

Of course, what is meant by 'moderate' and what is meant by 'extreme' is unclear, and is likely to be politically dictated (Spalek and McDonald, 2010). The theme of localism in relation to partnership can be found in the Prevent Review thus:

We expect all local areas to have a partnership tasked to take forward work on Prevent using the most appropriate structure in their area and to a level which is proportionate to local risk. Wherever possible, the partnership should comprise social services, policing, children's services, youth services, UKBA, representatives from further and higher education, probation services, schools, local prisons, health and others as required by local need (HM Government, 2011: 100).

Multi-agency work is therefore a key aspect to counter-terrorism policy and practice in the UK. This is particularly evidenced by the Channel Project, which is a controversial national scheme established to support those individuals vulnerable to recruitment by violent extremists, using the resources and experience of professionals who provide an ongoing support package. Described as a multi-agency process with a diverse grouping involving police, social services, health, youth offending team workers and community individuals, the group is mostly chaired by a local authority employee or a community person with sensitive case details provided by the police. Whilst some Channel panels have community involvement, the police

remain nervous about issues around security clearance, data protection (around legislative impact), confidentiality and extent of Criminal Records Bureau (CRB) checks, due to the sensitive nature of casework data on vulnerable individuals being shared in a non-police domain, even if they are counter-terrorism partners (Kundnani, 2009). In the US counter-terrorism strategy, engagement and partnership is also discussed, in relation not only to state and non-state local partners in the US, but also in relation to state and non-state global partners, thus:

We will work closely with local and global partners, inside and outside governments, to discredit al-Qa'ida ideology and reduce its resonance. We will put forward a positive vision of engagement with foreign publics and support for universal rights that demonstrates that the United States aims to build while al-Qa'ida would only destroy (The White House, 2011: 10).

Locally, US policy includes engaging and partnering with communities as there is the belief that this can help protect communities from being influenced by AQ and its affiliates:

We are working to bring to bear many of these capabilities to build resilience withing our communitites here at home against al-Qa'ida-inspired radicalization, recruitment, and mobilization to violence. Although increasing our engagement and partnership with communities can help protect them from the influence of al-Qa'ida and its affiliates and adherents, we must ensure that we remain engaged in the full range of community concerns and interests. (The White House, 2011: 11)

As highlighted in the previous chapter, however, police counter-terrorism efforts in the US have been criticised for infiltrating American Muslims and for placing them under surveillance without any valid investigative justification. It is therefore difficult to link the US policy discourse with the lived realities of many American Muslims.

Globally, Pakistan and Afghanistan are, in particular, mentioned in relation to partnership work:

We will defeat al-Qa'ida only through a sustained partnership with Pakistan. The underlying conditions that allow the group to maintain its safe haven and regenerate—including its ability to capitalize on relationships with militant allies—can only be addressed through a sustained local presence opposed to

al-Qa'ida. Pakistan has shown resolve in this fight in the face of increasing brutality by al-Qa'ida and its Pakistan-based allies, but greater Pakistani–U.S. strategic cooperation across a broader range of political, military, and economic pursuits will be necessary to achieve the defeat of al-Qa'ida in Pakistan and Afghanistan. (The White House, 2011, 13)

Again, this rhetoric fails to reflect the reality, with the relationship between Pakistan and the US being one far from the ideal of partnership. Any relationship-building between the US and Pakistan has come under severe strain as a result of a number of crises linked to counter-terrorism including the killing of Osama Bin Laden and the US use of unmanned drones.

Engagement and partnership within a counter-terrorism context raise a number of issues and questions. As demonstrated in chapter two, engagement and partnership can be carefully constructed and extremely sensitive, rather than comprised of a wide-sweeping engagement and partnership approach that the notion 'communities can defeat terrorism' might imply. Engagement and partnership can be aimed in particular at credible community members, who have reach into spaces and groups that are perhaps impenetrable to the police and other state actors. State actors may rely heavily on engagement and partnerships with credible community members, as a way of trying to implement community-based counter-terrorism initiatives. The following quotation taken from an interview with a police officer, in which he refers to a mentoring scheme targeted at individuals deemed at significant risk of violent radicalisation, further demonstrates the importance of credibility:

I used the old golf club analogy ... you've got ... a young Afghan male who's stuck in the rough and you think, crikey I need someone, I need a mentor who understands totally where he's coming from, because that person themselves may have come from Afghanistan, they're an illegal immigrant, has settled, knows all the pitfalls, knows all the issues, knows what comes from that same area of Afghanistan, so can empathise, so it's like who have we got in our golf club? Oh yeah, the six iron, ... the Afghan, yeah. And then they sort of put them in touch. So, very simply said, but you know, we're trying to find all these different people now we can call upon in situations to come and help.

Perhaps this is why the UK Prevent Review 2011 highlights that there is a distinction between criteria for funding and criteria for engagement. Implicit in this approach is an understanding that government needs to engage with

credible community members who, for a wide range of reasons, may be deemed by the British Government not to warrant funding. This links to a point made in a Demos report on community-based approaches to counter-terrorism, in which the authors argue that there is a need to move away from an all-encompassing notion of 'the community' and towards engaging more openly with faith-based groups, including those on the periphery such as Salafis (Briggs et al., 2006).

Whilst this discussion highlights the importance of developing engagement with credible community members, it is imperative not to lose sight of the importance of general engagement with communities. The information that is elicited here by police may lack specificity, but may provide them with general background information about what is happening within communities. This is illustrated by the following quotation from an interview with an overt counter-terrorism police officer:

I pick up – I was saying to one of our analysts, every day when I go and speak to somebody in the community I learn something from them. Feedback to yourself. You absorb that information.

Engagement can also be about enhancing the quality of life of community members, as the following quotation from an interview with a counter-terrorism police officer illustrates:

a local intelligence team which is a team which develops an intimate understanding of who our communities are, where they are, and to the best of our ability what the current issues are affecting them. Where they congregate, how we best engage with them, how we communicate effectively, just all of those dynamics, you know, just to ensure that we're not just relying on ten year old census data, but we're actually monitoring to say who are communities, where are they coming from, what are the tensions, how are we impacting on tensions and what can we do to play a part in enhancing everybody's quality of life?

The following quotation is from a community member in relation to the Muslim safety Forum, a forum through which community members in London engaged regularly with senior police officers of the Metropolitan Police Service. This quotation illustrates how engagement can be about inclusivity, involving a wide variety of individuals from within communities:

even within the organisation, some are huge organisations that are part of MSF,

some are very small. But everybody brings a different flavour. Everybody brings their different concerns. Some are very vocal. You have the angry young men, you have the mild women there and you have the angry women there. You have lots of different personalities there. Some people come to observe because they come purely to learn.

However, this same community member also demonstrates the difficulties in engaging Muslim women:

And some people say we purely come to see what is going on because even the I'm not someone who's very vocal, I don't like crowds, I can't ... it's usually the women that say I can't really engage in that sense, I don't want to be heard. Not because I'm a Muslim woman and we can't talk, and things like that. It's not that, it's because I don't feel comfortable and not everyone is gifted with that kind of you know becoming the speaker or becoming that person that can lead the herd, so to speak. Not everybody has that kind of ability or is comfortable with that kind of attention. And so they say we'll come to learn and we take it back and then within our own organisations that we can do something. And it's also good to know what's going on around us for that. But I think I do see through MSF the Muslim organisations very much are a boy's club and I do wonder sometimes why? Is it because the women are so reluctant to come forward because the brothers will always say no, we want more women, but do you really?

The following quotation comes from an interview with a Muslim woman who is part of a women's organisation that is a member of the Muslim Safety Forum. This quotation highlights how the priorities of the organisation that she was representing on the Muslim Safety Forum were different from those of the police:

So in terms of representing X and the partnership work with the police, our focus was slightly different in that we represented a certain part of the community whose needs were different from the needs of the police in terms of what angle they wanted to work with the community and especially with women. Ours was social need, emotional and physical to some extent, whereas obviously for the police their primary concern is safety and security.

Despite having different priorities, this same community member argues that partnership was possible with the police. Basically, the police could work with this particular Muslim women's organisation to help women in relation to domestic violence issues while the organisation could provide the police with access to women:

So in some ways we did link up whereas we were dealing with people who had, women who had domestic violence issues and things so we found a common ground from which we could develop partnership work. What they wanted to do was have access to, all the women could come to us ... through X we have access to a lot of women and young women who are professionals as well as young mothers, mainly English speaking women, but we have access to the older generation as well who the police would never be able to access because of the language barrier or because these women do not come out. So we formed to some extent a partnership where we could give them that access and they can give us the support in terms of developing certain projects that we felt that they can help us with. And mainly obviously with certain areas like domestic violence where they can really give us some key information and support. So this is just from my individual partnership work that was developed with the police as a result of developing the Muslim Safety Forum.

Police officers' and community members' understandings of partnership and engagement is an area that has been examined in the body of research underpinning this book. There is a focus on 'trust-building, equality and mutual benefit' in partnerships, 'space, recognition and acceptance of diverse political and religious beliefs and identities' as well as 'emotion, political and social grievance, religion and spirituality and personal perspectives' (Spalek, El-Alwa and McDonald, 2009: 84–5). The following quotation from a community member illustrates that it takes time to build relationships, and that real engagement is what matters:

I think one of the things is due to an enormous amount of openness and I think it's about a time piece. You build a relationship over time, you don't just turn up, you know, you turn up at the mosque once, no, you go every Friday and you're there every Friday, you come as friendly, you go on the open days. That's kinda ... it's that real engagement bit.

For the following police officer, engagement is about sitting down and chatting with people:

this is just good coppering again really, sitting down and having a cup of tea with people and you know, you're putting the world to rights aren't you?

For this same police officer engagement is also about discussing wider political issues:

And I agree, I mean I sit down with people and I think our foreign policy is

bloody rubbish, and that a lot of it has added to all the woes of what we've got now ... until we actually really say, well yeah we went to Iraq and okay Iraq wasn't a perfect place to start with and he was a murdering bastard, but what on earth – we've just opened up a hornet's nest now that will never go away, and has really upset hundreds of thousands of people all round the world, even though we went in ostensibly for doing the right thing, very ill conceived, not thought through, and now, you know, the country's just in total turmoil, and those wounds will probably never heal.

The officer also argues that engagement with Muslim communities should be no different than engagement with other faith communities:

... if the copper at the mosque having a cup of tea you know, he's saying the same thing, but it's no – it is no different really, it shouldn't be any different, and I think this is probably one of the positives as well ... you're at the local church having a cup of tea with the vicar and you're talking about the graffiti on the grave stones, and you know, and trying to sort that problem out, it shouldn't be really any different than having a cup of tea at the mosque and we're talking about other aspects of criminality which terrorism and the violent extremism is.

One community member refers to partnership involving a common understanding of people working together, of statutory agencies not 'going off and doing things':

... there is a common and shared understanding of the relationships of people working together. And where there isn't a hierarchy of, say, it's a partnership but the statutory organisations are the dominant partners or that they will just tap into the community as and when they see fit ... which is something that happens quite a lot. And also it's a partnership that's got to be consistent because you will have, in my own experience, you'll have some kind of very productive moments and you'll have other moments where the statutory organisations will just go off and do things, or they'll take certain decisions.

This person goes on to highlight how in many instances statutory agencies can undertake activities on their own, with community members having to try and keep tabs on what is happening, reminding agencies that they are supposed to be in partnership:

And, more often than not, the community partners are always chasing them up or kind of saying, 'Well, have you forgotten we're in a partnership? And how

could you justify that action, or those set of actions, or those behaviours when we're meant to be in a partnership together?'

The following community member emphasises the need to move at the community's pace:

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 may be some value.

This same community member also speaks about the importance of there being 'trustworthy engagement', that any powers that the police and local authorities have should be used wisely:

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.

Another community member speaks about the importance of respect and understanding for partnership:

I think a lot of that depends on a sense of fairness and integrity on all sides really. And I think you only really feel we're reaching these things when people are treating each other with that high level of respect and understanding.

The following police officer highlights the challenges facing police in trying to go beyond talking to people who want to engage with police but who may not be connected at a wider grassroots level:

the disadvantage for police consultation in my book, and I speak with some experience here, is we talk to the people who will talk to us ... unfortunately there are people out there with single-issue agendas. There are people out there who are not actually what they purport to be. They say they're plugged into the community. They say they can represent a particular community. They actually represent nobody but themselves and maybe one or two others. There are people who have information that is at least 20 years out of date and they're still fighting the battles of 1981 as opposed to dealing with the issues of 2010.

This same police officer also highlights that often engagement is with the same people, even though they may not be the most suitable:

And I've encountered all of these while I've, you know ... and, and another problem is that you actually end up engaging with the same people with different hats on. So that's why you need to go out into the community, identify the people and get them on board and get them talking to the consultative groups and represented there so that they can actually have their views represented.

The following police officer speaks about how community engagement has not traditionally been viewed by police as worthy of significant attention, for police like to see themselves as crime-fighting agents:

Empathy and understanding ... it's police officers, without using the word not politically, but are conservative, traditional, shall we say, very much ... and you have to sell it sometimes ... you know, the soft skills are not popular with them; they're seen as becoming soft on things.

This same police officer argues, however, that community engagement should not be viewed as a soft option but, rather, as just as important as arresting people because hard policing powers need to be carried out within a wider understanding of how such powers impact upon communities:

Well actually it's not. It's about doing your job. It's about getting out there and arresting the bad guys. But it's about not upsetting everybody else in the process. It's about avoiding collateral damage. It's about sensitivity about why people might feel bad about 3 o'clock in the morning, 14 people dressed like the storm troopers out of Star Wars beating down someone's door and dragging them off, you know, the next door neighbour, dragging them off with all the noise and everything else and disruption that that entails ... there's still work to be done with the police around that but there again, I think probably we do better than we're given credit for in that way.

The following quotation from an interview with a counter-terrorism police officer further highlights the importance of considering the wider impact of counter-terrorism laws and operations on communities:

I mean that was one of the things after 2001 where we had draconian powers that were introduced, or fairly sort of relatively draconian powers ... a lot of people were arrested without charge, you were very quickly noticing in the community that more time was spent worrying about the impact of these

operations on the community because that's what impact them on a day to day event, than actually trying to solve the problem of preventing people putting bombs down on buses.

The officer goes on to talk about the importance of considering the impact that counter-terrorism operations have on communities, because terrorists wish to use any local grievances about counter-terrorism strategies as a recruitment tool:

you're fighting the terrorist wish to recruit from minorities, so you are trying to counter them getting recruits from the community ... the community need to be onside because ... I mean terrorism is propaganda of the deed, the deed, in a way, is ... a small part of the issue is the fear, the wider ramifications of terrorism that ... that you're trying to counter and one of the things is that the terrorists want people to be frightened so that they change their mind. So they want people in communities to feel threatened by ... anti terrorism, you know, the impact of anti terrorism.

The officer also talks about how building relationships with community members can help police to separate out what is a real terrorist threat from what is a community issue:

I think the third thing is that communities are a source of information and I think that's one of the things where Prevent is ... we've slightly missed the ... missed the point that you can't police, you can't make good decisions without having good information. And the community provide information, and they also enable you to prove negatives because there aren't millions of terrorists out there but we have to have the best possible information and intelligence in order to focus on the people that matter. And if you have good information and good relationships with communities, you can get rid of, you know, hopefully, and this is the theory, that you cannot spend a lot of time wasted on pursuing negative leads 'cause people will say well that's a ... dispute, it's not a terrorist issue, they're just bubbling the other people up because they don't like them.

Tensions between 'hard-ended' intelligence-led approaches to counter-terrorism, in which community engagement and partnership are not priorities, and 'softer' community-focussed approaches that are about relationship-building, have been highlighted by Dame Eliza Manningham-Butler, a former Director General of MI5 who argued that:

For the Police Service, community engagement is quite properly an important part of the response to this wider challenge. But inevitably of course, there will be times when intelligence-based activity targeted at a specific element within the community, a tiny minority, of course, will rub up uncomfortably against initiatives to engage with the community more broadly. This is likely to be a recurring theme in counter-terrorist work in the UK in the years ahead (Manningham-Butler, 2007: 45 in Vertigans, 2010: 31).

It is perhaps worth distinguishing between proactive and reactive styles of engagement, as identified in a study examining police and community partnerships within a counter-terrorism context (Spalek, El-Alwa and McDonald 2009). Proactive engagement is 'where communities become actively involved in the development of particular initiatives with police, having a decision-making role whereby communities are consulted and actively engaged at all stages of a project, from initial conceptualisation through to development and implementation' (Spalek, El-Alwa and McDonald, 2009: 27). A further example of proactive engagement is in relation to communities moderating police approaches. The following quotation is taken from an interview with an overt counter-terrorism police officer, who explains the importance of proactively engaging:

Everybody brings their expertise, their disposition, to the table. That's very healthy, you know, for cops to be sitting there and understanding what else is out there so that they can help to moderate their approaches as well.

The importance of proactive engagement is further highlighted in the following quotation from an overt counter-terrorism police officer, who argues that families, friends, communities are the long-term solution to terrorism:

Because terrorism, we can work all day, especially the police, and you can have engagement, you can have good community links. But when it comes to information or people actually preventing it, it has to be that family link; it has to be those parents; it has to be the community; it has to be the friends. It has to be that ground level to prevent it long term.

Reactive engagement is where 'communities respond to initiatives that have already been developed and events that have already taken place, so that feedback is sought by police from communities rather than active involvement in decision-making – providing information to communities and consulting

them for their feedback rather than police and communities deciding and acting together' (Spalek, El-Alwa and McDonald, 2009: 27–8). Whereas some community members and police officers can prefer a proactive style of engagement, others can prefer a reactive style of engagement. This means that at the same time that some community members and police officers will be actively pursuing and adopting a proactive style of engagement, other community members and police officers will be actively pursuing and adopting a reactive style of engagement. This can therefore lead to some confusion and even frustration between individuals. It is therefore important to set out the style and terms of engagement at the outset, or to at least have a discussion about this. It is also likely that the aims of engagement differ. It may be that some community members and police officers view engagement as a forum through which to air grievances, it may be that some see engagement as exploring cases of potential police abuses of power, whilst for others engagement may be seen as a means through which to build relationships (Spalek, El-Alwa and McDonald, 2009). The goal of collaboration is to promote 'open channels of honest, long-term communication and the ability to negotiate conflict and different goals or values' but 'without compromising the fundamental standpoint of partners' (Spalek, El-Alwa and McDonald, p. 85). Moreover, it is very important that officers have good interpersonal skills when cooperating with community members (Silk, 2009).

Those community members and organisations involved in engagement with police officers may need support for capacity-building in order to enable them to communicate more effectively with the police and other statutory agencies. This point links to the notion of empowerment, which Pinderhughes (1995: 136) understands as referring to 'achieving reasonable control over one's destiny, learning to cope constructively with debilitating forces in society, and acquiring the competence to initiate change at the individual and systems levels'. Spalek, El-Alwa and McDonald (2009) highlight the importance of empowerment within a counter-terrorism context, providing examples of police officers playing a key role in empowering community members to tackle threats from terrorism. One example of this might be when community members discuss their ideas for community projects with police officers around how to prevent violent extremism, with police officers providing vital feedback and then support as to how to go about developing

projects further and gaining funding for them. This kind of activity might be viewed as a form of capacity building within communities, facilitated by police and other partners. Spalek, El-Alwa and McDonald's study (2009) found that, as a secondary benefit, this form of community empowerment can directly lead to intelligence for the police. It is important to stress the primacy of community empowerment over community intelligence in order to build effective partnerships based on trust between police and communities. Any mistrust that might be generated through a desire to focus on gathering information will directly impact on police officers' abilities to pick up on voluntary, and thus more reliable, community intelligence in the long term (Spalek, El-Alwa and McDonald, 2009).

Engagement and partnership between police officers and community members within a counter-terrorism context also raises the question of information sharing. The counter-terrorism arena is one that is dominated by secrecy, and yet with the introduction of overt styles of countering terrorism, police officers are engaging and partnering community members. It is important to stress that overtness is appreciated whilst covertness can create barriers between police and community (Silk, 2009). Silk (2009) has argued that it is important to be upfront about the police assignments in the community. Silk (2009) also shows that officers claim that the success of overt strategies lie in officers' abilities to explain the nature of the assignment in a comprehensible manner. Innes et al. (2011) also have noted that police officers experience positive public responses to more open ways of working, reflecting how officers involved in more covert strategies have to negotiate complex 'back-stage' and 'front-stage' arrangements. Information sharing between police and communities is a key dilemma, and police officers and community members can grapple with what information to provide to each other, and what the wider implications of this may be. Safeguards need to be placed around information-sharing. For example, community members who engage and even partner with police and who provide information can be placing themselves at considerable risk of reprisals from members of their own communities or any networks that they belong to, with the potential of them being labelled as spies or informants. Police officers are also potentially placing themselves at risk from community-instigated and other reprisals (Spalek and McDonald, 2011). It may be that within a counter-terrorism arena

all engagement and partnership places individuals at risk, hence there need to be in place procedures that can help mitigate some of the risks posed by information sharing (see Baker, 2011; 2012 for further analysis).

A further issue in counter-terrorism is whether the question of values should influence whether or not, and to what extent, engagement and partnership should take place. For Briggs et al. (2006), whilst values may be difficult to align, 'we must not let them get in the way of the priority of tackling terrorism. The energy of these non-violent forms of mobilisation must be harnessed towards this shared goal.' Similarly, Spalek and Lambert (2008) have argued that broader questions about community and social cohesion, alongside discussions about national identity, should not define the terms of engagement with Muslim communities for the purposes of counter-terrorism. Instead, a rational assessment should be made according to which groups can best help combat extremism, and questions of cohesion and national identity should be left to other fields of policy-making. However, the Muslim Contact Unit, an overt counter-terrorism policing unit that engaged and partnered with Salafi and Islamist Muslim groups, attracted considerable media and policy attention and criticism, being labeled as 'appeasers of extremism' (Lambert, 2008: 6). According to Silvestri (2007), Salafism in particular has been used as a synonym for jihadism and terrorism, and yet there are important nuances and many different positionings of Salafis, alongside the evolution of different currents of Islamic thought. It might be argued that to draw upon and use Islamic identities and practices that potentially might be construed as 'radical' (in some cases simply because individuals are religiously conservative and have a real or a perceived opposition to established secular values (see Spalek, Lambert, and Baker 2009)) runs the risk that these are negatively labelled and might be considered to require counter-insurgency and/or countersubversion tactics (Spalek, 2011). For Kilcullen (2007: 112–13), counter-insurgency involves 'all measures adopted to suppress an insurgency' where insurgency is 'a struggle to control a contested political space, between a state (or group of states or occupying powers) and one or more popularly based, non-state challengers'. For Lambert (2008) a counter-subversion perspective in the UK posits that those described as being Islamist, whether or not they are suspected of terrorism or violent extremism, are to be targeted and stigmatised in the same way as terrorists influenced or directed by AQ. Clearly, these debates can

significantly influence police and community engagement and partnership. Spalek, El-Alwa and McDonald (2009) have argued that:

If experienced counter-terrorism practitioners see a benefit in engaging with Muslim minorities at the margins of communities, reasoning that the foundational goal of preventing violence is shared, and such groups and individuals are in a position to assist and contribute to the prevention of violence and related activities, other agendas become entirely peripheral. In particular, the concern that a group may follow a theological methodology, or share a political sympathy or aim related in some way to those perpetrating and supporting violence does not negate the necessity of engagement. Even in light of confident democratic principles which allow for marginal voices within the boundaries of law and order, the fundamental point is whether or not terrorist violence is condoned or condemned (Malik 2008) (In Spalek, El-Alwa and McDonald, 2009: 62).

Moreover, it may be that engaging marginal and marginalised Muslim groups such as Salafis and Islamists is a logical approach within a community-focussed response to countering terrorism, involving faith-based approaches to youth work, education and de-radicalisation central to the Prevent agenda (Spalek, El-Alwa and McDonald, 2009). The following quotation is taken from an interview with a counter-terrorism police officer who stresses the risks involved in engaging with some 'radicals' who may have negative views of homosexuality for example:

whilst we might actually want to support someone that perhaps we wouldn't possibly endorse all their views because I mean again you may have a mainstream Wahabist cleric who has credibility within the community who totally rejects Al Qaeda extremist philosophy but has what we would consider as rather unenlightened views about homosexuals, women or whatever. And we would need to engage and seek their support to put the message out. But it does need to be managed quite carefully because of the risk of embarrassment and also the risk of wrecking any influence that they have. We want to try and keep the influence going if it's a positive influence. We try to downplay the negative.

The following is a quotation taken from another interview with a counter-terrorism police officer, who makes a distinction between the viewpoints of the pragmatists and the theorists in terms of this issue of 'engaging with radicals':

sometimes I think the divide is between the theorists and the pragmatists. The pragmatists are the people ... where they know where they're going on a day

to day basis. The theorists are people who worry where are we actually gonna end up? And I think theorists ... have a danger of being exactly the same as Islamists and anybody who ... has an idea of progress, that we are aiming to have a society in the future and you're not actually gonna be part of it, I think is, you know, you've gotta be very careful how you articulate your end goal because ... that's what ideologies are about. But on the other hand you do have to think, well, about engaging with this group and not that group, are we actually making the problem worse than better? I mean my aim is to have a London that is ... diverse, safe and all those things but how you actually articulate, measure that ... how do you know that what you're doing today is actually achieving a safe and diverse capital city?

The above quotation demonstrates the challenges involved in any kind of preventative work, for it is difficult to be able to prove that any work being undertaken today will have an impact in terms of building a safer society in the future. Senior counter-terrorism police officers have to take certain risks themselves, implementing novel prevention initiatives that need to be tested out without any guarantees of effectiveness or success.

Conclusion

This chapter has focussed on engagement and partnership within a counter-terrorism context, these being two key themes that feature significantly in the national counter-terrorism strategies of many different countries. It has examined engagement and partnership in more detail, drawing on the wider research literature as well as presenting empirical data gathered from interviews with counter-terrorism police officers and community members. Key themes highlighted in this chapter in relation to engagement and partnership include: the importance of general engagement with wide-ranging community members; the importance and challenges of engaging and partnering non-violent radicals; how engagement and partnership can have several different meanings and approaches relating to enhancing the quality of life for communities, building inclusivity, developing connections with women, building relationships, engaging with wider political issues, moving at the community's pace, with respect and understanding. There can be tensions between 'hard-ended' intelligence-led approaches to

counter-terrorism, in which community engagement and partnership are not priorities, and 'softer' community-focused approaches that are about relationship-building. Information sharing is a key issue for engagement and partnerships. Clearly, these issues relate to questions around the implementation of democratic forms of policing which respect human rights and which seek to foster community well-being. This chapter demonstrates the centrality of security as something that is co-produced. It is therefore perhaps more helpful to view counter-terrorism as conflict transformation, for engagement and partnership illustrates how the prevention of terrorism is about understanding community dynamics, about helping communities to deal with wide-ranging issues, and about facilitating dialogue and relationship-building between police officers and community members. The next chapter explores police and community engagement further in relation to understanding emotions.

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