Spalek, Basia. "Conclusion: Engaging Communities for Twenty-First-Century Security."
Terror Crime Prevention with Communities. London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2013. 165–174.
Bloomsbury Collections. Web. 26 Apr. 2023. <<http://dx.doi.org/10.5040/9781472545039.0005>>.

Downloaded from Bloomsbury Collections, www.bloomsburycollections.com, 26 April 2023,
00:08 UTC.

Copyright © Basia Spalek 2013. You may share this work for non-commercial purposes only,
provided you give attribution to the copyright holder and the publisher, and provide a link to the
Creative Commons licence.

Conclusion

Engaging Communities for Twenty-First-Century Security

For too long, counter-terrorism practice has carried with it stigma, being associated with infiltration, spying on communities, the implementation and the over-use of state powers against those considered to be 'suspect'. Counter-terrorism is a notion that has gained a certain notoriety, a certain reputation, for being unethical, for involving the violation of human rights, and for being secretive and lacking in public scrutiny and accountability. Steve Hewitt (2010), in his illuminating book called *Snitch!*, demonstrates that informers have been evident for centuries, being essential tools for the state to collect information on its citizens. In the US, for example, during the era of radicalism, the 1960s and 1970s, informers in the Black Power, Red Power, gay and liberation movements were employed by the FBI and CIA to monitor domestic dissent. The Soviet Union, with its secret police, pursued political radicals through the infiltration of secret collaborators, and informers were celebrated as doing their civic duty. It is estimated that under the German Democratic Republic, 2–3 per cent of the population were informers (Hewitt, 2010). More recently, post 9/11, with the US led 'War on Terror', accounts have emerged of Arab and Muslim communities in particular experiencing over-policing. To illustrate this, the following is a quotation taken from a book written by Zighen Aym, an American citizen of Algerian origin, who was asked to come for an interview by the FBI because he had been seen taking photographs of spiders next to a railway track which had aroused the state's suspicions:

When the formal interview began the first questions focussed on information I knew the FBI already had: Name and address. Like a surgeon's scalpel, the intrusive questions poked me, each cutting deeper and deeper, and the

dissection, though physically painless was mentally traumatizing. I regretted having agreed to the interview, for while I had done nothing wrong, I had to divulge both personal and professional information to prove my innocence. I felt as if some powerful system had negated the principle 'innocent until proven guilty'. (Aym, 2005)

This quotation clearly demonstrates the kind of pain that over-zealous counter-terrorism practices can create. These kinds of experiences, issues and debates are ongoing. In Britain, for example, the Channel Project has generated some criticism. Channel is a controversial national scheme established to support those individuals vulnerable to recruitment by violent extremists. It uses 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, issues around security clearance, data protection (around legislative impact), confidentiality and extent of Criminal Records Bureau (CRB) checks retain police nervousness due to the sensitive casework data of vulnerable individuals being shared in a non-police domain, even if they are counter-terrorism partners (Kundnani, 2009). The Channel Project is referred to in the Prevent Review document 2011, thus:

In many areas, these programmes are now delivered through Channel, a police-coordinated, multi-agency partnership that evaluates referrals of individuals at risk of being drawn into terrorism, working alongside safeguarding partnerships and crime reduction panels ... Channel is modelled on other successful multi-agency risk management processes such as child protection, domestic violence and the management of high risk offenders. It uses processes which also safeguard people at risk from crime, drugs or gangs ... the Channel process comprises three discreet steps: identification; risk assessment and referral; and support. The guidance states that identification of vulnerable people should be made by a wide range of statutory organisations. They include local authorities; police; youth offending services; social workers; housing and voluntary groups. Identifications must be made carefully and against a range of possible indicators ... The indicators (if observed) set the bar for referral quite high and would not (as is sometimes claimed) enable the referral of people simply for the holding

of political opinions or having commitment to a faith. They include: expressed support for violence and terrorism; possession of violent extremist literature; attempts to access or contribute to violent extremist websites; possession of material regarding weapons and/or explosives; and possession of literature regarding military training, skills and techniques. Under a section entitled 'personal history' the guidance proposes that attention be paid to: claims of involvement in organisations; espousing violent extremist ideology; claims of attendance at training camps; and claims of involvement in combat or violent activity on behalf of violent extremist groups. (Prevent Review, 2011: 60)

Any referrals should be made to a Channel coordinator who then assesses, with senior statutory partners, whether the person who has been identified is vulnerable to terrorism, whether they should exit the programme or whether they should be referred elsewhere (Prevent Review, 2011). According to figures released by the Associations of Chiefs of Police (ACPO), the number of Channel referrals nationally stands at 1120 between April 2007 and the end of December 2010 (ACPO, 2012). According to media reports, by 2009, two hundred schoolchildren in Britain, some as young as 13, were identified as potential terrorists by this scheme, raising concerns that the police run the risk of infringing upon children's privacy (*The Independent*, 2009). In 2011, MPs criticised Channel for triggering accusations about teachers and community leaders being asked to spy on Muslim youths (*The Guardian*, 2011). There is indeed a danger in pursuing an overly zealous counter-terrorism agenda. As much of this book has highlighted, particular communities can become 'suspect' and this raises issues for civil liberties.

The contribution of *Terror Crime Prevention with Communities* is that it attempts to propose ethical ways of doing counter-terrorism practice, at the core of which there lies an understanding that counter-terrorism is really about conflict transformation. Reframing counter-terrorism as conflict transformation helps state and non-state actors to work through their differences, to value each others' differing perspectives and experiences, and to work together in order to reduce the potential for extreme forms of violence. Chapter 2 has clearly illustrated the competing claims to truth evident in a post 9/11 era, and suggests that at the core of counter-terrorism as conflict transformation is the notion of credibility. Credibility is about a person's positionality, how a person draws upon their multiple identities in order

to build trust and relationships with key audiences and potential partners. Credibility can be challenging, for it is about being prepared to challenge dominant power structures in order to try to secure social justice, in a world characterised by social injustice. Credibility can play an important transformative role within conflict precisely because it is about maintaining integrity and trust despite considerable pressures to conform to dominant norms that may include repression, human rights abuses, violence or the promotion of violence. Credibility can be an important resource through which to build and maintain important connections with a wide range of actors for the purposes of conflict transformation, of offering peaceful responses to social norms and practices that are unjust and even violent.

Chapter 3 has examined community policing in relation to counter-terrorism, an area that has generated substantial research and policy interest. The chapter highlights that there is a danger that community policing is co-opted into state-driven agendas that almost exclusively focus on Muslim communities when responding to terrorism. At the same time, the chapter suggests that there is a danger that community policing might overlook the role of social and political factors in underpinning any community support for terrorism or other forms of extreme violence. This chapter also highlights the importance of police and communities engaging with each at times other than during a crisis event, as this can serve to humanise police and community relations. It is important, though to highlight that there can be important differences in perceptions between police officers and communities. Thus, police officers may express the real need for a covert style of counter-terrorism policing, and that communities cannot expect 'hard' policing tactics to be removed for the sake of relationship-building, even though communities argue that they dislike the use of tactics like surveillance, stop-and-search and informant-based approaches. Chapter 3 is generally supportive of adopting community policing within a counter-terrorism arena, although various limitations and questions must be considered. For example, could the application of 'softer' skills that feature in more covert, security-service led approaches within overt counter-terrorism policing contexts decrease the legitimacy of the police, particularly when the legitimacy of policing is often based on accountability and the rule of law being seen to be upheld and equal for all citizens?

Chapter 4 has considered how, within a context of differentiated citizenship, where there may be competing loyalties associated experiences of belonging at a global, as well as national and local level, states can encourage and actively persuade citizens to work within state-driven counter-terrorism agendas. The notion of active citizenship – that individuals as citizens have a responsibility to help prevent terrorism – that is at the heart of ‘softer’, community-based strategies to counter-terrorism, is highlighted. However, although citizenship at an abstract level implies equality, in reality individuals experience different levels of citizenship. When looking at citizenship in relation to nation-state security, particular communities have experienced differentiated state-led approaches to counter-terrorism. Post 9/11, Muslim communities have particularly experienced differentiated citizenship because they have borne the brunt of ‘hard-edged’ counter-terrorism policies and practices that have included detention without charge, surveillance and the use of informants. Therefore the chapter asks whether members of Muslim communities can take a proactive civil stance towards national counter-terrorism strategies and work towards preventing terrorism. Or, is it the case that the focus for all active citizens, not only for Muslims, should be a critique of state-driven counter-terrorism policies and practices where, despite state rhetoric around communities defeating terrorism and enhancing community resilience, in reality counter-terrorism continues to be largely driven by ‘hard-edged’ approaches that include surveillance and infiltration? A key theme highlighted in chapter four is that of trust. It seems that trust enables state and non-state actors to negotiate spaces of engagement and even partnership within the complex counter-terrorism terrain. This suggests that underpinning ‘softer’ counter-terrorism policies and practices are themes that resonate more directly with conflict transformation – the ability of state and non-state actors to work through any struggles and incompatibilities they may have, with trust serving as the social glue for this.

Chapter 5 has focussed on engagement and partnership within a counter-terrorism context. Key themes highlighted include: the importance of general engagement with a wide range of community members; the importance and challenges of engaging and partnering non-violent radicals; how engagement and partnership can involve 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, respect and understanding; how 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; and how information sharing is a key issue for engagement and partnerships.

Chapter 6 looks at the role of emotions in counter-terrorism practice. It seems that terrorists can generate destructive emotions in individuals who are susceptible to their messages and this in turn can lead to further violent action. Chapter six has suggested that destructive emotions are those that are harmful to oneself or others, and they include anger, fear, sadness, envy and jealousy. Overly hard counter-terrorism measures can create fear in specific communities that non-violent political action and debate is repressed and this may potentially and inadvertently lead to violent political action. Effective counter-terrorism practice involves state and non-state actors being aware of, and working with, emotions. Effective community-based approaches to counter-terrorism seem to involve transforming destructive emotions into constructive ones, which might be viewed as being those that are wholesome and positive, and can include self-confidence, conscience and nonhatred. This chapter also gives some focus to counter-terrorism policing in relation to emotions. Whilst policing organisations may value detached rationality, this can create tensions for police officers because not only is police work itself often emotional, but also because policing cultures and rules are affect laden. At the same time, communities themselves have complex emotional landscapes with inter- and intra-group dynamics and tensions further adding to the complexities. The notion that police officers can engage with political processes without giving due consideration to emotional processes and their own emotional intelligence is questioned in chapter six. Policing responses can themselves generate significant destructive emotions within communities – rage, anger, fear and so forth. A bureaucratic approach to policing characterised by emotional distance can hinder police and community engagement, for community members may feel that their emotions are not being taken on board by police officers and this may add further to a sense of grievance. Tensions are created when individuals attempt to be emotionally distant

within highly emotionally charged contexts. Chapter six suggests that effective police practitioners need to be aware of how their own actions may help to generate or awaken destructive emotions, or the ways in which their actions can generate or awaken constructive emotions.

Chapter seven has explored questions of governance and community-based approaches to counter-terrorism. The chapter looks at 'top-down' and 'bottom-up' approaches to counter-terrorism. It is argued that underpinning both 'top-down' and 'bottom-up' approaches are tensions between responses that emphasise community cohesion, and those that emphasise liberal freedoms associated with liberal democracy. The former can problematise specific identities, whilst the latter do not necessarily view religious, political or other identities as problematic. It is preventing violence that is the focus of policy and practice. The chapter points to an unresolved question for many counter-terrorism practitioners, for policy makers, for researchers and for community members: within a society, where should the balance lie between the embracing of ethical freedoms in relation to 'extreme' identities, and the governance of identity? Extreme or radical identifications are not necessarily problematic but violent actions associated with them are. Therefore, can there be alternative forms of agency that allow for the expression of radical or extreme identities which are democratic and do not involve violence ?

A core theme underpinning *Terror Crime Prevention with Communities* is that counter-terrorism practice is dominated by 'top-down' state-led approaches to security. *Terror Crime Prevention with Communities* is an attempt to strengthen, support and further establish an evidence base for 'softer' community-based approaches to counter-terrorism. Whilst community-based work within counter-terrorism is complex and fraught with difficulties, the book presents data about how state and non state actors have negotiated the multiple and multi-layered challenges. Implicit within *Terror Crime Prevention with Communities* is the idea that despite 'new terrorism' discourse resulting in a reduction of civil liberties, particularly for members of Muslim minorities, community-based work can help to re-set the balance. As such, community-based work can be part of a broader strategy of empowerment and transformation for twenty-first century peace-building. Importantly, *Terror Crime Prevention with Communities* has presented empirical data illustrating vastly different experiences and perceptions of counter-terrorism

practice. Trying to link these different narratives together to present a coherent framework of analysis is perhaps impossible. This is an important point, given that due to the politicised arena of counter-terrorism, often dominant elites decide on a particular set of policies and practices and then fit research and empirical data around these in order to validate their particular approaches and rationales. What happens if the approach taken to the analysis of empirical data contains elements of grounded theory, whereby themes are allowed to emerge from the data itself rather than being guided by particular political or policy frameworks and outcomes? A grounded theory approach is one that my research team and I have undertaken, and one which underpins *Terror Crime Prevention with Communities*. This has generated fragments of experiences and perceptions about community policing, counter-terrorism, police and community engagement, trust, emotions and other themes. These fragments are real-world, human experiences, and as such are invaluable. It is important to stress that the data presented in this book has not been tampered with in order to promote a particular philosophy, ideology or political standpoint. As highlighted previously, counter-terrorism policy and practice contains struggles over 'truth'. As such, counter-terrorism as conflict transformation involves the production of data that is not politically or ideologically motivated. Only then is it possible to create approaches that are for the betterment of all citizens, rather than approaches that are underpinned by political posturing and defensiveness. *Terror Crime Prevention with Communities* is an attempt to sow some seeds of ethical counter-terrorism practice, through a lens that views counter-terrorism as a form of conflict transformation. *Terror Crime Prevention with Communities* bears witness to the many practitioners, community members, policy officials and researchers who have shown significant leadership and courage in implementing ethically-driven initiatives aimed at preventing terrorism. The debates and issues presented in *Terror Crime Prevention with Communities* are likely to resonate for many years to come.

Bibliography

- ACPO (2012) National Channel Referral Figures, <http://www.acpo.police.uk/ACPOBusinessAreas/PREVENT/NationalChannelReferralFigures.aspx>. (accessed 17 August 2012).
- Aym, Z. (2005) *Still Moments: A Story About Faded Sreams and Forbidden Pictures*. Mossville: Still Moments.
- Home Office (2011) Prevent Strategy London: HMSO, https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/97976/prevent-strategy-review.pdf (accessed 10 April 2013).
- Hewitt, S. (2010) *Snitch! A History of the Modern Intelligence Informer*. London: Continuum.
- Hughes, M. (2009) 'Police identify 200 children as potential terrorists'. *The Independent*, 29 March 2009, <http://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/crime/police-identify-200-children-as-potential-terrorists-1656027.html> (accessed 17 August 2012).
- Kundnani, A. (2009) *Spooked! How not to prevent violent extremism*. London: Institute of Race Relations.
- Travis, A. (2011) 'Schools' counter terrorism project reviewed'. *The Guardian*, 18 February 2011, <http://www.guardian.co.uk/politics/2011/feb/18/schools-counter-terrorism-project-review> (accessed 17 August 2012).