

**Engagement and Partnership within counter-
terrorism: making space for emotion, humans as
psycho-social subjects**

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Background

- Communities, Identities & Crime (Policy Press)
- Human behaviour is the product of cognition, reason and, importantly, emotion, making 'the peculiarly passionless subject of criminology hard to comprehend' (Jefferson: 2002: 152).
- Developing a psychosocial criminology: psychoanalytic theory, focus upon the self, existentialism, a focus upon emotions.

Background

- **Religion & Society AHRC/ESRC programme:**
- Engagement and partnership work between police and Muslim communities within a counter-terrorism context.
- A Study exploring Questions relating to Partnership between Police and Muslim Communities in the Prevention of Violent Religio-Political Extremism amongst Muslim Youth.
- Spalek, El-Awa & McDonald

Emotion

- The intangibility and central importance of emotion in understanding socialities renders it complex and challenging for study. Nonetheless, there is growing research attention upon emotions, which might be viewed as being active stances towards the world, as well as being responses to situations (Woodhead & : 2009: 1).

Emotions – some themes

- Psychological, sociological, feminist approaches to emotions.
- Whose emotions ? The researcher's/the researched ?
- The relevance of emotional intelligence in a practice-based context.

Emotion – feminist themes

- Difference and Otherisation – these are emotional spaces.
- Empowerment/Disempowerment
- Outsider/Insider Perspectives
- Researcher-Researched Dynamics
- Reflexivity

Emotion - reflexivity

- An emerging body of feminist work considers emotionality to be a central part of documenting and examining the nature of the researcher's subjectivity (see Pickering, 2001). Traditionally, this form of introspection has not been pursued, amid concerns that researchers who explore their feelings might attract accusations of 'unhealthy absorption' or 'emotional exhibitionism' (Pickering: 2001: 486).

Emotions in a c-t context

- Emotions in a criminal justice context (Karstedt, 2002)
- Within policing, detached rationality is generally valued, whereby 'neutrality, objectivity and impartiality are viewed as necessary antecedents in policing' (Drodge & Murphy: 2002: 425)

AHRC/ESRC Study and Emotions

- With respect to their experiences in dealing with police, or as officers themselves, some participants felt that policing culture and practice is hindered by bureaucracy and emotional distance.
- The emotions of fear and anxiety were referred to by research participants with respect to the current political climate whereby Muslim communities are viewed as 'suspect' and in which individuals are fearful of voicing their concerns in legitimate ways, of showing their anger and frustration at being viewed with suspicion, or towards British foreign policy. Participants also spoke about how some individuals are also fearful of sending their children to mosques, and are watching over their own children out of a dread that they may be being influenced by extremists.
- Some innovative police officers using 'emotional intelligence' to build trust and empathy.

Future Questions

- What are the emotional components to violent extremism ?
- How might practitioners be drawing upon their emotional intelligence to connect with those deemed 'at risk' ?
- Within recent developments in cognitive psychology, emotions are viewed as being intertwined with human thinking and behaviour (Ben-Ze'ev, 2000; Gigerenzer & Selten, 2001; Maturana, 1988). Therefore, it might be suggested that a way of altering cognitions and transforming how individuals relate to, and interact with, the world is through an awareness of, and working with, emotions.

Future Questions

- How are emotions handled by police officers and young people – is there a way to harness anger and frustration in positive ways ?
- What is the role for emotions in ‘de-radicalisation’ initiatives ?
- What is the role for emotions when examining researcher/researched dynamics within this sensitive area ?