Article

“The Eyes and Ears on Our Frontlines”: Policing without Police to Counter Violent Extremism

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Abstract

As the US public has grown more concerned about domestic terrorist attacks and the abrogation of civil liberties in the pursuit of national security, law enforcement agencies increasingly have applied the principles of community policing to the problem of homegrown terrorism. This community policing approach has anchored Countering Violent Extremism (CVE) initiatives that mobilize local communities to combat terrorist radicalization and recruitment. To do so, this emerging model has tasked community members and social service providers like teachers and mental health professionals with identifying, reporting, and working with potential terrorists. Drawing from a two-year interpretive qualitative research study of CVE policy making and taking across the United States, I examine these emerging police–citizen practices, paying particular attention to how these new institutional arrangements enhance, rather than rein in, policing powers in the name of national security.

Introduction

In 2016, the Obama administration announced a US Department of Homeland Security (DHS) Countering Violent Extremism (CVE) grant program as a part of a larger antiterrorism strategy that mobilizes communities in the fight against homegrown terrorism. Through strategic partnerships between law enforcement agencies and community organizations, this DHS initiative has sought to “support state and local efforts to prevent terrorism and other catastrophic events and to prepare the Nation for threats and hazards that pose the greatest risk to the security of the United States” (DHS 2016: 1). In soliciting applications, DHS encouraged communities to apply for this federal grant program to support local efforts to thwart homegrown terrorism (author’s participant observation, July 2016).

In response to this grant program, DHS received more than two hundred applications from community organizations, academic institutions, law enforcement agencies, and corporations seeking to mobilize communities to combat violent extremism. After reviewing these applications under the Trump administration, DHS “awarded \$10 million to 26 local law enforcement and community organizations” (Office of the Press Secretary 2017). Secretary of Homeland Security John Kelly reported that he selected programs “with the highest likelihood of success, that support men and women on the front lines of this fight, and that can be self-sustaining into the future” (ibid.). Kelly specifically directed \$2,340,000 to law enforcement agencies, a key priority in funding allocations. Furthermore, some grant recipients like the Houston Mayor’s Office distributed part of its funds to law enforcement agencies like the FBI and Houston Regional Intelligence Service Center (Fusion Center) (City of Houston 2016). Other recipients like New Jersey’s Global Peace Foundation (2016) sought to establish partnerships with law enforcement agencies to

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enhance local efforts to counter violent extremism. As the largest, and only, congressionally appropriated budget for countering violent extremism initiatives, the DHS CVE grant program signals a federal commitment to supporting community–police collaborations to combat homegrown terrorism.

The awarded grants and corresponding quarterly reports provide insight into the priorities, vocabularies, philosophies, and practices of federally supported CVE programs, important data for understanding new community policing tactics developed and deployed in the name of national security.¹ The Las Vegas Metropolitan Police Department's (2016: 2) application, for example, revealed intentions to establish "an intervention program called the Southern Nevada Community Resiliency and Intervention Coalition" tasked with "develop[ing] and administer[ing] an intervention program for community members at risk of recruitment to violent extremism" through community–police partnerships. Like other recipients, the department identified the need for "local police agencies [to] work with their communities to develop non-law enforcement intervention programs for individuals attracted to violent extremism" (6). These community-driven interventions have served as a welcome alternative to more traditional police enforcement activities to combat terrorism, such as FBI stings and preemptive prosecutions.

In addition to articulating the need for community–police collaborations, some applications offered evidence as to who has been targeted by these federally funded programs, such as "Somali-American youth" and "Native American student groups" in Minneapolis and "faith communities, Black Lives Matter, diverse communities, refugee communities, among others, facing disenfranchisement by society" in Denver (FEMA 2018: 21; Denver Police Department 2016: 3). The documents therefore provide information on who is perceived to threaten US national security in specific cities and detail how local organizations intend to thwart these threats.

Other recipient applications indicated the strategies used to organize local CVE programs. The Illinois Criminal Justice Information Authority (ICJIA), for example, submitted a grant application that proposed a "bystander-gatekeeper training program to educate a broad cross-section of communities on how to help off-ramp individuals who exhibit warning signs of radicalization to violence as well as those who exhibit behaviors signifying they may be in the early stages of planning an act of ideologically inspired targeted violence" (ICJIA 2016: 2). In this model, community members and social service providers like teachers collaborate with, and serve as extensions of, the police by learning to identify, monitor, and work with individuals perceived to be vulnerable to, or in the process of, terrorist radicalization.

As these examples demonstrate, the DHS CVE grant program and its funded applications reveal how federal, state, and local organizations have thought about countering violent extremism and which types of initiatives the federal government has valued. To learn more about these new institutional arrangements through which communities have supported police partnerships to rein in governmental overreaching and enhance national security, I conducted a two-year qualitative research study that examined CVE from the perspectives of those directly involved in this work: political leaders, national security practitioners, community members, and targeted youth. To do so, I traveled across the United States to interview stakeholders; participate in industry conferences; observe community forums; and conduct a document analysis of key national security texts. My participant observation of public CVE forums and conferences introduced me to a network of federal, state, and local national security workers whom I would later interview. At the end of each interview, I asked participants to name other practitioners who should be included in this research study to provide a more complete understanding of CVE in the United States. Through this snowball sampling, I interviewed additional national security workers and radicalization researchers. In this article, I refer to all participants by their pseudonyms to maintain anonymity. Although I recorded and transcribed my interviews

¹ DHS only made public the applications that received funding. Although community organizations and I have filed Freedom of Information of Act requests, we have received only a handful of denied grant applications. I therefore could not conduct a systematic analysis of all funded and unfunded grant applications.

with participants, I relied on handwritten or typed fieldnotes during my observation of CVE events, which included documenting direct quotations, which I also have included in this article.

This fieldwork provided insight into the introduction, implementation, and evolution of countering violent extremism policies and programs. More specifically, this research study offered a window into how the US security state has called on racialized communities to carry out carceral functions *on themselves* and further institutionalize the management of "Muslim-looking" bodies as a deviant threat to the nation in the name of liberal progress (Love 2017). A critical analysis of these tactics and associated discourses used to construct "suspect communities" contributes to the field of surveillance studies by examining how these emerging community policing practices intensify the surveillance and monitoring of racialized youth (see also Monaghan 2014). This analysis therefore advances surveillance studies discussions on surveillant solutions organized around the logics of national security (Bigo 2006, 2008; Bennett et al. 2014; Wood 2009; Lyon and Haggerty 2012; Monaghan 2012; Monahan 2010).

To stage this analysis, I begin with an overview of community policing and its application to the US antiterrorism agenda. I then analyze how community policing-oriented CVE programs have relied on disproven warning signs to identify individuals vulnerable to or in the process of radicalizing. I argue that the introduction of CVE has intensified rather than mitigated racialized policing and targeted criminalization in the United States. Despite the digital turn in security governance, CVE programs have called on community members and social service providers to monitor their own communities through physical watching and surveillance. I contend that, by mobilizing communities to co-produce national security, CVE programs have shored up support for "the same institutions that racially profile us in the streets" and "the same police who decide to shoot Black people who are selling a cigarette or a young Black child who has a toy gun in the park" (author's participant observation, August 2017). CVE programs therefore have enhanced policing powers by deputizing social service providers as frontline defenders and framing these efforts as a progressive alternative to conventional counterterrorism practices.

Weed and Seed: Applying Community Policing to the Problem of Terrorism

Fifteen years into the global war on terror, the US security state renewed its community policing efforts to fight the perceived rise in "homegrown" or "lone wolf" terrorism. In 2014, for example, the International Association of Chiefs of Police (IACP 2014: 2) argued that "community members are an important force multiplier" in preventing domestic terrorism. Given the "shrinking budgets and increasing expectations for law enforcement agencies" in the United States, the IACP suggested that "one of the most beneficial aspects of community policing is the principle of leveraging the strength of communities and their members" to thwart terrorist attacks. As the US public has grown more concerned about the rise of homegrown terrorism and the abrogation of civil liberties in the pursuit of national security, law enforcement agencies increasingly have applied the principles of community policing to their national security work. The US security state has argued that communities can increase police power and safeguard civil liberties through ongoing participation in community policing programs. Today, community policing paradigms organize domestic antiterrorism regimes in the United States, ultimately enhancing the racialized surveillance of communities.

The Emergence of Community Policing: A More Complex Approach to Crime

According to sociologist Nigel Fielding (2005: 460), "community policing" refers to "an iconic style of policing in which the police are close to the public, know their concerns from regular everyday contacts, and act on them in accord with the community's wishes." In this approach, community members serve as "co-producers" of public safety, a collaborative tactic that "lays the foundations for a positive relationship between government and citizens by making citizens an integral part of the service delivery process" (Levine and Fisher 1984: 181). Given this co-production of public safety, agencies like the Department of Justice consider community policing to be "democracy in action," empowering local communities to collaboratively solve local problems with law enforcement agencies. In the United States, this "democratic" approach to policing dates back in the mid-twentieth century, although national commitments to community

policing have fluctuated with shifting social contexts from the civil rights movement to the global war on terror.

The mid-twentieth century rise of community policing models in the United States represented a pivot away from "incident-oriented" policing toward "problem-oriented" policing. Leading police strategists James Wilson and George Kelling (1989: para 4), for example, explain that "the conventional police strategy is 'incident-oriented'—a citizen calls to report an incident, such as a burglary, and the police respond by recording information relevant to the crime and then trying to solve it. Obviously, when a crime occurs, the victim is entitled to a rapid, effective police response." A police response to incidents, however, does not address "the community problems that cause or explain many of these incidents" and "so the incidents will continue and their number will perhaps increase." Because conventional police models were failing to resolve the underlying conditions that drive crime, Wilson and Kelling called for a more complex "problem-oriented" approach to policing that directly addressed the root causes of crime. For some jurisdictions, community policing would become this more complex approach to crime fighting. Although community policing sought to increase community involvement in local law enforcement, this approach still centers policing, including informal mechanisms of social control, as the quintessential solution to social problems like drug use rather than public investments in social supports like drug rehabilitation programs, job opportunities, and quality education.

Co-Producing Public Safety: Responding to Social Protests

In addition to rethinking the role of the police, the shift toward community policing emerged as a response to national critiques that coercive policing was violently suppressing the Black freedom struggle. According to criminologist Gary Potter (n.d.: para. 1), "the use of professional police forces to suppress the Civil Rights movement, often by brute force"—derived from earlier iterations of slave patrols—did "irreparable damage to American policing." In addition, the "police handling of large demonstrations against the Vietnam War in the late 1960s and 1970s was also controversial." In fact, the Department of Justice's Office of Community-Oriented Policing Services (COPS) admitted that during the 1960s "police brutality often led to civil disorder, and some members of the public saw the police at the forefront of maintaining the status quo of an unjust and discriminatory society" (Fisher-Stewart 2003: 3). As mass protests and political assassinations grew during this time, national commissions identified the police as a source of social tension. The Community Policing Consortium (1994: 7) similarly explained that the "police force's inability to handle urban unrest in an effective and appropriate manner brought demands by civic leaders and politicians for a reexamination of police practices." Both the US government and its public indicted the police as a source of social instability.

Given the criminal-legal system's growing crisis of legitimacy under these conditions, the US government dedicated federal funds to improve the image of the police through media campaigns. Police departments also began instituting community policing as a new approach to public safety issues. These early community policing efforts "represented short-term tactics to repair police/minority relations and was regarded by many as a cosmetic exercise masking reluctance to change unsuccessful established law enforcement methods" (Fielding 2005: 461). By "emphasizing proactive citizen engagement and addressing community concerns," police departments could be "more effective and viewed as more legitimate in the eyes of the public" (Lee 2010: 350). Initial community policing sought to repair the police's image, reputation, and capacity to solve crimes, particularly in communities of color contesting police brutality, racial profiling, and constant surveillance.

Despite intentions to reduce political protest through community partnerships, community organizers continued to question policing practices targeting racialized communities and rejected community policing as a solution, simultaneous to the government's continued reliance on these programs. After the 1992 Los Angeles uprisings, for example, President George H. Bush initiated Operation Weed and Seed to "weed" out criminals and to "seed" community revitalization projects. According to the DOJ (2014: para 1), "a community-oriented policing component bridges weeding and seeding strategies: officers obtain cooperation and information from area residents while they assist residents in obtaining information about

community revitalization and resources." Despite the liberal framing of Operation Weed and Seed, American Civil Liberties Union executive director Gary Peck warned that "this is a program that is using a disproportionate share of its resources on the weed side of the formula in communities of color, and using a disproportionate share of its resources on the seed side in communities that are predominately white" (as quoted in Kanigher 1996). Even though Operation Weed and Seed was framed as a program responsive to the needs of communities of color, community members argued that this program intensified policing, increased criminal complaints about communities of color, and promoted fear of gang-related crime (Bridenball and Jesilow 2005).

Facing similar problems of legitimacy, contemporary community policing models like COPS arguably work to "address the causes and reduce fear of crime and social disorder through problem-solving tactics and police-community partnerships" (Miller, Hess, and Orthmann 2008: 235). In Chicago, Mayor Rahm Emanuel voiced a recommitment to community policing in the wake of the Chicago Police Department's cover-up of its 2014 killing of seventeen-year-old Laquan McDonald (Rhee 2016). Given these contemporary struggles, Kristian Williams (2013: 84) argues that community policing "helps legitimize police efforts by presenting cops as problem solvers" and "forms police-driven partnerships that put additional resources at their disposal and win the cooperation of community leaders." By strategically "increasing daily, friendly contacts with people in the neighborhood, community policing provides a direct supply of low-level information," thereby exploiting community outreach for intelligence-gathering purposes.

Despite the enduring appeal of community policing as a liberal alternative to conventional coercive policing, Fielding (2005: 460) worries that this approach depends on an "idealized view" that assumes that every community shares a "unified value system," that police-community relations are stable, and that police strive toward a "posited common good." As one CVE practitioner similarly warned, using community policing to prevent terrorism "*assumes* you actually have partnerships between law enforcement and communities [and] *assumes* transparency and joint solutions," even though "in the context of violent extremism . . . investigations for terrorism are led by the FBI" (interview with Hadiyah Khoury, January 25, 2017). Furthermore, community policing models presume that policing as an institution can be reformed, obfuscating its anti-Black and anti-Indigenous roots in slave patrols and Indian constables used to control, eliminate, and evict Black and Indigenous peoples from communities (Singh 2014). Despite these limitations, the means of social control historically "have adapted in response to crises, to challenges faced by the existing authorities," from the creation of slave patrols to quash slave revolts to the establishment of community policing to manage the crises of the 1960s (Williams 2004: 205). In this way, community policing models sought to "undo the reforms of the Progressive and professional eras" that "centralize[d] command, introduce[d] bureaucratic management practices, close[d] neighborhood precincts, [did] away with foot patrols, narrowly focus[ed] on crime control, increase[d] specialization within the departments, and generally sever[ed] the connections between the police and the public" (ibid.: 205). Today, the global war on terror has generated new approaches in domestic counterterrorism, from coercive FBI stings to community policing-oriented countering violent extremism programs, which expand state surveillance.

Co-Producing National Security: Applying Community Policing to Counterterrorism

In the immediate aftermath of the September 11, 2001, attacks, US police departments abandoned community policing paradigms for more aggressive tactics (Brandl 2003). In California, for example, after September 11 the Long Beach Police Department "focused on tactical concerns such as patrol and counterterrorism while abandoning their community policing activities such as foot patrol, DARE (Drug Abuse Resistance Education), and their community relations division" (Lee 2010: 351). To prevent "the next September 11," police departments nationwide turned to the use of undercover informants, mosque crawlers to monitor weekly sermons, mosque rakers to "rake the coals" to find terrorist hotspots in Muslim neighborhoods, warrantless surveillance, FBI stings, entrapment, and other coercive tactics. Through the homeland security turn in US policing, "tactical methods, technology, and alternative social providers, such as security personnel" came to "replace community policing" (Pastor 2005: 4).

Yet, the turn to these coercive policing tactics generated ongoing resistance from targeted communities, civil rights organizations, academic scholars, and journalists (Martin 2013; Greenwald 2014; American Civil Liberties Union 2011; Cainkar 2009; Selod 2018). Given the continued resistance to and limitations of domestic counterterrorism tactics, national security experts sought to establish more complex and community-driven approaches to the evolving problem of homegrown terrorism. In 2006, for example, leading police scientist Martin Innes (2006: 224) argued that integrating "a system of local neighborhood policing (NP) into the counterterrorism apparatus" could thwart domestic terrorist threats. This approach also could provide local communities with "a degree of direct democratic influence over how they are policed" while positioning NP officers to "build levels of interpersonal trust with members of Muslim and other minority communities upon which the communication of intelligence is often contingent" (224). Rather than rely on "criminal intelligence" gathered by professional police informants, NP facilitates the collection of "community intelligence" provided by ordinary members of the public to detect "subtle indicators of suspicion that people may develop about activities connected to terrorism in their communities" (224). Community-police partnerships therefore formulate the "working capital" of "how trust is built for community intelligence to be passed to the police," ultimately operationalizing "soft power" in the national security arena (233). This means that the incorporation of NP into antiterrorism operations facilitates "democratic policing" by providing local communities with some "collective influence" over local policing, increasing trust between communities and police officers, and safeguarding civil liberties (239).

Despite the possibilities of the NP approach to counterterrorism, criminologists question whether "community intelligence is sufficient for maintaining, consolidating, and enhancing social cohesion which helps undermine the threat of terrorist violence," especially since targeted communities often view the police as "instruments of a repressive state" (Pickering, McCulloch, and Wright-Neville 2008: 93–94). Criminologist Ian Loader (2006: 215), for example, argues that "ambient" or all-pervasive policing undermines the values and practices of democracy. In his view, "by treating security as an unmediated relation between police and citizen that requires the former to be routinely displayed in front of the latter, and by pandering to rather than calling into question popular fantasies of total security, ambient policing makes security pervasive in ways that, in the end, foster and sustain the very insecurity it purports to attack" (ibid.: 209). This process shifts police work "from service to suspicion" (Bayley and Weisburd 2008). Loader (2006: 229) therefore refutes the notion that collecting and using community intelligence through ambient policing is a part of the "dirty work" of democracy and instead is a possible source of continuing insecurity. Rather than develop extensive relationships with local communities, policing institutions can "contribute to public security and to the getting and keeping of democracy as—and by remaining—constrained, reactive, rights-regarding agencies of minimal interference and last resort" (ibid.: 215).

Similar to Loader's warning, former LAPD Counterterrorism Deputy Chief Michael Downing (2009: 32) cautions that "the growth of intelligence-gathering operations at the local level must be proportionate with the creation of safeguards against abuses," particularly in "carefully and accurately defin[ing] those they suspect will commit a criminal terrorist act." Unlike Loader's desire to increase democratic values and practices, however, Downing's concerns center on gaining the "support of trust of the US population so that local residents will partner with the police in pursuit of their lawful mission" to counter extremist ideologies and "hunt terrorism suspects" (ibid.: 32–33). Criminologist William Pelfrey Jr. (2006: 336) similarly concludes that "the community is likely to endorse programs in which they can be involved in the co-production of safety." Building community relationships is operationally relevant rather than democratically salient in the "hunt" for potential terrorists. For many security-oriented organizations, community policing forms the basis of effective, inclusive, and progressive CVE practices. In this view, community members "are an important force multiplier," especially as local law enforcement agencies "have become increasingly important in providing for the national security of the United States" (IACP 2014: 1–2).

For many national security experts, the introduction of community policing into domestic antiterrorism efforts represented a turn away from coercive counterterrorism tactics like FBI stings toward more community-led efforts to prevent terrorist radicalization and recruitment. In fact, early CVE programs

emphasized the role of community policing in local operations. The DHS CVE Curriculum Working Group (2011: 5),² for example, argued that "the Community Policing philosophy is best suited to serve as the foundation of [countering violent extremism] programs," but only after this philosophy has been adapted to "address the dynamics of Violent Extremism and the associated convergent threats, particularly that emanate from Diaspora communities." By 2017, forty-five percent of policing agencies in the United States were using the community policing practices of "outreach and engagement with the communities that may be targeted for recruitment to violent extremism" (Schanzer et al. 2016: 12). Policing agencies, however, have continued to rely on traditional methods like "criminal investigatory techniques," "coordination with a state or local intelligence fusion center," "police patrols of potential terrorism targets and public spaces," and "video surveillance of public areas" (ibid.: 12–16). Although national security experts positioned these community policing approaches to countering violent extremism as a friendlier alternative to conventional counterterrorism tactics, their introduction did not lead to an abandonment of prior practices. Antiterrorism expert Daniel Glickman (author's participant observation, March 2017), for example, argued that this approach functioned as "the fourth way," alongside—not in place of—"sting operations," "labor-intensive surveillance," and "doing nothing."

Despite these continued practices, national security experts and community leaders alike have welcomed community policing-oriented CVE as a method to co-produce public safety, safeguard civil liberties, and protect communities from terrorist influences. As a type of "third party policing," this CVE approach encourages and incentivizes community participation in local efforts to identify, report, and work with individuals perceived to be vulnerable to or in the process of terrorist radicalization. The high level of public and police interest in the DHS CVE grant program indicates the primacy of this national security approach in the United States, even in the face of ongoing resistance to CVE and other national security practices. Given their centrality on the national security stage, these emerging surveillance tactics facilitated by community–police partnerships demand additional attention by surveillance studies scholars.

Third-Party Policing: Mobilizing Social Service Providers for the Domestic War on Terror

To co-produce national security, the CVE framework calls on community members and social service providers like mental health professionals to identify and report individuals at-risk of violent extremism, enhance community resilience to terrorist radicalization, and thwart the online presence of terrorist recruiters. To support these local efforts, the DHS CVE grant program funded applicants seeking to train communities in these skills. In Minnesota, for example, Hennepin County Sheriff's Office (2016: 6) grant application proposed implementing two workshops with the Voices of East African Women community organization. These proposed workshops would be "specially designed for area women and their children" to "understand the nature and danger of the threats, the processes and signs of radicalization, and aid in discussion of available resources for protecting their children and others in the community." In addition, the Sheriff's Office sought to replicate the London Metropolitan Police Department's Red Stop Program, an online system for individuals to "easily and anonymously report extremist internet content to law enforcement" (11). This approach "allow[s] residents and community partners to share the responsibility of policing the internet" and "create[s] a clear opportunity for law enforcement to engage the community in partnership," particularly within the Somali community. Lastly, the Sheriff's Office proposed a "new staffing model for law enforcement" by hiring "community liaisons" tasked with "develop[ing] relationships with growing immigrant diaspora communities that face challenging cultural and language barriers" and "vouch[ing] for our Agency credibility" (8). In this proposal, the Sheriff's Office called on "women and their children" to watch out for signs of radicalization in their communities and on the internet and for community liaisons to strengthen community–police relationships and enhance the credibility of law enforcement officials, all in the name of "addressing the threat of radicalization."

² In 2010, DHS created the CVE Curriculum Working Group, comprising representatives from the federal government and state and local law enforcement agencies. Los Angeles Police Department Deputy Chief Michael Downing chaired this group.

Like the Hennepin County Sheriff's Office, New Jersey's Global Peace Foundation's (2016: 4) grant application proposed "train-the-trainer" programs for law enforcement agents and community leaders to facilitate community-police relationships. These trainings intended to "promote knowledge and awareness of Violent Extremism (VE) and Countering Violent Extremism (CVE)" and were "designed to help communities to assess at-risk persons, inform communities about when it is appropriate to notify law enforcement about individuals at risk, make the environment resistant to violent extremism, and encourage the development of community-led prevention and intervention." The City of Houston (2016: 11) also proposed "Empowered Parents workshops" with a focus on "strengthening family bonds; increasing communication; and understanding risk factors, threats, and available social and community resources." In Colorado, the Denver Police Department (2016: 5) announced plans for a "community-led" CVE model to "help facilitate community-police trust and relationships as together we seek to recognize and prevent radicalization of at-risk populations in the Denver Metro area." To do so, the Denver Police Department partnered with Goodwill Industries to provide additional mentoring to youth identified as "at-risk" of radicalization, including introducing them to the concept of "community-oriented policing." (ibid.: 4). As the examples illustrate, these organizations have mobilized both local police agencies and communities to identify, report, and work with individuals perceived to be "at-risk" of terrorist radicalization and recruitment. Although framed as a "community-driven" alternative to "police-led" antiterrorism methods, the programs deputized community members and social service providers to carry out the functions of and support law enforcement.

In Maryland, the Muslim-led World Organization for Resource Development and Education (WORDE)³ established what it considered to be the "first community-led CVE program in the United States" by applying community policing to the problem of violent extremism. More specifically, this CVE program used a "collective impact approach" that increased "the citizen's role in public safety" and recognized "the importance of a range of public stakeholders and private partners that work collaboratively to *drive* social change" (Nazanin Zaghari, author's participant observation, August 2016). According to WORDE (2017: para. 1), this "Building Resilience Against Violent Extremism" (BRAVE)⁴ model maintained "a core focus on generating public awareness about the risk factors of violent extremism, and empowering the appropriate figures to intervene with vulnerable individuals before they ch[o]se a path of violence." One Montgomery County Police Department School Resource Officer "who attended WORDE's radicalization training," for example, "identified a high school student as needing intervention services," including "culturally-sensitive mentoring and counseling," after threatening another student with violence (WORDE 2014: 4). The student, however, had been experiencing post-traumatic stress disorder "after living in a refugee camp in Jordan," not radicalizing. WORDE conducted additional interventions that included "mentoring and care" for other immigrant students who experienced "homesickness," "acculturation related stress," "feelings of alienation," and "economic stressors," all of which "suggest they *may be* at risk of violent extremism" (2014: 4). Viewed through a CVE lens, social service providers have come to interpret common immigrant experiences in the United States as signs of terrorist radicalization requiring interventions facilitated by new community-police partnerships.

In Michigan, the Dearborn Police Department (2016: 2) sought DHS CVE funds to "help raise awareness on recognizing disturbing behaviors which warrant non-criminal intervention by well-trained law enforcement personnel and mental health professionals." Citing Dearborn's large Arab Muslim population, the police department celebrated its "inclusive approach toward community policing and countering violent extremism" as the "first line of defense in both homeland and hometown security" (4-5). From the department's perspective, "the marriage of community policing and countering violent extremism has proven effective in meeting the needs of the City of Dearborn" (4). This marriage contributed to the creation of the department's "Intervention Model" whereby "family, friends, or acquaintances" who are "worried about a person's behavior" can "[tip] off the police" (6). Although the department admitted that "there is no empirical data that shows people in Dearborn are committing terrorism," it also argued that "the city's

³ WORDE has since dissolved; its website is no longer accessible.

⁴ BRAVE formerly was known as the Montgomery County Model (MCM) before WORDE rebranded this initiative.

unique demographics"—the "largest concentration of Arab populations outside of the Middle East"—had given the city "a disproportionate amount of attention and subject[ed] our community members to intense scrutiny" (8). The Dearborn Police Department suggested that terrorism awareness and prevention training can equip community members with the tools to identify and thwart potential threats by knowing the behaviors or activities that may lead to "criminal activity," tasks usually undertaken by policing institutions (9).

Dearborn's approach aligns with broader CVE practices that police the "pre-criminal" space presumed to be a precursor to criminal violent extremism. In this "preventive" or "public health" approach, families, local communities, and local institutions" serve as the "first line of defense against violent extremists" by using their CVE training to identify and report suspicious behaviors "*before* the line of criminal activity is crossed" (DHS 2015, emphasis added). Redefining non-criminal behaviors like extremist thought and "acculturation related stress" as "pre-criminal" facilitates the criminalization of racialized communities, whereby certain behaviors are identified, reported, and treated as precursors to criminal violence, despite recognition that there are no scientifically proven indicators, warning signs, or risk factors of violent extremism. Although CVE practitioners increasingly reference suicide prevention strategies, behavioral scientists admit that "in the realm of suicide prevention work, there are no interventions in place to screen people for (or prevent) *thoughts* of killing oneself, because of the difficulty in distinguishing between those who are thinking about killing themselves and those who go on to kill themselves" (Rajeev Ramchand, as referenced in National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine 2017: 46). The social construction of a "pre-criminal space" enhances policing powers by reframing non-criminal behavior as pre-criminal and then calling on community members to report such non-criminal behaviors to law enforcement.

Each of these community-policing-oriented CVE programs relies on community organizations giving local police legitimacy, credibility, and access to targeted communities. The City of Houston's planned CVE program, for example, includes governmental, academic, non-profit, and interfaith partnerships. The Illinois Criminal Justice Information Authority's "Targeted Violence Prevention Program" similarly sought, but did not always secure, extensive community partnerships by pursuing relationships with the Islamic Center of Naperville, as well as the Parliament of the World's Religions, the Council of Religious Leaders of Metropolitan Chicago, and the Compassionate Care Network, which provides healthcare services to uninsured Muslim communities across Chicagoland. In addition to these religious, academic, and community institutions, CVE community-police partnerships increasingly include mental health providers like the Illinois Department of Human Services Division of Mental Health, the New Jersey Division of Mental Health and Addiction Services, to name just a few.

Within the CVE policy world, policing institutions enhance their power by training community members to identify youth vulnerable to violent extremism. In this national security approach, even though community members "do not technically qualify as the police," they are imbued with "a kind of regulatory power bound up with the threat of coercion, in other words, a form of police power" (Bell 2015: 20). CVE therefore facilitates "third-party policing," which refers to "police efforts to persuade or coerce nonoffending persons to take actions which are outside the scope of their routine activities, which are designed to indirectly minimize disorder caused by other persons or to reduce the possibility that crime may occur" (Buerger and Mazerolle 1998: 301). These community-driven approaches to countering homegrown terrorism both shore up support for and expand policing institutions that historically have targeted communities of color.

Radicalization Research: Identifying Homegrown Terrorists

As a type of third-party policing, the CVE policy framework encourages and incentivizes communities to participate in local efforts to identify, report, and work with individuals perceived to be at risk of terrorist radicalization. To support communities in co-producing national security, law enforcement agencies, academics, and policymakers have developed tools to evaluate individuals who may be at risk of terrorist radicalization and recruitment.

The NYPD (Silber and Bhatt 2007: 5), for example, published an early and popular report, *Radicalization in the West: The Homegrown Threat*, to increase law enforcement understanding of the radicalization process, with a specific emphasis on identifying the point at which “we believe the potential terrorist or group of terrorists begin and progress through a process of radicalization.” The NYPD argued that the radicalization process unfolded linearly through four phases, “each with its distinct set of indicators and signatures” (ibid.: 6). The “remarkable consistency” of the radicalization process provided a “tool for predictability,” such that law enforcement and communities could look for these “typical signatures,” such as “growing a beard,” “becoming involved in social activism and community issues,” “wearing traditional Islamic clothing,” and “showing unusual maturity and seriousness” (ibid.: 82, 31). The FBI (2006: 10) similarly provided a preliminary list of indicators to “identify an individual going through the radicalization process,” including “frequent attendance at mosque or prayer group,” “travel to a Muslim country,” and “increased activity in a pro-Muslim social group or political cause.”

As law enforcement agencies like the FBI and NYPD developed their own sets of indicators, academics similarly conducted studies and published reports that explored the radicalization process and associated indicators, warning signs, and risk factors of violent extremism (Jenkins 2010; McCauley and Moskalenko 2008; Horgan 2008; Gartenstein-Ross and Grossman 2009; Weine, Eisenman, Jackson, et al. 2017). This growing research agenda has intensified through the support of government grants, academic conferences, and university consortiums like Duke University’s Triangle Center on Terrorism and Homeland Security.

In addition to these warning signs, US security agencies have drafted assessments to determine an individual’s vulnerability to or propensity for violent extremism. The National Counterterrorism Center (NCTC 2014: 18–20), for example, authored a CVE practitioners’ guide that includes a rubric to assess the “risk and resilience factors” affecting a community. These factors include “trust in institutions and law enforcement,” “isolation and social exclusion,” “discrimination,” “neighborhood safety,” “degree of violence in community,” “experiences of trauma,” and access to healthcare, social services, educational services, and recreational services. By developing these tools, national security experts have sought to assist communities in undertaking policing work to identify and report individuals perceived to be radicalizing toward violent extremism by conducting risk assessments.

These risk assessments and the associated radicalization research have informed local policing aimed at countering homegrown terrorism. Minneapolis law enforcement officials, for example, cited “disaffection,” a “deepening disconnect between youth and religious leaders,” “internal identity crises,” and “lack of opportunity” as “root causes of radicalization” (United States Attorney’s Office of Minneapolis 2015: 4). These lists of warning signs have dictated which behaviors, vocabularies, and practices generate suspicion within communities and initiate preemptive action to prevent violent extremism, particularly in Minneapolis’s large immigrant Somali community. Reflecting on his high school experiences, one Somali student (author’s participant observation, April 2017) reported that through these tools, CVE practitioners, including Somali elders, “come to our school and tell us how to walk and talk and what to do. America wants you to act a certain way and, if you don’t, they’re not having it.” Somali high school graduates therefore worried about Minneapolis Public Schools’ curation of an “internal database of students who were concerning,” particularly when “opposition to American policy” counted as “concerning” (author’s participant observation, April 2017).

These surveillance practices align with academic calls for preventive interventions that “serve youth and adults who are believed to be at risk of committing a violent act but are still in the pre-criminal space” through “mental health and psychosocial programming” (Weine, Eisenman, Kinsler, et al. 2017: 3, 8). This approach mobilizes communities to conduct preventive interventions such as mental health counseling coordinated by the FBI with individuals who have not yet committed a crime but have been identified as vulnerable to terrorist radicalization (Morgan 2018). By encouraging communities to police certain non-criminal behaviors and thoughts as precursors to criminal violence (“pre-criminal”), CVE practitioners criminalize constitutionally protected acts and ideologies as well as communities perceived to be more

vulnerable to violent extremism. CVE proponents, however, argue that this preventive approach reduces arrests by proactively intervening before the line of criminal activity has been crossed.

Despite the rapid proliferation of community policing-oriented CVE programs promoted as an alternative to coercive counterterrorism, both CVE practitioners and social scientists routinely have disproven the radicalization research organizing these surveillance practices. More specifically, scholars have demonstrated that there is no single profile of a terrorist and no single pathway toward violent extremism (Bjørge 2011; Chang and Kim 2016; Horgan 2008; Kundnani 2014; Kumar 2012; Patel 2011). This means that there are no indicators, risk factors, or warning signs that can reliably predict who may commit an act of mass violence or who may be vulnerable to radicalization. The continued use of these identificatory practices that guide local surveillance demands ongoing attention by critical security studies and surveillance studies scholars to support both academic and community responses to these emerging security tactics.

Despite the mounting research studies disproving the validity of radicalization research, community organizations and law enforcement agencies increasingly suggest that "research is beginning to point to observable behaviors that seem to be associated with the process of radicalization" (Nebraska Emergency Management Agency 2016: 2). Although many CVE practitioners have recognized that "there is no 'profile' of someone who is likely to be a violent extremist," they also have insisted that there are "behaviors or observable signs" that could be used to "create checklists or structured professional judgement tools to aid in screening individuals who may be vulnerable to radicalization" (ibid.: 2).

WORDE employee Nazanin Zaghari author's participant observation, August 2016) similarly argued that "there is no such thing as a terrorist profile and there is no one single factor that can predict who will become a terrorist, but what we do know from the empirical research on convicted terrorists and terrorists incidences are some common indicators that may exist in many of these cases, which may make an individual more vulnerable to recruitment and radicalization." As these examples illustrate, CVE practitioners have recognized that radicalization research has determined that there is no terrorist profile while using checklists of indicators, warning signs, or risk factors to identify individuals vulnerable to or in the process of radicalizing. Using qualifying phrases such as indicators "associated with" radicalization, CVE researchers have defended these risk factors to do precisely what the experts say they cannot: reliably identify who may be vulnerable to or in the process of radicalizing (Patel and Koushik 2017; Sageman 2015; Morgan 2018). The continued use of these scientifically disproven warning signs is a "misguided effort to identify individuals who are supposedly on their way to becoming terrorists," a process that "creates a grave risk that people who have nothing to do with terrorism will be labeled potential threats, particularly because schoolteachers and social service and healthcare providers who come into contact with young Muslims, but have no law enforcement or intelligence experience, are expected to make these determinations" (Patel and Koushik 2017: 2). As one Somali student (author's participant observation, April 2017) reported, "CVE adds to the barriers we're already facing as Black, Muslim men." Rather than provide a liberal alternative to conventional counterterrorism practices, community policing-oriented CVE has introduced new methods and risk assessments to police communities through social service providers without an evidentiary base in social science.

In addition to these scientific limitations, some practitioners warned that CVE interventions relied on racial profiling to identify individuals vulnerable to terrorist radicalization. CVE practitioner Hadiyah Khoury, for example, cautioned that "there's a lot of questions . . . in terms of how are you doing *targeting* on who is . . . receiving [CVE] programming. . . . [Y]ou're making an assumption that a particular demographic is vulnerable—and that assumption is based on ethnicity, sometimes religion—and it's unclear if it's based on actual vulnerability. So the slicing gets done and does it end up entering the role of profiling?" Given these concerns, Khoury encouraged communities to offer CVE programming "for everyone," such as cybersecurity trainings that taught "the whole spectrum" of online "child predators," including "pedophiles, cyber-bullies and extremists." Khoury developed CVE programming that included entire communities

rather than targeted individuals identified as vulnerable to violent extremism using specious warning signs (interview in January 2017).

Despite Khoury's advocacy, many CVE programs explicitly targeted "US minorities" and "cities with significant Muslim Diasporas" (Weine 2012), the "Somali community" (Boston Police Foundation 2016), and "refugees and immigrants" (Nashville International Center for Empowerment 2016). In each of these cases, CVE primarily has pursued diasporic Muslim communities, a targeted practice constituted by what anthropologist Nadine Naber (2006: 236) identifies as a "dual process of cultural racism and the racialization of national origin." This dual process renders targeted populations as embodying a culture inferior to "American" culture and as a national security threat, which authorizes both "going to war 'over there' and enacting racism and immigrant exclusion 'over here' . . . as essential components of the project of protecting national security" (ibid.: 236). These racialized scripts justify CVE's targeting of diasporic Muslim communities as both humanitarian and security projects, obfuscating the more pernicious racialized tactics used to mark Muslim people as national security threats, especially Black Muslims policed as both Black and Muslim. As these examples illustrate, CVE has targeted specific communities perceived to be more susceptible to terrorist radicalization and recruitment, raising concerns about racial profiling.

The checklists of warning signs used by CVE practitioners offer other racial optics through which community members conduct their risk assessments, from saying "inshallah" (Nomani 2017) to "growing a beard" (Silber and Bhatt 2007). Through these identificatory practices, "racial optics conceive the profile through the abstraction of contiguous surfaces blurring the distinction between surplus (the tattoo or hoodie as detail) and the ontological (the flesh as essence) that in turn teaches us to see in racial others the unseen truth of criminality" (Nguyen 2015: 800). Posed as an objective science, these racial optics generate an "ontological confusion between subject and object" such that the hijab and other markers "[provide] cover for racism's slide into lethal structures that claim to assess and predict threat with disinterest" (ibid.: 800). In this way, "profiles that include these other surfaces—clothes, and also tattoos, hairstyles—teach us how to see race both with and without skin as an anchor" (ibid.: 799). Although CVE scholars and practitioners have argued that they target "behaviors not profiles" through objective risk assessments (Horgan 2008), the terrorist is "rendered knowable through visible signs and screens *fully schematized by racism*" (Nguyen 2015: 801). Rather than standing outside of power relations, the perceived warning signs of radicalization are always already rooted in racial hierarchies that direct the eye to recognize certain bodies, and their contiguous surfaces of "traditional clothing" and associated behaviors, as terrorist. These identificatory practices are facilitated by cultural racism and the racialization of national origin, enduring social processes that mark Muslim bodies, cultural practices, and migrations as suspicious and in need of constant surveillance. Given law enforcement's refusal to investigate hate crimes (Schwencke 2017), this national security approach denies targeted youth the law's protection while subjecting them to the law's discipline and punishment.

Despite these flawed foundational logics, CVE practitioners continue to have asked social service providers and community members to learn and use these warning signs to identify and report youth perceived to be vulnerable to terrorist radicalization and recruitment. Such actions, CVE actors contend, secure the nation while reducing racial profiling and protecting individual civil liberties. These community-police cooperation schemes transform social workers, teachers, mental health professionals, doctors, and community leaders into extensions of law enforcement, thereby intensifying carceral care work. By providing identificatory guidelines to be used in daily professional work, the CVE model has mobilized social service providers to serve as frontline defenders against homegrown terrorism, ultimately enhancing policing power and shoring up support for the very institutions that historically have criminalized communities of color. The enduring primacy of these racialized surveillance practices introduced by community policing-orienting CVE programs is ripe for critical analysis by surveillance studies scholars examining the surveillant society (Monaghan 2014; Mathiesen 2013).

Policing without Police

Given heightened fears of homegrown terrorism guided by neoliberal principles of personal responsibility and self-help, CVE programs often call on social service providers and community members to identify, report, and off-ramp individuals perceived to be on the path toward violent extremism. To support these efforts, CVE policymakers, experts, and practitioners developed lists of warning signs and risk assessments to facilitate the identification of could-be terrorists, primarily in Muslim and/or diasporic communities. In this context, "private individuals who see themselves as normative citizens become empowered to take responsibility for maintaining the imperial security state" and "hope to repair the effects of imperial and neoliberal policies and thereby save the security state" (Grewal 2017: 2). Shaped by ongoing processes of cultural racism and the racialization of national origin, these efforts respond to Hillary Clinton's (2016) primetime comment that "we need American Muslims to be a part of our eyes and ears on our frontlines." Rather than engage in an antagonistic relationship with Muslim communities, the US security state has sought to develop partnerships with moderate Muslim leaders across the United States (see, for example, the RAND Corporation project to build "moderate Muslim networks": Rabasa et al. 2007).

Inderpal Grewal (2017: 3) argues that the "exceptional American citizen trying to save the security state is the product of the self-empowerment regime that is central to neoliberalism in the United States." In this framework, "Muslims, Arabs, and South Asians are more visibly racialized as dangerous Others who are left out even from becoming neoliberal citizens" (ibid.: 11). Yet, the security state offers US-based Muslims an opportunity to prove their loyalty to the nation by serving as the "eyes and ears on our frontlines." For US Muslims, this opportunity is one of the few state-sponsored avenues to exercise "good citizenship," participate in the political process, and develop a sense of belonging in the context of ongoing anti-Muslim racism articulated through state policies and daily anti-Muslim violence (Ahmed 2000). By policing their own communities, US Muslims can be partially legible as deserving US citizens, distinct from and in opposition to less (politically) moderate and more radical Muslims. Given the long history of political exclusion and contemporary cultivation of neoliberal subjectivities, the US security state has provided a narrow pathway toward political inclusion in exchange for credibility, legitimacy, and access to communities otherwise unavailable to law enforcement.

By conscripting US Muslims into policing their own communities, the security state has cultivated "a new kind of more palatable Muslim to be integrated through cultural respect and tolerance while those who mount a political refusal see their civil rights disintegrate" (Kundnani 2014: 81). Through the promise of financial resources to disinvested communities, individual political gains, and a friendlier method to fight homegrown terrorism, the US security state has encouraged Muslim leaders to participate in CVE programs that monitor their own communities. As Sahar Aziz (2015) explains, "In allying with the government, these leaders believe they can restrain government over-reaching through established relationships that over time educate government officials that the overwhelming majority of Muslims in America do not support terrorism." This exchange, however, "produces an unspoken quid pro quo" whereby the protection of civil liberties and the provision of social services depends on Muslim cooperation with the security state "beyond what is expected of any other communities within America" (ibid.: n.p.). Not all targeted communities have accepted CVE as a viable national security strategy. Somali college student Hodan Hassan, for example, rejected CVE's underlying politics of recognition, which "presents a face that looks like you but is a mouthpiece for the government" (author's participant observation, April 21, 2017).

Given the growing application of community policing models to counter violent extremism, there is increasing need for surveillance studies to examine these emerging practices, particularly by learning from local struggles to "abolish CVE." This work can draw from and contribute to critical community policing studies focused on the exploitation of community relationships to gather actionable intelligence, the militarization of local law enforcement agencies, the racialized practices used in community policing models, and the application of counterinsurgency tactics to domestic security apparatuses. Surveillance studies is well positioned to examine and contest antiterrorism regimes that call on Muslim communities to

take responsibility for maintaining the security state through community-policing-oriented countering violent extremism.

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