Where's the intelligence in the UK's National Intelligence Model?

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ABSTRACT

This article investigates the status of community intelligence within The National Intelligence Model (NIM) in the UK. The study included focused interviews with 23 intelligence practitioners across the UK police service, combined with open-ended interviews with academics and persons working to implement the NIM. The results indicate that police officers and informants are the most trusted and the most used sources of intelligence, and that the use of community intelligence is marginal. A combination of police culture, lack of knowledge within management and police officers, the absence of a general definition of 'intelligence', a lack of guidance around community intelligence and the secrecy surrounding intelligence, stand out as factors that may explain the low status and use of community intelligence.

INTRODUCTION

The use of intelligence in both policing and other contexts has an international resonance whether in Iraq, Afghanistan, the United Kingdom or in the US. This paper will explore some of the implications of its usage and its failings in the police in one country, the United Kingdom. The findings are of particular importance in an elucidation of the events that happened in London on 7 July 2005.

The implementation of The National Intelligence Model (NIM) in the British police service in 2000 (Grieve, 2004; NCIS, 2000) has been an attempt to professionalise the police by providing a common structure and framework for police decision-making. The decision-making is intelligence-driven (John & Maguire, 2004, p. 9) and John and Maguire state that it 'provides . . . a cohesive intelligence framework across the full range of levels of criminality and disorder' (p. 8). For many police

officers intelligence equals information from covert technical sources or covert human intelligence sources such as informants and undercover officers (Robertson, 1992, as cited in Hebenton & Thomas, 1995) and for the purpose of this article is termed *traditional intelligence*. Traditional intelligence implies that information from other sources such as the public and partner organisations, is not commonly perceived as intelligence by police officers. Several reports have highlighted that the NIM implementation has struggled to involve the community, both public and partner agencies (Cope, 2004; John & Maguire, 2003; Ratcliffe, 2003; Sheptycki, 2004) and, in *Diversity Matters* (Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary, 2003) Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary (HMIC) notes that not all forces in England and Wales are currently developing community intelligence in the same way as criminal intelligence. Police use of intelligence from the community has been subject to scrutiny and critical comment, most significantly in the Macpherson report (Macpherson, 1999), the Bichard inquiry (Bichard, 2004) and the Victoria Climbié inquiry (Laming, 2003).

This article, based on qualitative research conducted within eight English police forces, examines the perception and use of community intelligence as a source of intelligence within the NIM. There will be a discussion around notable issues concerning the NIM, particularly those that may influence the use of community intelligence, such as various interpretations of the term 'intelligence', a lack of clear guidance, and 'uneducated customers'. It will examine how community intelligence is prioritised within the NIM, and also set out possible consequences of this prioritisation. The dissonance between the presentation of the NIM, what it could achieve, and how it is actually used is noted. The answer to this may be that the NIM was developed with the preliminary intentions of focusing on efficiency and heightening detection rates, and that community safety and quality of life issues were added late in its development. These outcomes are strongly linked to community intelligence. Finally the terrorist bombings in London on 7th July 2005 have increased the focus on the importance of community intelligence and this will be discussed in the conclusion.

Emergence of intelligence-led policing

Intelligence has been recognised as being important in policing since the formation of the modern police service in the United Kingdom where Sir Charles Rowan, one of the two original commissioners of the Metropolitan Police Service, had an intelligence role in Wellington's Peninsular Army (Grieve, 2004, pp. 26–27; Metropolitan Police Service, 2005). However, for much of the service's history, intelligence has had a peripheral role in policing, looked upon as something that *adds* to the investigative picture (Ratcliffe, 2004) or *supports* the operational capability of the organisation (Nicholl, 2004, p. 55) rather than a tool that drives strategy. The 1990s saw the emergence of 'Intelligence-led Policing' (ILP) which came about as the result of two drivers, one internal and one external. The internal drive came from developments with the use of intelligence in the police service (Grieve), while the external drive came from questions raised about the efficiency of police investigative practices (Cope, Fielding, & Innes, 2005, p. 41). In 1993 the Audit Commission reported that most crimes were committed by a small number of offenders and that the police should identify and target high-risk groups (Audit Commission, 1993). The emphasis was on 'targeting the criminal not the crime' (Tilley, 2003b, p. 313) and that in the absence of admission evidence the police would need to increase their focus on evidence which is 'forensic . . . and

intelligence-based' (Audit Commission, p. 32). The report encouraged the use of covert investigative techniques such as surveillance and the use of paid informants and undercover officers (Harfield & Harfield, 2005; Hobbs, 2001). Intelligence purported to be about targeting criminals and it was therefore closely linked to evidence of criminal activity. In 1997 HMIC published *Policing with Intelligence* (Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary, 1997a) which identified a number of key factors as essential for the implementation of intelligence-led policing; these included an integrated intelligence structure, key performance indicators, and the cooperation of partners. Common to both reports is the focus on intelligence gathering and analysis.

By the end of the decade a number of policing organisations, including the Association of Chief Police Officers (ACPO), had identified the need to formalise intelligence-led policing into a policy that could be adopted nationally by the 43 forces in England and Wales (Grieve, 2004; John & Maguire, 2003), and in 2000 the National Criminal Intelligence Service (NCIS) piloted the NIM in three force areas. By the end of 2004, the NIM had been implemented in varying degrees in all 43 police forces in England and Wales.

Supporters of the NIM claim it is a 'business model' that aims to professionalise police practices and to secure a more effective gathering, sharing and use of intelligence (Grieve, 2004; John & Maguire, 2003; NCIS, 2000). Still, it remains an aspiration to implement a functioning *national* IT system for the exchange of intelligence between UK police forces: the present national IT platform supports only the Police National Computer, providing access to vehicle records, previous convictions and Schengen information categories (Bichard, 2004, p. 6; Rogerson, 2004). The NIM model structures the intelligence into three levels: 'Level 1', local issues; 'Level 2',

regional issues; and 'Level 3', national and international matters (NCIS). The NIM defines several tasks on 'Level 1' that should be especially prioritised and focused upon, such as managing volume crime, disorder and community issues, and cooperation with partners and outside agencies (John & Maguire, p. 43; NCIS). A vital part of the NIM is the 'Tasking and Coordination Group' (TCG). The TCGs hold frequent tactical meetings (approximately every fortnight) to determine what intelligence to gather, to make tactical assessments, and to decide how to allocate the resources most effectively. Strategic TCGs are held more seldom (approximately every six months). These meetings set priorities both locally and at force-level. The model is repeated at regional level (Tilley, 2003b). Intelligence fuels the tasking and coordinating process of the NIM at each level and it is informed by four intelligence products (Tilley, pp. 321–324):

(1) strategic assessments — long-term planning, strategies and policies;
(2) tactical assessments — short-term and operational planning;
(3) target profiles — profiles of offenders;
(4) problem profiles — profiles of series of offences or offenders.

Tilley (p. 323) states that 'what comprises intelligence to feed into these products is not discussed in detail but can evidently be wide ranging and is often obtained by covert means'.

Challenges

The implementation of the NIM and intelligence-led policing have not been without problems, since the police service has lacked an 'intelligence culture' (John & Maguire, 2004, p. 9), with problems around definitions of intelligence, the knowledge of the intelligence users, confusion around sources of intelligence and the purposes for

gathering and using intelligence. Moreover, the culture tends to value evidence over the wider uses of intelligence.

An increasingly important issue in both intelligence-led policing and the NIM is the definition of intelligence itself. For the Audit Commission (1993, p. 32) intelligence was a form of evidence, whilst Butler (2004, p. 14) defines intelligence in his report as a 'technique for improving the basis of knowledge'. In its Intelligence Unit Manual the Metropolitan Police Service states that, 'it is information designed for action' (Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary, 2002, p. 46). Perhaps most surprising of all is the absence of a definition of intelligence within the original guidance for the NIM, so that for the first years of the roll out there was no guiding definition of intelligence. Subsequently, a definition of intelligence has been published in the revised NIM Manual of Guidance: 'intelligence is defined as information that has been subject to a defined evaluation and risk assessment process in order to assist with police decision making' (Centrex, 2005, p. 13). This most recent definition makes no reference to source and gives little guidance as to purpose.

Intelligence can be collected from a range of sources, but there are discussions around what constitutes valid sources of intelligence (Dunninghan & Norris, 1999). Cope et al. (2005, p. 43) refer to the use of 'open' sources (for example, newspapers and the public) and 'closed' sources (for example, informants). Robertson reports that 'to the police, intelligence often means nothing more than information by a covert source,' (Robertson, 1992, as cited in Hebenton & Thomas, 1995, p. 170) and he emphasises that to most police officers intelligence equals information from covert technical sources, covert human sources (informants) or from undercover officers. Butler (2004) points to the risk of relying on only one source of intelligence and in

doing so missing the real picture. The use of a confined set of data can hinder the police from identifying new criminal threats (Butler; Ratcliffe & Sheptycki, 2004, p. 205). It is therefore vital to look outside the police force and to cooperate with non-police agencies to 'expand both the scope and range of intelligence' (Ratcliffe & Sheptycki, p. 205). The implication for the NIM when the intelligence comes from non-covert sources, especially the community, will be taken up later in this article.

Police managers are a vital part of the NIM process. Ratcliffe (2004, p. 3) states that a common problem within an intelligence-led approach is that many of the senior managers are former detectives with an expertise within investigation but not intelligence. He suggests that adopting the terminology of intelligence-led policing may be simpler than implementing the model itself (Ratcliffe, 2002, p. 55). Williamson (2005) discusses the problem with delivering community policing when there is a pressure to deliver results, and he especially highlights England with its new 'top down command and control' management system (p. 5). The NCIS (2000) states in the NIM implementation manual that '"the need to know" is widely recognised as the backbone of the intelligence doctrine . . . and is restricted to those who have authorised access'. Dunninghan and Norris (1999, p. 84) express concern for the possible loss of control and accountability within an intelligence-led approach since most of the information is hidden away because of 'sensitivity' issues. Cope et al. (2005, p. 43) reveal that closed sources of information like informants and data bases were used more often than intelligence from open sources such as the public. Manning (2001, p. 99) states that the 'channel by which the message is sent' is of importance to the police officer and that to the police 'a mediated communication is

suspect . . . the more abstract and distant from the officer's experience, the less it is trusted'. This position is further supported by Cope (2004) who found similar issues in her research. She discovered cultural issues amongst police officers, and that the police worked on 'constructed experiential knowledge', this being in principal to target the usual suspects, a concept referred to as 'policing led intelligence' (p. 199). A well-known but disturbing claim is corroborated through her study, namely that police organisational culture, preconceptions and prejudice can suppress the open-minded thinking that analysts can bring to intelligence processing.

From its inception the NIM was intended to professionalise police practices to secure a more effective gathering, sharing, and use of intelligence (Grieve, 2004; John & Maguire, 2003; NCIS, 2000). Grieve identifies the three *tasks* of intelligence: to make local strategic decisions about crime and disorder, to inform tactical and operational activity and to support strategy and policy making. However Manning (2001, p. 101) questions whether the NIM can deliver its stated outcomes and identifies 'a basic contradiction in mandate . . . that policing can control crime, reduce the fear of crime, and yet be an entirely responsive, demand-driven, situational force dispensing just in time and just enough order maintenance'. Dupont (1999, p. 1) questions whether the police service can achieve anticipated outcomes or whether they evaluate their successes through 'the fallacy of quantification' where *outputs are more important than outcomes* (p. 1). Byrne and Pease (2003, p. 306) observe that 'one of the major tragedies of policing is that somehow actions have become divorced from their underlying purpose, to remain justified only by minimum standards of performance bureaucratically expressed. Arresting and imprisoning and offender is a "good result" only so far as it precludes the commission of further crime by the same person'. They go on to say that in the delivery of crime reduction it is important to 'reassert the purpose over process', in other words, to ensure that the NIM as a business model delivers its stated outcomes.

Community intelligence

The NCIS asserted that the NIM is a model that focuses on all law enforcement needs and that it is not just about crime and criminals (NCIS, 2000). The NCIS claims that the NIM can 'serve the community intelligence requirements of *Winning the Race*' (p. 7). In the thematic inspection report, *Winning the Race*, it was found that those policing areas that had the most successful relationship with their communities were those which involved the public in their policy-making process and formal community consultation processes (Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary, 1997). One of several recommendations from the HMIC inspectors was that 'Community intelligence should be valued by force managers as highly as criminal intelligence in terms of its contribution to effective policing'.

Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary subsequently found that most forces were not able to define community intelligence adequately and addressed this by defining community intelligence as:

> local information, direct or indirect, that when assessed provides intelligence on the quality of life experienced by individuals and groups, that informs both the strategic and operational perspectives in the policing of local communities (1997b, p. 47).

Here, in contrast to the absence of a definition of intelligence within the NIM, is a definition that articulates both the source and purpose for the intelligence. The need

for a formalised use of community intelligence within the NIM is finally emphasised through *Diversity Matters* (Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary, 2003). In this report HMIC comments that not all forces in England and Wales are currently developing and spreading community intelligence as they do with criminal intelligence. Several examples of the gravity of not gathering intelligence from the community are found. The Bichard inquiry (Bichard, 2004), examining the police actions before the Soham murders, revealed a lack of cooperation between partners, as did the Victoria Climbié inquiry (Laming, 2003), which examined the abuse leading to the death of Victoria Climbié. The report unveiled serial negligence including a disturbing absence of cooperation between partners. Because of poor information sharing between the social services, the police and the health agencies, there was a failure to analyse and assess risks and missed opportunities in identifying and solving them.

A pivotal point was made on the importance of community intelligence after the 7 July 2005 attacks in London. The Chair of the Association of Chief Police Officers Terrorism and Allied Matters Committee (ACPO TAM), Ken Jones, in giving evidence to the Parliamentary Intelligence and Security Committee (ISC), spoke of the need to think more widely about intelligence, and pointed out that an extensive picture of 7 July was produced by the media from openly available information and witnesses, not secret intelligence (ISC, 2006, para. 134). He further underlined that the use of open source information is necessary for the Security Service and the police to identify radicalisation and thus to prevent future attacks. The ISC states that 'the value of closer joint working between the Security Service and the police on a more local level is one of the key lessons to arise from the July attacks' (ISC, para. 135).

For such an integration of community intelligence to take place there needs to be clarity about how community intelligence and other types of intelligence are related. Here the work of Cope et al. (2005, p. 44) provides a useful contribution by dividing intelligence into four types:

(1) Criminal intelligence — data on known offenders;
(2) Crime intelligence — data on specific crime or series of crimes;
(3) Community intelligence — based upon data from 'ordinary' members of the public concerning the quality of life and tensions impacting upon their community;
(4) Contextual intelligence — social, cultural and economic factors that may impact on crime and offending.

The challenge for the police service is how to integrate these various different readings of intelligence. The first two, criminal and crime intelligence, sit well within the current cultural mindset of policing — namely, traditional intelligence. The second two, however, being more related to probabilistic information, will require the integration of more fragmentary pieces of information. This seems to be more difficult for the police service to include as a source of intelligence and this is the research gap which this article seeks to fill.

METHODOLOGY

There has been an initial evaluation of implementation of the NIM by the Home Office (John & Maguire, 2003), but no research has so far tested whether the community is being used actively as a source of intelligence. This study sought to identify the level of integration of community intelligence into NIM utilisation and so the aims of this research investigation have been:

- To identify what intelligence practitioners understand by 'intelligence' within the context of the NIM;
- To identify the level of understanding and importance put on community intelligence within the NIM;
- To identify the level of community intelligence used as a main source in the creation of 'target profiles' and 'problem profiles'.

This research is designed as a case study. It can be argued that case studies offer insufficient basis for generalisation if compared with an alternative methodology, the survey. Although the survey is the best method for giving a statistical generalisation, an appropriate case study can give a good analytical generalisation (Yin, 2003, p. 37). To ensure both reliability and validity the case study involved the gathering of several sources of data — *triangulation* (Hayden & Shawyer, 2004, pp. 51–52; Yin, 2003, p. 97). Four sources of data were used, namely open-ended interviews with intelligence experts, focused interviews with practitioners, the use of secondary documentation such as official research reports and observation. The reason for using more than one method is to produce a result that does not solely depend on how one method is conducted, or used. Collecting case study data in this manner promotes the advantageous possibility that the findings and conclusions will be more accurate as they are based on many different sources of information, using a 'corroboratory mode' (Yin, p. 98).

The sample

The sample of areas to visit for the focused interviews resulted from a consideration of several factors, for example, police forces where the NIM was piloted, police forces which the experts advised the researcher to look at (see the open-ended interviews), and forces which for practical/

transport reasons were manageable to reach within a certain time frame. Another important factor was to cover both city and rural areas, together with both the south and the north of England and Northern Ireland, to get a representative sample.

The interviews were conducted at eighteen different Basic Command Units (BCUs) and headquarters in eight different police forces. This covers approximately 20 per cent of the 43 police forces in the United Kingdom. The total number of practitioners interviewed was 23. All the interviews were conducted between November 2004 and May 2005.

As part of the criteria used to identify suitable interviewees, the sample was defined to include several groups working with intelligence within the police force and the end result was ten intelligence managers/coordinators, seven civilian analysts and six operational leaders. Interviews were conducted with practitioners from all three levels of the NIM (national, regional and local) but the majority worked at the local level (BCU).

The focused interviews concentrated on the *source/origin* of the intelligence being used to produce target packages and target profiles (hereafter referred to as 'intelligence packages') within the NIM. This naturally needed to be handled with sensitivity and so no operational or intelligence details were sought. Only the derivation of the intelligence collected, such as for example informants, witnesses, communities and so forth was recorded. Both the participants and the sites have been kept anonymous.

Due to the nature of this research, which involved police intelligence and therefore sensitive data and personnel, some key ethical principles were followed (Hayden & Shawyer, 2004, p. 65). Official access was sought through senior police officers. All participation was voluntary and the candidates were asked in advance to participate. Some of the interviews were arranged

through the interviewee's leaders and it is therefore important to recognise that this may have influenced their willingness to volunteer. Due to the nature of the topic the candidates were not questioned about personal information and all the data obtained have been kept anonymous and confidential. For this reason alone, there is no categorisation of gender or age. Finally, the interviews did not contain any questions that can reveal any sensitive intelligence material.

RESEARCH FINDINGS

The aim of the research was to examine what constitutes intelligence within the NIM. The author wanted particularly to focus on the level of community intelligence being used in comparison with other sources of intelligence, based on the hypothesis that community issues are downgraded within the NIM. For the purpose of this paper a summary of the findings is presented here. The full data are held on file with the author.

Intelligence in practice?

Having identified that there is no official definition of intelligence within the NIM, the author sought to explore the impact of this on operational practice. Interviewees were asked to give their personal definitions of intelligence as users of the NIM. The responses showed a variety of interpretations of the term 'intelligence' and it was found that there is no clear consensus of what the term constitutes in practice. Some defined intelligence merely as *information*. For example, interviewee K states that it is 'intelligence from primarily any source'. Part of the sample saw intelligence as information that had gone through a *process*. For example, interviewee Q stated that it is 'information that has been given some added value after being collated and

assessed'. Further, close to half of the interviewees defined intelligence as a *product*, something they could use to act upon; as interviewee C sees it: 'It is anything we can use which allows us to take action'. Finally a range of other respondents, primarily intelligence managers, went further and stated that currently intelligence is '*evidence*':

> It is the classic question between intelligence and evidence. These days there is very little difference. Some would say action, some would say evidential. Intelligence is evidence. (Interviewee V)

> You as the investigation officer should be at the scene looking for nothing — it should all be there. (Interviewee G)

> Without exceptions what the customers want is evidence to arrest and charge. The detectives want the intelligence unit to do the investigation for them. (Interviewee I)

Steve Richardson, from the ACPO NIM Team, stated in interview, 'the lack of a clear, national guidance on the term "intelligence" has led to a different understanding of the concept throughout the country'. This point was developed by Professor Nick Tilley in an open-ended interview: 'people uses as synonyms terms that have different meanings, such as "data", "information" and "intelligence"'.

These various definitions of the term 'intelligence' suggest different perceptions about how to conduct the business. If intelligence is thought of as actionable or evidential products, how would that steer the officers in terms of their choice of sources? And what are these products used for? The findings indicate that surveillance and arrests are prioritised over the development and use of community intelligence.

In order to explore this hypothesis further, the interviewees were asked to give

their personal interpretation of 'community intelligence'. Although the NIM *does* contain a definition of 'community intelligence', the interviewees were asked specifically for their own definition of the term. 49 per cent saw it as information *from* the community; intelligence obtained through engagement with the community. For example, one stated:

> It is intelligence we receive from a wide range of sources, not only agencies but special members of the community like imams in the Muslim communities. (Interviewee O)

Whereas, a few interviewees saw community intelligence as information that has an *impact* on the community:

> It is actionable intelligence provided by individuals or bodies of individuals or members of a group who have interest in directing the police to encounter crime that is affecting their lives. (Interviewee M)

Further, a minority understood community intelligence as information *about* the community, for example Interviewee J stated that it is 'Intelligence which informs us of what actually is happening in the neighbourhood'. One interviewee even perceived community intelligence to be 'open-source' material 'like things on the web, local newspapers and such' (Interviewee D). Another suggested that intelligence was information from the police *to* the community, looking upon the police as risk-informers. The final interpretation of the term 'community intelligence' viewed the term as defining communities' *understanding* of their own problems (Interviewee E).

These various interpretations of community intelligence imply different ways of perceiving and using this source of intelligence. What one police force sees as community intelligence may be different from

another. Furthermore, there is a risk within the same police station that what one police officer understands as community intelligence is disparate from the views of other officers.

The interviewees were asked to state which source of intelligence they looked upon as most *important*. Two groups stood out: informants (43 per cent) and police officers (43 per cent) (see Figure 1).

It can be seen in Figure 1 that informants and police officers are viewed as the most important source of intelligence followed by police data (30 per cent) closely followed by community intelligence (26 per cent). Crimes, witnesses, and victims were mentioned by only a few, but it is important to recognise that police data can contain all of these.

Only 25 per cent of the interviewees saw community intelligence as an important source of intelligence, and a fundamental issue raised by the data gathered was that 11 out of 23 interviewees *did not feel that community intelligence informed the work that they did*. A majority of the civilian analysts answered thus, but many of them pointed out that they would not know if they dealt with community intelligence because of the sanitisation process inherent within the intelligence process of the NIM:

> The difficulty is how we manage community intelligence. It is lost in the process. It needs to be stored in some way. (Interviewee J)

> Community intelligence would inform the final package but it would not be recognised in the final report. (Interviewee K)

> The intelligence from the community is sanitised; the analysts are not to know where the intelligence derives from. We should probably flag the community

Figure 1
Reported 'important
sources' of intelligence
(data gathered from
focused interviews with
23 practitioners
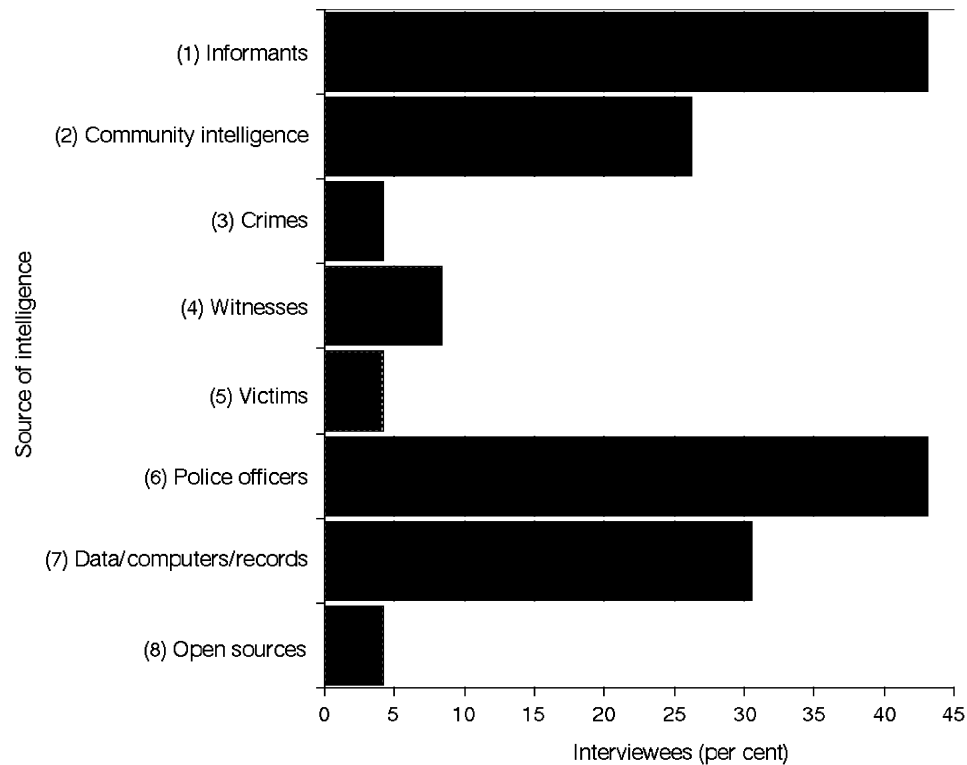
Note: Total percentage of interviewees adds up to above 100% due to multiple responses from each.

intelligence to give it an audit trail. (Interviewee V)

In an interview with Tim John, who has evaluated the implementation of NIM in three police forces (John & Maguire, 2003), the loss of community intelligence through the intelligence process was raised as a concern. John's view coincides with the above statements from the practitioners; and these views support the suggestion below that the potential role of community intelligence could be promoted by making it more visible in the intelligence system.

The other half of the practitioners stated that community intelligence *did* inform the work they did, but a majority of the answers revealed a focus on *criminal activities*. Community intelligence was seen as information that added to the picture, and very few declared that they were using community intelligence to improve the community itself. It mostly added to the qualitative side of the data or the qualitative side of the intelligence packages. For most it was not used as the main source of intelligence, it just '. . . gives you a complete picture' (Interviewee S) and 'the more intelligence you get access to the clearer the picture gets' (Interviewee D).

The interviewees were then asked to state the main source of their last five intelligence packages. In relation to this, they were interviewed about their personal understanding of intelligence packages to ensure that the question was understood correctly. All the interviewees knew the term and were familiar with the new terms

for intelligence packages within the NIM, namely 'target' and 'problem' profiles. The term 'intelligence package' in the following findings includes both 'target profiles' and 'problem profiles'.

The data presented in Figure 2, based on an open response to the question 'what was the main source of intelligence in the last five intelligence packages?', can be interpreted at both a conceptual and a statistical level.

At the conceptual level, what is illustrated is a lack of a consistent understanding and terminology, amply demonstrated by the use of open answers rather than pre-determined categories for respondents to choose from. It could be argued that all intelligence should be recorded on a database in such a way that its source is disguised and so protected. This would be consistent with ACPO good practice guidance (Harfield & Harfield, 2005, p. 16). In this case, a unanimous response of police data/computers/information systems could

have been reasonably anticipated since such databases provide the audit trail for proportionality, legitimacy and necessity for actions founded upon specific intelligence. It is interesting to note, therefore, that a number of respondents were able to identify specific sources from what should have been anonymised records.

In the case of some respondents this may be explained by the access their role would have afforded them to raw intelligence. For those respondents without such access it should not have been possible to identify source categories and this begs further questions, outside the scope of the present study, about adherence to good practice and possible formulaic approaches to the $5 \times 5 \times 5$ system of intelligence assessment (which is a mechanism to evaluate source credibility and information integrity, and to define handling procedures which, if used formulaically, could be a means to identify, and therefore potentially compromise, the source).
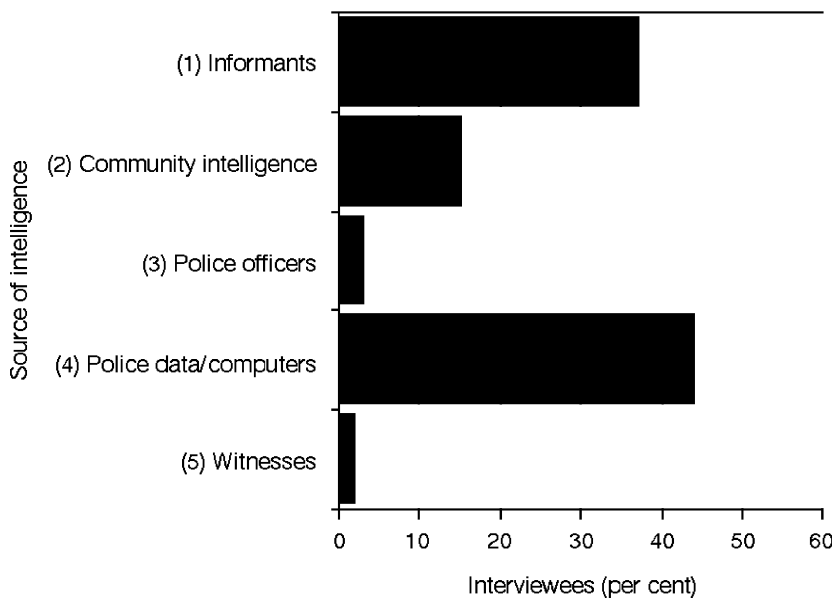

Figure 2
Reported 'main source' of intelligence in last five intelligence packages (data gathered from focused interviews

Note: At the time of research, not all interviewees produced packages, thus the total of packages is 88.

At the statistical level the data demonstrate that in 44 per cent of the cases, police data/computers/information systems were the main source of intelligence in their last five intelligence packages. More than one-third came from informants (38 per cent). This means that out of the 88 packages that were produced at the time of the research (February to May 2005) 82 per cent of the intelligence derived from informants and the police data, with only 15 per cent *identifiable* as being based upon community intelligence.

One can deduce from this that the intelligence being used in the majority of the packages is the 'user friendly' intelligence leading directly to an intervention, for example an arrest or a warrant. And from this, it might be further inferred that intelligence which does not lead to an immediate 'hit' (namely intelligence that requires further development and/or corroboration) is being avoided, for example community intelligence about quality of life issues. One of the interviewees stated: 'We know what we want from our informants — it's more readily actioned upon [sic]' (Interviewee V). Over 25 per cent of the interviewees stated that the use of informants was primarily related to drugs use, with Interviewee P stating: 'We use informants, but it's all about drugs' and Interviewee I adding that 'they would talk forever about drugs dealings. Informants' intelligence, dubious though it is, offers quick-hits for cops, particularly if it's drugs-related'.

The research found that out of seven civilian analysts interviewed, only one actively went out and sought community intelligence. One analyst stated that they were not covered by the insurance, another that the police officers did not like it. Two said they were afraid to reveal sensitive information when interacting with the community:

I would not actively look for information outside the police force because of security access and the fear of revealing concern you have about an area. But I certainly think it would be helpful if I could do that. (Interviewee F)

The above statement indicates that some practitioners using the NIM have problems communicating with the public because of sensitivity issues. Three of the interviewees expressed scepticism about certain aspects of community intelligence. It is important to examine if this is an important reason why community intelligence is not used more often. As two of the interviewees noted: 'It is important to look at the motives for community intelligence' (Interviewee M) and 'within community intelligence there is a risk of anecdotal information' (Interviewee N).

Some of the practitioners interviewed blamed police officers for not making more use of community intelligence. 30 per cent of the interviewees, both civilian analysts and police officers, pointed specifically to the fact that it was difficult to obtain such information from police officers. One of the interviewees stated, 'the problem is to get the information from inside the person's head into the intelligence system' (Interviewee G). Two of the interviewees expressed the opinion that:

Police officers go to community meetings and never come back with information. Probably want to deal with it themselves — it's theirs — they are missing the big picture. You have to report a crime, but intelligence; you can choose to report that. (Interviewee A)

It all falls down if the [Police Officers] don't feed intelligence into the system. It is difficult to change police culture. You can drag a horse down to the water but you cannot make it drink. (Interviewee J)

So why is community intelligence not more highly valued? Is it because officers do not get any credit for it, or is it that many of the officers are not familiar with the NIM, lacking recognition of how they can contribute to the product? Four interviewees supported this view, one of them stating that:

> . . . new police officers don't know anything about NIM. The intelligence managers are the only ones who understand it. The officers do not have time to learn it. All the officers need to know is the outcome. (Interviewee I)

Some officers stated that they used their experience and their knowledge instead of intelligence, one of them expressing this view:

> You should target offenders before they commit crimes. The purist will say; 'but you haven't got any intelligence'. I would say; 'it's his lifestyle to commit crime'. (Interviewee U)

It should be noted that not all the interviewees criticised the police officers for not using community intelligence more. 25 per cent of the practitioners (all but one of them police officers; chiefs of operations and intelligence managers) mentioned performance indicators as a reason for not making more use of community intelligence. Many of them stated the same thing, expressed by Interviewee P: 'I am not being measured by the fall in anti-social behaviour . . . I don't have any targets on that'. Not all felt that the performance indicators in themselves were a bad thing: 'I do support performance indicators — the work gets done. The question is; do we have the right performance indicators?' (Interviewee U).

Tim John stated in interview:

> NIM should be creative. We found very little evidence that this was done. Everything is measured against performance indicators. Police managers are very concerned with performance indicators and will always prioritise actions that will have an effect on the charts.

John Grieve, a former Deputy Assistant Commissioner for the Metropolitan Police, stated in an interview with the author that one of the challenges posed by gathering community intelligence is that the public do not trust the police. He also identified that the problem with the NIM and community intelligence is the lack of 'educated customers', meaning that police managers are not sufficiently trained in the use and management of intelligence. This view was supported by one of the practitioners, who stated that 'one of the problems with analysis is that the senior managers don't know what they want or what to ask for' (Interviewee O).

All the interviewees were given an opportunity to give their personal opinion as to what they would have done differently if the NIM was implemented all over again. Strikingly, the one issue that most agreed on was that they would have *named* it differently: 'I would have named it differently so it does what it says on the tin; "The National Policing Model"' (Interviewee H). Another view worth noticing when discussing what the NIM is seeking to achieve is that of Interviewee T: 'I would *not* have called it NIM — I wouldn't have had intelligence anywhere near it because it defines the outcome'. Tim John is of the same opinion: 'NIM isn't about Intelligence-led Policing. It is a business model. It is a misleading title'.

In interview, Tilley stated, 'Community intelligence about what comprise priorities and means of dealing with problems is often neglected within the NIM, because it has focused almost exclusively on law enforcement and crime'. Tilley compared two 'polar' police forces in their approach to crime detection and enforcement, 'One is

strongly NIM compliant. It does not have a very good relationship with the community but has good IT-structures through which it identifies hot spots, linkages between offences, and offenders to target. The other is non-compliant with NIM, but has close contacts with the community through which it identifies suspects, relationships between suspects and known trouble-makers'.

DISCUSSION

The study found little evidence of the use of community intelligence within the NIM. Although the NIM is in *theory* intended to involve the community, in practice there is little evidence to demonstrate such involvement in reality. Though the NIM is a business model designed to handle 'community issues' within its 'business', placing 'community safety' among desired outcomes, the findings indicate that community intelligence is placed low down on the list, and that the NIM is very much about intelligence-led policing in its purest form, meaning 'rounding up the usual suspects'. This means using traditional intelligence and analysing to find out who was involved with whom, where and with what crime plans and to use performance indicators to display successes in detection, arrest and prosecution of serious and prolific offenders (Tilley, 2003a, p. 4). The NIM is in many ways a panoptic device; everyone is expected to feed the centre but the centre is designed on a 'need to know' basis so that those on the outside, including most police officers, cannot look inside. It is very much about *collecting information but not informing*. Grieve (2004) states that it is difficult with the present culture of secrecy around intelligence and that it is necessary to make intelligence less threatening to the communities to make them come to the police. The latter poses the question, 'Is it possible to combine an intelligence-led

approach built on a "need to know" basis with a good relationship with the community built on openness and trust?'.

It is possible to identify a number of consequences from the low use of community intelligence. The obvious consequence is a lack of structure or effectiveness in dealing with the 'softer areas' within policing like crime prevention and quality of life issues, with deterioration in the relationship between the police and the public as a result. Whilst these are important public policy issues, there may also be graver consequences, as seen recently in the Soham murders, and the Stephen Lawrence case. There is also a danger that not collecting community intelligence can result in a loss of the context, which can lead to a wrong assessment (Butler, 2004).

The terrorist attacks in London on 7th July 2005 throw up possibilities that an intelligence model which embraced and valued community intelligence could have been more predictive of the terrorist attacks. In connection with fighting terrorism, the then Home Secretary, Charles Clarke highlighted the importance of community intelligence, stating that:

> . . . in many of these issues intelligence is brought not through intercept, not through phone tapping, but by the existence of individuals within organisations we are talking about who are giving information about what is taking place. (Evidence to Parliamentary Committee, January 2005, as cited in Gregory, 2005.)

Following the attacks on 7th July 2005, the journalist, Daniel McGrory (2005) reported two cases where Muslim leaders had alerted the police to concerns about members of their community. In 2001, the Imam of Brixton Mosque informed the police that Richard Reid had been banned from prayer groups because of his violent views and

three months later Reid attempted to blow up a passenger jet. In 2005 leaders in Beeston, Leeds, warned the police about the behaviour of three men and the company they were keeping. Months later these men were three of the four London bombers. There are risks involved with drawing conclusions after the event and it is not the argument of the author of this article that the proper collection and evaluation of community intelligence would have definitely prevented these attacks. It is, however, our argument that the systemic failure of the NIM to integrate community intelligence means that the police service will always be poorly sighted on the possibility of future risks. Though there is a definition of community intelligence in the NIM, there is an obvious lack of guidance on how to integrate and work with that intelligence. The findings suggest that the value of community intelligence needs to be promoted amongst practitioners.

CONCLUSION

The answer to the question, 'Where is the intelligence in the National Intelligence Model?' can be found in the preliminary work to the creation of this model; the origin of intelligence-led policing was the report from the Audit Commission criticising the CID's poor performance, followed by the introduction of the NIM to organise the process of intelligence better; namely using intelligence more efficiently to increase detections. The original guidance for the NIM did not need a definition of intelligence because it was culturally accepted that this was about the collation of evidence to increase detections. The emergence of the concept of community intelligence did need a definition because police officers could not see how it served the primary purpose of increasing detections.

In a changing world exhibiting increased possibility of inter and intra community tensions, a reduction of public confidence in the police service and the challenge of further terrorist activity in the United Kingdom, the police service cannot continue to depend on systems which are purely focused on law enforcement. Williamson (2005, p. 1, para. 5) argues that the future of policing will be about trust and networks:

> Running in parallel with the recognition of the importance of social networks there are exciting new developments in information technology. This will make an enormous amount of information available to people at all levels and when this starts to happen community policing will have moved from being intelligence led to knowledge based.

The question, 'Where's the "intelligence" in the National Intelligence Model?' takes on a specific poignancy after 7 July 2005. In this case there was no intelligence. The challenge for the police service will be how to respond to that absence and how to reconfigure the NIM with the type and quality of intelligence that will predict future risks. This will require the police service to move away from the command and control processes of the NIM to a more complex and negotiated position. It will require a cultural change and an increase in knowledge based decision-making. The police service and the NIM must change, but it will not be possible to make these changes until it is recognised how they are currently failing to deliver. This article seeks to make a contribution to those changes.

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