Risky intelligence

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ABSTRACT

The article concerns the use by police services of the abstract idea of intelligence-led policing, often embodied as it is in the United Kingdom in the National Intelligence Model. We will argue that while this is a central framing idea in policing, it contains omissions which lead to faulty decisionmaking. The article charts the rise of intelligenceled policing in the United Kingdom and argues that circumstances have led to the concept of intelligence becoming equated to 'information which leads to a detection'; however, that this construction leads to areas of omission which then impact upon the business of the police service. One outcome of this is that the members of the community that the police service is charged with protecting and serving pay the price of this decision-making. The central argument of our article is that an overconcentration on the detection of offences has skewed the way the map has been drawn up and how it is currently being used. Our main contention is not that the concept of intelligence-led policing should be abandoned, but that it should be revisited and revised to take greater notice of the changes in the landscape it is designed to cover. The territory is changing but the map is not being amended; it is time for some major revisions.

INTRODUCTION

Tell me what you dissociate yourself from and I'll tell you what you stand for. (Beck, 2005)

John Cleese and Robin Skynner discussed the use of abstract ideas in the real world using the metaphor of a person crossing a

International Journal of Police Science and Management, Vol. 11 No. 3, 2009, pp. 324–333. DOI: 10.1350/ijps.2009.11.3.134 territory using a map; when he comes to a river which is not on the map he has to choose which source of information to rely on. Cleese states that some people would rather 'tear up the territory' than abandon the map (Skynner & Cleese, 1993, p. 239).

Our article concerns the use by police forces of the abstract idea of intelligence-led policing, often embodied as it is in the United Kingdom in the National Intelligence Model. We will argue that while this is a central framing idea in policing, it, like Cleese and Skynner's map, contains omissions which lead to faulty decision-making. The principal difference in this metaphor is that when the map is wrong it is not always the police service which falls in the river or pays the price for the act or omission, but members of the community that the police service is charged with protecting and serving. The central argument of our article is that an overconcentration on the detection of offences has skewed the way the map has been drawn up and how it is currently being used. Our main contention is not that the concept of intelligence-led policing should be abandoned, but that it should be revisited and revised to take greater notice of the changes in the landscape it is designed to cover. In order to understand why, we need to look at the origins of intelligence-led policing.

From a United Kingdom perspective, the concept of intelligence-led policing can be tracked all the way back to Sir Charles Rowan of the Metropolitan Police who brought the art of gathering intelligence with him from the military (Grieve, 2004, pp. 26–27, as cited in Kleiven, 2007). It developed in the 1950s with the formation of the C9 branch in New Scotland Yard (Association of Chief Police Officers [ACPO], 1975), which was formed as a liaison department to assist officers from outside the Metropolitan Police when dealing with country house burglaries committed by offenders who lived in the

London metropolis. The success of this department led to the growth of intelligence departments, first of all in 1963 in major cities in England and Wales and then subsequently throughout the country. In the mid seventies the Association of Chief Police Officers (ACPO) defined criminal intelligence as:

The end product of a process often complex, sometimes physical and always intellectual derived from information which has been collated, analysed and evaluated in order to prevent crime or secure the apprehension of offenders. (ACPO, 1975, p.10)

INTELLIGENCE-LED POLICING

The 1975 ACPO Report of Sub-Committee on Criminal Intelligence (ACPO, 1975) made 79 recommendations, but a further report in 1986 (ACPO, 1986) commented on the lack of implementation of the Baumber recommendations. It found that (p. 14):

the system was introduced without the majority of officers having any comprehension of what it meant to achieve. To an extent the system was stillborn.

This report made further recommendations, and one of the most significant was that intelligence should not only be analysed but evaluated as to the reliability of its origin and content. To support this recommendation a grading system was introduced, where the reliability of the source of the information was graded A to C for varying degrees of reliability, with an additional X where the source was previously untried. A reflection on the thinking of the authors was found with the illustrated examples given: the reliable source was illustrated with sketches of a police constable, the Queen and a nun. However, the

untried source was an alien alleging that ET was responsible for a factory burglary on Mars! An additional grading of 1 to 4 was given to evaluate the reliability of the content. As the authors of the report stated, the evaluation would indicate the 'worth and usefulness of the information' (ACPO, 1978, p. 85). The recommendations of these reports represented the state of the intelligence scene in the United Kingdom until the early 1990s.

The decade of the 1980s leading to the start of the 1990s saw a dramatic increase in recorded crime in England and Wales. The Audit Commission Report, Helping with Enquiries: Tackling Crime Effectively (Audit Commission, 1993) found that crime had increased in the decade up to 1992 by 74 per cent, whilst the proportion of crimes detected declined from 37 per cent to 26 per cent. The proposed solutions offered by the report were increased productivity through detections per officer, an integrated approach to policing and an increase in intelligence-led policing. 'The core of police work', the report stated, 'is the linking of evidence from the scene with information about likely offenders' (Audit Commission, p. 35). In addition the report noted that a small number of offenders committed a substantial proportion of detected crime and as such it recommended that the police 'target the criminal and not just the crime' (Tilley, 2003, p. 313). It also encouraged covert investigative techniques such as surveillance and the use of paid informants and undercover officers (Hobbs, 2001).

The Audit Commission placed intelligence in a specific context, namely as part of the post-offence investigation process in terms of providing information leading to an arrest. It argued that if the police target and catch serious and prolific offenders, public confidence and cooperation would rise and thus with the clear up rate maintained or improved, the police would 'have

time for crime prevention' (Audit Commission, 1993, p. 59). It should be noted that the future debates around intelligence-led policing are signified here: the primacy of detection over prevention. This is something that engages the police service still today; the belief that targeting prolific offenders will lead to an increase in public confidence, and that prevention is to be undertaken when officers have the time for it.

Following the report, a handbook was published, entitled Tackling Crime Effectively, produced by ACPO, Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and the Audit Commission. This handbook, which was a collaborative effort, emphasised the need for a performance management framework which principally addressed arrests and detections (ACPO, Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary, & the Audit Commission, 1993, p. 79). In addition, it cautioned against using the performance indicators in a negative way which could damage officer morale or cause cynicism. This point was illustrated by a cartoon of an officer sitting before his manager's desk, quite clearly shaking with fear, with the caption 'Tompkins, I'm worried about your clear up rate . . .'. (ibid, p.89)

However, the issue of officer accountability was about to be further emphasised from an unlikely source — New York.

NEW YORK

In New York a dramatic drop in recorded crime occurred between 1994 and 1997. The then Commissioner of the New York Police Department, William Bratton was happy to explain how this was achieved in an article entitled 'Crime is Down in New York City: Blame the Police' (Bratton, 1998). Bratton described a process based on accurate information, focused deployment, effective tactics and relentless follow-up. Bratton was determined that the primary

responsibility for everyday operations resided with his 76 precinct commanders (Walsh, 2001, p. 352) and they were called to much feared, weekly Compstat meetings with the Deputy Commissioner, Jack Maple. These meetings were designed to make his commanders accountable for the crime in New York City, and enabled them to analyse problems and develop plans and priorities. Bratton (1998 p. 39) quotes a description of one such meeting where the commanders were called in turn to be questioned by Maple:

'What's going on?' Maple wanted to know what was being done about the drug spots, and one of the narcotics officers said it was a tough area because business was done inside and there were lots of lookouts. 'That's fine', Maple said. 'That's why we're detectives. Tell me what tactics we can employ to penetrate these locations.' The detective said they would try some buy-and-bust operations and maybe get a couple of guys behind the Plexiglas to rat when an arrest was hanging over their heads. Maple wasn't satisfied. 'I want you back here next week with a plan,' he said to the Precinct Captain.

At the same time as the New York policing model was achieving a high profile, a further HMIC report, Policing with Intelligence (HMIC, 1997) was being published. This recommended improving the intelligence structure by setting up regional tasking and coordination groups, and that 'all forces adopt the practice of using formal tasking criteria for the deployment of specialist support units, and introduce costing and of operations evaluation completed' (HMIC, 1997, p. 35). The foundations of the National Intelligence Model were beginning to become clear. However Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary was producing other reports which also talked

about intelligence, but this time the focus was on the community.

Coexisting with the changes outlined in the previous paragraphs was a rapidly changing and diversifying community which the police would have to serve and protect. In terms of intelligence-led policing, the 1990s saw the emergence of the concept of community intelligence. In 1996, HMIC conducted a thematic inspection on police community and race relations entitled, Winning the Race - Policing Plural Communities (HMIC, 1996). This inspection raised concerns over police responses to incidents in the community and a 'general lack of understanding and sympathy . . . by attending officers especially with regard to non crime matters' (HMIC, 1996, p. 8). It also found that forces that regularly assessed community tensions were best able to respond to community crisis and concerns, and it recommended that forces collect and analyse community intelligence which should be 'valued as highly as criminal intelligence' in terms of its contribution to effective policing (HMIC, 1996, p. 45). A follow-up inspection, Winning the Race - Revisited (HMIC, 1999) found that forces were struggling to define community intelligence, and defined it 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. (HMIC, 1999, p. 47)

It concluded by reaffirming the recommendations of the first thematic inspection and stressed the importance of implementing them urgently (HMIC, 1999, p. 54). As this report was published, a series of incidents commenced which not only had profound implications for the understanding of

intelligence-led policing, but also led to the most tragic of consequences.

HARDING AND HUNTLEY

Throughout the 1990s intelligence-led policing was driven by the need to increase detections and to be taking primacy over the future prevention of crime. Intelligence was being inextricably linked to what officers could prove to be true, deal with, and act upon through detecting offences. However, the actions taken by Police Constable Mick Harding of Humberside Police were about to highlight flaws in that mode of thinking. To return to our opening metaphor: he found a river which was not recorded on the map.

In 1999 PC Harding was working in Grimsby Police Station as part of a CID team when information was received linking Ian Kevin Huntley, a local man, to an allegation of rape. PC Harding, in the course of obtaining the case papers relevant to the allegation, became aware that Huntley was linked to other allegations of rape and indecency. In all the cases no action was taken because Huntley had known the victims and admitted having consensual sex with them. In addition, the victims were seen as having a demeanour which made them less credible as witnesses. As PC Harding subsequently recalled:

Hang on a second; is he actually physically targeting people because they are like that, because he knows that he will get away with it? If they are not going to tell the truth to the police for fear of not being believed, or whatever, then it is slightly different. (Bichard, 2004, p. 52)

As a result of his work, PC Harding found evidence which linked Huntley to four previous allegations of rape and one indecent assault, all of which were discontinued, and stated that: 'It is quite clear that Huntley is a serial sex attacker and is at liberty to continue his activities' (Bichard, p. 52). Despite the submission of an intelligence report recording his findings, and the subsequent acceptance by the then Chief Constable, David Westwood that patterns of behaviour are particularly important in the context of sexual offences (Bichard, 2004), there is no record of any action being taken by the police with regards to that report. In fact, it was subsequently 'weeded' from the intelligence system.

On 4 August 2002, in Soham, Cambridgeshire, Huntley was responsible for the murder of two ten-year-old girls, Holly Wells and Jessica Chapman. The following inquiry by Sir Michael Bichard found a number of failings in the actions of both Humberside and Cambridgeshire Constabulary. Bichard quotes the Director of Intelligence at Humberside Police who stated in evidence that 'there is an alarming ignorance of what constitutes intelligence' (Bichard, 2004a, para. 3.66). John and Maguire (1995, as cited in Ratcliffe, 2002, p. 56) discovered similar shortcomings in that some forces recorded all they knew about offenders, whilst others were much more selective.

The issue we wish to highlight is that in a culture of intelligence-led policing that focuses on the primacy of detections, the intelligence report submitted by PC Harding was destined to be ignored and marginalised, for it did not deal with law enforcement, it dealt with risk.

NATIONAL INTELLIGENCE MODEL

The first guidance for the National Intelligence Model (NIM) was published in 2000 having been developed by the National Criminal Intelligence Service. It specifically states that it delivers intelligence and analysis 'based on the Crime and Disorder Act of 1998' (National Criminal Intelligence Service [NCIS], 2000, p. 7). The Crime and Disorder Act 1998, ss. 5 and 6 require

local agencies to establish partnerships and through this to form strategies to reduce crime and disorder (Kleiven, 2005, p. 26). The NCIS also stated that the NIM would 'serve the community intelligence requirements of "Winning the Race" (NCIS, p. 7). It identified itself as a 'business planning' process which would deliver the outcomes of community safety, reduced crime, controlled criminality and controlled disorder. Central to its delivery mechanism is the tasking and coordination process which enables managers to understand the real nature of the problems they face, to identify priorities and resources required, and to direct the responses needed (NCIS, pp. 9–

In an echo of the New York system it described a tactical tasking and coordination meeting which 'must demand accountability from those charged with investigating targets' (NCIS, 2000, p. 14). The focus was centrally controlled and internally focused, predominantly about law enforcement and crime control. In terms of a model of policing it fitted with the military model of 'policing against people' (Bowling & Foster, as cited by Bowling & Phillips, 2003, p. 549). This means an emphasis on crime fighting, stop and search, surveillance, intelligence gathering and the pursuit of 'enemies within' (Bowling & Phillips, p. 549). In spite of its statements, the NIM did not elaborate how the community intelligence requirements would be served or how the outcome of community safety would be achieved.

In not stating how it would achieve the community safety outcome, the NIM lays itself open to two criticisms. The first is that it states more than it is capable of achieving, and Gill asks 'if intelligence-led policing is to become more than a rhetorical justification for traditional policing practices' (Gill, 2000, p. 261). The second criticism is whether it can achieve accountability, ie close the gap between the police and the

community they serve in order better to achieve community safety. Mike Maguire talks about the 'the big if' surrounding the NIM: whether those driving the implementation will be able to translate intentions into reality (Maguire, 2003, p. 388).

An early indication of the work yet still to do is found in the Guidance on the NIM published by the National Centre for Policing Excellence on behalf of ACPO (National Centre for Policing Excellence, 2005). It opens by stating that NIM is a business model for law enforcement, but whereas the original guide to NIM set out outcomes to be achieved through a business process, these outcomes are no longer included. In place is a process called 'Operational Review' (National Centre for Policing Excellence, p. 93), where the tactical tasking and coordination group can commission a review to determine whether key performance measures have been achieved. These include reductions in antisocial behaviour in key categories, improvement in quality of life or increased sanctioned detections, and convictions of priority and prolific offenders. And while it contains references to community intelligence, it is still not clear how this impacts on core policing business. Another incident in 2005 would find that community intelligence would increase in importance on the police agenda.

THE LONDON BOMBERS

On 7 July 2005 three explosions occurred in the London Underground system, followed almost an hour later by a fourth explosion on the upper deck of a London bus in Tavistock Square. The bombers, Mohammad Sidique Khan, Hasib Hussain, Shehzad Tanweer and Jermaine Lindsay, were killed in what are known to have been suicide attacks. Also killed in the attacks were 52 commuters.

The four bombers were all born and raised in the United Kingdom, and it subsequently emerged that they sympathised with the cause of Al-Qaida which was instrumental in the attacks on the World Trade Centre in New York on 11 September 2001. After the attacks in London, it emerged that a man who had worked with two of the suicide bombers had attempted to inform the police of their activities but that he had been ignored. Martin Gilbertson had worked in a local Islamic bookshop in Beeston and had assisted in the compilation of DVDs. One of the DVDs contained images of violence toward America, played to the soundtrack of 'The Star-Spangled Banner' and concluding with the image of the first plane crashing into the World Trade Centre. Two of the bombers, Khan and Tanweer, were involved in the distribution of the DVDs. Gilbertson became so concerned about the content of the DVD that he contacted his local police station in Holbeck. He was there told to contact West Yorkshire police headquarters and so he consequently sent a package of DVDs, a contact number for himself, and details of a number of people including Tanweer and Khan. He was never contacted. When the details of his account were published, a police spokesperson stated:

We get all sorts of material on extremist groups — but it's impossible to say whether this made its way into the intelligence system, whether it was discounted as low-level intelligence or whether it was acted upon in some way.

In an echo of the intelligence relating to Ian Huntley, information concerning the potential risks of persons known to the police was apparently discounted by the police.

CONCEPTUALISATION

To understand these issues better we will look at the ways in which intelligence can

be conceptualised. Innes, Fielding and Cope (2005) conceptualise intelligence in four levels: criminal, crime, community and contextual. Criminal relates to the activities of a known suspect or offender, crime to a specific crime or series of crime, community to information from a community member or issues within the community, and contextual relates to wider social, cultural or economic factors which may impact on crime or levels of offending (Innes et al., p. 44). An example of contextual intelligence would be that the bombings of 7 July occurred on the anniversary of the Bradford Disorders of 2001, where young men from a predominantly Asian part of the city were in conflict with the police and members of the White community.

One of the most recent examples of how community intelligence differs from crime and criminal intelligence was found in the outbreaks of disorder experienced in Birmingham in October 2005. The Lozells area of Birmingham contains people from cultural backgrounds including people of African, Caribbean and Asian heritage. In autumn 2005 a rumour began to circulate within the communities that a 13-year-old girl had been gang raped by between 3 and 25 Pakistani men in a local beauty salon. It was alleged that the girl had been 'punished' for having been caught shoplifting in the salon, and further that she had not wanted to report the offences to the police because she was a Jamaican and believed that she would be deported. It is worth pausing and asking: if this were received as intelligence by the police, how would it be evaluated?

The current system, is known as $5 \times 5 \times 5$ (and was developed from the 4×4 evaluation). It evaluates the reliability of the source of the information (the first 5), the known truth of the information (the second 5) and to whom the information can be circulated (the third 5).

This evaluation process was designed to assist police officers to increase detections, but it would struggle to prove either the truthfulness of the source or the content of the information. In spite of this, the local police acted on the information, not specifically with a view to increase detections, but to reduce potential outbreaks of disorder between the communities. The rumour came to the police's attention on Monday, and by Saturday the area experienced disorders which resulted in four men being stabbed, one of whom subsequently died and two men being shot, one of whom was a police officer. What appears to matter here is not the veracity of the rumour but the impact upon the local community.

DISCUSSION

It could be argued that the emergence of intelligence-led policing, whilst a modern concept, sits in a more traditional policing setting. In a system which is performance driven and where officers are held accountable for their actions, the overarching definition for policing is crime detection. In this context the NIM now describes itself as a law enforcement model. And it is through this lens that intelligence is viewed. The issue of accountability as articulated in the NIM raises the question; accountable to whom and for what actions?

As the quote from Beck which opens this article indicates, it is what gets excluded when the police service is primarily focused on law enforcement that interests us here. In two of the cases cited, the Huntley intelligence report and the Gilbertson posting to West Yorkshire Police, neither instance lent itself to simple law enforcement resolutions nor was either acted upon. To put it crudely, intelligence-led policing could only make a contribution to addressing the risks posed by Ian Huntley after the tragic deaths of two children — until then it was busy looking the other way. Likewise,

the interest in Khan and Tanweer was only evident after the attacks of 7 July and we do not know, as the police spokesperson stated, if it was 'discounted as low-level intelligence'. As the former chief of operations and analysis in the CIA's Counter Terrorism Centre stated, 'If you're investigating an act of terrorism, then you've already failed' (Harris, 2005, p. 106).

However, the intent of this article is not to be too clever in hindsight. We want to make the point that if the system is not sensitive to other forms of intelligence beyond that which detects crime, it will be subject to more errors.

The events in Birmingham illustrate how community intelligence also concerns what people in communities believe to be true, but the intelligence evaluation process of $5 \times 5 \times 5$ concerns what the police service can prove to be true. Peter Manning states that to the police information from a member of the community is suspicious because it is mediated communication (Manning, 2001, p. 99), and 'people cannot be trusted — they are dangerous' and it is policemen who 'can most accurately identify crime and criminals' (Manning, 1978, p. 101). However, Cantle (2001) states that there is a gap between communities that militates against understanding, and this can equally apply to the police service. It is this gap between the police and the communities they serve that community intelligence seeks to close. Now, it can be argued that the police need to engage with communities and gain their trust and confidence in order to obtain the community intelligence they need to operate effectively. In fact, this process forms the central part of the United Kingdom Government's PREVENT strategy to address counterterrorism.

Still, after over 10 years since the concept of community intelligence was introduced, it is legitimate to ask why this still presents a problem to the police in the United Kingdom. As we have argued in this article, the idea which community intelligence seeks to address is more about managing risk than increasing detections. Ulrich Beck states, when discussing the world risk society, that when experiencing risks which emerge in a globalised society there are three possible responses: 'denial, apathy or transformation' (Beck, 2006). It could be argued that the police service is still in denial around these risks and that it will only be after a number of significant events are added that it will begin the process needed to reorganise itself.

CONCLUSION

Societies are undergoing immense changes through globalisation, technological developments and mass migration. The challenge to the police service is that if it does not keep up with the changes, it will place both itself and the communities it serves further at risk. Our intent with this article has been to highlight how, by holding on to a concept of intelligence as a process that concerns itself solely with law enforcement, it has failed to respond to the emergent risks of a globalised world, not least the threat from violent extremism. We suggest that for the police to begin to address these risks they must first acknowledge the need to change and recognise that their current conceptualisation of intelligence is no longer fit for purpose. The alternative will be to see further occasions to add to the ones already outlined where the police were aware of information but failed to act. As we currently see it, the territory is changing but the map is not being amended; it is time for some significant revisions.

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