



Community Policing to Counter Violent Extremism: A Process Evaluation in Los Angeles

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About This Report

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Executive Summary

Countering violent extremism (CVE) work to date in Los Angeles, led by the Los Angeles Police Department (LAPD) and its law enforcement and community partners, has centered on a community policing approach. Community policing forms partnerships between law enforcement and communities and emphasizes proactive joint problem-solving so as to build trust and cooperation and address the conditions that mitigate public safety. Overall, research studies of community policing have shown that it can improve citizens' satisfaction with and trust in the police, but it does not necessarily decrease crime.

Community policing was cited in the White House's Strategic Implementation plan of 2011 as a key component of CVE. A recent national study led by Duke University concluded that nearly half of policing agencies in the U.S. are using community policing practices of outreach and engagement to communities being targeted for recruitment to terrorism.

The LAPD and its partners believe that community policing to counter violent extremism can build community resilience to violent extremism. This would mean that community policing can strengthen the capacities of communities to prevent violent radicalization and to stop attacks. However, there is presently a lack of adequate understanding and evidence about how exactly community policing practices can achieve this or otherwise contribute to CVE and also what are its limitations. Research is needed to build that knowledge.

We are researchers from the University of Illinois at Chicago (UIC) who conducted an independent research study of the LAPD's strategy of using countering violent extremism tailored community policing (CVETCP). The type of study we conducted is called a process evaluation. A process evaluation examines the course and context of a program so as to understand what is happening, to identify best practices, and to understand the program in its broader context and why it turned out the way it did.

Our overall conclusion is that adopting a community policing model is a necessary approach to better protect and serve communities at risk for violent radicalization. Some of those communities are comprised of Muslim immigrants and refugees from countries where the police were feared and citizens learned to turn away. Community policing can humanize officers for these communities and help shift these attitudes.

Our process evaluation of their work identified five community policing practices:

Engage. Community outreach officers meet and establish one-on-one relationships with community leaders to open communication channels. They also build partnerships with community-based organizations, including faith-based and interfaith organizations.

Build Trust. Community outreach officers work to establish honest and open dialogue on sensitive issues with community leaders and members, such as concerning terrorism, hate crimes, and discrimination. They acknowledge and promote mutual understanding of communities' historical traumas and their present needs and strengths. The officers aim to be as transparent as possible regarding crime fighting and police conduct.

Educate. Community outreach officers teach communities about crime (including hate crimes), police work, and community resources to combat criminal activity. This includes building knowledge and awareness in communities about violent extremism and how to prevent it.

Problem Solve. Community outreach officers help communities and individuals respond to their current problems. This includes helping communities respond appropriately to Islamophobia, discrimination, and hate speech and crimes. They also help community members access available resources to address social, legal, and mental and physical health concerns. They provide communities with knowledge and skills to assess the threat level of individuals and educate them on how to respond.

Mobilize. Community outreach officers promote the civic engagement of community members, including promoting women and youth advocacy on civic and public safety issues. They assist immigrants and refugees in promoting their integration and addressing their security concerns. They also provide community-based organizations with consultation, materials, information, and support regarding how their organization can contribute to building resilience to violent extremism.

These should be considered emerging practices given that CVETCP is a new practice and is currently based on evidence which is not research-based.

We then worked with the LAPD and their law enforcement and community partners to build a logic model of their current program. The model could be used to inform conducting a program evaluation of CVETCP as it is currently being practiced.

This logic model and these emerging practices lay an important and necessary foundation for additional work which is needed in order to effectively build community resilience to violent extremism, some of which could be incorporated into community policing approaches. Additional work should include incorporating public health models of *prevention* and *building resilience* that rely on evidence based strategies for addressing *upstream risk factors and root causes* (Weine and Ahmed, 2012). It should also include a stronger emphasis on *developing and maintaining partnerships, drafting logic models that include a theory of change, building multi-level change-oriented interventions, and evaluating outcomes*.

Efforts to build community resilience cannot possibly succeed without adequately understanding the community context. This study identified and described multiple key contextual issues which should inform the further development and implementation of CVETCP and CVE in Los Angeles and elsewhere. These included: *challenges growing up Muslim in America today; challenges for parents and families; challenges for mosques and Imams; bias against Muslims, and; history of surveillance and sting operations in Southern California*. We concluded that CVETCP and CVE could be strengthened by better understanding and addressing these contextual issues in program activities.

One of the most important contextual issues that needs to be better understood is the community opposition to CVE and CVETCP. We describe the polarized discourse of pro- and anti-CVE engagers. When we talked with persons about CVE, the position taken often seems less rigid than the public rhetoric. Many factors went into the polarized CVE discourse, but it is not one that necessarily needs to persist. The variabilities amongst and commonalities between the pro- and anti-CVE engager suggests that a broader and equitable approach to violence prevention utilizing community policing could possibly gain the mutual trust and cooperation that both communities and law enforcement seek.

Another key recommendation is that CVETCP should focus on all threats. Instead of limiting the focus to Muslim Americans, these strategies should address the full spectrum of ideologically inspired Islamists, far right, and far left violence, as well as non-ideologically inspired violence.

In conclusion, community policing and the emerging practices of CVETCP lay a necessary foundation for CVE, but additional work is needed to strengthen community resilience to violent extremism, especially through introducing a public health prevention framework, focusing on key contextual issues, and using equitable practices.

Introduction

Countering Violent Extremism and Community Policing

Criminal justice agencies and their community partners have been involved in a range of activities focused on countering violent extremism. These activities follow the White House's Strategic Implementation Plan (SIP) of August and December 2011 which set forth broad principles and some specific recommendations for building community resilience to violent extremism (The White House, 2011a). The SIP underlined that collaborative partnerships with community-based organizations were necessary, such as: “shar[ing] sound, meaningful, and timely information,” “respond[ing] to community concerns” and “supporting[ing] community based solutions” (The White House, 2011b). This policy of prevention through “engagement and partnership” and “building community resilience” is a cornerstone of national security and has resulted in new partnerships, information sharing, programs, and trainings across the United States (The White House, 2016).

This emphasis on prevention was intended to be built on existing successful models of community-based solutions and problem-solving, including but not limited to existing public safety practices (The White House, 2011a). One model that has been emphasized is the practice of community policing. Community policing forms partnerships between law enforcement and impacted communities and emphasizes proactive joint problem-solving so as to build trust and cooperation and address the conditions that mitigate public safety (DOJ, 2014). Nearly all U.S. police departments would say that practicing community policing is part of their DNA. Some have developed what is called “tailored engagements” which the International Association of Chiefs of Police (IACP) defines as “when police proactively engage a specific community because of a known or emerging trend” (IACP, 2012). The emergence of community policing practices in some U.S. police departments in cooperation with Muslim American communities under threat of violent extremism is a major new development. Importantly, these new policing practices depend not only on leadership and flexibility in police departments, but also on the strengths, organizations, and leadership in Muslim American communities. All of these characteristics are present in Southern California, where the Los Angeles Police Department (LAPD) and its law enforcement partners have developed an innovative community policing program focused on countering violent extremism.

A recent national study led by Duke University’s David Schanzer concluded that nearly half of policing agencies are following promising practices which can increase trust between police and communities, and serve as a platform for addressing public safety threats (Schanzer, Kurzman, Toliver, & Miller, 2016). The promising practices identified included, “deep leadership commitment to community engagement, broad based engagement efforts that span multiple communities, ensuring that police forces are trained in outreach techniques and cultural competency, hiring a diverse police force, using outreach to address the

core needs of the community, and finding ways to divert individuals away from the criminal justice system when possible by providing them the resources and assistance they need” (Schanzer, Kurzman, Toliver, & Miller, 2016, p. ii).

Community policing is not well-theorized, and some have described it as even anti-theory (Fielding, 2005). Successful prevention efforts in criminal justice and public health are grounded in well-accepted theories. Thus, it follows that community policing to counter violent extremism should also be based on theory. However, presently there is no single theory that adequately explains the opportunities and complexities of community policing’s prevention programming regarding violent extremism. The lack of a solid basis in theory could be a limiting factor in developing effective community policing programs that are able to contribute to preventing violent extremism.

To date, no known research has demonstrated the effectiveness of community policing’s prevention programming in countering violent extremism. This is not surprising, given the newness and complexity of the field. Research on community policing’s roles in preventing or suppressing other kinds of criminal activity is also lacking in definitive indications of effectiveness (Cordner, 1997; Fridell, 2004; Kerley and Benson, 2000; Lurigio and Rosenbaum, 1994; Sadd and Grinc, 1994). Overall, research studies of community policing in other situations have shown that it usually improves citizens’ satisfaction with and trust in the police, but it does not necessarily decrease crime.

The Liaison Section of the Los Angeles Police Department

In 2008, the LAPD established a “liaison section” of its Counter-Terrorism and Special Operations Bureau. The mission of the liaison section is, “to fully leverage the Department’s public outreach capability and communications capacity in an effort to improve the quality of life and public safety within diverse communities by building mutual partnerships and trust through coordination and collaboration of all Department entities, government stakeholders, public/private/faith-based organizations, nongovernmental organizations with local communities” (LAPD Liaison, 2017). The liaison section consists of up to six police officers and 25 specialist volunteers and reserve police officers. The founder of the Liaison Section was Deputy Chief Michael Downing, who retired in March 2017.

As part of the liaison section, the LAPD began holding the Muslim Forum in 2008. Each forum hosts approximately two dozen representatives from Muslim organizations throughout the greater Los Angeles area. The Muslim Forum’s overall aim is, “to enable the LAPD to better understand how it can protect and serve their communities” (Downing, 2009). The forums are held biannually and are always hosted by the LAPD Chief of Police, starting with Chief William Bratton (currently Chief of the NYPD) and continuing with Chief Charlie Beck. The forums take place at a Los Angeles mosque and are co-chaired by LAPD Deputy Chief Mike Downing and two community co-chairs. The community co-chairs have included, for example, Salam Al-Marayati, Executive Director of the Muslim Public Affairs Council, and Imam Abdul Karim Hasan, a member of the Executive Board of the Shura Council of Southern California.

Chief Downing explained the need for the forum and the LAPD’s community policing approach to countering violent extremism: “Community mobilization, an essential part of the crime-fighting model, is particularly important when applied to populations that may feel targeted by society or the police. One goal with Muslim communities has been to converge their community-building efforts with those of the LAPD; by opening channels of communication and fostering trust, opportunities to improve police service to those communities would arise” (Downing, 2009).

The LAPD has written that the liaison efforts are, “building a network to defeat a network” (LAPD, 2013). This network involves a diverse spectrum of traditional public/private partners, other non-traditional partners (e.g., mosques), partners from local criminal justice agencies, other local government agencies, and state and federal agencies. The network is built and sustained through one-on-one contacts, attending and supporting community events, and social media (<https://www.facebook.com/LapdLiaisonUnit>).

The emergence of community policing divisions conducting engagement, prevention, and coordination in Muslim American communities under threat with a countering violent extremism focus is an important new development, with the Los Angeles Police Department at the lead. However, this experience also raises questions that require further study.

We identified three research questions which were used to guide this study:

- 1) How does community policing work to counter violent extremism and how might that be enhanced through public health prevention strategies?
- 2) What exactly is community and family resilience to violent extremism in Muslim American communities under threat?
- 3) How can criminal justice agencies and communities develop policies, programs, and initiatives to enhance resilience in communities under threat?

Data and Methodology

Aims of the Study

The specific aims of this study were to:

- 1) Examine the engagement and prevention practices of countering violent extremism law enforcement in community context through ethnographic methods to characterize how community and family protective resources could be further enhanced through public health preventive strategies;
- 2) Examine how family and community protective resources vary across sociocultural context and services sectors and how this and other contextual factors would facilitate or impede the implementation of community policing; and
- 3) Develop a prevention model, identify core prevention strategies, and plan for assessing community resilience to violent extremism through the convening of a joint psychosocial/law enforcement/community working group.

Process Evaluation

These aims were addressed through a process evaluation that utilized ethnographic and community collaborative methods. A process evaluation examines the course and context of a program so as to understand what is happening, to identify best practices, and to understand the program in its broader context and why it turned out the way it did (Moore et al., 2014). The sample for the ethnography of Aims 1 and 2 was focused on Los Angeles, where countering violent extremism law enforcement conduct community engagement, prevention, and coordination in Muslim Diasporas. The researchers conducted both focused field observations and minimally structured interviews as described below.

Focused field observations. Focused field observations involve observations of community policing that are focused on activities likely to shed light on the research questions. Observations focused on activities involving: 1) law enforcement officers engaging in public meetings with community members (e.g., open

community meetings); 2) law enforcement officers meeting with community members in community sites (e.g., a law enforcement officer visits a school or mosque); 3) law enforcement officers only (e.g., team meetings, case consultations, meetings at which decisions are made). Note: The focused field observations focused only on community policing activities and not other law enforcement activities. For the focused field observations, police officers engaged in community policing activities and adults age 18 and over who receive their services, participate in programs with the officers or otherwise interact with the officers were observed. These observations lasted two to four hours each, with 100 hours of observations total in Los Angeles. Field notes were taken.

Minimally structured interviews. Minimally structured interviews are discussions with the respondent that begin with a small number of introductory questions. The conversation proceeds in whichever direction allows the respondent to speak most meaningfully to the research questions with concrete and personal details. The minimally structured interviews with the young adults and family members covered: personal history, family history and life, community involvements, political and religious views, and cultural attitudes and norms. For community advocates and law enforcement officers, the interviews focused on how the organization works with Muslim Americans, the cultural attitudes and norms, and organizational characteristics. These interviews lasted up to two hours and were audiotaped.

Minimally structured interviews were conducted with a total of 105 persons who were either: 1) Muslim American young adults (ages 18 to 30) (n=30); 2) Muslim American parents or adult family members (ages 18 to 64) (n=30); 3) Muslim American community advocates (ages 18 to 64) (n=30); 4) Law enforcement officers who do community policing work with Muslim American communities (ages 18 to 64) (n=15). The team focused data collection on persons from a diverse range of Muslim American backgrounds represented in that community.

Developing a prevention model and plan for assessment. We took a participatory approach to developing a prevention model and evaluation plan for countering violent extremism tailored community policing (CVETCP) in Los Angeles. The development of the initial logic model was based on meetings with stakeholders to discuss stakeholders' perspectives on the logic model components in the context of their organization's priorities. The stakeholders provided detailed information on the resources they had available for CVE-related activities, current CVE-related activities taking place, and short and long-term outcomes of interest. The evaluators then suggested causal pathways (or linkages) between the resources, objectives, strategies, activities and outcomes to aid stakeholders to better conceptualize their program ideas. (Note: This part of the work was conducted with Dr. David Eisenman and Dr. Janni Kinsler of UCLA through the support of the Science and Technology Directorate, Department of Homeland Security, Cooperative Agreement 2015-ST-108-FRG006.)

Results

This section reports on the results which include: 1) Emerging practices of countering violent extremism tailored community policing (CVETCP); 2) Stakeholder's perception of future directions of CVETCP and CVE; 3) The community context of CVETCP (including "key contextual issues," "the pro- and anti-CVE engagement rhetoric," and community recommendations regarding CVETCP and CVE; 4) logic model and evaluation plan for CVETCP.

1. Structural and operational differences

Emerging practices of counter violent extremism tailored community policing CVETCP in Los Angeles differs from traditional community policing, both structurally and operationally.

CVETCP in the LAPD is centralized in one unit of approximately 25 officers that covers the entire city, rather than traditional community policing, which is led by a Senior Lead Officer in each of 21 geographical divisions. CVETCP holds one quarterly Muslim Forum rather than 21 monthly Community Police Advisory Boards. This means that the liaison unit is both more geographically diffuse, and more one faith community focused than traditional community policing. It also means that the vast majority of LAPD officers, including the Senior Leader Officers, do not have any special focus on Muslim Americans or CVE.

Thus, our data collection focused especially on those officers who were part of the liaison section of the Counter-Terrorism and Special Operations Bureau.

Based on grounded theory¹ analysis of the qualitative data, we were able to build a model that identified five domains of emerging practices of CVETCP. Table 1 provides an overview of the domains, while the following sections summarize and give illustrative examples of each practice.

¹ The grounded theory method begins with inductive strategies for collecting and analyzing qualitative data for the purpose of developing middle-range theories. Charmaz, K., & Bryant, A. (2008). Grounded theory. In L. M. Given, *The SAGE encyclopedia of qualitative research methods*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

Table 1. Emerging Practices of CVETCP

| Emerging Practice Domains | Core Activities | Select Examples |
|----------------------------------|---|---|
| Engage | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meet & establish one-on-one relationships with community leaders and advocates • Meet & establish partnerships with community-based orgs, faith-based groups, local academics and media • Make contact with community members via social media | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Convening the LAPD’s Muslim Forum • Joining community events • Hosting interfaith events • Facilitating youth involvement • Building relationships with community leaders • Enabling hands on experiences |
| Build Trust | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establish honest and open dialogue between LE & community members • Acknowledge communities’ historical traumas and promote mutual understanding • Acknowledge the needs and strengths of communities • LE should be as transparent as possible with the community | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establishing trust following historical traumas • Creating a space for honest dialogue • Combating Islamophobia • Listening to community perspectives • Being transparent • Appearing open minded and helpful |
| Educate | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Build knowledge and awareness of crimes (including hate crimes), police work, and community resources to combat crimes • Build knowledge and awareness in communities about VE and CVE. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conducting inter-faith education • Developing CVE programming • Addressing non-CVE issues • Educating community about available resources • Teaching community members about law enforcement |
| Problem Solve | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide communities with knowledge and problem-solving skills on how to diffuse tensions associated with hate speech and crimes • Promote awareness about Islamophobia and how to challenge it • Provide communities with knowledge and problem-solving skills on how to assess level of risk for VE and how to get help. • Provide communities with information about available resources for at risk individuals (e.g. mental health etc.) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encouraging prevention • Solving daily problems • Reducing tensions regarding discrimination and hate crimes • Building capacity through technical assistance |
| Mobilize | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promote civic engagement among community members. • Provide communities with knowledge and problem-solving skills on how to address integration and security issues of refugees and immigrants. • Promote women and youth leadership on civic and public safety issues • Provide CBO’s with consultation, materials information developing CVE- programs | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Building a network to defeat a network • Providing counter narratives • Offering support during crises • Supporting integration of immigrants and refugees • Promoting civic engagement • Supporting women’s civic engagement and leadership • Promoting Muslim youth leadership on civic and public safety issues • Supporting community-led prevention initiatives • Developing community-led intervention models |

Engage

Police officers meet and establish friendly relations with persons and groups of significant influence in their communities and find opportunities for regular visibility in the community. They reach out to specific community groups, which has largely been focused on different components of Muslim American communities, though there are also some efforts to reach other faith communities. They partner with willing and cooperative community leaders and community-based organizations. They develop personal relationships with community leaders that open communication channels. They initiate dialogue on crime, law enforcement, community resources, violent extremism, and countering violent extremism. Select examples and quotations regarding engagement activities are as follows:

Convening the LAPD's Muslim Forum. The LAPD convenes a quarterly town hall meeting in a local mosque co-hosted by a community leader and the LAPD chief of police. A community member explained, "when we do the Muslim forums every six months with LAPD and I know Chief Downing may not agree with me on this, but the topic is what are we at LAPD doing to protect your civil rights...what are we doing to try and make sure that we're engaging you so you don't have extremists come pop up."

Joining community events. Officers regularly attend meetings in the community. "When the community sees high ranking officials, such as the Sheriff, taking the time to meet with them directly, it adds a sense of security and comfort for the community." One officer explained their strategy: "You get invited somewhere and then that always ends up getting something bigger."

Hosting interfaith events. Officers host a variety of inter-faith events, such as a public forum on religious pluralism. "We invite faith groups from all over the city. We are the most religiously diverse city in the nation and probably the world by some accounts, and so it's very difficult for us not to look at that as a way of engagement as well. So that was sort of another way of symbolic acknowledgment of these communities if you will, and it was very well received and very well taken."

Facilitating youth involvement. Officers have established programs for youth, including the Young Muslim American Leaders Advisory Council, the Youth Ambassadors Program, the Cadet Program, and the Anti-Bullying Coalition. The purpose of the former is, "empowering young Muslim American adults," and to, "encourage civic engagement and cooperation between young adults and law enforcement." One officer explained that the purpose of these programs is to create structure and give direction to children who may be more susceptible to negative influences, "once [these kids] get in the program, they are a different person."

Building relationships with community leaders. Officers shared how they engage community leaders and establish relationships as a way to open communication channels with the broader community. An officer reported: "We go in and introduce ourselves. This is who we are, if you have any issues or want us to come talk to anything, feel free to call us." Another officer reported, "The role of law enforcement is to come and be known in our community, come through the front door and develop the relationships and the trust and all of that and develop the personal relationships so that if necessary, if needed, we can reach out to them, we can contact them." A community leader welcomed the officers and said, "I believe in breaking bread. That means just sitting down and just eating together. And that diffuses a lot of issues right there. We work on commonalities versus on differences. Tolerance. Acceptance." An officer reported: "The feeling I get from mosque leadership is that they want to maintain a relationship with law enforcement,

they want to make sure the channel of communication is open. And there are obviously instances where mosque leadership has reported suspicious activity to law enforcement.”

Enabling hands on experiences. Officers invite community members to have a hands-on experience with their equipment to break down barriers. For example, one officer said to a father and two young boys, “Have you guys ever been in a helicopter?” Their eyes lit up. “Well, why don’t we get you on the helicopter? How much do you weigh? We need to know your weight” and the father said, “I’m going to have to go on a diet.” The officer replied, “No, don’t worry about it. But when the day comes we are going have to know, what day will be good, whether Tuesday would be good or Sunday would be good”. The officer explained, “This morning I wasn’t sure if I should wear my uniform and I was thinking we’re going, I would be going out to dinner. And I’m not sure what to do and then I thought, no, it’s good. I should wear my uniform because we want to be in a restaurant in this community and they want to be seen with me who is wearing my uniform and my badge because it’s good for them and then community people should see that we come to places like this and were friends with these people. That’s what this is all about, that’s what we are going to do.” Another officer explained, “And as you chit chat with them and talk about what we do a little bit, they’re more impressed. Then they start taking pictures. And then they have their kids come over and shake our hands and you’re friendly with them, then that morphs into *I’d like to see you talk about this further I’ve got some ideas for you, and other community members I want you to meet, here’s my business card*. So I’ll take that and I was this morning waiting for you to come in I would shoot emails to some of the business card people that you need business cards. And we’re setting up tea and coffee just to kind of get to know them better and that mixes into a broader relationship.”

Build Trust

Law enforcement works to build trust between themselves and the communities they serve. They address historical traumas that have occurred in the citizens’ countries of origin or in the United States. They work to combat anti-Muslim sentiment. They listen to community perspectives, including their critics. They also strive to be as transparent as possible. A community leader reported, “So I think that’s a two-way thing what the LAPD is doing. They are learning about our culture, and we are learning about other things. So there is a kind of mutual trust that’s building. I think that’s what is needed with the other communities.” Another added: “If you didn’t have the LAPD officers going out there doing what they did and the community was just on its own, I don’t think there would be necessarily any more predisposition to terrorism per se, but there would be I think less of trusting relations with law enforcement, let’s put it that way. So they serve a role.” Select examples and quotations regarding trust building activities follow.

Establishing trust following historical traumas. Officers reported working to promote trust with Muslim communities by acknowledging past traumas that resulted in distrust of law enforcement. An officer stated, “So we have different communities especially immigrant communities and refugee communities that are coming from countries they wouldn’t be in that status if their homeland wasn’t full of war and where there’s been a lot of abuses of human of rights and abuses of the law and it’s who you know and who you bribe and so it is no surprise that they don’t trust law enforcement.” Another officer added, “We were approaching communities that have really not been engaged in the past, we are approaching communities who look at government in general with kind of a mistrust, but we are also approaching communities where their starting points are international and not necessarily local because these are immigrant communities who are also coming in with their own biases, with their own experiences that don’t necessarily translate. So at the onset when we try to bring some of the community groups with the government, it was almost as though they were speaking two separate languages,

completely different languages and over the years we have kind of worked little bit with the community to try to kind of better improve the understanding of community, through educating, town halls, forums, whatever we can put out in these communities to kind of at least help them differentiate.” A community member added: “The police in some of the countries that we all have come from will not sit with you and listen to your complaints and take notes and try to go and tell it to his hierarchy and so on. The media where we come from doesn’t expose the police like the media here.”

Creating a space for honest dialogue. Law enforcement established a confidential space where community leaders could discuss issues within their community. “We tried to create a, I guess, a safe space and a table to bring the leadership around the table in the private confidential space to talk about the struggles within their communities.”

Combating Islamophobia. The LAPD worked with city government to address Islamophobia. A city official reported: “We have done things like especially when there were concerns about discrimination, anti-Semitism, Islamophobia and that sort of thing. We worked with city council and we put a resolution publicly at city council and council chambers that very much spoke about discrimination and very specifically about Islamophobia and so that was in a way a public acknowledgment.”

Listening to community perspectives. Officers reported listening to the community’s perspective on what their needs and strengths were in order to build a trusting relationship with the community. “You can’t just talk about terrorism and extremism and what the LAPD is doing to protect your civil rights or whatever. I mean that’s a very sort of a sub-current of things but it’s not the primary problem facing the Muslim community.” One officer explained how it’s done: “So the question is asked, how do you guys build trust? I can’t say *oh this is what we do A, B, C or D* and then you get trust. That’s the only way I know how to do it is anecdotal stories of building relationships, meeting someone but then following through with an email, and then not only an email but following through with actually going to the location or inviting them to our location.”

Being transparent. Community members explained that in order to have a trusting relationship, law enforcement must be more honest and open with the community regarding why they need information or access to homes and mosques. The community liaison officers tried to explain the purpose of the LAPD’s intelligence gathering activities. They also emphasized that they keep those activities separate from community engagement. “Chief Downing wants it organized this way. We were on the tenth floor as the community liaison division, they are on the ninth floor as the investigative division. And we don’t know what’s going on in their floor, they don’t what’s going on in our floor. We don’t talk to each other. So that way when the community talks to us, they know that we are their friend, we are not going to get involved in spying or anything like that. We just want to be with them and help them to solve their problems.”

Appearing open minded and helpful. Officers put themselves in situations where they demonstrated their open mindedness. “Once you see a picture of [a police officer] who is white playing cricket with these little Indian kids they go oh if this is any indication of open mindedness this is open minded, these guys are open minded.” Another reported: “Most of the trust building is hey my brother got a ticket or so and so got a domestic violence can I talk to you about it? Are you sure you won’t tell anyone?” They are trying to correct longstanding negative images of the LAPD: “We have to undo a lot of bad thinking in the community about law enforcement particularly LAPD because there are some people who are still right after in the riots in 90s that’s what their thinking is about us. And then of course they self-select to movies that reinforce yep that’s LAPD right. So we have a huge marketing problem.”

Educate

Officers promote community knowledge and awareness on violent extremism and countering violent extremism. They provide information to communities on available resources and supports. They work with communities to diffuse tensions regarding discrimination and hate crimes. Select examples and quotations regarding education for community members are included below.

Conducting inter-faith education. Law enforcement hosted forums with diverse communities to educate each other on religious pluralism. A city official said, “That panel was very interesting because we looked at religious discrimination and religious intolerance from different perspectives. So we had an Armenian perspective, we had somebody who is from the Coptic community, we had somebody from the Jewish community and the Sikh community and the communal experiences are very different but yet they all come to a space of we came from a place of persecution and here we are in the space of pluralism.”

Developing CVE programming. Law enforcement creates community programs to bring awareness to CVE-related issues. “We collected about a hundred people, brought them in a hall and we had a meeting about CVE and we called it ‘Community Engagement.’ He gave the presentation for 45 minutes which everybody was very hungry about and people loved it. A lot of people gave us pointers on how to change it and people talked about what can be made better.”

Addressing non-CVE issues. Law enforcement reaches out to the community to educate about other important topics such as disaster preparedness and domestic violence. Law enforcement stated, “Hey we want to do this emergency prepared seminar. How would your Iranian Islamic Center like to host it? Oh we'd love that. What do you need from us?”

Teach community about available resources. Officers inform and refer community members to appropriate resources and support in the community. “Ask me what are your questions and we can connect them to the right resource. So that's a big success in being able to communicate that.”

Teaching community members about law enforcement. Officers try to inform the community about how law enforcement works in the United States, including differentiating the different agencies, such as the FBI and LAPD.

Problem Solve

Law enforcement assists communities with knowledge and problem-solving skills on how to diffuse tensions associated with hate crimes. They help communities to carry out prevention activities, problem solve on how to assess levels of risks from someone who may be moving towards committing an act of violence and on how to get help. They help build capacity of grassroots Muslim organizations through technical assistance. Law enforcement also provides communities with needed information on resources available in the community, including health, mental health, and social services. A law enforcement officer stated that the community knows, “we are their friend, we are not going to get involved in spying or anything like that. We just want to be with them and help them to solve their problems.” Select examples and quotations regarding problem-solving activities are as follows:

Encouraging prevention. Law enforcement’s, “outreach to the non-Muslim community has combined education with prevention.” One officer stated: “We now have Terrorism Liaison Officers (TLOs) at all of our divisions and fire stations who serve as the principal points of contact for terrorism information and

intelligence. These liaison officers educate department personnel and the broader community about the indicators of violent extremism and have proven to be critical assets when it comes to raising the level of terrorism prevention and preparedness.”

Solving daily problems. Law enforcement works with the community to solve their daily problems, in addition to violent extremism. “I think that some of the focus is on solving practical daily problems, like what you described, but a lot of it is also around ideological identity issues. What does it mean to be a citizen, what are the rights of citizens, what are the roles of citizens, why do governments need citizens and vice versa?”

Reducing tensions regarding discrimination and hate crimes. Law enforcement hosts workshops to address problems with Islamophobia and hate crimes. “We did workshops on hate crimes and discrimination so that people have awareness of what it is and what that means and what happens when that is experienced not just on an individual level but on a communal level, how do you deal with it.”

Building capacity through technical assistance. Law enforcement provides technical support to grassroots Muslim organizations to help them succeed in their goals and get them involved in the community, “that was an example of an organization that we helped to promote and kind of helped to invite them to different meetings and different workshops and kind of expose them internally within government and now they are doing fairly well and getting more support and they are actually covered in the local news media in some of the work that they have done.” They added: “There was tremendous need for capacity building. Especially when you look at the youth population, we haven’t engaged the youth population in a meaningful way.”

Mobilize

Law enforcement authorities encourage integration and civic engagement, especially among immigrant and refugee communities. They offer the community support during crises and times of fear. They promote the involvement of Muslim youth leadership on civic engagement and public safety. They encourage communities to, “get involved in the political environment and be represented, to have people participate in the things that are going on in the city, the community police advisory board, the chambers of commerce, the neighborhood watch, the neighborhood councils, the business improvement districts, all those kinds of things. That’s naturally already there and there should be some form of participation in those structures.” Select examples and quotations regarding mobilization activities are below.

Building a network. Law enforcement sees its role as building a network in the community. “What we’re doing in effect is we’re building a network. We’re creating an environment which is hostile to those types of things that are trying to take root in communities, that would recruit kids and radicalize populations.”

Providing counter narratives. Law enforcement spread messages to counter those of terrorist groups. “We are really worried about who is going to socialize them if we lose control over socializing them.” One officer shared that he attends parent-child meetings at school and address issues ranging from school attendance to drugs in order to create an environment that is not conducive to crime and violence.

Offering support during crises. Law enforcement reported that they partner with NGOs during crises and work with communities to alleviate fears. “We got to the point where tensions were extremely high but because we have laid these foundations, we were then able to come out very publicly.” One officer

recalled: “Chief Downing and team of people went down and sat down with the community leaders and said, ‘Let’s talk. This is a really difficult situation. We are sorry for your loss’ ...So how do you train somebody to say we are sorry for your loss and be genuine and sincere about it?”

Promoting civic engagement. Law enforcement encourages community leaders and members to become involved in political processes and issues that affect their community. “I think the initial steps are to give these communities confidence that it’s okay to civically engage and to find ways to create partnerships and align their resources with what is going on in the city.” Another added: “It’s about increasing the civic engagement of community advocates and leaders in the Muslim-American community. Some of them might be negative and disengaged...But it’s trying to bring that more into the fold of taking civic responsibility, partnering with law enforcement, solving problems together.” On the other hand, one officer said, “We’re not interested in them becoming activists, but we’re interested in creating a better partnership so that we can rely on them and they can rely on us.” He added, “It’s okay to have grievances and it’s okay to feel a little oppressed now and then and maybe even feel discontent but do something about it and don’t do anything that is violent. Do something that helps, that you are part of the solution, not part of the problem.”

Supporting women’s civic engagement and leadership. Law enforcement works with women’s leadership groups and advisory groups and supports community based organizations that empower women and get them more civically engaged. One example of this was the LAPD providing financial support for a Southeast Asian Fashion show hosted by a local community based organization (CBO), with the proceeds used for education purposes in the community.

Promoting youth leadership on civic and public safety issues. Law enforcement encourage youth to become active in their communities on civic and public safety concerns. “The Pakistani community is doing youth development programs in the inner city. That’s what it is to be American, to lead beyond the walls of your own institution, your own world, your own home, and participate in contributing to something greater than what your particular culture is.”

Supporting the integration of immigrants and refugees. Officers tried to promote immigrant and refugees’ sense of belonging in the United States. One officer said, “How do we talk to these communities in a way that they feel a part, that they are able to participate, that they also feel the benefit in wanting to be a part as opposed to being excluded?”

Supporting community-led prevention initiatives. Law enforcement assists the community with establishing community-led prevention initiatives. The neighborhood watch group to prevent crime is run by the community and law enforcement’s role is to, “give them updates, let them know what’s going on, and then they could have the Neighborhood Watch every month and we could show up every three months and they are the ones that keep it going.”

Developing community-led intervention models. Law enforcement aids in the development of community-led models of intervention for individuals at risk for violent extremist activities. One such program, “Off-Ramps”, a concept from the Los Angeles CVE Intervention, aims to develop a community-led model that “leverages the full scope of resources in the greater Los Angeles region to help affected individuals.” Intervention models link community members to available resources, “if we were to actually give this person the right resources, and that’s where I think the Muslim community comes in, then we wouldn’t have a result that leads to entrapment, a person in jail, a family broken.”

2. Stakeholder's perception of future directions of CVETCP and CVE

The stakeholders identified several ideas for continued development of CVETCP and CVE. These are summarized below.

Broaden the focus to community resilience. Law enforcement and community partners recognize a need to shift from countering violent extremism to a broader focus on building community resilience. "I think government policy is shifting in that direction – toward community empowerment and community resilience."

Further develop partnerships. Law enforcement and community leaders acknowledge that forming and maintaining community-police partnerships is essential for trust and keeping lines of communication open to counter violent extremism. Law enforcement is, "Interested in creating a better partnership so that we can rely on them and they can rely on us. I think that's kind of what we're beginning to see. You have the leaders of the different organizations that we go to all the time and hopefully these leaders are pulling up from the grassroots, the seedlings that are going to grow in the future, the younger generation." Another added: "I'm here to build trust, to build partnership, it is very important that we work with organizations who reach young people who might appeal to terror threat from overseas." Community based organizations reported that they need funding to better conduct CVE/CVETCP: "We as organizations in our communities should be receiving funding and grant money to work with our communities."

Use a public health framework to develop focused prevention and intervention activities. Law enforcement recognizes that prevention and intervention activities need to be framed as violence prevention for the entire community as in public health, under primary prevention (community-level strategies), secondary prevention (directed at at-risk individuals), and tertiary prevention (individuals who have adopted extremist ideologies). "You prevent extremism before it starts... You prevent diseases before they start by teaching people how to be hygienic and how to take care of oneself and how to take care of one's community. And all those things that we know about prevention."

Outreach to more segments of the Muslim American community. The officers recognize that there is much more to be done to extend their outreach to more segments of the highly diverse and dispersed Muslim American community. "Essentially you either have MPAC or Stop LAPD Spying speaking on behalf of the community, somewhere in the middle you have a huge community there, we still have yet to be able to tap into in a meaningful way."

Develop more youth-focused engagement and programming. Law enforcement wants to build stronger connections with youth through more targeted engagement and programming. Law enforcement officers realize that youth engagement could be strengthened, "When it comes to youth programing, we are not reaching a lot of the youth. For them there is a whole platform of social media that we haven't even begun to tap into. And that's where a lot of the youth engagement is happening on social media, and we haven't really been able to tap or harness that in a way that brings about positive results."

Train police officers beyond a special unit. Law enforcement acknowledged that they need training beyond CVE that is all-encompassing on community engagement and cultural competency. "Muslim community engagement is not part of the academy training of the LAPD or your senior level training at the

LAPD, as community policing is. If you get somebody who really believes in community policing which means they also need to understand the communities that they are policing, they have to understand the dynamics, the issues, the politics and so on and so forth.”

Focus on far-right threats. Beyond the Muslim-American community, law enforcement realizes there are many threats from right-wing extremists which they should be approaching with CVETCP. Muslim-American community members agree that they do not want to be the only community targeted for CVE, “Violent extremism exists in every community throughout the U.S., but DHS is only focused on us. To be clear, we have absolutely no more responsibility for relation with the ideas of ISIS than you do.”

Develop use of communication technology. Law enforcement said they need to better utilize the Internet and social media as resources for engaging with the community. Despite reports by law enforcement mentioning the use of social media sites like Facebook and Twitter to communicate with the public, the LAPD’s Liaison Unit’s Facebook page has not been active since December 2014. In addition, there is no Twitter account associated with the Liaison Unit. Many divisions within the LAPD do operate both Facebook and Twitter accounts, but these are primarily used for disseminating general information about crime and safety, with no information about terrorism and radicalization.

3. Examining the community context of CVETCP

This section examines the community context of CVETCP. First, it introduces key contextual issues expressed by community members that shape their attitudes towards CVE including CVETCP. Second, it characterizes the polarized rhetorical positions for or against CVE.

Key Contextual Issues for CVETCP

Challenges growing up Muslim in America today. A college student said, “It’s a really difficult time growing up as a Muslim right now. Now with all the connectedness and social media and all the different online presences that confuse things even further than they would normally be confused for these youth as a minority in America. It’s really tough to find your way. On the one hand, it’s a positive community that we have pluralism not just this monolithic Islam, but on the other hand that means you are getting various voices even within your community. Telling you like this is the path, this is the path and so they have to make really tough choices at such a young age.” A mother stated, “I’m afraid for the next generation, I’m really afraid for them. I don’t know if we’re preparing them enough to make them strong, to be able to speak up and to make them knowledgeable in the politics, knowledgeable with the police academy. What the police is for, what the FBI is for, so they can make sound judgments for themselves. So that is my biggest fear.”

Challenges for parents and families. A parent said, “A lot of it is happening online and so parents just don’t have any grasp, they don’t have any grasp for their children doing anything on their phones or online and so this sort of one of many nefarious influencers is very problematic because they don’t know how to approach it...They cannot talk to their coworkers about, my son saw an ISIS video and he is talking crazy. Who are they going to talk to about? There isn’t and like I said the tools to talk to people they don’t have the tools so they’re extremely nervous.” “So, the American Muslim parent is dealing with all of those issues and oh, by the way ISIS is also trying to recruit your unstable kid who is finding himself, who may be doing drugs, who maybe having relationships that you’re not approving of, who is hitting the club, oh by the way

that kid is also being told, you will never be accepted in your country. You are being persecuted and hey here is a better life. Come here with your fellow brother.”

Challenges for mosques and Imams. A community advocate said, “We don’t have enough Imams to furnish the amount of Mosques that we have. So, what you do is, you import or you go to a non-qualified person, who really doesn’t know Islam well and some of these are radicalized, they read “Islam for Dummies”, or they converted to Islam and heard a tape or two and suddenly became radicalized. So, there is a problem.” Another community member added: “There’s 2,500 mosques in the United States according to research...and only 44 percent have a full time Imam. And 97 percent of the Imams in the United States were born, raised and educated abroad. Only 3 percent were born and raised here. There’s probably 20 or 30 mosques in the United States that really are progressive and have visionary leadership that have a well-adjusted Muslim American identity that are focused on community service and passing on our sense of leadership for their youth but also for the community at large.”

Bias against Muslims. A community member said: “Americans don’t understand the Islamic faith and its focus on peace and brotherhood among all people.” A city official said: “We approach these communities at a time when they are being framed in a very negative light, publicly in the media, even when really talking post 9/11 at this point and so there is already a great deal of hesitation and reluctance and a great deal of sense of being on the defensive more than anything else.”

History of surveillance and stings in Southern California. A community advocate said: “I think again going back specifically about the LAPD, I think they’ve made some good strides. I think they’ve had some blunders of things around mapping which I think they corrected in time. But I think again even with their outreach with the American Muslim community happens through their counter-terrorism team. And not really getting frank answers other than that’s what the budget is in terms of why are your relationships with the Muslim community simply through your CT team and so it’s been an ongoing kind of conversation.” Another community advocate was critical and said: “Well, lack of transparency, complete lack of accountability and so I think those are the things that have absolutely come through...and I think by accountability I mean that the level of entrapment that has taken place into these communities as well like what is the accountability to that. I mean lives have been destroyed, families have been destroyed, who’s accountable.”

Understanding the causes of extremism and ISIS. A community advocate said: “The biggest external factor that affects people’s radicalization is foreign policy. So, if you want to put effort anywhere, I mean that’s our biggest problem is drone strikes and interventions and all of these other things. I’m not saying that there’s better answers to dealing with those issues, but those are the issues. So, community interventions I just don’t feel that’s going to get us anywhere.” Another community advocate said: “How ironic is it for us to talk about the terrorism we’re afraid of while we’re dropping drone missiles through drone strikes in all these places where they’re watching their children die for no reason.”

The Pro- and Anti-CVE Engagement Discourse

Overall, we found that in the discourse on CVE there were two different rhetorical positions identified as “Pro-CVE Engagement” (aka “engagers”) and “Anti-CVE Engagement” (“disengagers”) which are summarized below in Table 2.

Table 2. Pro- and Anti-CVE Engagement

| Domains | Pro- CVE Engagement “Engagers” | Anti-CVE Engagement “Disengagers” |
|---------------------------------------|---|--|
| Overall | <i>We need to work on protecting our community from violent extremism by working with law enforcement</i> | <i>We will not work on CVE with law enforcement because it is harming our community.</i> |
| Perceptions of the Threat | The threats of radicalization, recruitment, and terrorist attacks are real and must be taken seriously. | The threat of radicalization, recruitment, and terrorist attacks is not real and is used by government as a ruse for domestic spying and civil rights violations. |
| Perceptions of Law Enforcement | Law enforcement is our ally and local helper and will keep us safe from violent extremism. | Law enforcement regards us as a community of suspects and is conducting surveillance and stigmatizing our community without foundation. |
| Perceptions of Priorities | We must accept responsibility for protecting our young people from radicalization and recruitment. | We need to focus on addressing multiple other higher priorities to protect our community such as hate crimes and police brutality and more common risks facing youth in America. |
| Perceptions of CVE | CVE is not yet well understood and requires a great deal of work between communities, community based organizations, academia, law enforcement, and civil rights experts. | CVE is a federal government program like COINTELPRO through which the government conducts illegal activity that harms Muslim Americans and therefore it must be stopped. |

Pro-CVE Engagement (Engagers)

Perceptions of the threat. Engagers reported that youth can be vulnerable to radicalization and recruitment. One community member described a high school senior from Syria who was, “getting fired up. And seeing all of these videos that come out from these groups and starting to post some of these things on Facebook.” A community leader reported, “There are so many young people who are Muslims who don’t know anything about Islam. They go on the Internet and they get their head filled with all kinds of crazy ideas about Islam and they don’t know a thing. They are completely confused and so I know for sure, I talked to these guys. I have to talk to them and try to teach them. And the only way we approach is through a religious and scholarly perspective to show them what is the true Islam. But the problem is they are already too far gone. They think they already know what is the true Islam.” A community leader expressed concerns that youth don’t recognize the dangers of terrorist organizations: “it’s just something that kids will romanticize like they romanticize about vampires or whatever.” One community member said, “The Imam doesn’t have the tools and no one really has the tools.” Overall, the engagers were not

able to give many examples of the threat beyond those cases reported in the media. “The people that are most at risk of radicalization are the ones that are outside of Muslim organizations and institutions, the ones that are going on YouTube. The ones that are listening to radical Imams that don't live here, that have nothing to lose by getting a young kid to do some dumb things.”

Perceptions of law enforcement. Engagers reported that collaboration between the Muslim community and law enforcement is essential to addressing the threats of radicalization and recruitment. A community member reported that, “local law enforcement is more like our local helper they help us keep our streets safe and they're actually physically there.” One community member also reflected on limitations to the law enforcement role: “Law enforcement was generally perceived as not having the community's best interest in that department. But what the community perceived was that it didn't matter if you were involved with radicalism or extremism that you would be painted as such, you would be treated as such with that same rubric of cynicism.”

Perceptions of priorities. Engagers reported that it is the responsibility of the community to address the threat of radicalization and recruitment among community members. The community should be further assets to law enforcement in focusing on both prevention and mitigation of risks for radicalization and recruitment. A community member reported, “That's when [law enforcement] comes in and obviously we need to work with them on helping law enforcement catch those people who we can't help anymore, but addressing the problem at its roots is our problem, it's on us.” Another community member indicated how there are different perspectives in communities: “I think ISIS changed the game a little bit. In that people who were in denial about the influence of extremism on their communities are seeing it through a different lens now. I think most leadership that we talk to still believe it's overblown. Most families that I talk to, most personal relationships that I have, they believe it's a huge concern and so there is a disconnect in leadership and the masses.”

Perceptions of CVE. Engagers connect the work of CVE with that of preventing a spectrum of threats to young people. A community member stated, “we have to face the real challenges within our community of identity formation and integrating into the society and helping our children face all kinds of threats, gang, drugs, alcohol, other kind of vices, as well as violent extremism, is one of those things that we need to help protect our children from.” Another community member saw CVE as a way to organize public-private cooperation: “The bottom line is we must work together to counter the ISIS narrative and its social media machine that exploits Islam to recruit young people to a cult of death. We must engage the government to effectively deal with the ISIS threat while adhering to standards of civil liberties. Communities have not been able to muster any counter campaigns to ISIS. Radicalization is happening on laptops and cell phones. Mosques and Muslim organizations need resources, whether from private foundations or public funds, which are our tax dollars to begin with.”

Anti-CVE Engagement (Disengagers)

Perceptions of the threat. Disengagers reported that the threat of radicalization and recruitment in their community is highly exaggerated due to misinformation being spread by the mass media and Hollywood about Muslims and Islam. One community leader said that ever since September 11th, “the sensationalism created to get news and ratings because bad news sells really well created a pretty traumatizing atmosphere for the community.” Another community leader spoke to the negative images of Muslims coming from Hollywood: “the images that are coming through television screens and film screens,

computer screens and smartphone screens and everything are one of the hardest battles that we fight.” To the disengagers, the problem is not the actual threat, but the stories and images that report a threat.

Perceptions of law enforcement. The disengagers reported mistrust towards law enforcement. To the community, the FBI represents surveillance, informants, deception, and discrimination. One community leader shared a story regarding the FBI’s use of informants: “this town hall was taking place and the director was assuring, ‘we are not spying on this community, we are not, there’s no way.’ And ironically this informant who was not yet exposed was in the room during the event. The community was very skeptical then and it turned out they were right.” Federal law enforcement is known to rely on informants, and many times these informants have used coercion in order to incriminate community members. A community member reported, “The case of informants coming in and instigating violent rhetoric in mosques didn’t help. So that’s still an issue we are struggling with the FBI.” Another community member spoke of the FBI’s use of agent provocateurs: “So that has been the case, actually in almost all the cases that we have encountered here of Muslim youth ‘radicalization or violent extremism,’ has been the vulnerable kids, people who have had some mental problems, all on medications some of them, people who are newly converts whose knowledge of Islam is very limited or kids who have social problem with their families and their communities and these are the ones that are caught by FBI agents for them to be criminals usually, even few past issues, so these people have all the motives to trap people. So these are made by the FBI through overtaxed money, go on seeking young people who are vulnerable at the mosques, outside the mosques and fueling ideas of extremism and violence in their heads and then the FBI keeps fueling the case, giving the ideas, providing the fake weapons, the targets and then eventually everything, then obviously a story is announced, what is announced to the media is ‘Yet again a bunch of Muslim extremists, youth extremists who are caught and fortunately the FBI is here to protect us civilians.’” Another community member reported, “I can safely say the biggest instigators and propagandists of extremist views within the Muslim community have been by far the FBI informants and these are facts. Every case that I have dealt in the past 7-8 years involving someone preaching violence and terrorism and extremist views has turned out to be an FBI case, FBI agent or FBI informant. So for me that is a bigger issue.” Community members reported being racially profiled and unlawfully suspected and spied on by law enforcement and government officials and feel there is no remedy for this type of infringement of their rights. One community member reported, “Law enforcement was generally perceived as not having the community’s best interest in that department. But what the community perceived was that it didn’t matter if you were involved with radicalism or extremism that you would be painted as such, you would be treated as such with that same rubric of cynicism.” Another community member described, “People get scared. What have I done wrong? And [we were] approached by the FBI, and they said, ‘Be an informant for us and we will get you out of this predicament that you’re in, you and your family, we will fix your situation. Just give us information on people.’” One community leader stated, “People say ‘don’t trust law enforcement.’ If that’s how they’re going to play, of course we don’t trust them. How could we possibly? They are like, ‘Well we really want to engage with the Muslim community, let’s sit down and have breakfast,’ while they stab you in the back. No because it’s real and we’ve seen it.” Some community members distinguished between the LAPD and federal law enforcement organizations, such as one community leader who stated, “local law enforcement is more like our local helper, they help us keep our streets safe and they’re actually physically there. Whereas the FBI or the CIA are probably looking at more grand schemes stuff.”

Perceptions of priorities. Disengagers reported that the threat of extremism and radicalization was not a top community priority and that there are bigger concerns that should be addressed in the community. One college student stated, “I’d say so even keeping radicalization in mind that’s not even in the Top 10 on

the priority list. I would say not in terms of order but the Top 3, if I could think of 3, I would say one for sure is our youth leaving Islam. Sometimes girls marry outside of religion. Sometimes guys partake in drugs and end up keeping them away from their religion and just doing their own thing. So I would say losing our youth should be our biggest priority, because if you lose your youth you lose your future." A person who worked with Muslim college students said, "In terms of the students that I'm engaging on a day-to-day basis, they're worried about their grades. They're worried about being able to date and eventually marry the person that they want to marry. They're concerned with mental health issues, being able to explain potential mental health issues to their parents, seeking the right diagnosis, being allowed to be medicated for it, seeking the advice of a mental health professional that's not Muslim, and those are the issues that I'm dealing with drug abuse, alcohol abuse, and premarital sex. Those are the things that are trickling to the top of the priority list in terms of the young Muslims that I'm engaging, whether or not to commit violent acts motivated by the religion are not even on the radar outside of the fact that it's being discussed in the media." Another reported: "Radicalization of individuals necessary isn't really the problem it's the demonization of like Muslim activities, being Muslim, being religious, being politically active. And that becoming intertwined with the definition of radicalization and then the rest of the national population stepping back and saying, 'Oh wait that's not right. We should target these people because they're like that, because they act like that, because they look like that'."

Perceptions of CVE. Disengagers reported that the Muslim American community is being unfairly targeted by CVE. To them, CVE is another method of marginalizing an already profiled and oppressed community. A community member said, "that CVE is unfairly applied to Muslims when we have extremists of all colors and religion and ethnicities, why Muslims?" The disengagers believed that CVE reinforces negative stereotypes about Muslim Americans which inhibits them from integrating with society. One community member described how they see CVE as interfering with Muslims practicing their religion, "It's unfortunate that the practice of a Muslim is now intertwined with this fear of like oh I'll be targeted when I just want to learn about my religion. Mormon students don't have to deal with these things to my knowledge." The disengagers understand that there is a need for partnership with law enforcement, but they cannot commit to such a partnership when all Muslim Americans are labeled as suspects. As one community member stated, "it's just ridiculous how they attribute one's religious beliefs and practices to be dangerous, a propensity to commit dangerous acts." Another community member explained, "So even if we are talking about us participating in countering violence extremism, we are still within the frame of violent extremism which doesn't represent what we are about and so we want to posture ourselves in a way that is not within that frame and we want to somehow distance ourselves from that." As one community leader reported, "If it's going to lead to more profiling and surveillance, that's clearly going to be problematic," noting that the Los Angeles region was home to one of the nation's largest Muslim communities. "Is it really a project to counter violent extremism, or is it really a project to counter violent extremism in the Muslim community?" Another described how this leads to the second false assumption – "Muslims in America are exceptional in that they have a higher or different obligation to counter violent extremism than other racial, ethnic, or religious communities with individuals who commit terrorism or other crimes. The result is a racialization of counterterrorism where violence committed by Muslims is viewed as representative of a problem within those communities."

Community Perspectives on CVETCP and CVE

Community members expressed variability and flexibility with respect to their adherence to pro- and anti-CVE engagement. One community member spoke of those whose opinions are "teetering on the edge." The community member stated, "There are leaders who are gung-ho about being engaged, and then

there are some in Los Angeles who are very skeptical about it. There are people who completely shun that, and there are some people who are teetering on the edge that are more, yeah, we want to be involved but we don't really like to know that Muslims are not bad people, we live in this country and we like it and we are 'be happy about it' but we don't want to be part of your group." Community members said that this variability was not surprising given the heterogeneity of the Muslim American community: "The Muslim community is one of the most unique communities to ever emerge in the United States since its founding. It is so diverse. It is so ethnically spread out. It is made up of so many different cultures that you can't say I'm Muslim and say okay, this falls into this nice pattern thinking about what you should be." Along these lines, they described how migration status could influence their opinions regarding CVE whether you are a Middle Eastern immigrant, African-American, or born in the United States to immigrant parents: "When Chief Downing in the LAPD and Chief Bratton started the Muslim Forum, you had different responses from these three groups. The first group, the immigrant group were like, 'Wow, this is fantastic. Never in our country like Egypt or Pakistan would law enforcement be reaching out to us and wanted to come visit us in our mosques, in our places of gathering.' And as a result the LAPD put their arms out to shake hands and they got a bear hug instead." There are those who want to engage, and who would find ways to address civil liberties issues if they arose: "I'm an American and they're my law enforcement officers, so I respect them, they'll respect me, alright let's engage. And oh by the way SARS or your fusion centers, yeah I don't like that sometimes because I think they're spying on me, but I'll go to my congressman, I'll go to my senator, I'll talk to my local whatever. I'll work the constitutional American way to address my grievances."

The relationship with law enforcement is too terrorism focused. Community members who supported the engagement and partnership activities nonetheless noted that the relationship with law enforcement was too focused on terrorism. "When we do the Muslim forums every six months with the LAPD the primary topic is terrorism. The primary topic is what are we at LAPD doing to protect your civil rights? What are we doing to try and make sure that we're engaging you so you don't have an extremist come pop up within your midst? And I sometimes think to myself okay, that's okay to talk about maybe for about 15 minutes ...but let's not make that the primary topic of engagement...I've been coming here I want to engage, I want to talk but you're talking to me about terrorism all the time. Why are you talking to me about terrorism all the time?" "If you're going to silo me and to put me into that silo and you are the government, you are the authority, you are the authority figure, well hell I'll become that thing if you're going to make me talk to me about that all the time."

Partnership concerns. Community members expressed a range of concerns about the nature and extent of the partnerships between law enforcement and community-based organizations. "What is a challenge to law enforcement is to meet the community where they are at and the concerns that they have, whether or not they see the relevance it's what's important to the community. How do you look and find places that law enforcement can complement and I am not asking the law enforcement to do a different role." Another said: "Government needs to treat American Muslims as partners and not suspects...We should be in prevention mode." Another added: "There needs to be a recognition of the success of Muslim Americans in ensuring that there is no extremism and terrorism in their community centers, etc. We are the heroes of this situation." Another community member critiqued the use of the term partnership: "The LAPD is very quick to use the word partnership. Well partnership is on equal terms but it's always a one-way street, always a one way street... It's 'we need more information,' 'we need more access to the community,' 'we need to go into these mosques,' 'we need to go into people's homes,' 'we need to be telling what is going on.' Ok, well then what kind of partnership is this? So I think if anything it exposes the fallacies of a lot of these policies." The nature of partnerships was also questioned: "The first question is what does public

safety mean? Does it mean more community centers? Does it mean more health centers? Does it mean just more schools or it means fusion centers or these sort of intelligence gathering, more policing and more policing. So that by itself. I mean healthy community, community policing can only happen if there is a healthy community as well. It can't be based on assumption." Another spoke to what should be the limitations of those partnerships: "I don't think it's government's role to talk about how you should avoid extremism. That's the function of the religious entities."

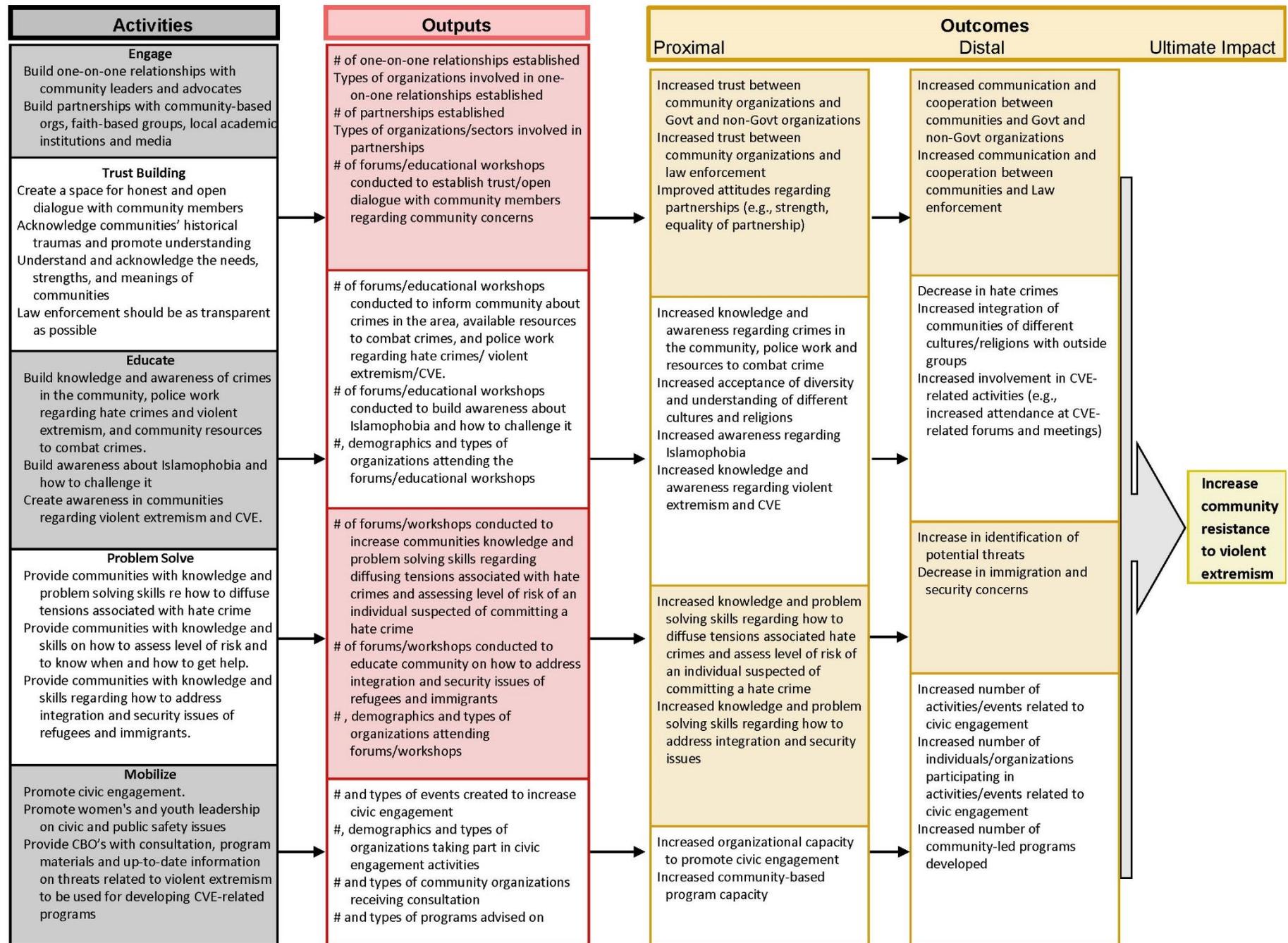
4. Prevention model and evaluation framework for CVETCP

We took a participatory approach to developing a logic model and evaluation framework for CVETCP in Los Angeles. Logic models are considered a vital tool in program development and evaluation in public health (Hawkins, Clinton-Sherrod, Irvin, Hart, and Russel, 2009). A logic model is a visual depiction of the linkages between available resources within the community (e.g., human and financial), program objectives to address a certain problem (e.g., reducing risk factors for violent extremism), and program strategies and activities that aim to achieve specific short- and long-term outcomes (Rossi, Lipsey, and Freeman, 2003). The development of a logic model can occur through an iterative process with program stakeholders by creating a dialogue between evaluators and stakeholders regarding the assumed linkages between available resources, objectives, program activities, and outcomes (Hernandez, 2000). McLaughlin and Jordan (1999) suggest stakeholders and program evaluators should agree on the definitions of program scope as well as benchmarks and measures for success. In addition, stakeholders can assist evaluators in determining data sources to use for evaluation purposes (Hill & Thies, 2010).

The development of the initial logic model was based on review of the aforementioned findings and on meetings with stakeholders to discuss stakeholders' perspectives on the logic model components in the context of their organization's priorities. The stakeholders provided additional detailed information on the resources they had available for CVE-related activities, current CVE-related activities taking place and short and long-term outcomes of interest. The evaluators then provided causal pathways (or linkages) between the resources, objectives, strategies, activities and outcomes to aid stakeholders to better conceptualize their program ideas.

Based on the findings from the formative evaluation, a logic model (Figure 1) was developed which included the components summarized below.

Figure 1. Logic Model



Resources/inputs. The stakeholders reported having the following types of resources/inputs: human resources, financial resources, partnerships/coalitions, and individuals with different skills/expertise. Human resources included paid staff and volunteers from the stakeholder organizations. Financial resources for CVE-related program activities included program development support from the organization's budget. However, some stakeholders reported no or little financial assistance for their CVE-related activities. Stakeholders reported partnerships and coalitions with health care organizations, faith-based organizations, academic institutions (e.g., universities, private schools and public schools), local law enforcement, and governmental and non-governmental organizations. The stakeholders reported the following CVE-related skills/expertise: Violent extremism and CVE knowledge, designing and conducting meetings to deliver culturally appropriate CVE-related information to community members, supervision and management, and communication (which included bi-lingual staff).

Activities. The LA CVE logic model identified five practices under activities that were previously discussed as the practices identified in Aim 1. These are: engaging, trust building, educating, problem-solving, and mobilizing.

It should be noted that overall the stakeholders tended to define prevention in terms of broad outcomes of community building, community strengthening, and community resilience. While preventing violent extremism was one outcome of their efforts, they didn't see it as the main outcome. Thus, they stated that they were not doing these activities to "decrease involvement in and support for violent extremist behavior" as was represented in an initial logic model draft. Instead, they aimed to create trust in the community and prevent crimes in general. They stated that they were trying to "create an environment hostile to violent extremism." Additionally, some of the stakeholders expressed concern that the Muslim American community would not accept and support a prevention program focused solely on CVE. The stakeholders preferred a logic model that depicted more of an ecological/environmental approach to prevention with the ultimate goal of making changes in the environment or creating community resiliency so that community members felt more supported and with more tools to strengthen their community.

In addition to these five activities, the stakeholders reflected on **the need for program evaluation of CVE**. The existing CVETCP program in Los Angeles was not designed to be evaluated and did not conduct any regular program monitoring or evaluation. The stakeholders and others were asked whether there could be ways to capture data from their activities.

Outputs. Direct products of program activities or measures that could be used for program monitoring include assessing service utilization (program coverage and participation) and service delivery monitoring (the extent to which program staff adheres to program guides or protocols). To assess participation in program activities, sign in sheets could be used. Program activity logs could be used to document day/time and location of program activities, demographics of participants (e.g., age, gender). Program activity logs could also be used to assess service delivery (e.g., number of resource guides handed out at a specific function). When appropriate, participants could also be asked to complete a brief satisfaction survey of the program activity/event they attended.

Proximal outcomes. None of the stakeholders reported formally evaluating their program activities. When asked what types of short-term outcomes they would like to see as a result of their program activities, they mentioned the following: Increased knowledge and awareness in communities regarding the roles and function of law enforcement; increased trust between communities and law enforcement;

improved attitudes regarding partnerships between community organizations and law enforcement (e.g., strength, equality of partnership); increased knowledge and awareness regarding crimes, police work and resources to combat crime; decreased feelings of isolation or exclusion; increased acceptance of diversity and understanding of different cultures and religions; increased knowledge and awareness regarding Islamophobia; increased knowledge and awareness regarding violent extremism and CVE; increased problem-solving skills regarding how to diffuse tensions associated with hate crimes or discrimination and assess level of risk; increased knowledge and problem-solving skills regarding how to address integration and security issues; increased number of referrals to needed services such as health, social and legal; and increased organizational capacity to promote civic engagement and community-based program capacity.

Distal outcomes. Distal outcomes of interest included: Increased communication and cooperation between communities and law enforcement; decrease in hate crimes; increased integration of communities of different cultures/religions with outside groups; increased involvement in CVE-related activities (e.g., increased attendance at CVE-related forums and meetings); increase in identification of potential threats; improved problem-solving skills around immigration and security concerns; increased utilization of health, social and legal services; increased civic engagement in the community; and increased number of CVE-related community-led programs. The ultimate desired outcome expressed by stakeholders was to increase community resistance to violent extremism by creating an environment hostile to violent extremism.

Conclusions

This research study conducted with the LAPD and their law enforcement and community partners and other stakeholders in the Los Angeles area focused on their use of countering violent extremism tailored community policing and the communities' experiences and perceptions thereof.

As a process evaluation, this study examined the course and context of their program so as to understand what is happening, to identify emerging practices and to better understand the program in its broader context and why it turned out the way it did.

Our overall conclusion is that adopting a community policing model is a necessary approach to better protect and serve communities at risk for violent radicalization. Some of those communities are comprised of Muslim immigrants and refugees from countries where the police were feared and citizens learned to turn away. Community policing can humanize officers for these communities and help shift these prejudices.

Our process evaluation of their work identified five community policing practices: engaging, trust building, educating, problem-solving, and mobilizing. These should be considered emerging practices given that this is a new intervention and is currently based on evidence which is not research-based.

We then worked with the LAPD and their law enforcement and community partners to build a logic model of their current program. The logic model includes a framework that could be used to inform conducting a program evaluation of CVETCP as it is currently being practiced.

This logic model and these emerging practices lay an important and necessary foundation for additional work needed to effectively build community resilience to violent extremism, some of which could be

incorporated into community policing approaches. Additional work should include incorporating public health models of prevention and building resilience that rely on evidence based strategies for addressing upstream risk factors and root causes. It should also include a stronger emphasis on developing and maintaining partnerships, drafting logic models that include a theory of change, building multi-level change-oriented interventions, and evaluating outcomes.

Regarding partnerships, the fields of public health and community psychology both emphasize the importance of partnerships as a necessary underpinning of program activities. They have devised strategies for initiating and sustaining partnerships among community-based organizations in order to strengthen their capacity for addressing a wide range of community building processes. For example, researchers and community partners used a **Community Barometer** to carry out a quick, flexible needs assessment to provide useful feedback that contributes to developing programs addressing public health priorities such as tailored breast cancer education and screening (Lounsbury, Rapkin, Marini, Jansky, and Massie, 2006). One of the major lessons learned from this “data sharing approach” is that the process is the outcome. This means that both the data gathered, as well as the data-gathering activities themselves, facilitate engagement and partnership, and the latter are seen as crucial to improving strategies and capacities in community-based organizations (Rapkin and Trickett, 2005; Rapkin et al., 2006). Community policing initiatives could consider building on that lesson by focusing as much on the processes of assessment as on the assessment of outcomes. Assessment tools could be used to facilitate a collaborative learning process that leads to stronger engagement and partnerships and importantly, effective community practices for preventing violent extremism.

Regarding theories of change, CVETCP currently has an a-theoretical practice model to guide law enforcement in engagement and partnerships, but they do not appear to have a prevention model which is solidly based on sound theory. What are some starting points? Community policing could draw upon several related models and theories that explain violent extremism, its multi-level determinants, and the need for interventions at the community level. One is **opportunity structure theory**, which describes the key role of “opportunity structures” in relation to such outcomes as involvement in terrorism and other risky behaviors (Clarke and Newman, 2006; Hirsch et al., 2009). A second is the **theory of community resilience and protective resources**, which explains how in the face of adversity, social and psychosocial factors at the level of a community can inhibit, stop, delay, or diminish negative outcomes (Weine, 2013; Weine, Henderson, Shanfield, Legha, and Post, 2013). A third is **partnership theory**, which explains how partnerships involving multiple perspectives and approaches are more likely to lead to multi-level and multifaceted approaches to the complexity of criminality. (Rosenbaum, 2002). A fourth is Roger’s **diffusion of innovations theory** which explains how new innovations start and become normative within communities, especially through the social influence of opinion leaders (Rogers, 2010). Efforts to use CVETCP to build community resilience to violent extremism are not likely to succeed unless they are driven by a high impact theory such as those mentioned above.

Efforts to build community resilience cannot succeed without an adequate understanding of the community context. This study identified and described multiple key contextual issues which should inform the further development and implementation of CVETCP and CVE in Los Angeles and elsewhere. These included: **challenges growing up Muslim in America today; challenges for parents and families; challenges for mosques and Imams; bias against Muslims**, and; **history of surveillance and sting operations in Southern California**. We concluded that CVETCP and CVE could be strengthened by better understanding and addressing these contextual issues in program models and activities.

One of the most important contextual issues that needs to be better understood is the community opposition to CVE and CVETCP. We describe the polarized discourse of pro- and anti-CVE engagers. When we talked with persons about CVE, the position taken often seems less rigid than the public rhetoric. Many factors went into the polarized CVE discourse, but it is not one that necessarily needs to persist. The variabilities amongst and commonalities between the pro- and anti-CVE engager suggests that a broader and equitable approach to violence prevention utilizing community policing could possibly gain the mutual trust and cooperation that both communities and law enforcement seek.

Nearly all believe that CVE as a term has too much baggage to use outside of Washington, D.C. and policymaker or practitioner circles. But it needs far more than just a change in nomenclature. To be effective and sustainable it needs strong leadership, better coordination, better focused programs, sufficient resources, the involvement of communities and professionals beyond law enforcement, a focus on all targeted violence, and a sound communications strategy.

Another key recommendation is that CVETCP should focus on all threats. Instead of limiting the focus to Muslim Americans, these strategies should address the full spectrum of ideologically inspired Islamists, far-right, and far-left violence as well as non-ideologically inspired violence. Muslim Americans need to know that law enforcement is addressing the hate and crimes being directed at them.

In conclusion, community policing and the emerging practices of CVETCP lay a necessary foundation for CVE, but additional work is needed to strengthen community resilience to violent extremism, especially through introducing a public health prevention framework, focusing on key contextual issues, and using equitable practices.

Recommendations

1. Recommendations Regarding the Emerging Practices of CVETCP

- a. Prioritize protecting civil rights and liberties of communities and effectively communicating that prioritization to the community.
- b. Address multiple forms of targeted violence including those that render Muslim Americans as the victims.
- c. De-emphasize engagement as the end-game and work to establish and maintain true partnerships.
- d. Use logic models to clarify program inputs, activities, outputs and outcomes and to strengthen program coherence and potential impact.
- e. Frame the work as community policing and promoting protecting public safety and targeted violence prevention rather than CVE or CVETCP.
- f. Consistently use social media for communication with communities on issues concerning VE/CVE.
- g. Develop and share a complete narrative explaining why CVETCP is needed and how it is conducted.
- h. Do not withdraw from engagement and dialogue when attacked; rather, figure out who is attacking and what their interest is in doing so and respond appropriately.
- i. Be as transparent as possible – what is happening around the country, and the world and in history is all available for the consumption of the disengagers – meet the facts where they are and build consensus around data and sound, sustainable strategies.
- j. Be flexible and redesign as needed.

- k. Conduct regular program evaluations to support continual improvement of initiatives and to build an evidence base.

2. Recommendations Regarding Addressing the Community Context

- a. Engage a broader range of communities – don't single out one – and bring the issue of the violent far right to the table in a real way.
- b. Always maintain an intersectional focus – being Muslim in America always means being many things.
- c. Give communities a seat at the table – and encourage varying community groups and leaders to create their own tables and invite law enforcement and government to take seats.
- d. Address the stated priorities of communities, which include drugs, mental health, gangs, domestic violence, education, hate crimes, and discrimination.
- e. Better identify and explain the threat of violent extremism and targeted violence locally - perhaps by bringing together community and experts in public forums that demonstrate an effort at building nuanced unbiased partnerships by LE.
- f. Strengthen coordination with other LE and non-LE agencies – law enforcement should take the lead in teaching communities about emerging practices regarding CVE and CVETCP.
- g. Expand youth development and empowerment programs.
- h. Support community-led initiatives.
- i. Support communities developing counter-narratives.

3. Recommendations Regarding Addressing the Policy Context

- a. Provide more training to local law enforcement regarding CVE and CVETCP needs and strategies, including around cultural competency.
- b. Empower communities and community leaders to do their part in supporting or developing prevention and intervention.
- c. Prioritize developing prevention and intervention (off-ramp) activities informed by public health and mental health approaches.
- d. Support program evaluations of local CVETCP and CVE initiatives.
- e. Promote application of public health models to CVETCP and CVE.

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