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Chapter 9

The Role of Community Engagement and the Practical Role of Moderate and Non-violent Extremist Movements in Combating Jihadist Terrorism

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Abstract:

This synthesis chapter gathers research evidence around community engagement in relation to combating jihadist influenced terrorism, including the practical role of moderate and non-violent extremist movements. The chapter is divided into three sections: the first section sets out the key debates within the research literature on the challenges of engaging communities and moderate and non-violent extremist movements in the UK. This section emphasises the importance of engaging communities in combating jihadist terrorism and also highlights the key complexities and challenges involved. This section also highlights that whilst there is considerable debate and controversy about the involvement of non-violent extremist movements in counter-terrorism, there is nonetheless research evidence of the merits of including non-violent extremists in community-based approaches. Section two explores some of the key Islamist movements from an historical and ideological perspective and what the research tells us about these movements in relation to their involvement in violence and its prevention. This section particularly focusses upon our understanding of Islamist movements in relation to their involvement in perpetuating and/or combating jihadist terrorism in the UK and internationally. Section three presents research evidence of the more contemporary practical involvement of non-violent “extremist” movements, both nationally and internationally, in combating terrorism.

Keywords: counter-terrorism, community engagement, extremism

Introduction

Scholars in terrorism studies have, for many years, written about the importance of considering communities when understanding, responding to and preventing politically, religiously and other ideologically motivated violence. Terrorists are in competition with communities and socio-political-religious movements for proactive and passive support for their causes, membership and resources. In the aftermath of a series of jihadist terror attacks, alongside terror acts committed by far-right extremists, in the UK there has been an increased emphasis upon the role of communities in combatting terrorism. “Communities can defeat terrorism” has become a well-known mantra. With this in mind, the following chapter comprises of a short research synthesis of recent published work on the role of community engagement, and the practical role of moderate and non-violent extremist movements, in combating jihadist terrorism.

The chapter is divided into three separate sections. The first section sets out the key debates within the research literature on the challenges of engaging communities and moderate and non-violent extremist movements in the UK. Section two explores some of the key Islamist movements from an historical and ideological perspective and what the research tells us about these movements in relation to their involvement in violence and its prevention. This section particularly focusses upon our understanding of Islamist movements in relation to their involvement in perpetuating and/or combating jihadist terrorism nationally and internationally. Section three presents research evidence of the practical involvement of non-violent “extremist” movements, in combating jihadist terrorism.

Section One: Engaging Communities and Moderate and Non-Violent Extremist Movements in the UK for Countering Jihadist-linked Terrorism

The terror attacks of 9/11 are viewed as a significant turning point in counter-terrorism policies and practices¹ in the UK alongside other international contexts, partly because governments have increasingly become concerned by the threat posed by citizens from within their own countries.² This has helped to create a “hearts and minds” approach to counter-terrorism, whereby community engagement in preventing terrorism is seen as a beneficial and even essential aspect.³

Community engagement is a broad notion that includes drawing upon the knowledge, skills and credibility of members of particular ethnic/cultural/religious/political communities alongside involving a wide range of professionals working within health/mental health, housing, educational and other sectors.⁴

The research literature suggests that engaging Muslim communities for countering jihadist terrorism can have a number of important benefits. Individuals within Muslim communities may have knowledge about colleagues, friends, family members, and others that is not available to policing and security and other statutory bodies.⁵ As established by a large body of research,

¹ Counter-terrorism policies and practices are dominated by ‘hard’ approaches involving surveillance and disruption activities and building technical and structural resilience. See for example J. Coaffee, *Terrorism, Risk and the Global City*, London, Routledge, 2009, pp.1-10

² A. Cherney and J. Hartley, ‘Community engagement to tackle terrorism and violent extremism: challenges, tensions and pitfalls’, *Policing and Society*, vol. 7, no. 27, 2017, pp.750.

³ R. Briggs, C. Fieschi and H. Lownsborough, *Bringing it Home: community-based approaches to counterterrorism* London, Demos, 2006, p. 12

⁴ B. Spalek, *Terror Crime: Prevention with Communities*, London, Bloomsbury, 2013; B. Spalek, ‘Introducing Counter-terrorism Studies’ in: B. Spalek (ed.), *Counter-Terrorism: Community Based Approaches to Preventing Terror Crime*, Hampshire, Palgrave Macmillan, 2012, pp. 10-15; A. Huq, ‘Community-Led Counter-Terrorism’, *Studies in Conflict and Terrorism*, vol. 40, no. 12, 2017, pp. 1043-1048; R. Lambert and T. Parsons, ‘Community-Based Counter Terrorism Policing: recommendations for practitioners’, *Studies in Conflict and Terrorism*, vol. 40, no. 12, 2017, p. 1055.

⁵ A. Huq, ‘Community-Led Counter-Terrorism’, *Studies in Conflict and Terrorism*, vol. 40, no. 12, 2017, p. 1041.

there is no one pathway to terrorism⁶ and as such drawing upon **knowledge about** communities can help police and security services and others to risk assess a particular person or network or group of individuals and to take appropriate action as required.⁷ Much research has been conducted looking at community engagement in relation to community policing within a counter-terrorism arena. **Although this can be both controversial and debatable**, some research literature suggests that community members can be the “eyes and ears” of police, passing on information that can help prevent or investigate a terror attack.⁸ However, the research literature suggests that community members will not pass on information to policing, security and other statutory agencies unless there is trust.⁹

The research literature places a large emphasis upon community engagement as a critical way of building and maintaining trust.¹⁰ The literature suggests the following stressors to building and maintaining trust: where community engagement is seen by community members as being there only for information sharing reasons rather than to empower and support communities; where there are no information sharing protocols;¹¹ where any trust that is developed is placed

⁶ J. Githens-Mazer and R. Lambert, ‘Why Conventional Wisdom on Radicalization Fails: The Persistence of a Failed Discourse’, *International Affairs*, vol. 86, no. 4, 2010, pp. 889-901.

⁷ R. Briggs, ‘Community Engagement for Counter-Terrorism: lessons from the United Kingdom’, *International Affairs*, vol. 86, no. 4, 2010, pp. 972-974; A. H. Baker, ‘Engagement and partnership in community-based approaches to counter-terrorism’, in B. Spalek, (ed.), *Counter-terrorism: community-based approaches to preventing terror crime*, Basingstoke, Palgrave Macmillan, 2012, p. 80; B. Spalek and D. Weeks, ‘The Role of Communities in Counter Terrorism: analysing policy and exploring psychotherapeutic approaches within community settings’, *Studies in Conflict and Terrorism*, vol. 40, no. 12, 2017, pp. 992-994.

⁸ M. Innes, ‘Policing uncertainty: countering terror through community intelligence and democratic policing’, *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, vol. 605 no. 1, 2006, p. 230; J. Klausen, ‘British counter-terrorism after 7/7: adapting community policing to the fight against domestic terrorism’, *Journal of ethnic and migration studies*, vol. 35, no. 3, 2009, pp. 410-412; D. Ramirez et al., ‘Community partnerships thwart terrorism’, in D. Silk, B. Spalek, and M. O’Rawe (ed.), *Preventing ideological violence: communities, police and case studies of success*, New York, Palgrave Macmillan, 2013, pp. 158-160; B. Spalek and D. Weeks, ‘The Role of Communities in Counter Terrorism’, pp. 994-995.

⁹ B. Spalek, ‘Community Engagement for Preventing Violence: The Role of Connectors’, *Conflict and Terrorism Studies*, vol. 37, no.10, 2014, pp. 830-836.

¹⁰ B. Spalek, ‘Community policing, trust and Muslim communities in relation to “new terrorism”’, *Politics and policy*, vol. 38, no. 4, 2010, p. 793.

¹¹ A. H. Baker, ‘Engagement and partnership in community-based approaches to counter-terrorism’, in B. Spalek, (ed.), *Counter-terrorism: community-based approaches to preventing terror crime*, Basingstoke, Palgrave Macmillan, 2012, p. 80.

under strain as a result of policies and practices that stigmatise and potentially harm community members; and where there is a high turnover of staff within policing units/divisions and of other professionals.¹²

Research indicates that counter-terrorism policies and practices, including initiatives brought in under the label of “community engagement”, have stigmatised entire communities. The research literature suggests that in the aftermath of 9/11 it is Muslim communities in particular that have become “suspect communities”,¹³ involving the securitisation of their identities, “hard” policing and security practices, and community penetration by informants.¹⁴ This can detrimentally impact upon any community engagement that is subsequently instigated. The research literature indicates that Muslim community members voluntarily cooperate with police to combat terrorism when they see tangible benefits that outweigh any negative effects of engagement, and when they have a belief that police are a legitimate authority, where police legitimacy depends upon the perceived fair and accountable application of the rule of law.¹⁵

Community members can help the authorities make a risk assessment of any individuals or groups that have been flagged up as being of concern; they can work with individuals deemed at risk, as mentors, to reduce the risk; and they also may have access to persons that police

¹² B. Spalek, ‘Community policing, Trust and Muslim Communities in relation to “new terrorism”’, *Politics and Policy*, vol. 38, no. 4, 2010, pp. 799-804

¹³ P. Hillyard, *Suspect Community: People’s Experience of the Prevention of Terrorism Acts in Britain*. London, Pluto Press, 1993, pp. 1-320; P. Hillyard, ‘The Role of Communities in Counter Terrorism The “War on Terror”: Lessons from Ireland’, *Essays for Civil Liberties and Democracy in Europe, European Civil Liberties Network*, 12 January 2018, pp. 1-4; C. Pantazis and S. Pemberton, ‘From the “Old” to the “New Suspect” Community: Examining the Impacts of Recent UK Counter-Terrorist Legislation’, *British Journal of Criminology* vol. 49, no. 5, 2009, pp. 53-57.

¹⁴ A. Kundnani, *Spooked: how not to prevent violent extremism*, London, Institute of Race Relations, 2009, pp. 13-15; T. Choudhury and H. Fenwick, *The Impact of Counterterrorism Measures on Muslim Communities in Britain*, London, Equality and Human Rights Commission, 2011, pp. 30-65; F. Vermeulen, ‘Suspect Communities- targeting Violent Extremism at the Local Level: policies of engagement in Amsterdam, Berlin and London’, *Terrorism and Political Violence*, vol. 26, 2014, p. 303.

¹⁵ T. Tyler, S. Shulhofer and A. Huq, ‘Legitimacy and deterrent effects in Counter Terrorism: a study of Muslim Americans’, *Policing Law and Society Review*, vol. 44, no. 2, 2010, pp. 365-402.

would struggle to engage with – those sections within communities that are particularly distrustful or fearful of police services.¹⁶ This raises the issue of engaging non-violent extremist movements, which has raised considerable research and policy attention, in the UK and internationally.

In the UK considerable research highlights that non-violent extremists can play an important preventative and divertive role in that they provide identity, belonging and political/religious frameworks of understanding and practices and in this way take potential recruits away from violent extremist groups.¹⁷ Indeed, there may be no direct link between extremism and violent extremism.¹⁸ On the other hand, some commentators raise concerns about the involvement of non-violent extremist groups in combating jihadist terrorism. They argue that non-violent extremist groups can provide the space within which extremist ideologies and practices can flourish, making it easier for people to transition to violent extremism.¹⁹ Section two is a synthesis of research findings on the question of which groups of Islamists could be good partners in countering violent extremism and their historical and ideological foundations that justify this argument.

Section Two: Research findings on the history and ideology of violent and non-violent political Islamists.

¹⁶ A. H. Baker, *Extremists in our Midst: confronting terror*, Basingstoke, Palgrave Macmillan, 2011, pp. 38-62; R. Lambert, *Countering Al-Qaeda in London: police and Muslims in partnerships*, London, Hurst and Co, 2011; R. Lambert, 'Empowering Salafis and Islamists against Al-Qaeda: A London Counterterrorism Case Study', *Political Science and Politics*, vol. 41. no. 1, 2008, pp. 31–35.

¹⁷ A. H. Baker, *Extremists in our Midst: confronting terror*, pp. 38-62.

Robert Lambert, *Countering Al-Qaeda in London: police and Muslims in partnerships*. London: Hurst and Co. 2011; R. Lambert, 'Empowering Salafis and Islamists against Al-Qaeda', pp. 31-35.

¹⁸ Rachel. Briggs, 'Community Engagement for Counter-Terrorism', pp.971-981.

¹⁹ E. Husain, *The Islamist*, London, Penguin 2007; M. Phillips, *Londonistan: how Britain is creating a terror state within*, London, Gibson Square, 2006, p. 1; M. Gove, *Celsius 7/7*, London, Phenoix, 2006, pp. 5-8.

Research suggests that political Islamic²⁰ activists who seek change within their communities, countries or internationally, can be roughly divided into three broad categories.²¹ First, the jihadi approach which resorts to violent means to achieve its aims, and which, in turn, splits into various political and theological sects mainly divided around the question of who is the enemy (national or international).²² Those groups include small local militants whose acts of violence are directed towards their countries' regimes, but also affecting civilians, groups such as the former Jihad organisation (*Tanzim al-Jihad*) of Egypt with its many offspring groups²³ and the newly emerging *Harakat Hasm*; and transnationally active groups such Al-Qaeda and the Islamic State; or those active both locally and internationally such as Boko Haram in Nigeria, Chad, Niger and Cameroon. ²⁴

There are two approaches that refuse to endorse violence on a theological basis and, thus, offer the alternative to jihadists' violent extremism. These are namely the non-jihadi "radical"

²⁰ This is to exclude spiritual and non-political groups that do not aspire to achieve "change" such as the purely spiritual *sufi* approach or the purely classical educational/scholarly approach of *madradas* and *darul 'ulum*, for example.

²¹ This division is not meant as the ultimate and definitive division. Each of the three categories split internally into a large number of other groups sometimes varying in ideology and practice. Also, the social and political situations they react to are in a state of constant change and therefore new groups keep emerging and ideologies are consequently revised.

²² F. A. Gerges, *The Far Enemy: why jihad went global*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2005, pp. 119-184.

²³ For more on the small local jihadi groups in Egypt: Abdul Mun'im Munib, *Kharitat al-Harakat al-Islamiyyah fi Misr (Map of the Islamic Movements in Egypt)*, Cairo: Al-Shabaka al-'Arabiyyah Lima'lumat Hqūq al-Insan, 2009, pp. 10-15, available here: <http://www.anhri.net/reports/islamic-map/islamic-map.pdf>

For more on international Jihadist networks:

Dia' Rashwan and Muhammad Fayiz Farahat (ed.), *Dalil al-Harakat al-Islamiyyah fi l-'Alam (A guide to Islamic Movements around the World)*, Cairo: Markaz al-Ahram Liddirasat Al-Istratigiyyah, 2006.

M. Sageman, *Understanding Terror Networks*, Philadelphia, University of Pennsylvania, 2004; M. Sageman, *Leaderless Jihad: Terror Networks in the Twenty-First Century*, Philadelphia, University of Pennsylvania, 2008; M. Sageman, 'Understanding Jihadi Networks', *Strategic Insights*, vol. 5, no. 4, 2005. Accessed: 1.02.2018. https://www.iwp.edu/docLib/20140819_SagemanUnderstandingJihadiNetworks.pdf²⁴ For more on Boko Haram, its activities and links with other international organisations: A. R. Mustapha (ed.), *Sects & Social Disorder: Muslim Identities & Conflict in Northern Nigeria*, Suffolk & New York, Boydell & Brewer Ltd, 2014, pp 147-198; M. A. Pérouse de Montclos (ed.), *Boko Haram: Islamism, Politics, Security, and the State in Nigeria*, Los Angeles, Tsehai Publishers, 2015.

²⁴ For more on Boko Haram, its activities and links with other international organisations: A. R. Mustapha (ed.), *Sects & Social Disorder: Muslim Identities & Conflict in Northern Nigeria*, Suffolk & New York, Boydell & Brewer Ltd, 2014, pp 147-198; M. A. Pérouse de Montclos (ed.), *Boko Haram: Islamism, Politics, Security, and the State in Nigeria*, Los Angeles, Tsehai Publishers, 2015.

approach of Wahhabi Salafism and the “moderate” or rather “centrist”²⁵ reformist approach of the Muslim Brotherhood (henceforth MB) global movement.²⁶ Both approaches are widespread and largely represented in both Muslim and non-Muslim countries.²⁷

Looking at the ideologies and theological basis of the two movements shows that they can pose a threat to violent extremism because they both are founded on a theological basis that is contradictory to the ideas adopted by the global jihadi movement and their ideologues explicitly oppose its activities as well as principles and engage in direct theological and jurisprudential polemic with their jihadist counterparts.²⁸

The aims of political Islamist activism have often been to achieve individual, social and political reform through recourse to a pure form of religion.²⁹ However, contemporary radical Salafism rooted in Wahhabism discourages political participation altogether because of the movement’s strong association with the Saudi State. There is much debate about Wahhabi Salafism and a

²⁵ For the origin and implications of the term “centrist”, R. W. Baker, *Islam without Fear*, USA, Harvard University Press, 2003.

²⁶ By the MB’s global movement, I do not mean just the organisational members of the Muslim Brotherhood, but rather the many groups across the globe adopting the peaceful political approach of Hassan El-Banna, founder of the MB, such as the Jamaat Islami in India and Pakistan and groups tied with it in Bangladesh, Kashmir and elsewhere as well as other more recent ideologies developing within groups such as the EIG in Egypt.

²⁷ See: Dia’ Rashwan and Muhammad Fayiz Farahat (ed.), 2006.

Ahmad Salim Abu Fihir, *Ikhtilaf al-Islamiyyin: halat Misr unamudhajan (Differences among Islamists: Egypt as a case study)*, Cairo: Markaz Nama’ lil-Buhūth wa Al-Dirasat, 2013.

²⁸ Muhammad Mustafa al-Muqri’, *Hukm Qatl Al-Madanyyin fi Al-Shari’a Al-Islamiyya: (The Ruling on Killing Civilians in Islamic Sharia)*, London: Al-Markaz al-Duwali li-Ddirasat wa al-I’lam, (1418 h).

Karam Zuhdi et al, *Istratijiyyat Taffirat Al-Qa’ida: al-akhta’ wa al-akhtar (Al-Qaeda’s Attack Strategy: mistakes and dangers)*, Riyadh: Al-‘Ubaykan, 2005.

Nagih Ibrahim, *Al-Jihad: ghaya am wasila (Jihad: aim or means?)*, Cairo: Dar al-Haytham, 2016.

Hisaham Al-Najjar & Nagih Ibrahim, *Da’ish (ISIS)*, Cairo: Dar al-Shuruq, 2014.

‘Ismat Al-Sawi, *Hiwar Hadi’ ma’a Da’ishi (A Calm Dialogue with a Member of ISIS)*, Cairo: Mu’assasat Rawa’i’ li-thaqafa, 2017.

Yusuf Al-Qaradawi, *Al-Islam wa Al-‘Unf (Islam and Violence)*, Cairo: Dar al-Shuruq, 2005.

²⁹ Akram Hijazi, *Dirasat fi Al-Salafiyya Al-Jihadiyya (Studies in Jihadi Salafism)*, Madarat lil-Abhath wa Al-Nashr, Cairo: 2013, pp 33-36.

T. Stanley, ‘Understanding the Origins of Wahhabism and Salafism’, *Terrorism Monitor*, vol. 3, 2005.

relatively wide-spread perception that it is the same as Jihadi Salafism.³⁰ However, a large body of research into the history and ideology of Wahhabism concludes that this is not necessarily the case.³¹ Mohamed ibn Abdul Wahab's theology has been embraced by the Saudi state in the seventies and the doctrine that forbids opposition to the state and any form of political engagement, be it violent or peaceful, has since become a part and parcel of this ideology.³²

Non-violent radical Salafis around the world have worked both alone and with the state to reduce political activism of all kinds, particularly jihadist activism, based on a presumed resemblance of the current time for Muslims to the earlier years of Prophet Mohamed's mission (the Meccan period), when jihad and political confrontation with opponents were no longer a requirement on Muslims because Islam and Muslims were not in a position to win such battles. This, along with the principle of *tahrim alkhuruj 'ala al-hakim* (forbidding rebellion/opposition against rulers), led to the conclusion that contemporary Muslims should live at a stage of *da'wa*

³⁰ The Telegraph Reporters, 'What is Wahhabism? The reactionary branch of Islam from Saudi Arabia said to be "the main source of global terrorism"', *The Telegraph*, London, 19 May 2017, available here: <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2016/03/29/what-is-wahhabism-the-reactionary-branch-of-islam-said-to-be-the/>; C. Moniquet, *The involvement of Salafism/Wahhabism in the support and supply of arms to rebel groups around the world*, European Union, Belgium, 2013.

³¹ Akram Hijazi, 2013. Pp 33-36.

Trevor Stanley 2005, URL:<https://jamestown.org/program/understanding-the-origins-of-wahhabism-and-salafism/>

Mohamed Bin Ali and Muhammad Saiful Alam Shah Bin Sudiman, 'Salafism Vs Whabism: Are they the same?', *Eurasia Review*, 2016 Accessed: 29.01.2018. URL: <https://www.sott.net/article/330853-Salafism-vs-Wahhabism-Are-they-the-same>

³² For various *fatwas* and discussions of 'democracy as a forbidden form of *shirk*' (polytheism) by prominent Wahhabi Salafi Sheikhs: <https://islamqa.info/ar/107166> Accessed: 01.02.2018. The same source also includes references to *fatwas* by various prominent scholars of the Saudi Permanent Committee: Abdul Aziz bin Baz, Abdullah bin Ghadhyan, Abdullah bin Qa'ud and Abdurrazzaq 'Afifi.

For further Salafi discussions of the legitimacy of political participation:

<https://www.sahab.net/forums/index.php?app=forums&module=forums&controller=topic&id=126009>

group's leadership publicly distancing it from extremist factions evolving under persecution in Nasser's prisons in the 1960s (the Qutbies and *al-Tanzim al-Khass*). Since then, the reformative political approach has become the only official position of the MB outside occupied territories.³⁷ The movement aspired to participation in democratic processes as a way of achieving wider popular acceptance following the repeated persecutions of the movement's members in Egypt (in 1954, 1962, and recently in 2013). Thus, the global Muslim Brotherhood movement repeatedly calls upon its members around the world to be active within the legal and political systems of their countries and, also, to reject all means of violent activism.³⁸

An interesting example that highlights the lack of compatibility between violent and non-violent political activism in contemporary Islamic ideologies is a local non-violent political group in Egypt, *al-Jama'a al-Islamiyya* (the Islamic Group) (EIG henceforth). The recent history of the EIG shows that the group was only able to participate in the political process, from an ideological point of view, after it had denounced violence in the name of jihad in 2001, which was the fruit of a prolonged process of theological revision followed by a large-scale in-prison de-radicalisation program facilitated by the State.³⁹ More co-operation between the Egyptian State and the EIG in in-prison de-radicalisation has been repeatedly reported, since 2001 to the present day.⁴⁰

³⁷ Omar Al-Tilmisani, *Du'a la Quda (Preachers Not Judges)*, Cairo: Dar al-Tawzi' wa al-Nashr al-Islamiyya, 1977. Notably here, this is the MB's current position as regards all forms of political violence, except for that which is directed against foreign, non-Muslim occupiers in occupied territories, where they continue to use warfare against the occupiers, e.g. Hamas in occupied Palestine.

³⁸ Yusuf Al-Qaradawi, *Fiqh al-Jihad (The Jurisprudence of Jihad)*, Qatar: Markaz al-Qaradawi lil-Wasatiyya al-Islamiyya wa al-Tajdid, 2008.

Ahmad Fawzi Salim, Qabla 'Hasm': limadha taraddada al-Ikhwan?', <https://www.ida2at.com/before-hasam-why-did-the-muslims-brotherhood-hesitate-to-declare-their-opinion-on-violent-groups/>

³⁹ El-Awa Salwa, *Al-Jama'a al-Islamiyya al-Musallaha fi Misr 1974-2004 (The Militant Islamic Group in Egypt 1974-2004)* Cairo: Maktabat al-Shuruq al-Duwaliyya, 2006. Pp. 146-186.

Muhammad Abu 'Atiyya Al-Sandabisi, *al-Inqilab al-Fikri lil-Jama'a al-Islamiyya (the Intellectual Coup of the Islamic Group)*, Cairo: Awraq Li-nnashr wa al-Tawzi', 2012. Pp 163-245.

⁴⁰ S. El-Awa, *The Relation between the EIG and the Egyptian State Security*, Unpublished study, Cairo, 2009.

EIG's self-imposed theological revisions denounced the group's old belief that the State and the Regime are 'disbelievers' who should be fought against, and, instead, called for reconciliation and gradual reform through participation in the political process and '*dafiwa*' (Islamic education and preaching).⁴¹ This current position is almost identical to that of the MB's. Subsequently, the group's ideologues also engaged in theological debates with their jihadist counterparts about the validity and permissibility of their violent struggle from an Islamic jurisprudential point of view, calling upon groups such as Al-Qaeda and the Islamic State to denounce violence against state and civilians alike.⁴² The ideologies of these movements have a wide influence on Islamist activists across the globe and have therefore been invested in to counter jihadi ideologies in various parts of the world.⁴³

Section Three: Research Evidence of the Practical Involvement of Members of Non-violent Extremist Movements in Combating Jihadist-linked Terrorism.

Two particular case studies of partnership approaches to counter-terrorism involving members of non-violent extremist movements and police officers have been researched in depth within the UK. Both of these will be the focus here.

The first case study is that of an initiative that took place between members of a Salafi community based at a mosque in Brixton in London and police after 9/11. The initiative comprised of Salafi community members working in partnership with police officers in order to risk assess vulnerable individuals, to provide interventions to make vulnerable individuals less likely to use violence (whether politically/religiously motivated or gang-related violence),

⁴¹ For details of their revised theology: Karam Zuhdi et al, *Tashih al-Mafahim* (Reformation of Concepts) (series), Riyadh: al-'Ubaykan, 2001.

⁴² See footnote 28 above.

⁴³ For example, see the works of The *Jamaat Islami* in India and Pakistan, the Izalah movement in Nigeria.

and to flag up those individuals who had moved from non-violent to violent extremism with the police so that these individuals could be disrupted and prevented from committing acts of terrorism. It is important to highlight that this initiative between community members and the police involved a particular policing unit – the Muslim Contact Unit (MCU). The MCU was a specialist community-based counter-terrorism policing unit whose particular remit was to build trusting relationships with wide-ranging Muslim communities across London, including moderate and non-violent extremist groups. The second case study of partnership between members of non-violent extremist movements and the police in London focusses on the involvement of community members linked to the Muslim Brotherhood at Finsbury Park mosque and the MCU. Again, the MCU set out to build trust with Muslim community members at Finsbury Park mosque, which had at one time been associated with the extremist cleric Abu Hamza. Both of these have been documented at length.⁴⁴ The key findings from this body of research are as follows:

- It is important to facilitate community participation as mutually beneficial, even if forms of participation are not routinely of direct police interest.
- Trust building is key, particularly between police and members of communities who have been previously marginalised or alienated.
- There can be conflicting values to negotiate between different partners: as the values and goals of police and community members are not always in concordance, it is vital that conflicts are addressed to the satisfaction of all partners, and that commonalities are used to consolidate partnerships.

⁴⁴ A. H. Baker, *Extremists in our Midst: confronting terror*, pp. 38-62
R. Lambert, *Countering Al-Qaeda in London*; R. Lambert, 'Empowering Salafis and Islamists against Al-Qaeda', pp. 31–35; B. Spalek, S. El-Awa and L. McDonald, *Police-Muslim Engagement and Partnerships for the Purposes of Counter-Terrorism Summary Report*, Birmingham, University of Birmingham, 2008, pp.11-18.

need of police intervention.⁴⁸ This work continues to this day and time, although trust issues have arisen due to the change of administration that took place recently in Egypt.⁴⁹

The empowerment of the MB since the 1980s and the Wahhabi-type Salafi preachers in the late 1990s led to the formation of a large social and political force of people seeking in-depth religious education and social and political change (particularly for the MB). The long and intensive efforts were successful in mobilising hundreds of thousands of Egyptians of various age groups and social and professional backgrounds towards meaningful activism and away from what was seen as destructive and religiously illegitimate jihadi ideologies.⁵⁰ Such social empowerment is considered to be a key factor in the uprising that the Arab World witnessed in 2011, choosing non-violent methods over militancy to change the ruling regime, particularly in Egypt and Tunisia. In more recent years, when Egypt's military seized power by the removal of the elected MB president in 2013, the widely prosecuted members and supporters of the MB remained faithful to their peaceful (non-violent) ideology and, despite continued pressure from angry and disillusioned young Muslims opposed to the new regime, the group's leadership continued to be publicly outspoken against the various calls to adopt violence to defeat the oppressive regimes both in Egypt and elsewhere.⁵¹

To conclude, there is historical evidence that the two approaches to Islamic activism, the jihadi and the non-jihadi, negate each other and are non-complementary. The empowerment of communities called for by researchers yet again was most effective, as seen from the research

⁴⁸ S. El-Awa, *The Relation between the EIG and the Egyptian State Security*.

⁴⁹ The previously exemplar successful relation between the EIG and the Egyptian state has been shaken after the recent change in Egyptian politics and is in a state of flux that is currently difficult for researchers to access. For more on the EIG after the 2011 uprising, see: Muhammad Abu 'Atiyah al-Sandabisi, 2012, pp. 319-329.

⁵⁰ See, C. R. Wickham, *Mobilizing Islam: Religion, Activism and Political Change in Egypt*, 2002.

⁵¹ R. Dandachli, 'Fighting Ideology with Ideology: Islamism and the challenge of ISIS'. *Brookings*, 5 January, 2017, available here: <https://www.brookings.edu/opinions/fighting-ideology-with-ideology-islamism-and-the-challenge-of-isis/>; see also: footnote no 35 above.

discussed above, when it relied on non-violent Islamists being able and free to provide a viable and legitimate channel to which active young Muslims could resort instead of violence.⁵²

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