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Abstract

The UK PREVENT programme aims to address radicalisation by identifying and supporting “at risk” individuals that are deemed vulnerable to extremism. Central to this process is the willingness of professional practitioners to report information to authorities, a duty consolidated through the Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015. Despite this, little is known about the thresholds to report from a policing perspective. How risk performs beyond fixed indicators which pre-figure terrorism is also underexplored. This qualitative study provides insight into PREVENT police officers’ accounts of the reporting stage of PREVENT. A thematic analysis of semi-structured interviews identified the mobilisation of intelligence on the basis of “gut feelings” and “instinct”. Professional partners in particular were encouraged to trust their own subjective judgements in the absence of observable risk indicators and tangible evidence. A simplified and relational risk logic was said to provide several operational benefits, for example, aligning the PREVENT team with non-specialist actors. To unpack the data theoretically, this article is inspired by the affective turn in human and social sciences and measures the data against the notion of “affect”. Finally, the findings are supported by an examination of national counter-terrorism policing campaigns, PREVENT briefing documents, and Home Office initiatives. The key propositions therefore have wider implications for policy and practice.

Key words: Prevent, counter-radicalisation, policing, gut feeling, instinct, risk, affect

Introduction

The UK PREVENT programme has reconfigured aspects of counter-terrorism from covert, threat-centric models, towards overt methods of counter-radicalisation. PREVENT - part of the UK government’s CONTEST strategy - aims to, *inter alia*, “discourage people from becoming terrorists” (HM Government 2009, 56), and “challenge extremist ideologies which can be made to justify terrorism” (HM Government 2011b, 25). To this end, PREVENT governs in a non-criminal space – that is, where individuals considered at risk of radicalisation have not crossed a threshold for criminal behaviour but are deemed vulnerable to extremism. Commenting on programmes to support at risk individuals, the PREVENT strategy makes clear: “They should pre-empt and not facilitate law enforcement activity” (HM Government 2011a, 8). The

organising logic of PREVENT thus exhibits a future-orientated temporality. This has led to a growing research field that situates counter-radicalisation as an inflection of temporal imaginaries cast against a pre-emptive imperative.ⁱ

This article contributes to studies that examine how practitioners make sense of the operational imperatives of counter-terrorism.ⁱⁱ The specific focus is on exploring PREVENT police officers' accounts of the reporting stage of PREVENT. The importance is threefold: first, the revision of PREVENT in 2011 made the concept of risk particularly apposite to counter-radicalisation. How risk performs beyond fixed indicators which pre-figure terrorism is underexplored. Second, whilst PREVENT is not a police-owned programme, there is a paucity of research that has examined PREVENT police officers' perceptions of risk. Third, the willingness of the lay public and professional practitioners to escalate information to authorities is a crucial element of PREVENT. Despite this, little is known about the thresholds to report from a policing perspective.ⁱⁱⁱ

A thematic analysis of semi-structured interviews with PREVENT police officers identified the mobilisation of intelligence on the basis of "gut feelings" and "instinct". For the participants, the importance of an *experiential* risk logic was considered salient to decision-making processes; whether explained as an uneasy feeling, or a "gut reaction" (Pizzinotto et. al 2004, 4). Participants further described experiential risk largely in terms of existing protocols inherent in safeguarding.

At this point it is worth highlighting that the data are derived from a PREVENT team operating in a non-priority PREVENT area as defined by government funding structure. The status of the police force area meant statutory partnerships on a full-time basis were lacking. While the PREVENT team were reliant on referrals and reports from professional practitioners (and to a lesser extent, the lay public), professional partnerships were largely founded on partners' "goodwill", "confidence" and "trust". The data are also reflective of counter-terrorism governance which pre-dates the statutory footing of PREVENT. In July 2015, the Counter-Terrorism and Security Act (CTSA) placed a legislative duty on specified bodies to, *inter alia*, provide authorities with information. In an operational sense, simplifying risk thresholds towards instinct and gut-feelings served a strategic purpose for the PREVENT team, essentially alleviating non-specialist actors' uncertainty to report. This was due, in part, to the diversity of

professional partners and reporting contexts. The relatability of risk contextualised as “feelings” was said to align the PREVENT team with frontline agencies by providing common understanding of risk assessment and information sharing. In turn this reduced partners’ dissonance and resistance of PREVENT; participants framed this uniting in terms of securing partners’ “buy in”.

From the outset it is important to be clear what the data does and does not indicate. The research findings do *not* suggest that counter-radicalisation should be understood entirely through the notion of gut feeling. Nor do the findings indicate PREVENT referrals are exclusively underpinned by subjective “feelings”. The data demonstrates that PREVENT police officers encouraged frontline agencies (e.g. the internal police family, teachers, social and youth workers, etc.,) to trust their own subjective judgements in the absence of radicalisation knowledges(s). Further risk assessment processes clearly take place at the post-referral stage, though gut feelings and an intuitive logic were considered important post-identification. Participants’ accounts of guidelines published by the Home Office which list 22 vulnerability factors (referred to as Extreme Risk Guidance 22 or ERG22) are instructive in this sense.

It is worth noting that this article is purposely divorced from exploring broader community perspectives around PREVENT as a policy frame. Rather, I follow a path mapped by Heath-Kelly by focusing on the “hows and ‘whys’ that require examination relative to the incorporation of risk-based models within UK counter-terrorism” (2012, 3). In doing so this article illuminates the empirical reality of PREVENT policing at local level. Whilst the data are inherently unique to the case study, the research findings are supported by an examination of national counter-terrorism policing campaigns, PREVENT briefing documents, and Home Office initiatives. I draw attention to national counter-radicalisation advice such as: “Trust your instincts” (Greater Manchester Police n.d); “Rely on your gut-feeling” (HM Government 2017b); and “Don’t worry, don’t delay, just act!” (HM Government 2017a, 1). It is therefore possible to hypothesise that the key propositions have implications for policy and practice beyond the present study.

To unpack the data theoretically, this article is inspired by the affective turn in human and social sciences, and explores decision-making processes through risk “heuristics” i.e. cognitive shortcuts which guide decisions under conditions of uncertainty. Theorising “affect” as the pre-individual capacity to affect and to be affected, Brian Massumi emphasises the role played by

autonomic bodily responses, which have been defined as in-excess of conscious states of perception and therefore point to a “visceral perception” preceding perception (Massumi 2002, 25). The turn to affect has also been framed in terms of opening the human body to its indeterminacy which ontologically mutates space-times implicated in the matter (Clough et al. 2007). Within this framework Massumi (2005) proposes a present/future axis in which virtual threats are not merely immaterial entities, rather, they are abstract, yet concrete (Massumi 1995) and therefore responded to pragmatically (Massumi 2005, 2002). Massumi summarises this as “the felt reality of the threat is so superlatively real that it translates into a felt certainty about the world ... the felt certainty of a ‘gut feeling’” (2007, 5). In a similar vein, Anderson states “feelings act as an instantaneous assessment of affect that are dependent upon the affected body’s existing condition to be affected” (2006, 736). To elucidate affect this way is to draw attention to the acute immanency of threat and the urgency of ontological (re)action. This is because radical uncertainty does not serve as an impediment to anticipatory action but provides the very reason for it given the radical uncertainty of the present (Stockdale 2014). As Cromby and Willis put it, “feelings actualise potential futures as powerful constituents within current thought and decision-making processes” (2016, 489).

Participants’ accounts chime with the characterisation of a present/future axis (Massumi 2005) and play of affect through a pre-emptive logic of risk. The data suggests in the absence of clearly defined, observable risk indicators, gut feelings act as anticipatory epistemic conditions legitimised as a form of quasi-evidence that professional partners are encouraged to trust. It is, however, debatable whether this demonstrates the “decline of the empirical fact” in Massumi’s terms (2005, 7), or the transformation of new empirical facts in the absence of tangible evidence.

Whilst Massumi defines affect as an “unqualified intensity” that is pre-personal and distinguished from emotion, the extent to which “affectual facts” are devoid of “subjective content” and/or “sociolinguistic fixing” (Massumi 2002, 28) has been challenged. In particular, scholars have drawn attention the inability of affect - theorised as a non-conscious experience of intensity (Massumi 2002) - to recognise the constitutive power of language (Wetherell 2013). Wetherell, for example, rejects the notion of affect “as an unspecific force, unmediated by consciousness, discourse, representation and interpretation of any kind” (2012, 123). In keeping with this perspective, the data are indicative of the ways affective practice(s) both

maintain and constrain subjectivity. Participants' accounts draw attention to the ways "experience" is inflected by "feeling" and/or intuition (itself constituted through feelings) and thus, the data do not affirm affect residing below, beyond or outside of discourse as affect studies have largely emphasised. To enact the manipulation of space–times, this article posits the need to move beyond defining affect in terms of its autonomy from conscious perception, language, and emotion (see Clough et al. 2007), and explore the discursive functionality between the experiential dimensions of discourse, emotion, risk and affect (see Lupton 2013). Affective semiotics are therefore valuable when exploring the data ontologically as they allow a more nuanced account of felt affective dimensions (see Wetherall 2013; McAvoy 2014). Following Wetherell, the value of affect, then, might precisely be "to the extent that it is not autonomous" (2013, 565).

To understand the key arguments proffered, this article proceeds in several phases: first, I outline the UK PREVENT programme and the policing aspect of PREVENT. The second section reflects upon the methodologies and data analysis employed. The third section documents the findings derived from the qualitative accounts of PREVENT police officers. The final section unpacks the data theoretically drawing upon affective studies in the context of pre-emptive anticipatory governance, before conclusions are drawn.

The PREVENT Programme and Policing

Since 2006, counter-terrorism has been reconfigured from clandestine and covert crime prevention, towards more innovative methods of counter-radicalisation. Central to this is the PREVENT programme defined by Innes et al. as "a multi-disciplinary, cross departmental strategy intended to provide a holistic response to the full spectrum of terrorist risks and threats" (2011, 11; adapted by author). PREVENT sits within the cross-government counter-terrorism strategy, CONTEST with PURSUE, PROTECT and PREPARE constituting further strands. The objective of PREPARE is to mitigate the effects of attack through, for instance, target hardening measures; PROTECT reduces the vulnerability of the national infrastructure to attack (HM Government 2009); PURSUE targets known suspects that have crossed a criminal threshold, and coincides with traditional forms of "top-down" intelligence gathering; finally, PREVENT favours "bottom up" approaches which rely on community engagement - what

Sliwinski refers to as the “mobilisation of society and the ‘civilianisation’ of security in the UK” (2012, 290).

PREVENT is aligned around three overarching (yet interrelated) objectives: to respond to the ideological challenge of terrorism; to provide support and practical help to prevent individuals from being drawn into terrorism; and to work with a wide range of institutions where there are risks of radicalisation or which support counter-radicalisation work (HM Government 2011a, 7; see also HM Government 2012). These objectives couple vulnerability to radicalisation with a responsibility to support “at risk” individuals (Dresser 2018a). This direction has re-appropriated PREVENT as a protectionist agenda which reconfigures the would-be-terrorist through a discourse of victimhood (Dresser 2018a). This is explicit in revised counter-radicalisation guidance which situates the subject of radicalisation as someone “vulnerable to radicalisation”, “vulnerable to recruitment”, and “vulnerable to violent extremist messaging” (HM Government 2011a, 83). The de-radicalisation programme, Channel, is instructive here. Considered an arm of PREVENT, Channel is a multi-agency risk assessment and case management system designed to ‘dissuade individuals from engaging in and supporting terrorist-related activity’ (HM Government 2011a, 56). Channel is also concerned with ensuring behavioural changes through other types of support such as education skills; housing support; and careers advice (HM Government 2018b).

To ensure the aforementioned objectives are met, PREVENT involves a myriad of organisations and stakeholders, including the police. Given the multi-agency nature of counter-radicalisation, how PREVENT is operationalised differs according to local implementation, practices and procedures. The revision of PREVENT in 2011 also transformed the size and autonomy of PREVENT. Funding was initially restricted to 25 priority areas on an intelligence-led basis, under the sole, securitised control of the Office for Security and Counter-Terrorism (OSCT). Ostensibly, PREVENT is now said to be proportionate to the nature of local risk indicators through the identification of intelligence-driven “hotspots” and counter-terrorism local profiles (CTLP).

Though the Home Office makes clear “PREVENT is not a police programme, and must not become one” (HM Government 2011a, 9), there has been significant investment in PREVENT policing since the implementation of CONTEST II. Reflecting this genealogy, Prevent Violent

Extremism (PVE) funding has led to 300 new dedicated police posts nationally, split between Regional Counter-Terrorism Units (CTUs), Counter-Terrorism Intelligence Units (CTIUs) and “engagement posts”, including PREVENT Police Engagement Officers (PEOs) and senior, non-uniformed personnel where members have been engaged in the development of the national counter-terrorism network since its inception in 2006/07. CTUs are comprised of staff drawn from a number of disciplines, including highly skilled detectives, community contact teams, financial investigators, intelligence analysts and high-tech crime investigators (HM Government 2014). These substantial units are largely self-sufficient and can effectively coordinate routine enquiries and operations without compromising the commitment of local forces to day-to-day policing (HM Government 2014, 19). CTIUs, while still substantial, are smaller in scale than the CTUs and are focused upon the development of counter-terrorism intelligence rather than the investigation of offences.

PREVENT policing is said to entail three main activities: community engagement and community intelligence generation; identifying and mounting disruptions against presenting risks (see Innes et al. 2017); and community impact management (Innes et al. 2011, 3). Innes et al. (2011, 16) separate these activities into two distinct sets of actions: general community level interventions designed to inhibit and decay existing and potential social support for violent extremist ideologies; second, nested within these community level interventions is a more targeted focus upon preventing radicalisation. Set against this backdrop, Innes et al. (2011, 90) outline PREVENT policing typically takes place through four principal modes of intervention. These are: *Protective* – where the police own the intervention in terms of defining the problem to be addressed and undertaking the response; *Mobilisation* – where the community engages in self-help behaviours to deal with a perceived threat; *Type 1 Co-production* – the orthodox notion of collaborative working wherein the community seeks police involvement to tackle a problem; and *Type 2 Co-production* – this involves the police utilising community-based informal social control resources to manage a problem (Innes et al. 2011).

Research demonstrates the interaction between PREVENT policing and “neighbourhood policing” given the blended nature of “primary” and “secondary” modes of crime prevention (Innes et al. 2011; Lamb 2012a). Neighbourhood Policing is broadly defined as “an organisational strategy that allows the police, its partners and the public to work closely

together to solve the problems of crime and disorder, and to improve neighbourhood conditions and feelings of security” (Association of Chief Police Officers 2006, 10). This connection to neighbourhood policing is important because there is evidence that PREVENT work cannot be separated from more mainstream policing concerns (Innes et al. 2011). For instance, it is argued that “personal relationships” will constitute the working capital for building trust and confidence in order to allow for community intelligence to be passed to the police (Spalek 2009) – what is termed “soft power” (see Nye 2004). Lamb (2012b) describes this publically visible approach as the “light” side of counter-terrorism.

The implementation of the CTSA has further transformed counter-radicalisation. Section 26 imposed a statutory duty on specified authorities – set out under Schedule 6 - to demonstrate, *inter alia*, “due regard to the need to prevent people from being drawn into terrorism” (HM Government 2016, 2); what is more frequently referred to as the PREVENT Duty. The CTSA outlines “due regard” means specified bodies are now “subject to provisions” when they “consider all the other factors relevant to how they carry out their usual functions” (HM Government 2016, 2). The PREVENT Duty is therefore expected to be incorporated into “existing policies and procedures, so it becomes part of the day-to-day work of the authority” (HM Government 2015b, 6). Specified bodies including: local authorities; education bodies; health and social care bodies; prison and probation authorities; and the police, are expected to “demonstrate an awareness and understanding of the risk of radicalisation in the area, institution or body” (HM Government 2016, 2); a duty overseen by the Home Office. It is further stated that those in leadership positions within specified authorities must “establish or use existing mechanisms for understanding the risk of radicalisation”, and “ensure staff understand the risk and build the capabilities to deal with it” (HM Government 2016, 3). Specified authorities must also evidence productive co-operation with Local PREVENT co-ordinators, the police and local authorities (HM Government, 2015b, 4), as well as demonstrating “co-ordination through multi-agency forums, such as Community Safety Partnerships” (HM Government 2015b, 4).

What is particularly apposite to the CTSA is the PREVENT Duty contextualised within a rubric of safeguarding. The Home Office and the Department for Education (DfE) in particular have urged professional practitioners to think of the duty as “an addition to existing safeguarding responsibilities” (Busher et al. 2017, 9) and to use their “professional judgement” (DfE 2015,

6) in identifying individuals who might be at risk of radicalisation and act proportionately' (DfE 2015, 6). Public sector workers must now raise concerns to their line manager or Designated Safeguarding Lead with referral evidence passed to the local authority when a PREVENT-related safeguarding concern has been identified. Local PREVENT Channel Panels assess the nature of concern and decide whether an individual has met a threshold for anti-radicalisation support. Where any specified authority has failed to execute its PREVENT Duty (including failure to provide information to authorities), section 32(A) of the CTSA allows the Secretary of State to enforce the performance of PREVENT (HM Government 2015a).

Since the implementation of the CTSA, it is debatable whether the police are now the main stakeholder tasked with identifying radicalisation. The police have bequeathed responsibility for delivering PREVENT awareness training with local authorities entrusted with this duty. Designated Safeguarding Leads are also expected to provide advice and support to members of staff on protecting individuals from the risk of radicalisation (DfE 2015, 7). It is therefore unsurprising that statistics relating to individuals referred to and supported through PREVENT demonstrate Education as the sector with the highest referral rate, followed by the police (see HM Government 2018a). Essentially nationalising PREVENT through the CTSA mandates counter-radicalisation as a "collective responsibility" (HM Government 2011a, 44) and a whole-of-society approach.

Methods and Data

The data informing the analyses are derived from qualitative interviews conducted with a PREVENT police team and individuals drawn from security disciplines in an area defined by government funding structure as non-priority (Dresser 2015). The PREVENT team comprised of: a PREVENT Sergeant; a PREVENT (Police) Lead; a PREVENT Police Officer; and a Channel Officer. Whilst the intensive data are derived from these participants, a PREVENT Lead suggested key stakeholders who had extensive knowledge of PREVENT at local level. Interviews were subsequently conducted with: a PREVENT Sergeant from a different police force; neighbourhood police officers; a Youth Offending Team Case Manager; a Supported Housing Officer; a Local Housing Officer; a Community Safety Officer; a Community Engagement Officer; and a Channel Intervention Provider. The data gathered from the extended sample was used to supplement the intensive data generated from the PREVENT team in a supportive

or challenging fashion. Moreover, participants from the extended sample were geographically operating within the same police area command as the PREVENT team, with the exception of a neighbouring PREVENT Sergeant. Regardless of this anomaly, the entire sample was operating in non-priority PREVENT areas and thus, the extended sample was considered an embedded unit of analysis within a single-embedded case study (Yin 2009).

21 qualitative (in-depth) semi-structured were conducted in total, with repeated interviews undertaken with the PREVENT team. Most interviews lasted around one-hour, though some were considerably longer. Interviews took place between 2013-2014 and were audio-recorded by dictaphone with the handling of interview data adhering to the 1998 Data Protection Act. Qualitative interviews were considered most appropriate since they enabled greater flexibility and adaptability that was conducive to both researcher and interviewee (Silverman 2013). Whilst semi-structured in nature, I adopted a stance of “talking back” to the interviewee (Griffin 1990) with questions used to promote a two-way dialogue. Whilst this approach raises issues regarding researcher neutrality, a two-way dialogue helped to explore key themes, as well generate accelerated intimacy with participants (Wilkerson 2007). This was deemed important given the sensitive nature of the research.

The PREVENT team were accessed through the use of “judgement” or “purposive sampling” with participants sharing characteristics that enabled “detailed exploration and understanding of the central themes and puzzles” (Ritchie et al. 2003, 78). Participants from the extended sample were accessed on the basis of opportunistic sampling, and snowball sampling. A PREVENT Lead also suggested various individuals for interview therefore acting as gatekeeper. It is worth giving due consideration to whether the PREVENT Lead suggested certain individuals on the basis of similar views, beliefs and accounts to reaffirm their own views. Whether the PREVENT team granted research access because they were operationalising PREVENT in a manner they were willing to discuss with a researcher also deserves thought. This raises concerns regarding perceived professional bias and the pursuit of vested interests on the part of participants.

The fundamental funding structure of PREVENT meant the PREVENT team was relatively small in numbers compared to police forces operating in priority PREVENT areas. Caution is therefore anticipated with regard to the sample size. Various points of address are worth raising here:

first, given the paucity of research that has explored non-priority PREVENT areas, the choice of case study site was driven by theory and policy relevance. In addition, recognising there a fewer PREVENT officers operating in non-priority PREVENT areas is not a justification to further compound the relative invisibility of PREVENT police officers' voices and narratives. Second, whilst I acknowledge the data are not generalisable as descriptions of what other PREVENT teams or individuals indefinitely *do*, they can be considered analytically generalisable as descriptions of what any individual tasked with counter-radicalisation *can* or *might do* (Dresser 2015). What the data do afford is insight into the operations and performance of PREVENT with greater applicability for police forces that share similar characteristics. The research findings should accordingly be interpreted as *instrumental* (Yin 2009) in that they facilitate knowledge of PREVENT policing at local level. The data are further supported by an examination of counter-radicalisation policy, PREVENT briefing documents and national counter-terrorism campaigns. It is therefore possible to hypothesise (though not generalise) that the key propositions can be extrapolated beyond the case study.

To minimise the acquisition of biased data, building trust and increasingly familiarity with the PREVENT team was an important undertaking. Treating field relations as data (Silverman, 2013) was particularly pertinent to this study given the volume of negative attention PREVENT has received since its policy inception. Having initially made contact with the PREVENT team, several meetings took place with two members of the PREVENT team at safe spaces in order to outline the nature of the research, and to discuss dates and timescales for fieldwork. I also accepted various invitations to attend presentations delivered by the PREVENT team which contributed to a reduction in power imbalance by relating to members in the field. While this approach allowed mutual trust and healthy relationships to be established, the schizophrenic nature of power differentials was apparent in numerous interviews. In certain interviews I was hypothetically afforded a position of trust within the PREVENT team, however, on other occasions my position had reverted to that of an outsider lacking in expertise. It became clear that the aforementioned research measures do not fully sanitise our "brought selves" within interview settings.

Interviews were transcribed verbatim in keeping with thematic analysis which requires a rigorous and thorough "orthographic" transcript (Braun and Clarke 2006, 17). To increase data familiarity, the tape-recorded conversations were studied extendedly involving close, repeated

listening. This helped fully capture the originalisation of talk (Silverman 2013). All words were included in the transcription, though intonation and body language descriptions were not; paralinguistic content was not considered central to the analysis. Cursing words were included in the transcribed data since such terms emphasised the nature of participants' experiences, accounts and discussions. To maintain the confidentiality and anonymity of participants, references to names including colleagues, locations (such as cities, towns, universities, buildings, etc.,) were replaced in the transcribed data by bracketed text. This helped preserve the anonymity of the case study location and individual participants. Had the case study location been identified, it may have been possible to hypothesise who had participated in the study even if one could not directly link individuals to interview quotations.

The data was analysed using Braun and Clarke's (2006) six-phase model of thematic analysis. Thematic analysis seeks to apply meaning to data by exploring salient themes within a text at different levels (Attride-Stirling 2001) through "careful reading and re-reading of the data" (Rice and Ezzy 1999, 258). Thematic analysis techniques were selected primarily because of the flexibility and variability with which they can be applied to provide a rich and detailed account of the data (Braun and Clark 2006). This approach was ideal when capturing the in-depth nature of participants' accounts. It is worth noting that during the analysis phase, the "keyness" of a theme was not necessarily dependent on quantifiable measures, but followed observations by Lofland et al. (2006) who emphasise the importance of "meaning": what concepts participants use to understand their world and what meaning or significance such concepts have for them.

The data were subjected to several levels of scrutiny following a framework described by Braun and Clarke (2006). Here I have described the stages more broadly, though sub-phases fall within each category e.g. generating initial codes, defining and naming themes, etc. Phase one involved the generation of initial code from the data; phase two focused on searching for themes, as well as the re-focus of themes at a broader level; finally, phase three entailed organising and reviewing themes, and the refinement of candidate themes.

Risk Thresholds: Gut Feelings and Instinct

The research findings demonstrate that “soft facts” (Innes et al. 2017, 274) - that is, beliefs based on “feelings” were considered important to the mobilisation of intelligence. Connected to this, it was common to participants’ accounts that instincts, hunches, and “gut feelings” as a decisional basis to report information should be read in correlation partners’ willingness to share concerns with the police (Dresser 2015). The simplicity of “gut feeling” as a decisional basis to act was a strategic policing tactic as a result of two interwoven factors: first, the PREVENT team stressed that professional partners could “instantly understand” and “immediately relate to” a simplified risk calculus (Dresser 2015). Given the lack of consensus about the definition of radicalisation and/or extremism, participants suggested frontline agencies felt relieved by a relatable risk calculus. Illustrating this, a PREVENT Sergeant said:

I think a gut feeling is something [...] probably because it is so broad and everybody knows what you mean, because we do talk about theories of radicalisation, some of the concepts are difficult, you know? Getting your head around some of the concepts, being socially isolated and all the other things [...] that may be talked about. But gut feeling is something that everybody understands instantly and it is that catch-all, you know [...] “I’ve just got a feeling that something’s wrong” [...] And it could be as simple as that. People feel relieved that it is a term that they can completely understand and I don’t have to know what Terrorism Act, section one, part one is, you know? Stuff like that. The gut feeling is simple language that people know [...] ‘I’ve got a gut feeling that something’s not right’ [...] (cited in Dresser 2015, 178).

The PREVENT team further described reporting thresholds determined by *experiential* risk, and not knowledge of radicalisation, extremism, and/or terrorism (Dresser 2015). For participants, “gut feelings” were considered a risk threshold that partners should trust in the absence of counter-radicalisation expertise. Whether this was with reference to external partners or internal partners, the principle was understood to be the same. As a PREVENT Police Officer put it: “what we want them to think about is, not only their experience in their role, but also life in general, to use that as their risk test, you know? Their risk threshold that they feel” (cited in Dresser 2015, 180).

The relatability of risk as “feeling” was further framed in terms of counter-terrorism governance. Participants highlighted the progressive responsabilisation of non-specialist actors has resulted in a security environment where numerous bodies have varying understandings of “risk” and “vulnerability” (Dresser 2015). The PREVENT team suggested re-orientating reporting thresholds towards subjective feelings helps alleviate partners’ uncertainty to report, and, in turn, this increases partners’ willingness to engage with the PREVENT strategy (Dresser 2015). As the following interview dialogue illustrates:

I think people have begun to accept and agree that there is slight variation regarding what is a vulnerable individual [...] or vulnerability is inevitably going to be different to each individual [...] the threshold at which somebody crosses that point of vulnerability into doing something more dangerous and potentially where they pick up the phone and speak to somebody it is going to be different for every individual. I think, again, it’s a relatively new thing PREVENT and definitions evolve over time. And I think there might become a meeting of minds but gut feeling [...] that is always going to be there and that covers a huge spectrum. And that gut feeling is used in Home Office terminology because that’s the catch-all, the levels of vulnerability, the levels of threat that people perceive may have different thresholds at which concern them, but it still has to be that gut feeling, whether it be the level is 9 out of 10 or 1 out of 10, it still is a gut feeling that something is not quite right (cited in Dresser 2015, 180).

In a governance sense, simplifying reporting thresholds was considered a useful mechanism of operational linkage between and across institutions. Related to this was the fact the PREVENT team were operating in a non-priority PREVENT area and therefore (full-time) statutory partnerships were fettered. At this point it is worth reiterating that the data are reflective of counter-terrorism governance which pre-dates the CTSA. Given the non-priority status of the police force area, the PREVENT team were reliant on partnerships built on goodwill, confidence and trust. PREVENT was subsequently framed in a manner that partners could understand and relate to. A PREVENT Police Officer said:

The thing about PREVENT, PREVENT is about relationships and they take time to build up. And for me, as much as you know, turnover of staff, you’ve got to be mindful with this, especially, in probably, our sort of area where we have no

statutory partners who are full-time on this because we're not a funded area, so we're relying on partners' goodwill as well to identify somebody or a number of people to engage on this agenda (cited in Dresser 2015, 166).

For the PREVENT team, counter-radicalisation was realised through inter-agency work involving "some degree of fusion and melding of relations between agencies" (Crawford 1998, 119), rather than multi-agency partnerships, that is, "the coming together of various agencies to address a problem" (Crawford 1998, 119). The anti-expert nature of responding to "gut feeling(s)" provided common ground essentially uniting the police with non-specialist actors. Risk felt as "gut feelings" was couched in a similar way to work by Simon who suggests theory in classrooms and books does not help the detective "read" the streets (1991 cited in Tong and Bowling 2006, 3-4) but, in fact, decreases professionalism through the concept of "deskilling" (Maguire et al. 1992, 25). As a participant put it:

The last person I referred in was a member of a right-wing group, who was very young and the information given to me was that they weren't quite happy with the people they were associating with and it was just a gut feeling. They didn't know anything about this right-wing organisation; it was just a gut feeling that they had that it was just not right. So a little bit of research from us and we thought, "Yeah, your gut feeling is probably right, they shouldn't be associating with those people". So that was referred into Channel.

That gut-feeling and instinct(s) have become central to decisional subjectivity is littered throughout government policy and national counter-terrorism campaigns. Non-statutory guidance disseminated by the DfE encourages educationalists to use their "professional judgement" in identifying at risk individuals (DfE 2015, 6). This is supported by Heath-Kelly and Strausz who, in the context of the National Health Service (NHS), suggest the PREVENT Duty builds on forms of "professional intuition already developed within safeguarding practice" (2018, 8). Similarly, though in a lay public sense, Neil Basu, the Metropolitan Police Assistant Commissioner for Specialist Operations has recently called for "good" citizens to become counter-terrorism citizens, and for the public to utilise their "instincts" to help defeat terrorism (Dearden 2018).

The Home Office incentive ACT - Make Noting Happen (2017) further affirms the notion of intuition as a logical basis to report. Home Office advice states: “If you see something unusual or suspicious, *trust your gut* — ACT. If you think someone is vulnerable to being radicalised, ACT. Your information could save lives” (HM Government 2017a, n.p; *emphasis added*). Risk thresholds experienced as “gut instinct” is further evidenced by Operation Fairway - a “national counter terrorism operation to detect and deter or disrupt terrorist activity in the UK” (Greater Manchester Police, n. d, 7). Operation Fairway entails a short film designed to instil confidence in police officers, police staff and partners (including members of the public) to report unusual activity that doesn’t feel right (Greater Manchester Police, n. d, 7). As a PREVENT briefing document makes clear: “The film highlights a simple request, *trust your instincts*” (Greater Manchester Police, n. d, 7; *emphasis added*).

Finally, at the time of writing, UK police forces’ publically accessible websites demonstrate “gut feeling” as central to decision-making thresholds. Out of the 43 police forces in England in Wales,^{iv} 27 (n=27) refer to either: “trusting instincts”; “gut-feeling”; and/or “it’s probably nothing, but...” As one example, the PREVENT page for Nottinghamshire Police states: “Unless you trust your instincts and tell us, we won’t be able to judge whether the information you have is important or not” (Nottinghamshire Police 2017, n. p). Conversely, official websites of 16 police forces (n=16) make no such reference to trusting one’s instinct or gut-feeling(s) as a logical basis to act.

“It Might Be Nothing, But...”

When discussing the notion of risk, participants regularly alluded to the strap-line: “It might nothing, but...” This phrase epitomised PREVENT officers’ understandings of partners’ trust and confidence, with the PREVENT team planting the phrase into the operational logic of frontline agencies. A PREVENT Sergeant said:

So it’s very useful both for us, but especially for reporting agencies, and we often end our talks with “It may be noting, but [...]”, which you have seen on some of the talks we do. And there’s still a huge number of calls that come in [...] sort of almost apologetically [...] “I don’t want to trouble you, but [...]” But it is that gut feeling, you know [...] something isn’t quite right [...]. So it is very useful (cited in Dresser 2015, 181).

It was suggested a logic of “It might be nothing, but...” allowed professional partners to situate PREVENT at the bottom-end of a security imaginary rather than conceiving the objectives of PREVENT as clandestine and threat-centric. A PREVENT Police Officer said:

We’re not saying it is definitely going to be terrorism or extremism - it might be drugs for instance. But if you have, for whatever reason, that feeling inside that suggests “I don’t know what it is but there’s just something not quite right with this person” [...] that you have the confidence to contact your local police, somebody at work through your local partners or the PREVENT team (cited in Dresser 2015, 182).

Acting on gut feeling through the aforementioned motto was understood to be helping Special Branch shake its reputation as a “secret squirrel” and operate in an overt fashion (Dresser, 2015). It was suggested adopting an approach of “It might be nothing, but...” positively impacted professional partnerships including internally within the police. As a PREVENT Lead put it:

The world of PREVENT is very much the overt face of Special Branch. Special Branch has always been associated with the secret service, a secret squirrel. What we’ve done with PREVENT is open up doors, so in the office you now get cops phoning up saying: “Can I run this past you?” When I joined you wouldn’t have looked at someone in Special Branch never mind picked up the phone to ask them a question (cited in Dresser 2015, 183).

“It might be nothing, but...” was also framed similarly to existing logics inherent in safeguarding through a “better to be safe than sorry” approach. Operationally, the PREVENT team re-appropriated the provisions of PREVENT as a safeguarding endeavour to help secure the “buy in” of frontline agencies. In turn, this was said to decrease partners’ dissonance and resistance of PREVENT. As the following interview dialogue illustrates:

Everyone gets the safeguarding message. And again, the other phrase I use is “radicalisation is another form of abuse”. So you look at the abuse that happens in terms of vulnerable adults, vulnerable children - the process of PREVENT is exactly the same. So within communities we’re asking our key partners to look out for those vulnerable people who might be a subject of abuse – PREVENT’s just another film to put into that process (cited in Dresser 2015, 174).

Participants further described “It might be nothing, but...” in terms of the compression of *time*. The PREVENT team equated deliberation at the reporting stage with missed opportunities. Acting on gut instinct was therefore foregrounded rather than encouraging professional partners to hypothetically and conspicuously deliberate at the reporting stage of PREVENT. As a participant put it: “Tell us what you’ve got when you’ve got that gut feeling, that hunch, rather than when you’re sure something’s wrong - because by then it might have gone too far down the road” (cited in Dresser 2015, 227). Affirming this view, a participant stated:

We want them to just share that concern that they have at a very early stage if necessary, if they have the confidence to, not necessarily come to us, but to go to a colleague and share that concern. That uneasiness they feel about a subject (cited in Dresser 2015, 179).

The PREVENT team outlined responding to a wealth of reports and referrals was preferred rather than missing crucial opportunities to offer vulnerable individuals support; a logic coinciding with safeguarding. In addition, whilst PREVENT officers recognised evidencing the success of PREVENT as a difficult task, it was suggested success could be gauged in terms of the volume (and standard) of reports and referrals from professional partners. A PREVENT Lead stated:

Here we’ve doubled our referrals from 2012/2013. And success is a really hard thing to measure, you know? I might sit here and think we’ve been really successful - but what evidence have I got of that? It’s a hard one to measure what you’ve prevented [...] and one of the ways I think you can do that is by looking at the referrals that are coming in from partners (cited in Dresser 2015, 189).

PREVENT officers’ accounts map with temporally contingent advice at national level. ACT outlines a risk jigsaw where no piece of intelligence is considered insignificant (see HM Government 2015b). This is best exemplified by the increase in PREVENT reports and referrals since the launch of ACT (see HM Government 2017b). Furthermore, and similarly to the participants’ descriptions, the logic of a compressed timescape is evident at national level. ACT states: “The message is clear - don’t worry, don’t delay, just act” (HM Government 2017b, 1). Counter-terrorism guidance disseminated by Police Scotland echoes such sentiments: “Be in no doubt YOU have a vital role to play in defeating terrorism by being vigilant and reporting

anything suspicious IMMEDIATELY by calling the Anti-Terrorist Hotline or by calling Police Scotland” (Police Scotland 2017, n.p; emphasis in original).

The participants’ accounts mirror a logic that extends beyond the case study in other ways. The original iteration of “It’s probably nothing, but...” was driven by the Metropolitan Police (and supported by the counter-terrorism network, and ACPO) during the 2012 Olympics. Initially a four-week campaign, this consisted of: a 40-second radio advert which was, according to police documentation, aired on Kiss FM, Capital, LBC and GOLD; and press advertisements in local publications and minority media titles. The activity was also supported by a digital presence on the music streaming platform Spotify (Metropolitan Police 2012). More specifically, the campaign outlines: “If you see or hear of something that could be terrorist related, *trust your instincts* and call the Anti-Terrorist Hotline. Our specifically trained officers will take it from there” (Metropolitan Police 2012, 1). At the time of the campaign, DAC Stuart Osborne, Senior National Co-ordinator Counter Terrorism said: “Our priority is to keep the public safe - but we can only do that with your help. Please *trust your instincts*. Call the confidential Anti-Terrorist Hotline on...” (Metropolitan Police 2012; *emphasis added*). This notion is repeated in more recent Home Office documentation which states: “*You may feel it’s probably nothing*, but unless you *trust your instincts* and talk to the police, they won’t be able to judge whether the information you have is important or not” (HM Government 2015b, 1; *emphasis added*).

Whilst this study explores the reporting stage of PREVENT, it would be incorrect to suggest that democratic deliberation played no role in risk assessment processes. The concept of democratic deliberation featured in many of the participants’ accounts of the post-referral stage, including: “Let us make that call”; “Don’t try and come up with the solution or the answer, let other people consider it”; “The second side of things is dealing with the individual referrals of people of concern. Trying to assess what level of risk they actually do pose” (cited in Dresser 2015, 228). Participants’ perspectives of ERG22 are instructive in this sense. Participants recognised that framing radicalisation in terms of vulnerability has provided practical operational benefits, however certain participants voiced concerns regarding the formal structure of ERG22. Participants emphasised the importance of engaging with vulnerable people on an individual basis, rather than operationalising a blanket mode of risk assessment. Furthermore, since participants emphasised the future as partially unknowable, concerns were raised regarding the rigid, audit-like framework of ERG22. It was suggested that

instinctive feeling should work alongside standardised risk guidance in a complementary fashion (Dresser, 2015). A PREVENT Sergeant summarised the post-referral stage as follows:

There's the formal risk guidance [...] the ERG22 risk guidance which is a formal thing [...] But I guess [...] I've never really got my head around it; a lot of is common sense as to what ticks the box. I think the ERG thing is a bit like [...] You know these questionnaires you see: "Are you an alcoholic?" And then you look down this check box and it gives you some crazy thing. Just 'cause you put some ticks in some boxes, to me, isn't really ... it's a bit artificial. But I think by chatting to people sitting round a table, which is what we're trying to do, get everyone's heads together, you know [...] See if anyone has any contact with that individual, or if we need to make contact, if its deemed necessary to do that. That's a far better way of assessing risk rather than making these judgement calls by putting these ticks in boxes or putting a number in which [...] You know [...] Risk will be different for you as it is for me. But based on somebody's assessment or somebody's number [...] You know [...] You can go in many different ways [...] Somebody could be risk assessed as high when they're actually low or vice versa (cited in Dresser 2015, 175-176).

Discussion

The preceding section demonstrated the salience of gut-feelings and instinct as epistemic components for pre-emptive decision-making. Central to participants' accounts was utilising intelligence derived from professional partners. In a governance sense, simplifying risk thresholds as "instinct" and "feelings" was a strategic policing tactic due to the diversity of professional partners and reporting contexts. Conceptualising risk as "gut feeling(s)" was said to provide operational benefits, specifically, alleviating partners' uncertainty to report. This is not only reflected in participants' understandings of risk, but features prominently in national counter-terrorism policing campaigns. The purpose of ACT is to galvanise community intelligence by advocating decisional subjectivity that is devoid of reflective, analytical judgement. Seemingly, when to escalate intelligence to authorities is no longer based on an agreed set of observable indicators but an ontology severed from such. It is therefore unsurprising that national counter-terrorism advice legitimises gut feelings as form of quasi-evidence whilst assuaging public concern about overreacting and wasting police time.

Though the PREVENT team did not describe frontline agencies in terms of policing or surveillance per se, the data are indicative of risk thresholds that are intertwined with “policing from the gut” (Foley 2010, 275) and *experiential* reasoning as a guide for action; Mythen and Walklate (2011) term this “knowing otherwise”. Experiential decision-making coincides with the “old regime” perspective of policing (Tong and Bowling 2007, 3) which frames policing as an intuitively learned “craft” or “art” (Repetto 1978). Policing “craft” is seen as emerging from experience on the job (Hobbs 1988). The “art” of detective work similarly appears from some perspectives to be a quality that only experience can provide (Tong and Bowling 2006, 3). Pertinently, Lum and Koper posit objective judgements may lead to an increase in police accountability, transparency and legitimacy, and, in turn, “could improve police-citizen relations and trust” (2015, 3). This is supported by Worrall (2013) who suggests “sixth sense” policing - which incorporates intuition - entrenches feelings of police isolation thus distancing the police from the communities they serve. Skolnick (1994) affirms sixth sense suspicion forever marks the police as different from those they serve.

The research data challenge such notions. Participants’ accounts indicate a simplified and relational risk logic aligned the PREVENT team with internal and external partners, not distanced them. The simplicity of risk as “gut feeling” provided common ground for information sharing and risk assessment. In turn, this reduced partners’ dissonance and resistance of PREVENT. This finding maps with the work of Massumi who posits affect as allowing for the “co-functioning of formally distinct processes” (2005a, 7), and, in the process, affect transforms radical uncertainty from a barrier to action (Anderson 2010). Affect here is understood following Deleuze as a “mechanism of linkage that enables otherwise distinct processes to exist in relation” (cited in Anderson 2007, 160). To put it differently, to overcome the uncertainty of what may or may not actualise, affective (re)action provides “an opening to virtualities that populate anticipatory governance” (Stern 1998 cited in Anderson 2007, 160). This is neatly captured by Elmer and Opel who document the emergence of “gut instinct” as the primary basis for decision/action “in the absence of adequate intelligence and research on which decisions are based” (2008, 14). Likewise, officers’ accounts demonstrate that “objective uncertainty” (Massumi 2007, 7) resides at the heart of collaborative counter-radicalisation i.e. partners’ uncertainty about the detection of radicalisation.

In elucidating affect Massumi (2005) further proposes the notion of “affective fact” as part of a present/future axis. An affective fact refers to a circumstance in which an “affective mechanism exhibit(s) the certainty to which empirical facts aspire” (2007, 4). The (re)production of affective fact is said to make potential futures felt in the present given they legitimate an epistemic basis for sovereign decision-making. The idea of affective fact can therefore refer to precisely the sort of imagined potentialities upon which anticipatory action – in whichever form - is premised, since the latter cannot be grounded in empirical data (Massumi 2010, 68; Stockdale 2014, 143-144). Theorising affect thus entails re-articulating a decisional logic from empirical fact (Massumi 1993, 11); hence, Massumi draws attention to the “decline of the empirical fact” (Massumi 2005, 7). The research data does not necessarily reflect the “decline of the empirical fact” (Massumi 2005, 7), but rather the centrality of “soft facts” (Innes et al. 2017, 274). In the absence of clearly defined, observable risk indicators, gut feelings were situated as an anticipatory epistemic condition legitimised as empirical “facts”. To put it differently, given the epistemic fuzziness of an (uncertain) abstract future, gut feelings were couched as a form of quasi-evidence that people should be left to trust. Gut feelings subsequently resolved epistemic tensions at the heart of anticipatory security - as pre-conscious processes to act upon even if they exist “beyond observable reality” (Pinnizotto et al. 2004; Worrall 2013, 307).

That said, it would be intellectually incoherent to overlook the ways affect and discourse are indissolubly and tightly woven together (Wetherell 2012). As Wetherell argues, “it is becoming increasingly difficult to sustain the chronology Massumi and Thrift propose: humans first encounter the world bodily and then secondarily discursively” (2013, 355). Whilst officers described risk in terms somatically sensed feelings, such embodiment is entangled with cultural meaning-making, discourse and semiosis. According to participants, the generation of intelligence was realised through the construction of language. This involved “interactional, relational, semiotic, meaning-making practices” (McAvoy 2014). In this sense, participants accounts do not suggest a turn away from language as has been the case with affect studies (see Gregg and Siegworth 2010; Sedgwick 2003); the governance of PREVENT was realised discursively (and operationally) *through* language, an argument I’ve made elsewhere (see Dresser 2015, 2018a). Key to this process is social meaning with risk framed through the intersubjective dynamic of dialogue. This is because PREVENT encompasses a complex

assemblage made up of historically diverse and largely disparate authorities with resistance and dissonance documented (see O’Toole et al. 2015; Fussey 2013; Dresser 2015, 2018b; Thomas 2017). The lack of consensus about definitions (vulnerability and risk, in particular) is pertinent in this sense. It is therefore important to question how heterogeneous entities that constitute an assemblage converge and “function together” (Deleuze and Parnet 1977, 39). At the very least there is a requirement to critically consider how heterogeneous entities are brought into a form of temporary relation (or set of relations) without presupposing that these relations necessarily constitute an organism (Anderson et al. 2012, 177).

A productive way to thinking through such complexities is synthesising the data through discursive-affective analysis. Following Wetherell, McAvoy (2014) rejects the notion of discourse and affect as dichotomous in favour of an approach which recognises affect and discourse as semiotic relational practices. Similarly, participants’ accounts of experiential risk and feeling are inextricably inter-related with how discourse becomes internalised in such a way that it activates feeling(s) (McAvoy 2014). More specifically, Wetherell suggests it is fruitful to draw attention to the “ways in which ‘bodies’ very broadly defined ... combine, assemble, articulate and shift into new formations, worked upon, as well as working on” (2013, 350). Telling in this sense is the way participants described the reality of PREVENT as inter-agency partnerships that required hard work to sustain. One approach was re-appropriating the provisions of PREVENT in relational terms partners could understand; hence “gut feelings” and “It may be nothing, but...” It is therefore theoretically difficult to conceptualise the data entirely in terms of pre-conscious processes and “embodied dispositions” (Thrift 2000, 36) given that, in the context of counter-terrorism governance, language *is* the activity (McAvoy 2014). In considering the lived experience of “feelings”, then, attention must be directed towards the reproduction of discourse *and* affect and the how epistemology of subjectivity and an ontology of subjectivity are entwined (McAvoy 2014).

Whilst participants spoke positively about the practical benefits of adopting an intuitive risk logic, from an intervention perspective, research is ambivalent regarding the effectiveness of gut-feeling as a somatic marker. Though not applied to the field of counter-terrorism, Goleman (1998) argues bodily senses make for sounder personal decision-making. Slovic and Peters (2006) conversely suggest cognitive, logical reasoning-based risk detection in ambiguous situations increases a sense of safety. Taking this into account, it is worth commenting on the

pitfalls associated with accumulated experience as a guide for action. Bittner (1970) draws attention to “dictionary knowledge” where officers develop routine ways of categorising their environment, as well as individuals whom they have regular contact. This notion is supported by Worrall’s (2013) reading of schemata theory which delineates knowledge construction on the basis of generic cognitive representations (i.e. stereotypes) formulated from repeated exposure to certain phenomena, what is termed “frames” (Worrall 2013). Such frames have implications for impartial decision-making (Stalans and Finn 1995).

With this in mind, Ahmed’s (2003, 382) reading of “embodied meaning making” provides an important departure point to think through the impact of subjective judgements and the implications of securitising bodies deemed “Other”. It is practices of embodied meaning making that Ahmed contends involve “reading the body of others, such that ‘they’ become the source of an affect”, and this reading creates a division between the “Self” and the “Other” (2003, 382 cited in Lupton 2013, 642). This is in keeping with Lupton’s relative reading of risk through the notion of an “emotion-risk assemblage”. For Lupton, in the process of interaction, emotion and risk configure each other through “embodied meaning making”. Episodic foresight is subsequently experienced in “dynamic and heterogeneous contexts” in which understandings of risk are “constantly configured and reconfigured” (Lupton 2013, 638).

In a similar vein, Anderson argues “emotions are formed through the *qualification* of affect into ‘sematically’ and ‘semiotically’ formed progressions, into narrativisable action – reaction circuits, into function and meaning” (2006, 737; *emphasis in original*). Affect here is not divorced from antagonism and contestation which “distribute bodies into hierarchies of interest and obligation” (Anderson 2006, 740). It is this perspective that is central to making sense of emotive and affective sensitivities that are likely to coalesce at points in time and elicit perceptions of risk (Anderson 2006). This is particularly so if one follows Brown and Reavey (2015) who reconceptualise affect as an “arrangement of relations vital both to the production of subjectivity and the formation of memory” (cited in Cromby and Willis 2016, 480). In keeping with this position, Ellis et al. (2013 cited in Cromby and Willis, 2016, 481) describe how contemporary infrastructures of surveillance inculcate “‘affective atmospheres’ that can be experienced as either reassuring or threatening”. It would therefore be fallacious to disregard bias which may impact the efficacy of PREVENT reports determined by anxious feelings. Given the master narrative of terrorism discourse i.e. Islamic terrorism, irrespective of whether

PREVENT has abandoned pre-fixed profiling (Heath-Kelly 2017), the extent to which suspicious and non-suspicious bodies collapse is contextually subjective.

This is not to suggest an inherent flaw in the PREVENT strategy but a practicality that needs to be carefully and sensitively managed. From a policy perspective, if identifying radicalisation has moved towards a subjective realm, there is a necessity for continuous review of referrals and reports. This is important for the operational side of PREVENT, and for individuals monitored under PREVENT's burgeoning gaze. Van de Weert and Eijkman (2018) raise a similar point in relation to subjectivity which resides at the heart of youth workers' perspectives around detecting radicalisation in the Netherlands. Moreover, where gut feelings populate the void left by definitional inconsistencies and contested notions of risk, what are the ramifications in a liberal democracy? There is not space here to provide an answer, however, this question should be contextualised within broader arguments about the legal threshold of suspicion.

The data further demonstrate decision-making based on experiential risk rather than rational, analytical judgement. This logic contrasts the notion of objective, scientific rigour and the ethics of modern democratic governance. An experiential risk logic also runs counter to ongoing developments of police professionalism through the innovation of evidence-centred approaches. That said, it would be incorrect to suggest risk assessment was driven solely by sites of "unreflexive, immediate, non-rational decision-making in response to affects" (Evans 2010, 22). Participants' accounts of ERG22 evidence a collision between risk as feeling (the experiential risk system) and risk as analysis (the rational risk system). Slovic et al. (2004) suggest risk in the modern world is confronted and dealt with in three fundamental ways: (foregrounding of) "risk as *feelings* refers to our fast, instinctive, and intuitive reactions to danger; (with) risk as *analysis* brings (that is) logic, reason, and scientific deliberation (as secondary) to bear on hazard management ; finally, when risk as feelings and analysis collide, in effect, "this pretension to certainty produces a third reality - risk as politics" (Slovic et al. 2004, 311). This third reality of risk assessment best sums up participants' understandings of the post-referral stage of PREVENT.

This does not mean affect disappears from view. Massumi (2005a) observes as well as overlapping with the traditional family of facts, affective facts overlap with command by logic by homology with it. According to Slovic et al. (2004) the central political significance of affect

rests on these overlaps because they enable a slippage between the orders they bring in contact. As Slovic et al. (2004, 316) put it, “while we may be able to “do the right thing” without analysis, it is unlikely that we can employ analytical thinking rationally without guidance from affect somewhere along the line and vice versa”. In this way, the experiential mode of thinking and analytical mode of thinking are said to be continually active, interacting in what has been characterised as “the dance of affect and reason” (Finucane et al. 2003).

Finally, participants’ accounts of PREVENT are likely to have greater applicability for police forces that share similar characteristics, particularly in terms of funding and resources. A financially fettered landscape which has seen a decrease in police capacity will have impacted the scope and strength of community network ties that formally provided bridges to intelligence. During the same period of austerity-driven measures, policing has witnessed the logic of managerialism manifest in the regulation and governance of counter-terrorism. The Strategic Policing Requirement monitors police forces’ contribution to the PREVENT Duty while the Home Office measures the extent to which specified authorities demonstrate due regard of PREVENT. That gut-feelings are promoted as the informational basis to act serves a strategic purpose, as well as a bureaucratic solution. Innes et al. (2017) make a similar point in the context of disruption as short-term mode of counter-terrorism as opposed to resource-intensive full investigations. Whether this logic transpires into effective counter-radicalisation or induces a culture of reporting and/or professional compliance warrants further evaluation. Given the legislative fusing of specified authorities through the CTSA, additional research would also need to be conducted to evaluate the impact of the PREVENT Duty on the PREVENT team’s practices and procedures *in situ*.

Conclusion

This article has explored the PREVENT-risk relationship from the perceptions of PREVENT police officers. At the heart of this article has been a genuine attempt to introduce a novel risk perspective to Critical Terrorism Studies. Research has predominately focused on PREVENT as policy frame and the prevalent critique that PREVENT is no more than a pathologisation of “Otherness”. Whilst I do not refute such frameworks for analyses, this article has travelled a different path by exploring how pre-emptive security is actualised, (re)configured and performed. In doing so, this article has attempted to provide a nuanced account of PREVENT

beyond its temporal origins, founding assumptions, and anachronistic critique. To finish, this article has examined the decisional processes involved in at the reporting stage of PREVENT, as well as the way(s) risk is implicated in the subjective understandings of PREVENT police officers. Such elaboration is currently underexplored with little known about the thresholds to report from a policing perspective. It is hoped this article has provided a partial answer.

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Notes

ⁱ See Baker-Beall et al. (2014); Heath-Kelly (2012, 2013); Lindekilde (2013); Martin (2014).

ⁱⁱ See Pickering et al. (2008); Innes et al. (2011); Lamb (2012a); Maguire et al. (2014); Maguire (2014); Maguire and Fussey (2016); Mullins (2016); Peddell et al. (2016).

ⁱⁱⁱ See Thomas et al. (2017) for an analysis of reporting thresholds associated with intimates.

^{iv} ACT has been disseminated across Police Scotland in response to *Your View Counts* - a public consultation survey which identified terrorism as the greatest concern to the public (Police Scotland 2017).

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