



Exploring the reactions and emotions of Muslim youth in relation to policing: A thematic analysis

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April/2017

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**ABSTRACT**

Policing among Muslim communities in the UK is becoming exceptionally prevalent. The 'prevent' strategy introduced by the UK government to combat terrorism and radicalisation involved police community support officers and policing teams working together with local communities in order to build trust in police and create safer communities (HM Government, 2011). This research explored the reactions and emotions of Muslim youth in relation to policing, through individual 10-item semi-structured interviews. Six Muslim participants (3 male and 3 female), aged 18-25 from a predominantly Muslim community in Manchester were interviewed in order to understand: a) The emotional reaction of young Muslim males and females on community policing. B) The emotion of young Muslim males and females on being stereotyped by the police, and C) The effects of policing leading young Muslim males and females to commit crime. Thematic analysis of the qualitative data revealed 5 themes: community, stereotyping, policing, gender differences on policing and crime. Participants felt anger towards excessive policing, nonetheless they trusted the police and understood that community policing is put in place to ensure a safe community.

<b>KEY WORDS:</b>	<b>POLICING</b>	<b>MUSLIM YOUTH</b>	<b>STEREOTYPING</b>	<b>COMMUNITY SAFETY</b>	<b>ANGER</b>
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## Introduction

Recently British policing has shifted to a neighbourhood- style policing model, in order to create social cohesion; this comprises of engagement with faith communities, and carries with it the expectations of addressing potential terrorist activities (McFadyen and Prideaux, 2014). Since 9/11, stereotypes of Islam and 'Islamaphobia' have been on the rise (Dunn, Klocker and Salabsy, 2007); those with derogatory attitudes about Muslims and Islam generally, have raised concerns about Islamic-related terrorism (Sides and Gross, 2013). Sides and Gross (2013), found stereotypes of Muslims as violent and untrustworthy are especially common.

The UK government introduced *Prevent* as part of a counter-terrorism strategy, as a way to make communities resilient to terrorist ideology, by aiming at improving a sense of belonging and citizenship (HMGovernment, 2011). The program's target audience are those who may be readily supportive of violent extremism, and these are considered more likely to be amongst young individuals (HMGovernment, 2011). The police have therefore developed a closer dialogue with Muslim communities in the UK, especially as they are considered to be more affected by counter-terrorism operations. Since 2005 the police and local authorities talk regularly to mosques and have sought a far closer dialogue with mosques and their governing bodies, as faith institutions are considered most at-risk from extremist and terrorist organizations (HMGovernment, 2011).

Previous research on the relationship of Muslim communities with police focus heavily on the interventions used. Blackwood, Hopkins and Reicher (2016) explored a UK counterterrorism intervention by observing the police whilst they conducted a workshop to raise awareness of *Prevent*. The material was then subjected to thematic analysis. They discuss how the surveillance warranted can lead to disengagement of Muslims from majority group members. Upon observation, Blackwood, Hopkins and Reicher's (2016) provided in-depth analysis of the workshop intervention, how it was facilitated as well as identifying times the police officers were somewhat biased.

Moreover, the researchers analysed how effective the workshop strategy would be in reducing radicalisation; their findings suggested that the focus of the workshop was too narrow focusing on individual weakness and vulnerabilities, and by doing so, authorities may be blind 'to the corrosive effects of their own practices' (Blackwood, Hopkins and Reicher's, 2016:609). The researchers concluded that the authorities are positioning Muslims as 'other.' Such categorisation may lead to Muslims feeling as though they are heard not as British citizens, but as Muslims, leading them to feel disengaged from wider society (Hopkins and Blackwood, 2011).

Murray, Mueller-Johnson and Sherman (2015) investigated targeting resources on 'hot spot areas' with low confidence in the police in the UK. With a sample of 335 neighbourhoods, 30,412 surveys were completed, increasing the reliability of outcomes. Police scoring of human intelligence as well as public opinion surveys, were used to explore targeting evidence. The data was then analysed

by classifying each Census Output Area (COAs) as high, medium and low risk of susceptibility of violent extremism. The research found COAs with the lowest confidence in police, combined with highest extremism risk had substantial evidence-based targeting of strategies for preventing extremist views. The research discovered ethnic minority Muslims were more displeased at the appropriateness of stop and search than their non-Muslim counterparts. In comparison to white and ethnic minority non-Muslims, Muslims have lower confidence in the police. In summary, generally areas at high risk of vulnerability had significantly lower confidence in the police, than medium and low area neighbourhoods. Murray, Mueller-Johnson and Sherman's (2015) research however, does not obtain in-depth accounts of how young Muslims in these neighbourhoods react to the policing, whether in high, medium or low risk areas.

Spalek (2010) investigated trust between the police and communities within the context of 'new terrorism'. High levels of trust are required for partnership between police and Muslim communities when implementing sensitive intervention work with those considered at high risk of terrorism. Therefore long-term interaction and trust building are required for police in counter terrorism units, explicitly emphasized by values of community policing. Spalek's (2010) study employed a qualitative design, semi-structured interviews and participant observations of community and police meetings, allowing small-scale yet in-depth data. Semi-structured interviews are guided by the schedule, rather than dictated such as structured interviews; therefore the interviewer is able to probe into interesting topics that may arise (Lyons and Coyle, 2007). Forty-two individuals were interviewed; participants included 13 police officers and 6 officers within the Muslim Contact Unit (MCU). The data was then transcribed and analysed using thematic analysis.

Spalek's (2010) findings suggest trust between police officers and Muslim communities are difficult due to 'hard' policing strategies. In order to build trust, it is key the MCU use openness and transparency. They openly tell community members they are counter terror police officers, and they wish to build sincere relationships regarding the unit's remit. The MCU empower the community by providing them with resources needed for managing unease and uncertainty, as well as access to funding for projects. To conclude, traditional 'hard' intelligence-led models of policing can successfully develop 'softer' community based approaches to counter-terrorism policing, by building trust between police and community members. Further research from this study can be conducted, exploring the community members' reaction to the MCU and the 'softer' community based approaches.

In contrast to previous research conducted in the UK, Sirin and Fine (2007), investigated Muslim American youths identities- the 'Hyphenated selves'. Participants taking part were 70 12 -18 year olds. The use of a refined age group provides in-depth information and views from one generation. Using a mixed method design, Sirin and Fine (2007) used surveys, interviews and drawing 'identity maps' to collect data on how the participants felt being on the fault line of a global conflict. Ethnic and religious discrimination was measured with a 10-item survey. Results highlighted important themes and revealed Muslim youths sometimes experience discrimination to an extreme degree.

84.3% of survey participants reported discrimination based on religion or ethnicity in public settings such as school. The identity maps suggested 90% of females revealed a flexible movement in being both Muslim and American. On the other hand 70% of males insinuated conflict, tensions and struggles with racism and their American identity. During the interviews it was revealed the young men viewed the US as an oppressive force; they felt persecuted on the land on which they live. The interviews were conducted using focus groups, which may have resulted in interviewer bias. Additionally, the younger members or quieter members of the focus groups may not have voiced their true opinion and just conformed to the older children's opinions. Therefore the current research intends to use individual interviews, allowing for each participant's opinions to be voiced, as well as highlighting the differences that occur between female and male opinions.

Sirin and Fine (2007) found the participants feel constantly blamed and stereotyped for the acts of Muslims around the world. Being a marginalised group under surveillance and siege since 9/11 has led to self-policing. Reactions between male and female participants were exceedingly different. The young women were aware of their stereotypes as oppressed women, however they instantly educate and prove the stereotype wrong, showing strength and empowerment. Males on the other hand, admitted struggling with their identity. This research is extremely important in creating an opening for more research to be conducted on this topic. Perhaps looking specifically at gender differences, different age groups, or the identities of Muslim youth in other western countries, such as the UK.

Tyler, Schulhofer and Huq (2010) compared two perspectives in which members in a Muslim American community might cooperate willingly with the police in general as well as specifically for terrorism. The first suggested they perceive the benefits to outweigh the costs (instrumental), the second suggested they recognise the police as legitimate authority (normative), they based 'legitimacy' to fairness and procedural justice of police behaviour. They used data from 300 telephone interviews with Muslim Americans in New York City. Various factors were measured with other Muslim and non-Muslim American communities. Tyler, Schulhofer and Huq's (2010) findings demonstrate the main element of cooperation with the police and influencing legitimacy was based on the normative model; procedural justice of police behaviour, in the context of antiterrorism policing. Cooperation with the police had weak connections with religiosity, cultural background and political beliefs, suggesting procedural justice is exceptionally significant when designing policing strategies for antiterrorism. Though this study was conducted in America, it provides a vital insight on how policing should be led universally, the study should be replicated in additional western counties to understand if findings are similar. Tyler, Schulhofer and Huq's research suggests Muslims will cooperate, show pro-authoritative attitudes and have positive views about policing depending on procedural justice, which in turn produces successful achievement of counterterrorism goals.

A review of previous literature has shown the limited available research on how Muslim youth (aged 18-25) in the UK feel about the continuous police

surveillance they are subjected to, and the emotions and reactions that it stirs. Where previous literature has investigated this subject, the research specifically on the opinions of Muslim youth have typically remained quantitative, in the form of surveys. This research has not yet been conducted qualitatively, in the UK. Therefore, the current research aims to conduct interviews to receive in-depth analysis on the thoughts and feelings of Muslim youth in the UK. The purpose here is to determine: (a) the emotional reaction of young Muslim males and females on community policing. (b) The emotion of young Muslims on being stereotyped by the police and (c), The effects of policing leading young Muslim males and females to commit crime.

## **Methodology**

### **Study design**

In order to explore reactions and emotions of Muslim youth in relation to policing, qualitative semi-structured interviews were conducted. The interviews were conducted in a room located in the Brooks building in Manchester Metropolitan University. This allowed for a safe and neutral environment for both the researcher and the participants, and therefore allowed the participants to elaborate more about their experiences of community policing and stereotyping.

### **Participants**

Participants were recruited through an opportunity sample. Posters (appendix 1 on Application for Ethics Approval Form) advertising the study including researcher contact details, were placed in the local Community Centre of a Muslim area in Manchester, England, until 3 male and 3 female participants aged 18 to 25 agreed to take part. Female participants were aged 21, 18 and 19, male participants were 19, 21 and 22 and all participants were from Asian Indian or Pakistani backgrounds. Six participants from both genders were appropriate to retrieve in-depth accounts of a variety of experiences. The participants did not have a criminal record; therefore data will not be restricted to those who have had direct conflicts with the police, to allow for generalization.

### **Data collection**

An Application for Ethics Approval Form (AEAF) (Appendix 1) was completed beforehand. Participants were recruited through opportunity sampling, if they were willing to take part in the research participants first make contact via e-mail. They were then sent a more detailed invitation email (Appendix 2 on AEAF) and an information sheet (Appendix 3 on AEAF), which informed them of the research and stated that an interview would take place in a university room at Manchester Metropolitan University, lasting approximately 30 minutes. The information sheet stated that all data will remain anonymous and that they have the right to withdraw from the research at any time without reason.

All participants agreed to partake in the research and a time was arranged to meet the researcher at the University for the interview before February 19<sup>th</sup> 2017. Upon arrival, participants were presented with a consent form (Appendix 4 on AEAF) in which they agreed to participate in the study. The semi-structured interview then took place (Appendix 5 on AEAF). The interview consisted of 10-

items including prompts. Questions were fairly general to obtain open answers; from these, follow-up questions were asked if it felt necessary or appropriate (Potter and Hepburn, 2005). Participants could have potentially found the interview topic to be sensitive, e.g. (Item 5) do you feel stereotyped by the police? (Item 6) Do you think the policing is necessary? However, the sensitive nature of the interview was made clear prior to the start (via the information sheet and consent form), and they were informed of their right to not answer any questions they perceive as sensitive. The interviews were recorded on an audio device (Dictaphone), and recordings were kept until the data was transcribed, and then destroyed on March 20<sup>th</sup> 2017. Audio recording was used to ensure no data was missed when transcribing. A debrief sheet (Appendix 6 on AEAF) was given to participants at the end of the interview in which they were thanked for taking part in the research, and provided with the contact details of the university and a helpline in the event any distress is caused. Subjects retained a copy of the debrief sheet containing their unique code in case of withdrawal, no participants withdrew.

The interview items for this research provided relevant detailed information about the topic area, providing insight on this matter. The researcher was able to gather information on experiences and emotions, which could not have been obtained through quantitative methods. Probes and paraphrasing were used in order to build rapport and encourage discussion, (Rossetto, 2014). Interviews were appropriate for this study, as previous research has suggested interviews can imitate naturalistic conversation in analytically essential respects (Hollway, 2005, cited in Wooffitt and Widdicombe 2006). Previously said to be conversation with a purpose (Bingham and Moore, 1924, cited in Madill, 2011), it is practical to assume that interviewers and interviewees both incorporate material from their everyday interactional competencies during interviews. Wooffitt and Widdicombe (2006) propose semi-structured interviews may have great similarity to naturalistic conversation. However, a downfall of interviews is that they may occasionally drift off track, though all the main topics from the schedule should be answered (Potter and Hepburn, 2005).

### **Data analysis**

The research was analysed using thematic analysis. Thematic analysis was applied as ‘through its theoretical freedom, thematic analysis provides a flexible and useful research tool, which can potentially provide a rich and detailed, yet complex, account of data’, (Braun and Clarke, 2006:78). The method of thematic analysis comprises of identifying, analysing and reporting patterns within data, as its flexible analysis themes will be broad (Braun and Clarke, 2006).

Ryan and Bernard (2000, cited in Braun and Clarke, 2006) recognise thematic coding as a procedure in which ‘major’ analytic traditions are performed within, as oppose to a specific approach in its own right. Coding for a relatively specific research question maps onto a more theoretical approach, by means of an essentialist/realist approach. This way theorizing motivations, experience, and meaning is enabled. Themes for this research were refined after coding was completed. Themes capture essential aspects about the data in relation to the research questions. Therefore, researcher judgement is obligatory to determine what a theme is, (Braun and Clarke, 2006). For this research regarding effects

of policing in Muslim communities, thematic analysis was beneficial, enabling participants to report experiences, meanings and the reality of policing.

The analytic process involved interview transcription and coding of the data (Appendix 2). Through immersion of the data, descriptive codes such as 'race issues', 'physical crime' and 'positive view of police', were found, organized and summarised. After codes were generated, five themes were identified.

## **Analysis and discussion**

The research intended to understand the reaction of Muslim youth in relation to policing in the UK. The 'Prevent' strategy introduced by the UK government to combat terrorism and radicalisation involved police community support officers and policing teams working together with local communities in order to build trust in police and create safer communities. They prioritised certain areas of the UK, which had indicators of terrorist activity, (HMGovernment, 2011). The research discovered mixed attitudes towards policing and surveillance of areas populated mostly by Muslims, instigating positive feelings as well as feelings of anger and annoyance amongst youth, aged 18-25.

Thematic analysis generated numerous codes for each transcript; those that were similar in nature were combined creating clear themes and subthemes. Theme 1, 'Community', includes subthemes 'religion' and 'multicultural'. Theme 2, 'Stereotyping' comprises of subthemes 'race', 'impact of social media', 'perceptions of stereotypes' and 'effects of stereotypes'. Theme 3, 'Views on community policing' contains subthemes 'regularity of policing' and 'trust in police'. Theme 4, 'Gender differences on policing' includes subthemes 'attitudes on being seen as high-risk' and 'stereotypes of dress'. Theme 5, 'Crime' consists of subthemes 'violence arising from stereotypes', 'reporting trends' and 'backlash of policing'.

### **Theme 1: Community**

This was a core theme as participants described their community in a similar way. It includes subthemes 'religion' and 'multicultural'. When asked 'how would you describe your community?' all participants were quick to comment they felt safe in their area and they felt a strong sense of community cohesion. Most commented on how the majority was Muslim. Mohammed comments,

'Community is very tight knit of Muslims everyone is very close together and knows everyone very well.' (lines 5-6)

Though the majority is Muslim, Aminah comments on the diversity.

'It's very diverse...especially around where I live erm there's a whole different bunch of religions because I live on a road where there's a church but also there's a mosque in the area and there's also a temple in the area as well... yeah its very multi-cultural.' (lines 5-8).



Cassim mentions the multi-cultural area, particularly on his street, which is situated near the mosque. The diversity of religions around the mosque contradicts research that predominantly Muslims areas have unrest and a lack of integration, (Jayaweera and Choudhury, 2008).

‘On my street you have Muslims, Hindus, Sikhs, Christians’ (Cassim, line 5)

It was clear that the participants were very proud of their religion and put their religion first. All participants practiced Islam and beliefs were strong, even in a post 9/11 society and the formation of ‘islamophobia’. Ilyas mentions:

‘I’m Muslim and have lived in a society where- before 9/11 happened and a society after 9/11 happened... I do feel there has been a change in how people behave towards Muslims.’ (lines 4-7)

Participants felt safe in their community even though the wider society may be against their religion. 84% of British people tend to be more suspicious about Muslims since 9/11, and 45% believe religious diversity has a negative impact on society, (Allen, 2010). Findings from this research suggest the diversity is not a concern and Muslim youth in England feel safe in their local community.

‘In terms of racism around here I don’t really experience it in or around my area erm I think you feel it more when you go near town centre and like when people are drunk.’ (Ilyas, lines 14-16).

## **Theme 2: Stereotyping**

Stereotyping was a core theme throughout interviews, all participants were evidently aware of the state of negative stereotypes of Muslims in western society. They either experienced or knew of someone close who had encountered an incident and was offended or insulted because of the stereotypes of Muslims. The subthemes comprise of ‘race’, ‘impact of social media’, ‘perceptions of stereotypes’ and ‘effects of stereotypes’.

Female participants recognised differences in race more than male participants did. When asked ‘do you think there is more policing in your area than other areas?’ Sara states,

‘Like when a Muslim youth has done something bad...even if it’s something small then I feel like they get really involved I think maybe if it was a white area they would let it go more easily.’ (Lines 28-31)

In the year ending March 2016, persons from black, Asian and minority ethnicities were over one and a half times more likely to be arrested than those of white ethnicity, (Home Office, 2016). This supports Murray, Mueller-Johnson and Sherman’s (2015) research, in which ethnic minority Muslims were more displeased at the appropriateness of stop and search than their non-Muslim

counterparts. In comparison to white and ethnic minority non-Muslims, Muslims have lower confidence in the police. Additionally Cassim mentions race when explaining policing in the community.

‘Black Muslims feel more stereotyped compared to white Muslims that I know.’ (lines 29-30)

All participants mentioned social media numerous times throughout the interviews. Mohammed mentions,

‘Like a lot of people are unhappy with the media and lies which get portrayed and get angry about it so they think Muslims are gonna commit crime to get back at them’. (Lines 24-26)

However, social media does not just have a negative impact on Muslims but police reputation too. Police indiscretion captured online can cause reduced trust or hatred towards the police force, (Goldsmith, 2015). Cassim states,

‘Social media sometimes it can affect you because err once you get an image of what the police are doing then you might start to believe it’. (lines 25-26)

The complexity and impact of social media on both the police and Muslims was acknowledged by Ilyas, he was aware of the media being a tool for propaganda by news corporations such as the BBC, he states,

‘You see a lot of videos online on Facebook and YouTube but you only see one side of the story’. (lines 63-64)

When participants were asked about their perception of Muslim stereotypes, they all described the negative labels associated with Muslims.

‘The stereotypes are usually bad like oh they’re all evil and will hurt you like terrorists and stuff.’ (Mohammed, lines 18-19)

Social categorization based on religion and race which influences individuals’ perceptions of Muslims, leads to stereotyping, (Bartholow and Dickter, 2008). Sides and Gross (2013), found American society stereotype Muslims as violent and untrustworthy. Such categorisation may lead to Muslims feeling as though they are heard not as British citizens, but as Muslims, leading them to feel disengaged from wider society (Hopkins and Blackwood, 2011). It could lead to Muslim youth feeling marginalised and having no trust in the police causing a lack of reporting crime. Sara mentions a friend who feels this way,

‘Because of social media he can see how the police treat Muslims and that they stereotype... he just doesn’t trust them and says he’d never tell the police anything.’ (Lines 39-41)

Spalek (2010) found trust between police officers and Muslim communities are incredibly difficult due to 'hard' policing strategies. In order to improve trust, it is key the police use openness and transparency.

Stereotypes have a range of effects on young Muslims. When asked, 'what do you think these stereotypes could lead to?' Ilyas responded,

'In society as a whole your pushing them away you're not make making us feel like part of society if that happens why would it not lead to a life of crime?' (lines 29-30)

Sirin and Fine (2007) found the participants feel constantly blamed and stereotyped for the acts of Muslims around the world. This could potentially cause group differentiation, 'us' and 'them' in British society. It could cause an inherent representation of negative characteristics of the Muslim out-group, which the in-group is threatened by (Jaspal and Cinnirella, 2010).

Zahra comments on the effects of stereotyping,

'People can be harassed for erm being misjudged and it can lead to anger...completely there's been loads of examples where people get angry because they think someone's being racist to them.' (lines 12-14)

All participants stated they had never personally experienced specifically police stereotyping or conflict, suggesting why they may view the police force in a positive light. When asked 'have you ever felt stereotyped by the police?' Zahra replied,

'I've never had an encounter with them so...but I know some people probably have.' (line 22-23)

### **Theme 3: Views on community policing**

The core theme policing comprised of subthemes 'regularity of policing' and 'trust in police'. Female participants spoke more openly about the police whilst male participants were more hesitant. Several commented on their personal views of the police as well as Muslim friends in their community who had controversial views on policing.

When asked 'Do you think there is more policing in your area than others?' some participants assumed it was no more than other areas in Manchester. As British Muslim youth are more likely to be readily supportive of violent extremism (HM Government, 2011), policing strategies have changed to a neighbourhood-style policing model, in order to create social cohesion by engaging with faith communities, with the expectation of addressing potential terrorist activities, (McFadyen and Prideaux, 2014). This has led to the increase of policing Muslim areas.

Ilyas comments,

'so you see these two police officers on cycles and... you know there were these two boys who went to Syria we don't know the reasons why

they went we don't know if it was to help people... no one knows the real reason why they went-is that ... does that give police a reason to patrol my area more? And on- I don't know sometimes it makes you feel quite secure because there's police around or insecure because it feels like your being watched.' (Lines 41-48)

The perception of being watched may lead to self-policing, Sirin and Fine (2007) found Muslim American youths who felt marginalised under surveillance and siege since 9/11 had led to self-policing. The UK government introduced *Prevent* as part of a counter-terrorism strategy, as a way to make communities resilient to terrorist ideology. Its aims to improve sense of belonging and citizenship. The police have sought a far closer dialogue with mosques and their governing bodies, as faith institutions are considered most at-risk from extremist and terrorist (HM Government, 2011). The majority of participants (5 out of 6) approved with the prevent strategy. Mohammed comments,

'I think it's really good... just to keep everyone safe and to clear any doubts and misconceptions anyone might have.' (lines 45-46)

Similarly, Aminah comments,

'I don't think it's a bad thing... I think definitely erm in the community everyone should be working together and that's something that I feel very strongly about because Muslims are always being seen as not wanting to work with the police or working with the government.' (Lines 59-62)

Contrary to Blackwood, Hopkins and Reicher's (2016) analysis of a police workshop conducted to raise awareness of *Prevent*, who argue the surveillance warranted can lead to disengagement of Muslims from majority group members. The participants in this research were supportive of the prevent strategy, perhaps making them feel more included in British society by helping to reduce terrorist activity. Even with more community policing present, participants still placed trust in the police. Aminah mentions,

'I'm strong in the belief that the police are there to help you' (Lines 32-33)

Thus providing support for Tyler, Schulhofer and Huq's (2010) research who compared two perspectives in which members in a Muslim American community might cooperate willingly with the police in general as well as specifically for terrorism. Using data from 300 telephone interviews with Muslim Americans in New York City suggested they recognise the police as legitimate authority (normative); they based 'legitimacy' to fairness and procedural justice of police behaviour.

#### **Theme 4: Gender differences on policing**

Gender differences were found between the male and female participants perception of policing. Female participants assumed young Muslims males would have more conflict with the police than female Muslims. This core theme

includes subthemes 'attitudes on being seen as high-risk' and 'stereotypes of dress'.

When asked 'Have you felt unnecessary arrests have been made for suspicious behaviour?' Sara replied,

'yeah I think like for black and Asian people they are arrested for the smallest reason and the police probably take it out of proportion like 'oh it could lead to terrorists if we don't arrest.' (Lines 79-81)

As male arrests are significantly more common (Home Office, 2016), males are more likely to be targeted by the police and stereotyped as radical or 'high risk.'

Stereotypes of how Muslim males and females dress could affect police perceptions of them as well as arrests. Aminah states,

'I think it's much harder for males with the police... because they're portrayed very differently a lot of the times... so if you look at a Muslim male then a lot of the times people would think straight away that he's part of a terrorist group if he has a beard and if he's wearing religious dress and erm a lot of the times females are seen to be oppressed by the media rather than being part of some organisation that's planning to kill everybody.' (Lines 39-45)

The previous UK prime minister, David Cameron, openly stigmatising Muslim women as oppressed and suggesting young Muslim men are vulnerable to radicalisation due to 'traditional submissiveness of women', (Payton, 2016). He also requested Madressas (Muslim schools) be regulated because children were having their 'heads filled with poison' (Jeffreys, 2015). This attitude would have affected the government including how the police force ran. Therefore, the government may have influenced the police to believe sexist and racist stereotypes of Muslims, resulting in arrests.

## **Theme 5: Crime**

The final core theme, crime, consisted of subthemes 'violence arising from stereotypes', 'reporting trends' and 'backlash of policing'. All participants made it clear that any violence arising from stereotypes would depend on the individual.

'If that Muslim is very emotional about the being labelled then they would backlash against all the negative stereotypes given to Muslims'. (Sara, Lines 20-22)

Some individuals react sooner and become angry more easily than others. Individuals who are more argumentative may become violent if affected when felt as if someone is disrespecting their religion. Cassim mentions,

'You know... like 'Muslims are terrorists' and everything like that and obviously that's not true so people will disagree and start calling each

other names and from there it'll just escalate... I've seen it happen.'  
(Lines 15-17)

Participants all suggested they would report crime from their area to the police, as they are just as affected by radical behaviour. Mohammed mentions,

'It's just to keep everyone safe from extremists' (Lines 35-36)

Similar to the findings of Tyler, Schulhofer and Huq's (2010) research on a Muslim American community's willingness to cooperate with the police specifically for terrorism. Cooperation with the police had weak connections with religiosity, cultural background and political beliefs, suggesting procedural justice is exceptionally significant when designing policing strategies for antiterrorism.

'Backlash' was mentioned several times by participants, suggesting reactions of Muslim youth were all subsequent to policing. When asked 'do you think community policing has led young Muslims to commit crime?' Cassim replied,

'Yeah because it gets them angry because they see it happening all the time and now it's starting to become second nature to us. We kind of have to accept the fact that this is always going to happen.' (Lines 39-41)

Additionally, Mohammed replied,

'Not unless someone specifically has been targeted in an unfair way by the police.' (Lines 40-41)

Blackwood, Hopkins and Reicher (2016) analysed how effective a workshop raising awareness for 'prevent' would be in reducing radicalisation. Their findings suggested that the focus of the workshop was too narrow focusing on individual weakness and vulnerabilities, and by doing so authorities may be unaware of the corrosive effects of their own practices.

## **Limitations**

Participants were Asian (Indian and Pakistani) Muslims therefore results cannot be generalised to other British Muslims. The experiences of Black Muslims on community policing may produce stronger opinions. Participants volunteered most likely due to strong opinions of policing, however, they may have held back opinions they thought would be deemed as wrong in society. The participants did not have criminal records, the opinions of Muslim youth with criminal records may produce different outcomes. The number of participants may have been a limitation as well as only using few people from each gender.

## **Summary**

Policing of Muslim areas is clearly evident through accounts given by the participants. There was anger towards excessive policing, as well as a tone of

disappointed acceptance that as long as Muslim youth are present there will be more policing in the area. The participants did not feel as though they were stereotyped by the police as much as wider society or on social media, they were happy to cooperate with the police and understood the police working with the mosque was to create a safer community. In relation to policing leading to crime, participants recognised a variety of sources showing negativity and hate towards Muslims leads to crime. Policing is one of the many aspects that can give rise to Muslim youth committing crime. Perhaps schemes need to be reviewed and improved before implemented in minority communities, to better relationships between the community and community officers.

### **Reflexivity**

The researcher was a British Indian Muslim female, who lives in a predominantly Muslim area therefore has some understanding of the relationship between Muslim youth and policing. The participants of the research were similar to the researcher in that they were also British Asian, Indian or Pakistani, which could have made participants more comfortable. However, gender differences may have affected the outcome of the interviews. Females were more talkative, perhaps this was because they regarded the topic to be more of a 'male' problem, which they were less affected by. Males displayed signs of hesitation (pauses) at some instances during the interview. The researcher was able to reflect on how their background could have influenced interpretation of data. The researcher took an impartial approach when analysing data.

Due to the variety of past research on the negative relationship of policing and minority groups, the researcher intended to find a clear negative view of policing from Muslim youth. However, mixed opinions were found as participants viewed the police in a positive way, as a unit they can trust which promotes safety. Participants may have been apprehensive on true opinions in order to appear as though they agree with policing strategies, or were response biased because they assumed what they were saying was what the researcher required. No major methodological problems were encountered, the researcher had to use more probes than expected. As the researcher was an undergraduate psychology student, they were familiar with conducting semi-structured interviews and had experience of using thematic analysis.

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