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Your pain is my pain:

Examining the community impacts of Islamophobic hate crimes

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## Abstract

Islamophobic hate crime continues to be a significant social problem throughout the United Kingdom. It is now well established that hate crimes can cause heightened levels of anger, fear and anxiety amongst those who are directly targeted. However, it has largely been assumed that such incidents have negative emotional and social impacts on *other* members of the victim's community. Using a large scale survey, this chapter will provide the first quantitative examination of the *indirect* (community) impacts of hate crimes on members of UK Muslim communities. The study found that simply knowing a victim of an Islamophobic hate crime can have emotional and behavioural effects that are comparable with those who have experienced direct forms of victimisation. This indirect experience was found to increase other group members' perceptions of threat and their feelings of anger and anxiety. In addition, they were more likely to report avoidant and security-related behavioural intentions and hold negative attitudes towards the Government and certain criminal justice agencies. However, not all impacts were intrinsically negative to community wellbeing. Indirect victimisation was also found to have a mobilising effect on Muslim communities, with many individuals likely to experience enhanced ties to their community and a strengthening of their Muslim identity.

## Your pain is my pain:

### Examining the community impacts of Islamophobic hate crimes

#### ***Introduction***

Islamophobic hate crimes<sup>1</sup> continue to blight communities throughout the United Kingdom. Recent statistics from the Crime Survey for England and Wales (CSEW) show that Muslim adults in England and Wales are more likely to be a victim of both racially *and* religiously motivated hate crime than any other category of adults (Corcoran, Lader, & Smith, 2015). With recorded incidents of racial and religious hate crimes on the rise (Corcoran, et al., 2015; Corcoran & Smith, 2016), this type of victimisation is likely to have considerable impacts on individual Muslims – and, in turn, Muslim communities more generally. In this chapter we start by documenting Muslim individuals’ direct and indirect experiences of hate crimes and examine how these experiences affect their emotional and behavioural reactions to an imagined hate crime scenario. In the second part of the chapter we explore Muslim individuals’ perceptions of how well the Government, the police and the Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) are doing with regards to combating Islamophobic hate crime. The study shows that Islamophobic hate crimes not only traumatise direct victims, but are likely to spread fear and anger throughout Muslim communities. Incidents are also likely to impact upon individuals’ community involvement and avoidant behaviours, while also damaging their perceptions of, and confidence in, the police and Crown Prosecution Service (CPS).

#### ***Understanding the impacts of hate crime***

Much has been written about the impacts of hate crime generally, helping us to understand why hate motivated incidents are likely to cause significant emotional traumas to those who

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<sup>1</sup> We use the broad term Islamophobic hate crime to incorporate crimes and non-crime incidents that are perceived to be motivated by a prejudice towards Islam and/or Muslim people.

are victimised (e.g., Herek, Cogan, & Gillis, 2002; Herek, Gillis, & Cogan, 1999; see Walters, 2014: Ch 3 for a summary of this literature). In essence, research has shown hate crimes are *more likely* to result in victims feeling angry, fearful of repeat victimisation, vulnerable, anxious and depressed, compared with non-hate crimes (see e.g., Herek, et al., 2002; Herek, et al., 1999; McDevitt, Balboni, Garcia, & Gu, 2001). Research has also found that many victims apportion blame on themselves for having invited their victimisation for being ‘too visible’ (Bell & Perry, 2015). Such occasions can leave victims feeling a sense of guilt and/or shame for their own victimisation (see e.g., Dick, 2008).

In relation to Islamophobic hate crime, recent studies have shown that incidents can result in feelings of vulnerability, anxiety, depression, and anger, with some victims also experiencing post-traumatic stress disorder (Abu-Ras & Suarez, 2009; Awan & Zempi, 2015; Perry, 2014; Zempi & Chakraborti, 2014). The reason for these heightened traumas has been linked to the fact that Islamophobia purposively subjugates and seeks to destroy a person’s Muslim identity, often through acts of violence. Ultimately, these hate-based attacks can destabilise an individual’s sense of self, seemingly making their world appear a much more malevolent place. Such an outcome can have significant behavioural and spatial impacts (e.g., Awan & Zempi, 2015; Perry, 2014). Awan and Zempi (2015), for example, found that experiences of Islamophobia influenced participants’ sense of belonging and feelings of safety, which resulted in participants engaging in avoidant strategies (e.g., not leaving the house; hiding their Muslim identity) and employing additional security measures (e.g., adjusting online security settings). Conversely, for some, Islamophobic experiences resulted in strengthening their Muslim identity as well as their sense of “increased in-group solidarity” (p. 376).

These effects are not restricted to direct victims. The symbolic nature of hate incidents, it has been argued, serves to terrorise *entire* communities via what Iganski calls

“waves of harm” (2001, p. 628). For instance, in the aftermath of the hate-motivated murder of Matthew Shepard, Noelle (2002) identified a “ripple effect” in which the homophobic hate crime stoked fear and anxiety amongst other gay people who feared they too could be targeted in such a way (see also Bell & Perry, 2015; Perry & Alvi, 2012). These *indirect effects* plainly show that hate motivated incidents send a clear message to those who are “different” that they are unwelcome, unworthy and undeserving of social respect and are pertinent to understanding the effects of Islamophobic hate crimes. As Awan and Zempi (2015) note, many Muslim people now live within a British society where Islamophobia has become endemic and where Muslim individuals are commonly the targets of hate-motivated crimes. Such offences are not only likely to lead Muslim individuals to view society as unsafe and dangerous, but they are also likely to increase the expectation of further attacks, which make individuals feel personally vulnerable (Awan & Zempi, 2015; Paterson, Brown, Walters, & Carrasco, in prep; also see Perry, 2014 and Poynting & Perry, 2007 for similar consequences in Canadian and Australian contexts).

From a social psychological perspective, Social Identity Theory (SIT; Tajfel & Turner, 1986) and Intergroup Emotions Theory (IET; Mackie, Maitner, & Smith, 2009) help us to understand why the harms of Islamophobic hate spread across Muslim communities. In general terms, SIT suggests that individuals who share important beliefs and interests form social groups with one another, either in actuality or subjectively (usually both). Such groups give rise to social identities that are shared by group members and help to define how the group – and its constituent members – think, feel and act. The group also fosters important emotional bonds between group members. The ‘ummah’ in the Qur’an typifies this type of social group as scholars suggest that it refers to all Muslim people as a “community” who are bound together by the ties of their similar religious beliefs (e.g., Hassan, 2006; Hossain, 2012).

Group formation is achieved and maintained by the psychological process of ‘self-stereotyping’ (Turner, Hogg, Oakes, Reicher, & Wetherell, 1987). Given some minimal level of identification, group members assume for themselves what they perceive to be the stereotypical, identity-defining attributes of the group. These may be relatively enduring ‘prototypical’ characteristics seen to comprise the group (e.g., particular life-style features such as clothing or physical appearance, or certain behavioural traits), or may be more temporary attributes such as perceived ‘appropriate’ attitudes or emotions (e.g., in response to specific intergroup events such as an external threat). Because such self-stereotypic responses are usually socially shared, members of groups often come to display common patterns of thinking and behaviour in response to particular situations.

IET adds to SIT by explaining that when the group is central to the individual, what happens to the group or, by extension, other group members, will be felt as though it is happening to them. This then means that members will *feel* and *react* to the situation (good or bad) as though it was they who were personally involved. Hence, an Islamophobic attack on a Muslim individual (or symbolic property such as a mosque) is likely to be felt by other Muslims (the ummah) as an attack, not just on an individual, but on all Muslims and Islam and all that the religion symbolises. Consequently, this is likely to lead to certain emotional and behavioural reactions *throughout* the community, which are in line with those that are likely to be experienced by the direct victim.

This theoretical understanding of the indirect impacts of hate crime is persuasive, yet little is known empirically (at least quantitatively) about the indirect consequences of such attacks. It is to such evidence that we now turn.

### ***Research design and sample***

The research for this chapter is drawn from the Sussex Hate Crime Project, which seeks to understand the direct and indirect impacts of both Islamophobic and anti-LGBT hate crime in the UK. The current analyses focus on participants who self-identified as Muslim<sup>2</sup> and who currently live in the UK. A total of 347 respondents were recruited from a variety of sources including via links on social media distributed by the project and its partners (e.g., *MEND*, *Muslim Council of Britain*, and various Muslim student organisations). Adverts were also placed on Facebook and paper surveys were distributed at a Muslim conference (Global Peace & Unity, 2013).

The participants were aged between 17 and 75 years old, with an average age of 33 years. There were 195 females, 151 males and one person who did not provide an answer. Participants were from a variety of different ethnicities, with the majority being Asian (n = 204), with White (n= 51) and Arab (n = 40) also being relatively common. There were over 30 nationalities represented, with British being most common (n = 227).

## **Experiences of Islamophobic hate crime**

### ***Direct experiences***

As the central aim of the survey was to assess the impacts of respondents' experiences of hate crimes, participants were asked to think of all the times they had been a victim of five specific crimes and incidents<sup>3</sup> in the *past three years*. These crimes/incidents were: *verbal abuse, online abuse, vandalism, physical assault, and physical assault with a weapon*.

Following this stem question, participants indicated "How many of these incident(s) do you

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<sup>2</sup> To access the survey, participants were asked, "Do you feel culturally, religiously, and/or socially Muslim?" If they answered yes, they proceeded to the survey. If they answered no, they were directed to the end of the survey.

<sup>3</sup> Hate incidents are incidents that are perceived to be hate-motivated but do not meet the threshold of a crime. As incidents and crimes are likely to have similar impacts, and for the sake of brevity, we shall include incidents within the term of 'hate crime' for the remainder of the chapter.

think occurred because the attacker(s) were (partly) motivated by a prejudice against Muslim people?” These items measured their *direct experiences* with Islamophobic hate crimes and are shown in Figures 1 and 2<sup>4</sup>.

Figure 1

Frequency of direct experiences of Islamophobic verbal abuse and online abuse

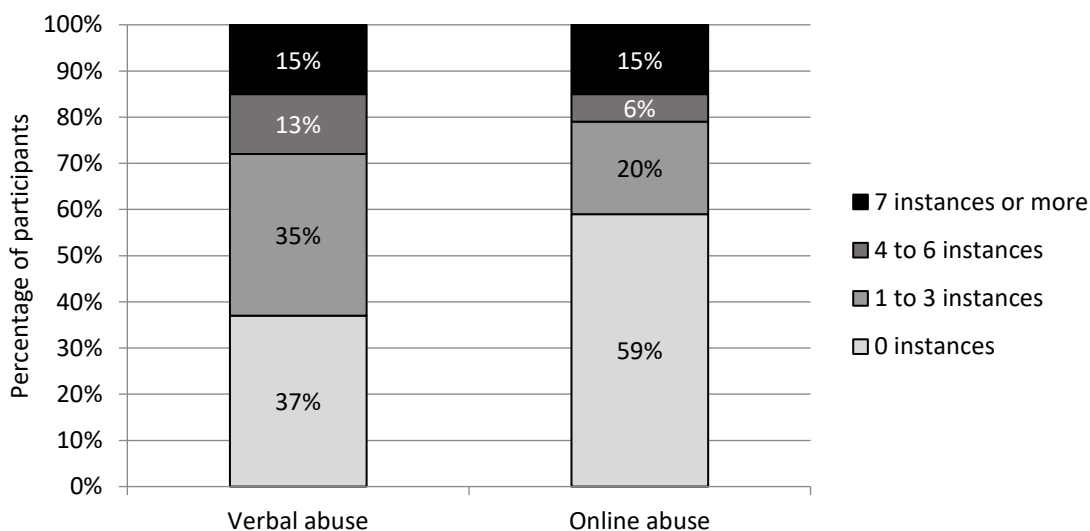
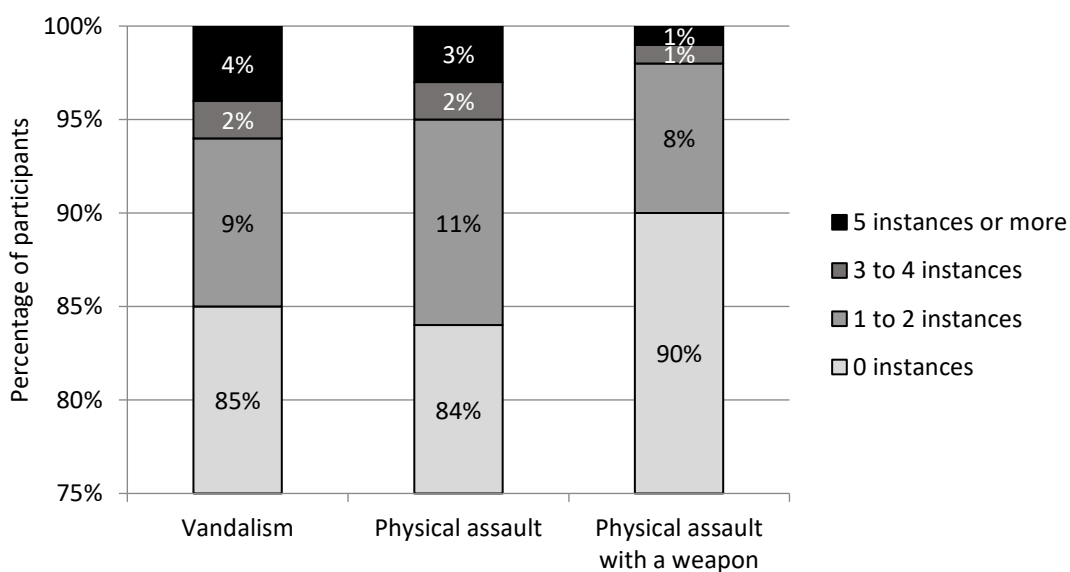


Figure 2.

Frequency of direct experiences of Islamophobic vandalism and physical assaults



<sup>4</sup> As verbal and online abuse are more common than physical hate crimes, the response options were larger for the abuse items (i.e., 1-3 vs. 1-2) and so the results are shown in two different figures.



Consistent with CSEW data and other research (Corcoran, et al., 2015; Corcoran & Smith, 2016; Littler & Feldman, 2015), Figures 1 and 2 show that Islamophobic hate crimes were common experiences for respondents. Verbal and online abuse, in particular, were very common with over two thirds of the sample (n = 243) having been a victim of at least one form of abuse in the past 3 years. In line with other data in this area (Corcoran, et al., 2015), we found a significant proportion of participants had experienced repeat victimisation, with 28 per cent stating that they had been a victim of verbal abuse four times or more and 21 per cent suffering four instances or more of online abuse. Direct experiences of Islamophobic assault, though less frequent, were still worryingly common, with 16 per cent of participants having been assaulted within the past 3 years and 10 per cent having been assaulted with a weapon.

### ***Indirect experiences***

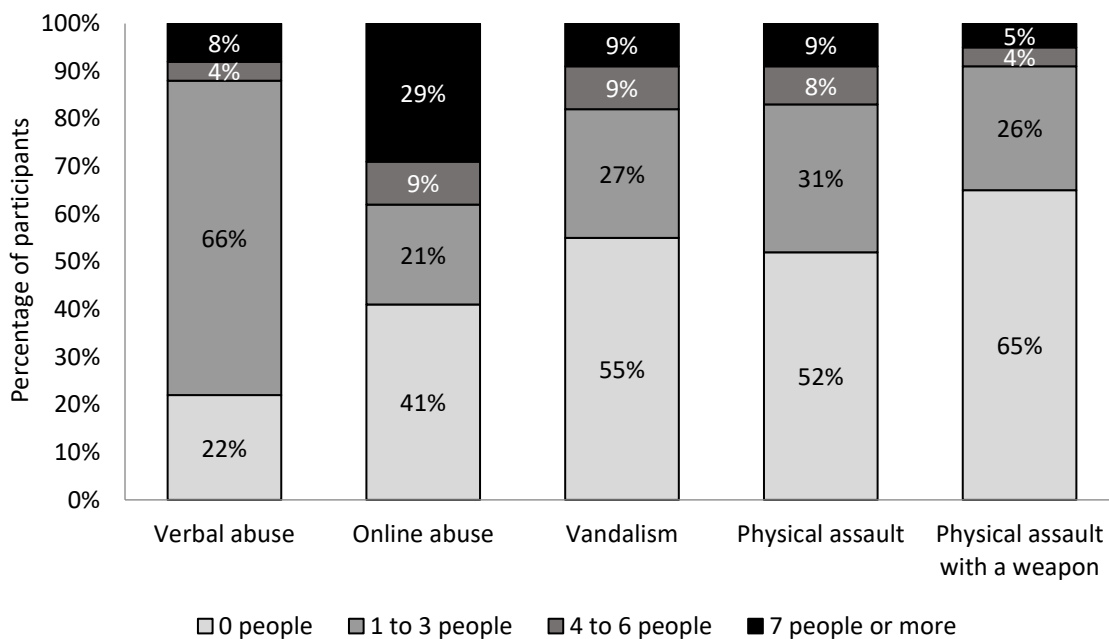
To understand the community impacts of these crimes, participants were asked about their *indirect experiences* of the Islamophobic hate crimes described above. They were instructed to think about victims who they personally knew but that “(y)ou don’t need to be close friends with the victims, but you do need to know them (i.e., not just seen them on TV).” Again, they were asked about their indirect experiences within the past 3 years<sup>5</sup>.

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<sup>5</sup> We also asked about knowledge of attacks against their own mosque and mosques in the UK. 85% of participants knew of at least one UK mosque which had been attacked in the past 3 years and, of those who went to mosque, 58% of their own mosques had been attacked.

Figure 3

## Frequency of indirect experiences of Islamophobic hate crimes



As Figure 3 shows, knowledge of others' Islamophobic victimisation was prevalent: 78 per cent knew someone who had been verbally abused, 59 per cent who had been abused online, 45 per cent who had their property vandalised, 48 per cent who had been assaulted, and 35 per cent who had been assaulted with a weapon. These indirect experiences were not one-off instances. Indeed, 12 per cent of participants knew more than three people who had been verbally abused over the past three years, while 17 per cent knew more than three people who had been physically assaulted in an Islamophobic attack.

## The indirect impacts of Islamophobic hate crime

### *Analysis strategy*

To examine the community impacts of Islamophobic hate crimes, we split the participants into three groups based on their previous direct and indirect experiences with Islamophobic assaults<sup>6</sup>:

- *No experience*: 50% of participants had not been a victim of an Islamophobic assault and did not personally know of a victim.
- *Indirect*: 34% had not been a victim of an Islamophobic assault but did personally know of a victim.
- *Direct & Indirect*<sup>7</sup>: 16% had been a victim of an Islamophobic assault and personally knew of another victim.

### *The impacts of Islamophobic hate crime*

To explore the threat posed by Islamophobia, participants were asked to what extent they thought Islamophobic hate crime posed a threat to themselves and other Muslims in the UK. This *perceived threat* measure included items such as “I worry about being a victim of an Islamophobic hate crime or incident” and “I believe Islamophobic hate crimes and hate incidents pose a real threat to the physical safety of other Muslims”. This scale, and the other scales reported below, was measured on a 1-7 agreement scale.

Participants who had *Direct & Indirect* experiences and those who had *Indirect* experiences reported feeling significantly more threatened by Islamophobic hate crimes than participants who had *No experience* (at the  $p < .05$  level). Those who had only *Indirect*

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<sup>6</sup> We chose to split the sample on experiences with assaults as participants were asked to respond to an Islamophobic assault (described later).

<sup>7</sup> There were only 7 participants (2%) who had been a victim but did not know another victim. These participants were included in the *Direct & Indirect* group.

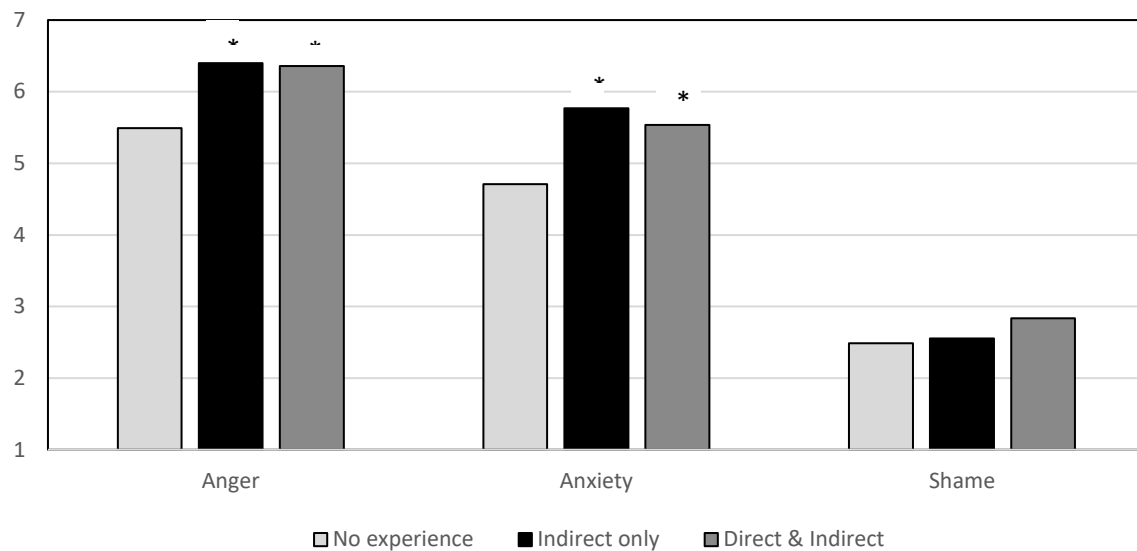
experiences reported similarly high levels of perceived threat as those who had also been a direct victim (Means: *Direct* = 5.49; *Indirect* = 5.37; *No experience* = 4.13). Such a finding highlights the community impacts of Islamophobic hate crimes by suggesting that knowing of someone else's experience of a hate crime heightens individuals' perceived vulnerability to a similar extent as having actually been a victim themselves. It also shows that Islamophobic hate crimes are threatening communicative acts that send messages of hostility throughout the community (Paterson, et al., in prep; Williams & Burnap, 2015).

To assess reactions to Islamophobic hate crimes, participants were asked to "imagine that you find out that a Muslim person, who you did not personally know, was physically assaulted in an Islamophobic hate crime in the town where you live." Though the project could have asked participants to think of an incident they had actually experienced, this scenario was used to ensure that participants without any experiences could respond, thereby allowing us to make comparisons across the three sample groups (*No experience*, *Indirect*, and *Direct & Indirect*). By using the standardised scenario, we were also able to control for some of the characteristics of actual crimes that could account for differences in individuals' reactions (e.g., closeness to the victim, severity of crime, location of the crime, etc.).

Drawing on the current literature (see above), participants were asked to report their feelings of anger ('angry', 'outraged', 'annoyed', 'appalled'), anxiety ('anxious', 'afraid', 'alarmed'), and shame ('ashamed', 'embarrassed', 'guilty') after imagining the hate crime scenario.

Figure 4

The impacts of Islamophobic hate crimes on emotional reactions



As shown in Figure 4, previous experiences with Islamophobic hate crimes had a significant impact on how participants responded emotionally to imagining a hate crime. While those who had no direct or indirect experience with an Islamophobic hate crime were angry and anxious (averages were above the mid-point of the scale for the *No experience* group), people with any experience with hate crimes were much more angry and anxious. Feelings of shame, however, were similarly low for all three groups.

Illustrating the power of “vicarious victimisation” (Perry & Alvi, 2012), Muslim people with only *Indirect* experiences not only reported significantly higher levels of anger and anxiety than the *No experience* group, their heightened emotional reactions were similar to those who had also suffered direct victimisation. This is consistent with previous research (Abu-Ras & Suarez, 2009; Awan & Zempi, 2015; Zempi & Chakraborti, 2014) and theories of social identity and intergroup emotions (e.g., IET: Mackie, et al., 2009; and SIT: Tajfel &

Turner, 1986) and it shows that Islamophobic hate crimes are keenly felt by fellow Muslims causing significant emotional impacts across the community.

### ***Behavioural impacts***

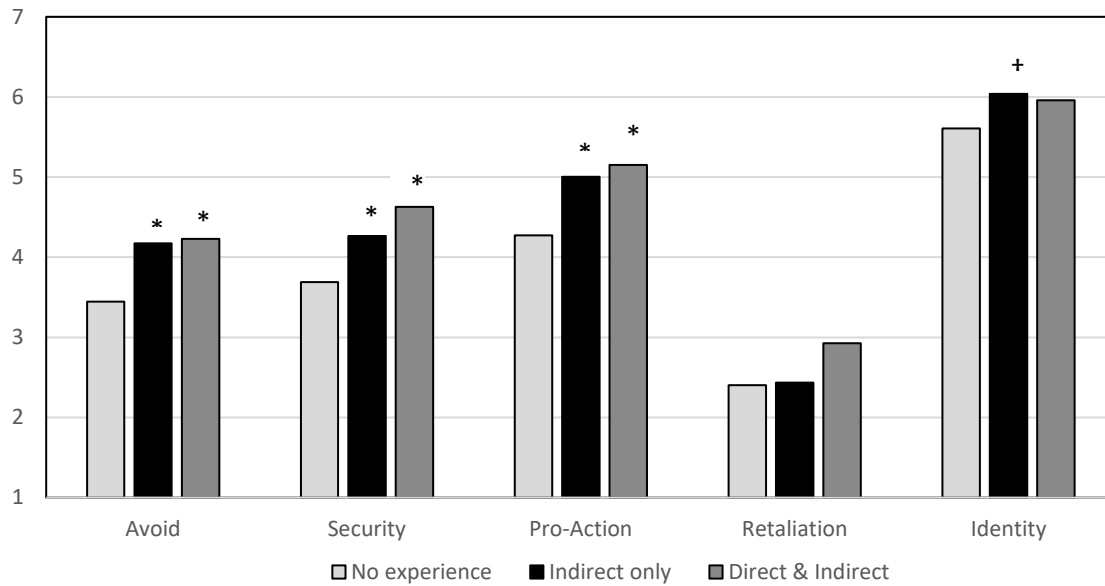
In addition to the heightened emotional reactions, Islamophobia can produce a wide range of behavioural responses. In trying to understand how Islamophobic hate crimes may impact other Muslim individuals' behaviours, participants were asked what they were likely to do after imagining the hate crime scenario. These behavioural intentions<sup>8</sup> included *avoidance* (e.g., "I would go out less often"), improved *security* (e.g., "I would improve the security of my home and my personal belongings (e.g., change locks, change passwords, improve house alarms)"), *pro-action* (e.g., "I would join and/or increase my participation in groups and charities that help Muslim people"), and *retaliation* (e.g., "If I could, I would try and get my own back on the offenders in some way"). Participants also reported the strength of their Muslim identity (e.g., "I feel good about being Muslim").

### Figure 5

The impact of Islamophobic hate crime on behavioural reactions and Muslim identity

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<sup>8</sup> Although these measures were *intentions* rather than *actual* behaviours, research has shown that intentions are a good predictor and proxy for actual behaviours (Armitage & Conner, 2001).



\* denotes a significant difference from the No Experience group at  $p < .05$

† denotes a difference from the No Experience group at  $p = .06$

Experiences of Islamophobic hate crimes were again shown to have pronounced effects on the Muslim community (Figure 5). Of note, after imagining the hate crime, participants who had previous *Indirect* experiences of Islamophobic hate crimes reported that they would react significantly differently to those without any experience. Similar to individuals who had also been a direct victim, the *Indirect* group indicated that they would be more likely to engage in *avoidant* behaviours, improve their *security*, and increase their participation in Muslim groups (*pro-action*). They also reported a stronger Muslim *identity* than the *No experience* group, though this difference was only marginally significant ( $p < .06$ ). All groups of participants were unlikely to want to retaliate and there were no significant differences between the groups on this measure.

Taken together, the effects on behaviours and identity clearly show that simply knowing other people who have experienced an Islamophobic hate crime has significant impacts on Muslim people's perceptions of belonging and safety. Supporting work with direct victims (e.g., Awan & Zempi, 2015; Zempi & Chakraborti, 2014), Islamophobic hate crimes seem to create a hostile environment in which Muslims live in an increased state of

vigilance and isolation. Although the increase in *pro-action* and strength of Muslim *identity* could be seen as positive, it may also be an indicator of how Islamophobic hate crimes contribute to the ostracism of Muslim people. Exemplifying this – in response to how Islamophobia had effected their identity – one of Awan and Zempi’s (2015) interviewees commented, “I am more passionate about my Muslim identity. *I feel I don’t belong anywhere else*”(p. 376; emphasis added). Thus while engagement in Muslim groups and strengthening one’s identity may help individuals to find solace and protection, it may also lead to “voluntary segregation”, which threatens feelings of general belonging and social cohesion (Wachtel, 2012). It should be noted that we found no evidence in this study that indirect hate crime primed participants for retaliation as others have warned (Awan & Zempi, 2015; Craig, 1999).

### ***Attitudes towards the Criminal Justice System***

To combat the deleterious effects of hate crimes on communities, the UK (and elsewhere) has enacted legislation designed to deter and additionally penalise those who attempt to victimise people because of their identity (e.g., Crime and Disorder Act, 1998, ss 28-32; Criminal Justice Act, 2003, ss 145 & 146). While these laws recognise the substantial impacts that these crimes have on individuals, communities, and society, their “success” depends on their application and perceived effectiveness. To this end, the Sussex Hate Crime Project asked Muslim participants about their perceptions of hate crime laws, their beliefs about the policing of Islamophobic hate crimes, and their attitudes towards the bodies that prosecute (the Crown Prosecution Service; CPS) and legislate (the government) hate crimes.

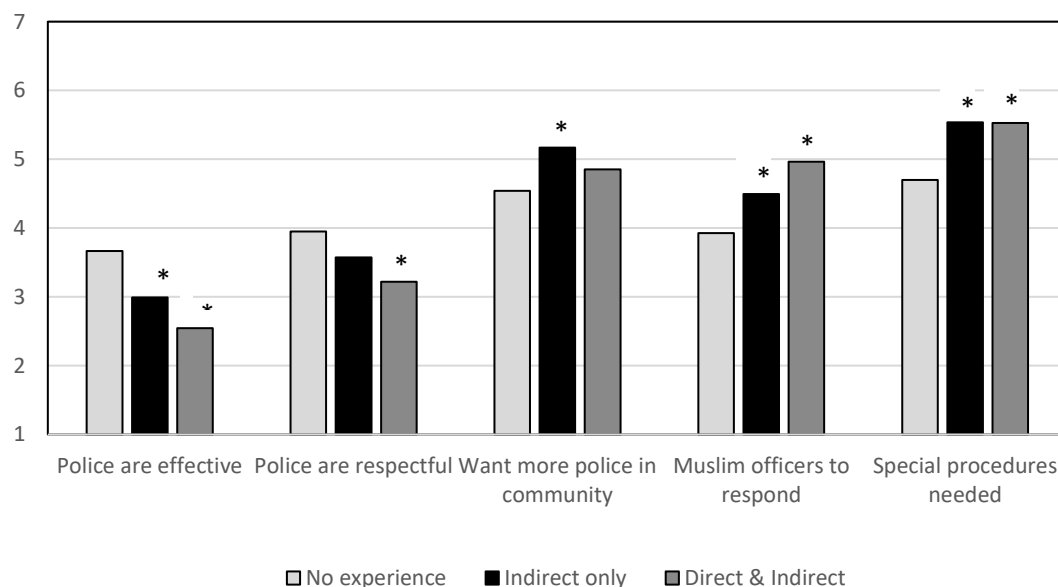
If hate crime is to be combated, victims and witnesses need to have confidence that the police will react swiftly, respectfully, and effectively when they report it. Unfortunately,



while there is some evidence that the police continue to improve their responses to hate crime (Corcoran & Smith, 2016), commonly targeted communities still tend to have low confidence in the police and view the organisation with suspicion, thereby affecting reporting levels (e.g., Awan, 2013; Home Office, 2013, p. 18). To further understand Muslim individuals' perceptions of the police, participants reported their opinions of the police in relation to Islamophobic hate crimes and their beliefs regarding how the police should deal with such offences<sup>9</sup>.

Figure 6

The impacts of Islamophobic hate crimes on attitudes towards policing



\*denotes a significant difference from the *No experience* group at  $p < .05$

In general, the police were viewed negatively by Muslim participants. All three groups thought the police were ineffective and not respectful when dealing with Islamophobic hate crimes (all averages were below the mid-point of the scales). Moreover, these negative attitudes towards the police were exacerbated by experiences with

<sup>9</sup> Individual items (not scales) were used to assess perceptions of the police and specific police procedures and policies

Islamophobic hate crimes. People with only *Indirect* experiences believed the police were even less effective and respectful than people without any experiences (though the latter finding was not statistically significant). Having *Direct* experiences made these attitudes even more unfavourable.

The erosion of community confidence in the police's ability to deal with Islamophobic hate crimes is a real cause for concern (Hall, 2013: Ch. 7). Without this confidence, individuals are less likely to report hate crimes to the police. For the victims of Islamophobia, this means that the perpetrators are free to act again and so feelings of vulnerability are likely to be increased further within Muslim communities. Such a situation is likely to lead to feelings amongst community members that Islamophobia is an expected and even normalised experience, giving rise to enhanced feelings of anxiety and anger (e.g., Awan & Zempi, 2015).

One possible way to improve attitudes towards the police is to show that the police listen and respond to the needs and wishes of the Muslim community when dealing with these crimes. To this end, we asked Muslim individuals three specific questions about how they thought the police should deal with Islamophobic hate crimes. Figure 6 shows that participants across the three groups were in favour of having more police in the community to deal with Islamophobic hate crimes; that they agreed that police services should have special procedures when dealing with Islamophobic hate crimes; and agreed that Muslim officers should respond to instances of Islamophobic hate crime (though the *No experience* group slightly disagreed with this measure). Those who had experienced Islamophobic hate crime first hand or indirectly were most in favour of these policies, inferring that their direct and indirect experiences had led them to recognise that greater police involvement and specialism is needed in order to tackle Islamophobic hate crimes.

Although historically the police have come under immense criticism for the way they have over-policed certain minority communities (see Chakraborti & Garland, 2015: Ch. 9), there have been major improvements to the way police forces across the UK now respond to hate crime (Gianassi & Hall, 2016). For example, a victim-centred definition of hate crime was implemented in police guidance from 2000 and officers are now required to record “non-crime” incidents of hate (“hate incidents”) as part of their policy on hate crime (College of Policing, 2014). In London, there are specialist hate crime units (Community Safety Units) which have responsibility for investigating hate crimes, while many services also have a specialist “Force hate crime sergeant” who will have responsibilities for co-ordinating operational guidance on policing hate crime in their area, and other BAME and LGB&T police liaison officers who are specially trained on responding to hate crimes.

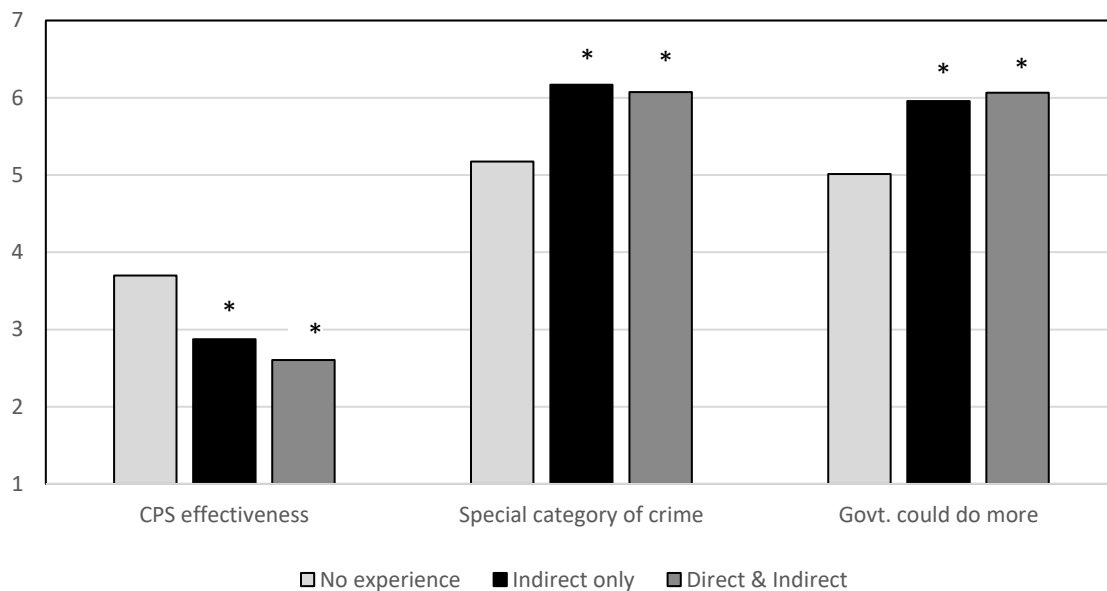
Yet despite these numerous operational improvements, it was evident from our study that respondents from Muslim communities remained doubtful that the police would treat them respectfully. It was also clear that as a result of this, respondents’ generally wanted Muslim officers to respond to Islamophobic hate crimes. While this may not be practical in every Force, this finding is demonstrative of the need to ensure that police services throughout the country continue to strive to employ greater numbers of officers that represent the diverse communities that make up the UK, including those from Muslim communities. Further work is clearly also needed in communicating to Muslim communities the support that is on offer and the work that is being done in local communities to combat hate crime.

Confidence in the police is the first step in ensuring that greater numbers of victims report hate crimes to the police; however, it is not only the police that victims must have faith in. If Muslim communities are to feel safe in society they will need to feel that the hate crime laws designed to protect them are being supported by the Government and by the Crown

Prosecution Service who ultimately prosecute cases in court. In this study, Muslim individuals' confidence in both the Government and the CPS along with their approval of hate crime laws were measured using three scales and included the following representative items: "I believe the CPS is effective in prosecuting Islamophobic hate crimes" (*CPS effectiveness*), "To what extent do you agree that hate crimes should be treated as a special category of crime?" (*special category*), and "I think the government could do more to help eradicate Islamophobic hate crimes and incidents" (*Govt. could do more*).

Figure 7

The impacts of Islamophobic hate crimes on attitudes towards the CPS and Government



Looking at the average responses in relation to the scales' midpoints in Figure 7, Muslim participants, in general, did not think the CPS is effective at prosecuting

Islamophobic hate crimes. They also agreed that hate crimes should be a special category of crime and thought that the government should be doing more to combat Islamophobic hate crimes. Again, illustrating the community impacts of Islamophobic hate crimes, these attitudes were significantly stronger for people who knew of at least one victim of an Islamophobic hate crime (*Indirect*) and for people who had also been a victim themselves (*Direct & Indirect*).

The finding that participants agree that hate crimes should be considered a special category of crime is important for two reasons. First, it highlights that victimised communities are seemingly aware of the greater impacts caused by these types of crimes, especially if they have had personal experiences with Islamophobic hate crimes. Second, as hate crimes are already a special category of crime (e.g., Crime and Disorder Act, 1998; Criminal Justice Act, 2003), it suggests that the UK is right in legislating specifically against anti-religious hate crimes. Nevertheless, Muslim participants also indicated that more is needed to be done for them to feel confident that the State is taking this type of crime seriously. In this regard, it is worth noting that more specific recognition of “Islamophobic hate crime” (as against more broadly anti-religious hate crime) may be helpful. The Metropolitan Police Service, for example, now collects data specifically for “Islamophobic hate crime” separating these out from other religious-based aggravated offences<sup>10</sup>. Further separation of categories within the legislation may be something that policy makers may wish to consult further on. Such a governmental response is but one measure that could help to communicate to Muslim communities that Islamophobia is considered a serious societal concern. Of course, much greater social, political and structural work is required before confidence levels in “the system” will improve drastically.

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<sup>10</sup> See MPAC Hate Crime Dash Board: <https://www.london.gov.uk/what-we-do/mayors-office-policing-and-crime-mopac/data-and-research/crime%20/hate-crime-dashboard>

## Conclusions

This chapter has provided new quantitative evidence regarding the community impacts of Islamophobic hate crimes. Our findings show that Muslim community members continue to encounter pervasive forms of hostility in the UK. This hostility takes many forms including verbal abuse, online abuse, and physical attacks. Such widespread victimisation provides further evidence that Islamophobia has become a normalised part of everyday life for many Muslim people in the UK.

The consequences of Islamophobia and Islamophobic hate crime can be far-reaching. Direct victims are likely to experience heightened emotional responses, exhibit potentially harmful behaviours, and feel further alienated from society and the institutions tasked with protecting them. Crucially, we have shown that these detrimental effects extend to other Muslim community members. Simply knowing of other Muslim people who have experienced Islamophobic hate crimes was found to be associated with increases in perceptions of threat, together with increased feelings of anxiety and anger. This *indirect* experience of victimisation also made individuals feel wary of socialising and heightened their concerns for individual and community safety and security. Consequently, confidence in the police, the CPS, and the Government in tackling Islamophobic hate crime was low. The only potentially positive finding from the study was that victimised Muslim participants seemed to find (or at least seek out) comfort and support in their Muslim identities and Muslim organisations. Nevertheless, even these findings point to a society in which Muslim individuals feel more secure by becoming more insular and, as a result, moving further away from other identities and groups in British society.

While our findings are necessarily limited by characteristics of the sample, survey items, and analysis strategy, they still provide cogent evidence of the considerable impacts

that hate crimes have on Muslim communities. To combat these widespread effects, the criminal justice system must continue to find new ways to address the consequences of Islamophobic hate crime if it is to address the huge gap that exists between policy aspiration and the low confidence levels that Muslim people have in Britain's statutory agencies.

Fundamental to this task is a clearer and more nuanced understanding of the community-wide emotional impacts that Islamophobic hate crimes have on individuals. At a legislative level, both the courts and other justice practitioners must recognise that hate incidents traumatise not only individual victims but entire communities of people who are bound by a group identity. However, community impacts are far from homogenous in their effects. Practitioners must grasp the wide-ranging consequences on emotionality and behaviours. In this regard, it is important to appreciate that that incidents are likely to invoke certain key emotions (e.g., anger and anxiety) as well as specific key behavioural responses (e.g., avoidance and pro-action). It is only by understanding how these emotions and behavioural responses are directly and indirectly linked to hate crime that practitioners will be better equipped to explore new ways of addressing the consequences of Islamophobia on Muslim people.

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