

WORKING TOWARDS A BETTER UNDERSTANDING OF ISLAMOPHOBIA

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Abstract

This paper explores the wider experience of racial and religious hate crimes, specifically anti-Muslim hate, through the use of semi-structured interviews. Importantly, the aim of the paper is to look at the experience and impact of anti-Muslim hate, and Islamophobia by Muslims and by those who are 'misidentified' by perpetrators as being Muslim. The experience of non-Muslim victims is key, as it has been comparatively neglected in existing research into Islamophobia. The article then moves on to the consequences that this experience can have upon the victim and their wider community as captured by reporting centres. These centres are a legacy of the Macpherson Inquiry and subsequent Hate Crime Action Plans to address the issue of the underreporting of hate crimes and community engagement. Finally, this article looks at the effectiveness of initiatives, victim support and community engagement as per the recommendations of the Macpherson Inquiry. Overall, the findings suggest that more coordinated efforts need to be made in regards to how the police engage with minority communities. Further recommendations would be to engage local communities and organisations to establish long-term initiatives and projects, with sufficient funding to support victims of not only hate crime but also anti-Muslim hate.

Keywords

Islamophobia, hate crime, anti-Muslim, misidentification.

Introduction

Hate crimes are defined as criminal offenses where the perpetrator demonstrates hostility or prejudice towards their victim. In the UK, the definition of hate crime is based upon hostility towards five protected characteristics. These are those relating to disability, race, religion, sexual orientation and transgender status (College of Policing, 2014). This means that the selection of victims is based on certain characteristics which the perpetrator deems worthy of victimisation (Coester, 2010:50; Green, McFalls and Smith, 2001:480; Macdonald, 2015:355). Hate crimes with a racial or religious motive are widely understood as majority versus minority crimes, therefore they are expected to be perpetrated by the white majority against the ethnic minority communities. However, hate crimes can also occur between different minority groups, and by ethnic minorities against ethnic majorities.

The Asian experience of hate crime is currently understood as the specific targeting of Muslims, commonly referred to as Islamophobia. However, there is an issue of how Islamophobia is identified, and how victims, especially those who are not practising Muslims, are supported. The usage of the term suggests that only Muslims experience these crimes, resulting in many of the current initiatives being directed towards those communities. However, what is missing from this literature is a focus on the experiences of non-Muslim individuals who suffer Islamophobic hate crime because they are believed to be Muslim. As these victims are not captured within Muslim communities, they are not supported by the initiatives that are intended to support victims of anti-Muslim hate (Awan and Zempi, 2018). Therefore, this paper examines the racialisation of religion and at how these victims are included or neglected by current policies and institutional understanding of Islamophobia. This distinction has to be made as a range of minority ethnic and religious groups are often mistaken by perpetrators as being Muslim, and therefore not immune from experiencing Islamophobia. (Hopkins et al, 2017).

The 1999 Macpherson Inquiry made 70 recommendations. The most pertinent for this research was the suggestion that the collaboration between police and agencies in recording and responding to racist crime should be improved. The 2000 Home Office Code of Practice set out procedures for reporting and recording of racist incidents. In 2005, the Racist Incident Group was created and the Strategy and Action Plans for 2006/7 and 2007/8 identified the group's remit as focusing on a range of issues including: identifying barriers to reporting and recording of racist incidents, assessing third-party reporting, and evaluating support provided to victims. This paper will explore how these recommendations have been applied and how well such measures address the barriers to reporting, and the level of victim support that has been achieved.

The Concept of Islamophobia

Hate crimes are not necessarily solely directed towards an individual victim, but also against the community to which they are assumed to belong (Borell, 2015:3; Craig, 2002; Perry, 2001). Under these circumstances two different victims are created. The individual who is directly and personally victimised by the crime, and the wider community (Roxell, 2011: 202; Iganski, 2001). Perry (2003), contends that it is possible to create a conceptual definition of bias crime which reflects its deeper historical and social contexts, as well as the community relationships, thereby allowing this broader definition to recognise and include

different forms of violence carried out against any individual. Much of the research in this area has been event orientated, conceptualising hate crimes as isolated incidences that are often retaliatory, reactionary to prior incidents or events, or they are opportunistic in nature (Perry, 2015). This fails to take into account repeated or systematic victimisation, and the cycle of violence, threat and intimidation (Bowling, 1999:18).

Since 2001, one of the dominant aspects of hate crime scholarship has been those hate incidents which have been directed towards Muslim communities, commonly referred to as Islamophobia. This developed as a concept in the late 1990s and early 2000s, after the 1997 publication of the report 'Islamophobia: A Challenge for Us All' by the Runnymede Trust. However, the current lack of consensus that currently exists over what constitutes Islamophobia stems from this report, as the definition used in the report itself not only varies, but also contradicts itself (Bleich, 2011). Researchers frequently use the term to identify and describe the causes, and consequences of anti-Islamic and anti-Muslim sentiments (Bleich, 2011). Therefore, according to Bleich (2011:1581) in its most basic form, Islamophobia can be described as the 'indiscriminate negative attitudes or emotions directed at Islam or Muslims', as opposed to a disagreement with or criticism of Islam. Islamophobia can also take the form of an ideology which creates a societal structure which promotes the marginalisation and exclusion of those deemed to be Muslims (Allen, 2011). Specifically, Islamophobia treats Muslims as a unified entity, and judges them and their religion as the enemy to the West (Zúquete, 2008: 323).

Islamophobic hate crimes towards 'visible' Muslims have increased dramatically in Europe following the terrorist attacks of 9/11 in the USA in 2001 (OSCE, 2016). In a post-9/11 climate, a particular anxiety towards Muslim 'others' has led to suspicion and hostility towards Muslims. Following the terrorist attacks on 7/7 in London in 2005, and, more recently, the Manchester and London terrorist attacks in May and June 2017, these anxieties have intensified (Awan and Zempi, 2018). These tensions have resulted in 'Muslim-looking' individuals, also being the victims of this type of hate crime (Ahmad, 2004; Awan and Zempi, 2018). Therefore, someone who may have a similar appearance to a Muslim (for example, through appearance, ethnicity or race) is more likely to be seen as an 'ideal' target for Islamophobic hate crimes because of their perceived Muslim identity (Awan and Zempi, 2018; Parvaresh, 2014: 1313). These victims are targeted due to the racialisation of religion, where all Asians are believed to be Muslim. In the UK, whilst attacks against non-Muslim men may not have been well documented, this does not mean they do not occur (Awan and Zempi, 2018). Through the lens of a political and cultural threat, those communities who are mistaken for Muslims face a spike in hate crimes in the UK, particularly in the wake of 'trigger' events such as ISIS-inspired terrorist attacks (Awan and Zempi, 2018).

Third Party Reporting

One of the recommendations from the Macpherson report was the need to provide an alternative to the police, as a mechanism for victims of racial hate crime in the UK to report to (Macpherson, 1999). Therefore, third-party reporting centres (TPRCs) were created in order to by-pass the mistrust felt towards the police. The Home Office state that victims being able to report their hate crime through third-party organisations, rather than to the police directly, has improved 'the accessibility of the criminal justice system' (Home Office,

2016). However, the policies have lacked specific details as to which communities these are, and how this will be achieved. Despite this lack of clarity, engagement with diverse, 'hard to reach' communities, forms a central theme within much of the policy guidance around hate crime (College of Policing, 2014; HM Government, 2012, 2014; ODIHR, 2009).

However, little consideration has been made as to what makes certain communities 'hard to reach', whether they are actually hard to reach, or whether this perception is based upon limited effort by the police to effectively engage with them (Chakraborti, 2018). This issue is particularly acute when looking specifically at ethnic minority communities. These communities are frequently perceived as being 'hard to reach' by policy-makers and practitioners (Garland et al., 2006). However, this label is inaccurate as these communities have been found to be receptive to the process of engagement and welcomed the opportunity to share experiences and ideas (Chakraborti, 2018). It is instead the lack of targeted initiatives and limited short-term outreach projects that have earned them such a label. Another contributing factor as to why these communities may not engage with current initiatives is their perceived inaccessibility. This is both in terms of their physical location, and the prominence of online reporting tools via apps or websites which excludes those who are unable to access such technology, or who are unable to use them (Chakraborti, 2018). These issues are prominent when an individual is not a frequent user of the organisation which has been granted TPR status.

This targeting of communities has demonstrated the need for community-based support, whilst also highlighting the issue of how successful the attempts to do so have been. Currently, third party reporting centres (TPRCs) can range from Citizens Advice Bureaus, community and faith groups, student unions, public libraries, housing authority neighbourhood offices and day care centres (Wong et al, 2019). The intention was that these centres would be a convenient and familiar place for a victim to report a hate crime, and to receive the necessary support. However, this ideal has not necessarily been realised. As TPRC status is granted to existing organisations rather than being created as exclusively for the reporting of crimes, they were not set up with the intention of being distributed universally across geographic regions and communities. The establishment of TPRCs has not been universal, creating 'a patchwork of provision across the UK', which has resulted in some regions having unequal access to these centres compared to others (Wong et al, 2019). As a result, rural areas and their residents are far less supported through TPRCs compared to more urban areas. Therefore, whilst TPRCs were designed to overcome some of the initial barriers to reporting by enabling victims to report hate incidents this has not been widely achieved. When this is combined with limited public knowledge of local or national provisions for hate crime reporting, the effectiveness of this approach can be questioned.

Additionally, this approach assumes that there is a relationship between the victim and one of these 'community groups' or specifically a 'community leader'. This issue was highlighted by the Leicester Hate Crime Project which found only 1% of their respondents had reported their hate crime to a community leader. This therefore indicates that this approach to providing hate crime support will only support those few within the community, who already have ties to that community leader. It also fails to consider those who don't believe

themselves as belonging to part of a particular community. These individuals may instead use organisations that exist outside of their local community, however due to cuts to provisions many welfare, mental-health, asylum and homeless charities have reduced their access to these resources (Chakraborti, 2018). Therefore, community engagement needs to be integral to the role of police in order to establish approaches which generate dialogue with a more diverse set of voices in a consistent and long term manner (Chakraborti, 2018).

When looking specifically at Islamophobia, many Muslim communities are well catered to, with mosques and local charities serving as TPRCs, and successful outreach work by the organisation TellMAMA which raises awareness of Islamophobia and aims to provide support for victims. This network of support cannot be said to exist within Sikh, Hindu, or other non-Muslim communities which also experience Islamophobia or hate crime. Few of the places of worship which cater to these communities serve as TPRCs, and the same can be said for local or national hate crime initiatives. This contributes to the uneven distribution of TPRCs across communities. Additionally, focusing reporting techniques relies on the victim having some familiarity with the organisation prior to their victimisation. This is a particular issue when it is considered that most TPRCs are pre-existing organisations such as places of worship and welfare charities. Therefore, it is difficult for someone unfamiliar with the services they provide to identify the support that they offer for hate crime.

Despite the centrality of TPRCs to strategies designed to address hate crime, there has been no consistent way to assess whether they are fulfilling their aim of increasing hate crime reporting (Wong et al, 2019). For example, Wong et al., (2013) found that many TPRCs were not able to collect data on hate crime reporting, largely due to limited resources. Budgetary pressures have been found to be the main cause of 'extremely low' recording rates in the North East of England (Clayton et al, 2016: 72–73). The issue of limited and insecure funding is more acute in dispersed rural areas, which already under resourced (Garland and Chakraborti, 2007). Therefore, it must be considered that more thought needs to be made as to which organisations are given TPRC status, how they are funded and supported, and how this is advertised to those in the wider community.

Methodology

The interviews for this study were conducted with 22 individuals who work within a range of religious, cultural and community organisations that serve as third-party reporting centres across Greater Manchester, and the West Midlands. These two regions were selected based upon the following criteria: sufficient number of TPRCs that have hate crimes reported to them across different communities, high levels of ethnic diversity, a range of different cultural and religious communities and a variety of socioeconomic conditions across the regions they contain. Therefore, this is a purposive sample, and there was no attrition of the participants. The participants were asked to give accounts of the experiences of those who use their organisation's facilities. The centres interviewed included TellMAMA, an equality charity for women and ethnic minorities, an Asian Resource centre, a welfare centre for the Afghani community, two charities for newly arrived communities, a Muslim Centre, an Asian women's organisation, a youth-based organisation and an ethnic health organisation, as well as places of worship.

The organisations interviewed were spread across different regions capturing different local communities in order to produce a representative account of the racial and religious hate crimes that are perpetrated across the regions, and the local experience of these hate crimes. There are a number of limitations with this selection criteria. The first is that TPRCs are typically limited in their provisions of rural communities, and so respondents are only able to give an account of what has been reported to them. This also requires the willingness of the victims to seek support and talk about their experiences. As these experiences are being retold by a member of the supporting organisation, rather than by the victim themselves, it assumes an accurate recounting of these experiences by the individual being interviewed. Another limitation, is that many of the TPRCs responded to the invitation to interview by saying that they have not received any reports of hate crime. The final limitation in the sample and the resulting data is the consideration that some of the TPRCs were more closely linked to their local council than others. Consequently, the organisations included in this study received different levels and different types of funding to facilitate provisions and support for victims.

The participants in this research were assured anonymity in regards to how their interviews would be used within this research, and as such, any quotations that are used will be ascribed to them via an anonymised code. The interviews were manually transcribed for reasons of accuracy, and were analysed thematically to discover patterns in how certain communities understand hate crime, and shared experiences (Mayring, 2000). This identifies any differences in the understanding of hate crime, and any disparity between the experiences of it between certain communities. For instance, some communities may be better provided for in terms of services to assist victims of hate crime than others. Therefore, there may be disparities in how victims are supported based upon which community they belong to.

The dominant theme of the research question was: how do different communities experience hate crime. When the interviews were analysed, the following sub-themes were generated: the cultural tensions that exist between different ethnic and religious communities, the experiences of hate crime and anti-Muslim hate, the effectiveness of local hate crime initiatives, and community relations with the police..

Findings

Cultural Tensions

The respondent accounts of hate crimes detailed that Asian communities had a higher risk of experiencing hate crime, compared to other communities within their regions. Many of the respondents felt that the diversity and differences between different communities is often overlooked. Specifically, they mentioned tensions and acts of violence committed between different ethnic and religious groups within minority communities based upon religious, cultural, or national tensions. For instance, many respondents commented that within the 'Asian community' there are religious tensions between Sikhs, Hindus and Muslims, and cultural/national tensions between Pakistanis and Indians. These tensions are longstanding and not well understood outside of those communities, and can result in violence.

Therefore, racial and religious hate crimes cannot be understood as exclusively white vs minority crimes. Whilst these are tensions between settled minority communities, newly arrived communities are also at a greater risk of being victimised by both the majority and other minority populations. One of the reasons given for this is that their integration or reluctance to integrate may cause tensions within the local community. As they are not established within the community, they are treated with suspicion and a lack of familiarity, which can result in not only tensions but also hate crimes. Therefore, the religious, cultural and national differences between the different communities are erased under the umbrella term of 'Asian' as many who worked within Asian communities believe: 'those who commit these crimes see skin colour and nothing else' (WM1). By grouping diverse minority populations together in one way of conceptualising the outgroup, it ignores the differences and tensions that exists between these different minority groups and communities.

As such, those who are Asian or Muslim are considered to equally at risk of hate crime victimisation regardless of the specific racial or religious motive of the crime. Many respondents took this account a step further and commented that there is a widely held belief by the wider majority white population that: 'every Muslim is a terrorist' (WM10). This experience has led many of the participants to believe that whilst ethnic minorities view their race and their religion as separate aspects to their identity, many others do not observe this distinction and assume religious adherence based upon a person's race. It was commented that:

Hate crime is based generally on ignorance so people committing it don't care about the nuance between race and religion. (GM10)

For many communities, the experience of hate crime is nothing new, making the lack of effective interventions a striking omission by authorities. Tensions between white and minority communities have existed since these communities first arrived in the UK in the 1960s. These tensions were frequently manifested in violence, often referred to as 'paki bashing', and the violence used by the National Front in the 1980s towards those of South Asian or African heritage, as a means of social control (Kissling, 1991). This violence and hostility was largely accepted by the newly arrived communities and was considered to be part of their new life in the UK (Larkin, 1997). This violence and hostility was largely indiscriminate in terms of who was targeted so long as they belonged to a minority group, and it could be argued that the issue of misidentification can be traced back to this context. For instance, 'paki bashing' was not exclusively targeted towards those with Pakistani origins, but towards any South Asian individual or group. With this experience in mind, it can be more difficult to reach the elders in these communities with intervention policies as they do not recognise the behaviour as being something that should not be tolerated. It is also challenging to identify whether current initiatives need to be broadened to include these elders, or whether new reporting opportunities need to be introduced. For many, verbal abuse is something that they consider, just needs to be tolerated or ignored (Mason-Bish and Zempi, 2018). One respondent describes the attitude that many within minority communities have towards this kind of abuse: 'you learn: just ignore it, forget it, you know let the person talk and you just carry on with your day' (WM6).

However, this accepting attitude towards violent hostility has not been tolerated in the same way by the second and third generations who were born in the UK and identify as British:

Our elders when they first came to the country they used to put up with it, but the next generation the kids who grew up here, born here would not put up with things like this. (WM8)

One thing worth noting is that whilst for some of these communities the experience of hate crime has become less violent over time, it is something that still persists. This persistence of hate crime across generations indicates that there has been a more historic lack of initiatives to limit these hostilities and perpetration of hate crime, which are still prominent. This also highlights the need to develop policies to educate and reach the elders within these communities to support them.

Therefore, when this type of verbal hate crime is considered to be such a constant occurrence, it becomes difficult to make the victims aware that what they have just experienced is indeed a hate crime and needs to be reported as such, rather than being a casual event in their day. The attitude can be summarised by the following:

People think that a lot of these things are either too trivial to report or that they see it as so trivial that they're just part of everyday life. (WM2)

Some believe that little can be done to limit hate crime as it will always be a part of life for minority communities. For instance, one respondent recounted: 'if they want to attack me they will. They've already made up their mind they will. But even if they've got legislation and stuff like that it won't stop people from hurting others ' (WM8). Thus, this type of experience becomes readily accepted by these minority communities as being something that they need to be prepared for, and something that they need to accept. This therefore also presents issues for how to deliver effective interventions, and how to encourage individuals to report these types of incidences.

Experiences of Hate Crime and Islamophobia

It has been found in other studies, that certain high-profile events can cause a spike in hate crime after the event. For instance, there was a spike in incidences of anti-Muslim hate in the aftermath of high-profile events perpetrated by Islamic extremists. Examples of this include 9/11 attacks in America, the 7/7 attacks in London, the murder of Lee Rigby, the Charlie Hebdo attacks in France, and most recently the Manchester Arena bombing in 2017 which saw a significant increase in the crimes committed towards Muslim communities and individuals (Hanes and Machin, 2014; King and Sutton, 2013; Awan and Zempi, 2016; Sadique et al, 2018). After each of these high-profile incidences, the Muslim community is considered to be responsible for the extremists who claim to have perpetrated these acts in the name of Islam. This is in part due to how these events are presented, 'when incidents happen, and it comes on the media and Muslims are accused of this and that' (WM1). This perpetuates the image as Muslims as being a direct threat to national security and ways to

life, which can inflame community tension, especially when combined with dehumanisation of the community:

When there is an attack anywhere in Europe then you'll find that there's gonna be an increase in hate crimes predominantly within Muslim communities but will cover anybody who fits that profile. (WM10)

In keeping with the prominent research in the area, the five terror incidences in 2017 created a wider sense of fear of minority communities, which then resulted in an increase in the number of hate crimes against Asian and Muslim communities (Hanes and Machin, 2014; King and Sutton, 2013). However, the increase in hate crime after a high-profile terror incident is typically found to be a short and temporary phenomenon, and hate crime rates eventually return to 'normal' levels after a few months.

Respondents believed that Muslim women were particularly vulnerable to hate crime: 'Asian people, especially women have been targeted because of terrorist activity' (GM11). They are considered to be especially vulnerable to hate crimes due to the visibility of the hijab, niqab and burka which act as symbolic indications of difference, and are therefore considered as a magnet for some types of hate crime (Mason-Bish and Zempi, 2018; Perry, 2014). It was noted that 'there's a lot [of fear] within the Muslim women group, especially those who wear hijab' (WM1). Examples of this type of abuse were verbal forms and physical such as the perpetrator forcefully removing the hijab or covering. One incident that was brought up was particularly poignant:

We heard a lot particularly from Muslim women about the experiences they had just walking down the street one woman did tell us that she had acid thrown at her from a passing car, and people were telling us that they had things shouted at them at bus stops as cars were driving past and things like that so it's like an overall climate of if not fear then tension. (WM2)

Such actions based on Muslim community being considered responsible for acts of terror, and by extension those who fit the 'idea' of what a Muslim is becomes individually and collectively responsible, and therefore is a legitimate target for these acts of hate. One participant discussed the victimisation of a woman by extreme right-wing supporters:

They targeted a non- Muslim lady but they thought she was Muslim because she looks the same or she has the same skin colour so people who are racist will do it anyway regardless. (WM4)

This presents hate crime as being based upon a narrow understanding, or lack of understanding of who constitutes the outgroup that they consider hate crime to be legitimate against. When describing Islamophobia specifically, many respondents recounted acts of anti-Muslim hate that are directed towards non-Muslims. For instance, there is frequent targeting of Sikhs by those committing acts of racial and religiously

aggravated violence, or specifically anti-Muslim hate based upon the assumption that those wearing turbans are Muslims and therefore terrorists. As one participant put it:

It's more about profiling and not about who that person is so you have a Sikh individual who may actually get abuse because the assailant or the perpetrator assumes that he is Muslim. (WM10).

This has been a longstanding issue, especially for Sikh communities. For instance, the first retaliatory death for 9/11 was that of Balbir Singh Sodhi, a Sikh man who owned a gas station in Arizona (Ahmad, 2002). This was followed by the arson of a Sikh temple in New York by teenagers who mistakenly thought that the temple chief, Gobind Sadan, was named after Osama Bin Laden (Volpe and Stobl, 2005). Moreover, it is not exclusively Sikh men who are victims of this type of Islamophobia, it is all those who are believed to look Muslim by those who believe all those who are Asian, are also Muslim and therefore a valid target of anti-Muslim hate.

When discussing hate crimes within the Hindu and Sikh communities, respondents detailed their experiences:

The problem with Sikhs everywhere is they get mistaken for Muslims, obviously I'm not saying that it's ok to abuse Muslims of course not but there's a lot of islamophobia directed towards Sikhs. (WM7)

These communities do experience anti-Muslim hate and yet do not benefit from hate crime initiatives or dedicated third party reporting centres, and therefore they have access to fewer resources in relation to hate crime than, their Muslim counterparts. Respondents lament that there have been significant efforts to engage with Muslim communities and places of worship, in order to address their experience of anti-Muslim and Islamophobic hate. For example, many non-victims refuse to engage with TellMAMA, the most prominent anti-Muslim hate crime support network specifically because it is Muslim, due to ingrained tensions that still exist between religious communities. Consequently, there is the perception within Hindu and Sikh communities that Muslim communities are favoured:

Money is given to the Muslim community but not to the Hindu or Sikh communities. (WM5)

Connected to this assumption of preferential treatment of the Muslim community is also the attitude that 'Muslims want support when they are being attacked, but are silent when Hindus and Sikhs are being attacked' (WM5). This creates an imbalance between these communities and imbeds resentment that can fuel pre-existing tensions.

This victimisation of non-Muslims creates a discrepancy in the initiatives used to tackle hate crime. Within the Sikh and Hindu communities, the comparative lack of resources or initiatives to promote awareness of hate crime, or to cope with victimisation is a key issue - with some feeling that their community is invisible. This omission also presents the problem of how to assess the impact of these crimes on these communities. If there is little

awareness or access to reporting opportunities, few of these crimes end up being reported. If these incidences are not reported, it is difficult to know the scale of the problem and accordingly the level or type of resources to allocate, in order to address the issue. Additionally, it raises the issue of how to encourage reporting by these communities. Should resources be focused on raising awareness and support structures within places of worship? Or should resources be focused on creating new TPRCs within these areas? Whilst there have been a handful of government and council-lead projects which have aimed to address this imbalance, they have not trickled down to the community level. Many consider these efforts to be tokenistic, especially when they involve superficial meetings of different congregations, or projects such as Hate Crime Awareness Week as they have no lasting impact and are one off events. This claim is validated in the minds of these communities as even the governments' Hate Crime Action Plan omits any clear focus or recommendations for the Sikh or Hindu communities, as the focus remains on the Abrahamic faiths: Islam, Judaism and Christianity. This omission perpetuates the imbalance in both the level of support offered to communities, but also in awareness of what issues communities are experiencing and the scale of them.

The respondents were very vocal about the impact that these hate crimes have on the victims. The victims lose confidence, and become more negative in their outlook, they also feel alienated by their experience which makes them distrustful of others. For some this can be so impactful that they are unwilling to talk about their experience as they feel others will not understand. This isolating behaviour separates and alienates them from their family and those around them. For instance, on respondent recounted that:

Those who have been effected by it often feel demoralised, feel picked on, feel disempowered, especially those who have been told to go back home. (GM11)

This can lead victims to experience depression and become more reclusive due to the isolation of their experience. This reluctance to talk to others about their experience, makes it less likely that the individual will become aware that they have been a victim of hate crime, and will therefore miss out on the support mechanisms that are in place to help those who are victims:

When this attack takes the form of verbal abuse the impact of that is often difficult to understand for those who have never been or never experienced hate crime. (GM6).

These crimes also create a greater sense of fear, as they feel they are no longer able to leave their community without being targeted. Many become reluctant to leave the safety of their community and further segregates communities when individuals are scared to go into other areas. This behaviour is seen by victims and potential victims as minimising their risk of victimisation in the future (Mason-Bish and Zempi, 2018)

Hate Crime Initiatives

Despite the recommendations in the Macpherson Inquiry and the aims of Hate Crime Action Plans, there remains a lack of collaborative effort between community groups and the police. The reporting centres are intended to address the issue of attitudes towards the police as a limit on reporting, however these are not universally considered as being successful. Additionally, it is difficult to assess how much impact these third-party centres have on addressing the issue of underreporting of hate crimes. Many of the centres contacted for this study declined the invitation to interview, as they had not received a single hate crime reported to them. This may be an indicator that there needs to be regular evaluations of these centres and a wider spread of organisations that are trained in this manner across different religious and cultural communities. Subsequently, it is difficult to access the data of the hate crimes reported to these centres. It also raises the issue of how to cater and support victims who are not captured by current Islamophobia supporting structures. Whilst there are resources dedicated to assisting the victims, the community impact of these crimes is neglected. As one respondent remarked:

There is this communal impact which I think is quite a big issue for a lot of people which isn't currently being addressed by a number of interventions.
(WM2)

Respondents were asked about the hate crime initiatives in their area. The most widely known was TellMAMA, a national Muslim hate crime awareness and reporting organisation which is active nationally. Networks made up of local imams were also mentioned as they aim to increase Muslim awareness of hate crime. Other initiatives included: 'Places of Welcome' which is a multi-faith initiative to create interactions between those of different faiths, the 'Love your Neighbour' initiative which attempts to bridge the gap between cultural differences, and the actions of local councils. Some were aware of more specific local group initiatives, such as community outreach projects to help address access to employment. As these initiatives are lead or funded by local councils, it is difficult for individual community groups and charities to develop their own hate crime initiatives, despite an awareness of how these crimes are impacting their communities. Respondents noted that there are opportunities to apply for small amounts of funding through the council or government centred initiatives.

Many of these government or council-led initiatives are focused around getting individuals to meet those from different cultural backgrounds to address the lack of contact and knowledge between cultural and religious groups. One example is a church led initiative where:

They try to integrate people and bring people together and get people to meet and things like that so at a very local level we organise visits to mosques and things like that you know. (GM5)

However, not all of these initiatives are viewed as being successful, as they are considered short term and are not conducted across the region more widely. Many felt that these initiatives are very limited in their scope and do not go far enough and that there is a severe

disconnect between the small initiatives that are created centrally or nationally, and the community that they are supposed to help:

They will sit down and have these action plans, priority plan and you know investing money to actually say how we're gonna address the issue, guess what? Nobody in the local community is aware of it, local organisations are not aware of it. (WM10)

The most frequent comments given were that the connect between hate crime initiatives and the communities which experience hate crime is minimal. Many see these types of initiatives as being superficial and as having little impact upon attitudes towards ethnic minorities, or on the rate of hate crime within certain areas. This could be a result of how the initiatives are created. The more active the role of local organisations and residents, the more effective the initiative when it comes to crime prevention (Fung, 2009). For example, hate crime awareness week is a national initiative that lacks collaboration between organisations and residents and was considered to be a considerable waste of resources as it was viewed locally as ineffective:

I would say it's tokenistic and face value. It's a tick box exercise rather than actually educating and tackling the actual problem. (GM3).

Therefore, there needs to be a more considerable effort to create hate crime initiatives that are more integrated within the local communities, and address the local issues that those who work within community organisations identify as leading to hate crimes within their local areas. This gives the community organisations and residents a level of empowerment, and creates accountability for the governmental authorities (Fung, 2009).

Many hold the opinion that the initiatives which are created by local councils, or by the national government are limited in how effective they are at addressing the causes of hate crime within local contexts:

What gets said at the strategic level doesn't filter down to the grassroots level and that discrepancy and lack of communication its very big and it's a major problem. (GM3).

In part, this is because there is little emphasis on having a collaborative and long term approach to tackling hate crime, and the causes of hate crime within the local communities. In most cases the respondents talk of small initiatives which are only active for a few months, with limited funding and limited scope, and as such they are not considered effective. This fits within some of the models of participation. Initiatives are more successful when there are higher degrees of citizen control. The current hate crime initiatives as told by the respondents appear to fit within the 'tokenistic' category where there is merely informing, consultation, and limited involvement of the organisations in the discussion or creation of initiatives (Arnstein, 1969; Wilcox, 1994; Mostert, 2003).

Thus, the majority of the discussion around the topic of local initiatives to address hate crime were framed around their limitations. Specifically, the lack of connect between policy, initiatives and the grassroots communities. The main issue that was mentioned is that the decision makers are not connected with the local issues and therefore are ignorant of the tensions or circumstances within the local communities and therefore the initiatives that they push out have little impact as they are not focused on the problem:

They're having their own conversations its horizontal across that particular platform people are talking about the issues but there's no connectivity when it comes down to grassroots. (WM10).

The charities and local organisations believe that they are more aware of the local issues that contribute towards hate crime at the local level, however they feel they are being excluded from the creation and implementation of the initiatives. In order for hate crime initiatives to be more effective, there needs to be a higher level of engagement with local organisations and residents, and the governmental authorities. This would allow these different groups to deliberate and create long term initiatives that best cater to the needs of their local communities, and to address local issues that are not possible through broad national initiatives (Fung, 2009; Arnstein 1969; Wilcox, 1994; Mostert, 2003).

The Community and the Police

One of the recommendations of Macpherson Inquiry was the police engagement with communities, and increasing the reporting and recording of racist crimes. When looking specifically at how the police are perceived, respondents emphasised a general lack of faith in the police, and that nothing will happen if they do report the crime and therefore there is no point in doing so:

They may think that the authorities aren't going to do anything or what's gonna happen if I call the police? Nothing. (WM6)

The attitude of the police when dealing with hate crimes more generally was noted by many of those interviewed as being a possible issue and barrier to hate crime reporting. They consider the police to be unsupportive towards victims of hate crimes, and not taking the crime or the victim seriously. The distrust of the police is only exacerbated with the belief that institutional racism is still prominent within the police. In turn this impacts upon how those from the minority communities view the police, and therefore how willing they would be to interact with them and have faith in their ability to solve the hate crime they were a victim of: 'I have reported a hate crime and the way it was done and the way it was managed to be honest with you I wouldn't trust the police as far as I could throw them' (GM3).

For some minority communities their negative view of the police is the result of previous suspicion or hostility that they have experienced from the police. This in turn limits the willingness of any hate crime victim from that community, feeling willing and able to discuss the crime with the police as they do not feel that the police are there to protect their interests. This is a prominent issue for the Sikh community within the West Midlands:

We find that police didn't really understand our religious customs and that led to problems (WM7).

This lack of familiarity creates tension and barriers between the community and the police:

There is a big lack of trust between congregation members and the police, we are wary when the police come into the temple what are they doing here, are they watching me for example. (WM7).

This feeling of suspicion negatively impacts the likelihood of crimes being reported by that community to the police. This is exacerbated by the lack of third party reporting centres within certain areas or communities, which limits the likelihood of these crimes being reported to bodies which are external to the police force and therefore go uncaptured. This is especially true outside of the Christian, Jewish, and Muslim communities which have a higher level of contact and collaboration with the police. Therefore, it is difficult to access the scale of hate crime being experienced by these communities if the crimes are not being reported. Without accurate reporting of these crimes either to the police or through a TPRC, it is difficult to know the level of resources that need to be allocated to these communities. These resources are necessary in order to promote awareness of hate crime, and the reporting options available to victims, and to sufficiently support victims through their experiences.

Conclusions

Those interviewed described that whilst many ethnic minorities believe that their race and religion are separate aspects of their identity, when it comes to Islamophobia or anti-Muslim hate, the distinction is no longer relevant (Hanes and Machin, 2014: 253). This is because religion has become racialised, as assumptions about a person's religion or adherence to religion are made based on their perceived ethnicity (Dunn, Klocker, and Salabay, 2007). Other research has found that Sikhs, Hindus, and other south Asians as well as black victims were regularly mistaken for being Muslim (Hopkins et al. 2017; Awan and Zempi, 2018). This also brings about the problem of how anti-Muslim hate is understood and countered. Many initiatives and practitioners consider hate crimes, specifically anti-Muslim hate and Islamophobia, to be something that exclusively targets the Muslim community and thus develop and promote initiatives specific to that community. As such, in line with the findings from the study carried out by Chakraborti (2018), those interviewed called for more meaningful engagement between organisations, police and communities, with groups and organisations being included in the creation of initiatives. However, inclusion can take many forms, and can vary in terms of how meaningful this inclusion is. Groups can be included in a tokenistic manner where they are not encouraged to participate in the creation of the initiative itself, but are instead informed of the initiative in a means to placate them and give them a perception of inclusion (Arnstein, 1969). Alternatively, they can be more heavily involved in the creation and implementation of hate crime initiatives in partnership with the governmental and police authorities (Fung, 2009). This more meaningful type of inclusion of local organisations and residents would be more effective at addressing different underlying issues, that are present in different local communities.

This would produce more tailor-made hate crime initiatives for the areas they are used in. Currently there is unequal access and involvement in these initiatives as they are established with certain communities, and are inaccessible to those outside of them. In particular, many hate crime initiatives focus on the Muslim communities, but neglect the Hindu, Sikh and non-religious communities, despite each of them sharing the same experiences of hate crime (Chakraborti, 2018). Due to this omission, the experiences of anti-Muslim hate within Sikh, Hindu, and non-faith communities, is often ignored as they are comparatively unsupported in their hate crime victimisation, and increases the sense of alienation.

These places of worship are not as connected with local hate crime initiatives, and are not covered by the Muslim organisation TellMAMA, or the Jewish Community Security Trust (CST), both of which deal with hate crime victimisation and awareness within their communities. This creates an imbalance between different minority groups. As a result, the disparity between the resources given to these different religious communities creates and exacerbates the resentment and tension between them.

The Muslim communities are seen in some areas as receiving a far greater level of assistance by the council and government, and expect assistance from the Sikh and Hindu groups when they are targeted by acts of anti-Muslim hate. However, the resentment continues when Sikh or Hindu individuals or groups are targeted by the same hate, and receive no assistance by the council, government, or their Muslim counterparts. Therefore, more efforts need to be made in the inclusion of these communities in the creation, promoting and establishment of hate crime initiatives that cater to the needs of these communities.

The issue of non-Muslim victimisation of anti-Muslim hate, has significant repercussions for community cohesion between different ethnic groups, and also between the different religious communities. The belief that all those who fit the idea of what a Muslim looks like is a valid target for acts of Muslim hate, creates tensions between the white and ethnic minority communities. This highlights the need for initiatives and resources to spread awareness of an all-encompassing understanding of anti-Muslim hatred that effectively binds communities together against prejudice, rather than continue to fuel tensions between them.

Whilst the impact of hate crime upon non-Muslim victims does need to be addressed, the findings from this study do not suggest that they experience more hate crime compared to their Muslim counterparts. The exact level of their victimisation is difficult to assess, however it can be dated back to the 1970s and 'paki-bashing' where the differences between South Asian communities and groups were not well known, and individuals were targeted regardless of which community they belonged to. This communal experience of prejudice remains, though it has moved away from this 'paki-bashing' towards Islamophobia. This also raises the issue on how these crimes are reported and recorded. For instance, if the victim of an Islamophobic incident is Sikh, how does this crime get recorded? To record this crime as a racial or religiously motivated hate incident would be accurate, but would fail to capture the exact motivation. Equally to record it as having specific Islamophobic motivation may give the incorrect assumption that the victim of the crime

was Muslim. Accuracy in how these crimes are recorded is necessary in order for the statistics to reflect the experiences of the victims. The victimisation of non-Muslim victims needs to be correctly recorded in order to understand the significance of the problem. Currently it is difficult to know how the experience of Islamophobia is distributed across the different religious communities. Without knowing this, it is difficult to know how resources should be allocated. This is further complicated when looking specifically at how to encourage the reporting, and awareness of these crimes within these communities. Establishing TPRC, and reporting structures through different types of local institutions is necessary, for example through existing religious and community spaces may encourage individuals to report these crimes.

Current policies need to be amended to address awareness of Islamophobia both within, and outside of Muslim communities. There also needs to be a wider consideration that Islamophobia impacts non-Muslims and so policies and initiatives need to take this into account, in order to support the victims. Police need to establish and maintain good working relationships with places of worship as a means to encourage reporting and creating community ties. These relationships have been developed in Muslim communities and mosques, but these efforts need to be replicated with other faith communities. Such actions would facilitate trust between members of these communities and police, and encourage reporting whilst also reflecting the recommendations of the Macpherson Inquiry. There needs to be more appropriate inclusion and funding for TPRCs and other local organisations in the creation and maintenance of local hate crime initiatives. Many of the existing initiatives are considered as being too short term and limited in terms of their intended audiences. As these organisations are based within communities which experience Islamophobia and hate crime, they are well placed to advise and deliver effective initiatives and support victims.

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