

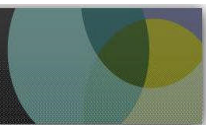
Muslim airport policing encounters: Improving community relations



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Disengagement:

Or the process of becoming an outsider



Individually: The process by which people fail to actively engage with or help authorities

Communally: The loss of self-policing

Cumulatively: Creating a context in which those who are anti-authority can operate with impunity

A general model of disengagement



It is an *interactive* process...

...which results from being *positioned* as 'other'...

...and which leads to a *shift* of influence from authority to anti-authority voices

Airports as spaces of fear: The 'Muslim Airport Story'



Open interviews/focus groups with diverse sample of Muslims



Airports emerge as sites of distress and sometimes fear



Open interviews/focus groups with airport staff



On-going Police Scotland efforts to improve experience

Should we be concerned?

Withholding cooperation: *I thought if I say I know them, potentially for the ten days I would have been stuck in jail, yeah? So I purposely said, and I had to lie, that I don't know them. [m, 20s]*



Questioning morality (and competence): *I don't listen to Authority figures now because I respect them []. That disappeared. [] So I have to listen to what you say, but it doesn't mean I respect you on the inside. [m, 20s]*

...contd



Loss of sociality: *It's the perception I have, you do good in life. And it's always at the back of my mind, if something goes wrong like on the airplane, I can't get involved. [m, 40s]*



Compromising moderate leadership: *What am I saying to my community? Am I wanting them to feel the police are your saviours, there's no problem and you should integrate?' [m 30s]*

Who is affected and why?



“These young men find it hard to identify with Britain because we have allowed the weakening of our collective identity. [] We must build stronger societies and stronger identities at home. Frankly, we need a lot less of the passive tolerance [] and a more active, muscular liberalism”.

But I'm British (Scottish)

I understand where they're coming from, but this is my home. When I get singled out, who am I now? I know who I am, but who does he feel I am? [m, 20s]



... the more I care the more it hurts (the
paradox of commitment)

Identity denial and misrecognition

The experience:

- ❖ Being seen only as Muslim - the production of 'them and us'
- ❖ Disrespect and denial of Britishness compromises other identities
- ❖ Loss of agency - the ability to act on one's own terms



The response:

- ❖ Dignity and respect – treating the same?
 - ❖ Positively recognizing identities
- ❖ Restoring agency through facilitating legitimate goals – e.g., catching a flight, protecting oneself from negative attention

Feeling powerless



If I were to object I would be locked up in prison for sixty days, potentially taken to Guantanamo, potentially not questioned for the next six years. [m, 30s]

Airport staff: *“they play the race card” and “I treat them (those who question their treatment) with more suspicion”*

The response:

- ❖ Facilitating both individual *and* collective voice – e.g., information and provision of non-threatening processes
- ❖ Attending to front-line staff perceptions and fears

Public degradation and humiliation



That happened in my home city. There could have been people who knew me. How are people perceiving me being pulled over. Even when you're walking around after you're thinking who saw that? [m, 40s]

Airport staff: You have people (passengers) saying 'Why are you stopping me. He's the Muslim. He's the one you should be stopping'. And they'll be standing right there.

The response:

- ❖ Affirm moral standing through differentiation – i.e., strategies communicate recognition of most Muslims as 'one of us' and clearly differentiate from those who pose a threat.

Asking what works (and knowing WHY)



We need to:

- ❖ Understand (dis)engagement as an interactive process entailing multiple perspectives and multiple groups
- ❖ Understand the underlying processes to know not just what can work but why
- ❖ Develop an evidence base for policy and practices that can foster positive community relations

Thank you



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