

# The Muslim Airport Story: How practices of surveillance unite old and young



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# The Airport Story

## Problem practices:

- ❖ Multiple stops and multiple agencies
- ❖ Pulled aside under gaze of fellow passengers
- ❖ Initial interaction – verbal and non-verbal
- ❖ Questioning that is disrespectful and lacks face validity
- ❖ Petty discourtesies (e.g., keeping loved one's waiting)
- ❖ Unable (unsafe) to question or complain



## But I Am British...



*I can understand where they were coming from, but this is my home. I consider Scotland my home. Why am I being stopped in my own house? When I get singled out, who am I now? I know who I am, but who does he feel I am? [m, 20s]*

## ...And A Devout Muslim



*Had she been dressed as a slapper let's say and she was clinging onto my arm, we would have just boogied on through like two lovebirds and then nothing would have happened. [m, 50s]*

# The Experience of Humiliation...

**...disrespect and identity denial**

**...public degradation (reduced in eyes of others)**

*How do people perceive me being pulled over. Even when I'm walking around after I'm thinking who saw that? [m, 40s]*



**...powerlessness (unable to act on identity)**

*It's common play amongst Muslims, don't ever object to any questions because it's easy as you're objecting, you're locked up for sixty days. [m, 20s]*

## Does This Matter?



### Withholding cooperation

*...they treat you like a criminal, and then I reduce my contact with the police. [m, 50s]*

### Changing social interactions

*...if something goes wrong, like on the airplane, I can't get involved. [m, 40s]*

### Understanding young men's rage

*...he's not been in trouble and when you do that to people like him, you're just going to push them to the edge. [m, 40s]*

# Changing Perceptions of Authorities

*I don't sort of listen to Authority figures now because I respect them []. That sort of disappeared and it's just I think I respect you out of sort of like a formality, like I have to respect you. So I have to listen to what you say, but it doesn't mean I respect you on the inside. [m, 20s]*

## Questioning:

- ❖ Motives (morality & integrity)
- ❖ Competence



## Shifts In Community Leadership



*Where am I driving my community to? Am I actually wanting them to feel that the police are your saviours and there's no problem and you're not felt as the other and you should integrate fully?' [m 30]*



## What Can Be Done?

Airports are complex spaces: multiple agencies and multiple agendas (commercial and security)

Guiding principles for evaluation of policy & practice:

- ❖ Recognition of shared group membership through
  - ❖ Differentiation tactics
  - ❖ Facilitation of legitimate intentions
  - ❖ Procedural justice
  
- ❖ Communication and voice

*Thank You*

