



Knife Crime and the media, is it that bad?

**Jonathan Griffiths
Student ID: P150418**

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Declaration

DECLARATION

This work has not previously been accepted in substance for any degree and is not being concurrently submitted in candidature for any degree.

J H GRIFFITHS

Signed (candidate)

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STATEMENT 1

This work is the result of my own investigations, except where otherwise stated. Where correction services have been used, the extent and nature of the correction is clearly marked in a footnote(s).

Other sources are acknowledged by footnotes giving explicit references. A bibliography is appended.

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List of Abbreviations

.MoJ –

Ministry of Justice

.CoP –

College of Policing

.ONS –

Office of National Statistics

.MOPAC –

Mayor's Office for Policing and Crime

.UK –

United Kingdom

Abstract

The aim of this dissertation is to identify whether knife crime in the United Kingdom is as bad as many believe it to be, and if the coverage of knife crime has an influence on the population of the United Kingdom, and whether this influence comes from the media. Also analysing statistics of knife crime, and the government's involvement in trying to prevent knife crime from happening in the United Kingdom.

Chapter two provides the reader with a background of the topic and theories. These will be gathered from books, textbooks, webpages and academic journals. The literature highlighted the worrying rate of knife crime in the United Kingdom and the effects it is having on society. Some methods of preventing knife crime may have worked previously, but in the modern day where gang violence and youth violence is rising these methods may be outdated, and in turn not helping to prevent knife crime.

A questionnaire was used to gather the opinions of the participants who were from a variety of backgrounds and ages. The research was targeted at all members of society to gain their opinions on the topic, and create a balanced, nonbiased account. There were 64 participants and results showed that there may be a bias in society around knife crime.

In conclusion, knife crime is a huge problem in the United Kingdom and tackling it is very difficult. Although knife crime is a problem, the media use it to their advantage to generate revenue for their media outlets by gaining clicks, views and selling papers to members of society. As found through research this creates a moral panic in communities around knife crime in the United Kingdom.

Chapter One

1.0 Introduction to the Research

The title of this dissertation is ‘Knife crime in young people and ethnic minorities, is it that bad?’. The aims of this dissertation is to gain further understand and knowledge of knife crime and to see if ethnic minority groups and young people commit more knife than other members of society. To do this, the methods of research used will be questionnaires, surveys and interviews. Due to Covid-19 and the safety measures in place, all research methods used must be conducted online, not in person. Independent online research from credible sources such as academic texts, reports, online resources will also be used to gather information of figures and news regarding knife crime. As media is a big part of the dissertation in regards to creating morale panics, news articles will be used to research this area of the topic. All research will be conducted in a safe manner, and will be adhering to the Covid-19 guidelines set out by the government, and guidelines set out by UWTSD Swansea.

1.1 Introduction to Knife Crime

Knife crime is not a term that has been made by government, but it is a term that the media have created and adopted to report on news of stabbings in the United Kingdom, (CoP, 2019a). Due to this many members of the public believe that knife crime means the stabbing of a person, but this isn’t the case. For an individual to commit a knife crime it can be committed in a number of ways like; carrying a knife, threatening someone with a knife, murder using a knife, attempting to buy a knife or burglary/robbery where a knife is carried, (CoP, 2019a). Therefore this can be seen as the media manipulating the term to cause a moral panic around the words ‘knife crime’.

According to Ford and Grimshaw, (2018), knife crime last peaked in 2008 in England and Wales, but it has remained at a high number ever since with slight declines and inclines. They explain that the knife crime committed the most is assault, which was responsible for 46% of knife crimes. Robbery was the next highest with 43%. Although only 3% difference between these two crimes, the media report on stabbings more than robberies and use the term ‘knife crime’ when reporting about stabbing, but do not when reporting on robbery. This could be to create a moral panic within the public, but could also be a strategy to gain the attention of the

reader, thus selling more newspapers, attracting more clicks online and gaining more revenue for the media companies.

Knife crime in the United Kingdom has become more apparent in recent years, and much of the time the individuals involved are young people and people of ethnic minorities, (Eades, et al, 2012). This dissertation will be focussing on whether this is actually true, and whether knife crime is as bad as media portrayal, or if they are creating a moral panic within the public of the United Kingdom.

1.2 Moral Panics

Over the last 50 years, the words moral panic have become more apparent. Stanley Cohen (1973) introduced the term in his work in regards to youth and crime. Since this the media have used it to inflate crimes to create more revenue for the papers and in turn create a moral panic. This can be within a community, county, country, continent or worldwide, (Marsh and Melvin, 2011).

Oxford Dictionary, (2020) defines a moral panic as,

‘an instance of public anxiety or alarm in response to a problem regarded as threatening the moral standards of society’.

Cohen, in his book ‘Folk Devils and More Panics’, (1973), identifies five stages required to create a moral panic. The first stage is identifying an issue in a community where it is not the norm. Stage 2 follows quickly where the media creates a name or a symbol that everyone can easily recognise, then portrays this name or symbol negatively. For example, linking the name or symbol to pain or death gives members of the public a bad feeling towards the issue and public panic arises. Stage four sees the authorities respond to the panic of members of the public, and as the public's concerns rapidly grow they look to the authorities for guidance and leadership. The final stage is when society changes daily life and routine based on the guidance and leadership given by the authorities.

A moral panic is usually something that is unlikely to happen to someone or anyone they know, but media pressure inflates the situation, which then gets nationwide coverage and panic grows, as Cohen's (1973), theory shows. Cases of moral panic created by the media are; youths wearing hoodies, Mass shootings, HIV/AIDS and Islamic extremism, (Scott. 2014). Often the panic is created to increase newspaper sales or clicks online. It is interesting to see how many cases there are of moral panic. This dissertation will try and see if knife crime is seriously a huge issue in the United Kingdom, or if there is an element of moral panic in regards to it.

1.3 How Will Finding the Public's Perception be Conducted

It is perceived that the public in the United Kingdom are scared of knife crime. (MOPAC, 2019). This dissertation will examine if this statement is really true and discuss whether the media are selling knife crime as a publicity stunt to create more revenue, thus creating a panic, and in turn creating more of an issue surrounding knife crime.

There are around 30 participants taking part in the research, which enables me to gather sufficient information and conduct a fair assessment of the topic. All involved are over the age of 18.

There may be ethical issues for the participants in the dissertation such as emotional distress or risk to personal data. These issues will be mitigated by; explaining what the dissertation is, to avoid distress for the participant and to allow them to make an informed decision as to whether they wish to participate. The participant will be able to remain anonymous should they wish and in cases where personal information is held, such as an email or phone number, this will be destroyed once the task is completed.

1.4 Labelling Young People

This is an important issue in society as many people seem to be scared and worried about knife crime and many feel afraid to leave their home at times. Is this fear widespread in the United Kingdom or specific to big cities like London, Birmingham and Manchester? (Parker, 2018). As outlined previously, hoodies have been given a label of criminal activity. Hoodies

are worn everyday by people of all ages around the globe, but as a result of moral panic created by the media, a person wearing a hoodie is stereotyped and seen as a potential threat. This preconception gives the individual a distorted and bad reputation and if an individual becomes labelled then they are likely to act up to this label, as explained by Edwin Lemert in 1912 and Howard Becker in 1928, regarding labelling theory. It's also reported in the media that many individuals committing knife crime are young people from ethnic minorities and this has created a negative stigma regarding these individuals. Through the research in this dissertation it will be interesting to see if individuals have the same perception or not. If not then it will be interesting to establish how this perception has been created and if there is a direct link to moral panic created by the media.

1.5 Aims

The aim of this piece of work is to see if youths in the United Kingdom, both white and from ethnic minority backgrounds are given a label when it comes to knife crime or are they being treated fairly by members of society.

1.6 Objectives

By the end of this study, the following objectives are hoped to be achieved;

1. Analysing knife crime statistics and seeing what changes need to be made by government to improve knife crime in the United Kingdom.
2. To evaluate and analyse knife crime within white people and ethnic minorities in the United Kingdom.
3. To evaluate and analyse knife crime within youths in the United Kingdom.
4. Researching behavioural theories and seeing if there is a link to knife crime.
5. Analysing knife crime influences from the media and seeing if the media create more panic rather than report it.
6. Researching the public's thoughts on knife crime in the United Kingdom.

This topic will be very interesting as there is much to learn, research and investigate. Knife crime has been well reported over a number of years, and examining this topic will hopefully answer some difficult questions. Although the aim of the dissertation is to find answers to the questions, these answers may lead to further questions needing answering. It is essential therefore to keep an open mind and an openness to change going forward with this topic to have a successful outcome, and a successful dissertation.

1.7 Research Design

Chapter One: This chapter will give the reader an introduction to the topic with clear aims and objectives that the research will follow and attempt to achieve.

Chapter Two: This area of the research will be provided by secondary research for the reader on knife crime in the United Kingdom. This chapter was gathered by a wide range of sources such as; textbooks, articles, journals and websites.

Chapter Three: This chapter is about the methodology and will explain the reasoning for a quantitative data research method approach to the dissertation. Here it will give the reader an understanding as to why questionnaires were the chosen method for data collection in this area of the dissertation.

Chapter Four: Here the data collated from the previous chapter will be analysed. Whilst analysing this data, references will be made to the research found in chapter two.

Chapter Five: This is the final chapter, drawing a conclusion from the information found in chapters two, three and four, this will then allow for any recommendations for further research to the topic.

Chapter Two

2.0 Literature Review

This 'Literature Review' will be looking at what knife crime is and the figures of knife crime as well as establishing if the figures are as bad as public perception seems to be. It will also endeavour to establish if there is a clear link between knife crime and young people in society, whilst also looking at theories from Howard Becker, Edwin Lemert and Stanley Cohen, which will aid in trying to achieve the objectives outlined in the previous chapter. It will be interesting to see if there is a clear link with people from ethnic minorities committing crime as portrayed by the media, (Scott, 2014). Hopefully this research will show why knife crime is being committed across the United Kingdom. This research may raise further questions and hopefully these will be answered and researched further. There are grey areas in all topics and it will be interesting to see similarities and differences in public perceptions and beliefs on the topic. This will be seen in chapter four, with the analysis of data collated from members of the public.

2.1 Defining Knife Crime

Allen et al, (2019), from the House of Commons library gives an in depth view of knife crime and the different acts that are required to police it. They define knife crime as, '*crime involving an object with a blade or sharp instrument*' and explain that knife crime is, '*a persistent and worrying concern, especially as it impacts particularly upon young people and the disadvantaged, and various remedies have been tried over the years*'. Bedfordshire Police, (2020), define knife crime as '*a crime that involves a knife*', and the consequences for this type of crime range from a £5,000 fine, and anything from 4 years to life in prison. Therefore this topic shouldn't be taken lightly.

'Many young people carry a knife for protection to make themselves feel safer in the bigger cities, even though they have no plans on using it', (Bedfordshire Police, 2020).

Bedfordshire police, (2020), then claims that an individual is more likely to become a victim of knife crime by carrying a knife than if they were not. There is clear link between these two

definitions and this is that both of them mention that young people are at risk to being involved in knife crime, but do the figures prove this?

2.2 Young People at Risk?

In a survey from Crime Survey for England and Wales, (CSEW, 2017), children aged 10-15 were asked about their experience with knife crime from the previous 12 months. 6.5% of children aged 10-15, knew someone who carried a knife. Adults aged 16-29 were asked the same question and 5.7% knew someone who carried a knife. The survey shows 0.8% more children knew someone who carried a knife, but doesn't specify if the children knew adults or children carrying a knife, proving only that children have seen a knife being carried more than adults, not that children are more involved in knife crime than adults, although still a concern that children are seeing knives being carried, (ONS, 2017). When compared with newly released 2020 figures, an increase of 14% for children aged 10-15, 9% for adults aged 16-29. This is worrying as there is an increase in both instances, (ONS, 2020).

Ford and Grimshaw, (2018), show 6.5% of people aged 10-15 knew someone who carried a knife but less than 1% of the children admitted to carrying a knife within the last 12 months. They report that it is not good that adults are seeing and being involved in knife crime, but seeing children just as involved is worrying as children are the future, and will set an example for the next generation, so it is imperative these figures fall and knife crime decreases.

Figures regarding young people and knife crime in the England and Wales, show 38% of knife crime offences committed by people under the age of 25 were of ethnic minority groups, and in London 66% of knife crime offences committed by individuals under 25 were from an ethnic minority group, (MoJ, 2017). Statistics from the Ministry of Justice, (2017), show that in 2009, 22% of individuals committing knife crime in England and Wales were from an ethnic minority, therefore from 2009-2017 there was an increase of 16% in this area of research. On average this is a 2% increase annually. Across all age groups, 27% of knife crime convictions in 2017 were from ethnic minority groups, suggesting more younger people from ethnic minority groups commit knife crime than older. The counter argument to this claim could be that more white adult are committing knife crime, and due to this the number regarding ethnic minority groups has decreased.

The reality of this is that both instances are true. There were 1,600 young white people under the age of 25, convicted of knife crime in the year 2017 compared to 1,400 ethnic minority individuals. There were also 600 people where ethnicity wasn't stated, (MoJ, 2017).

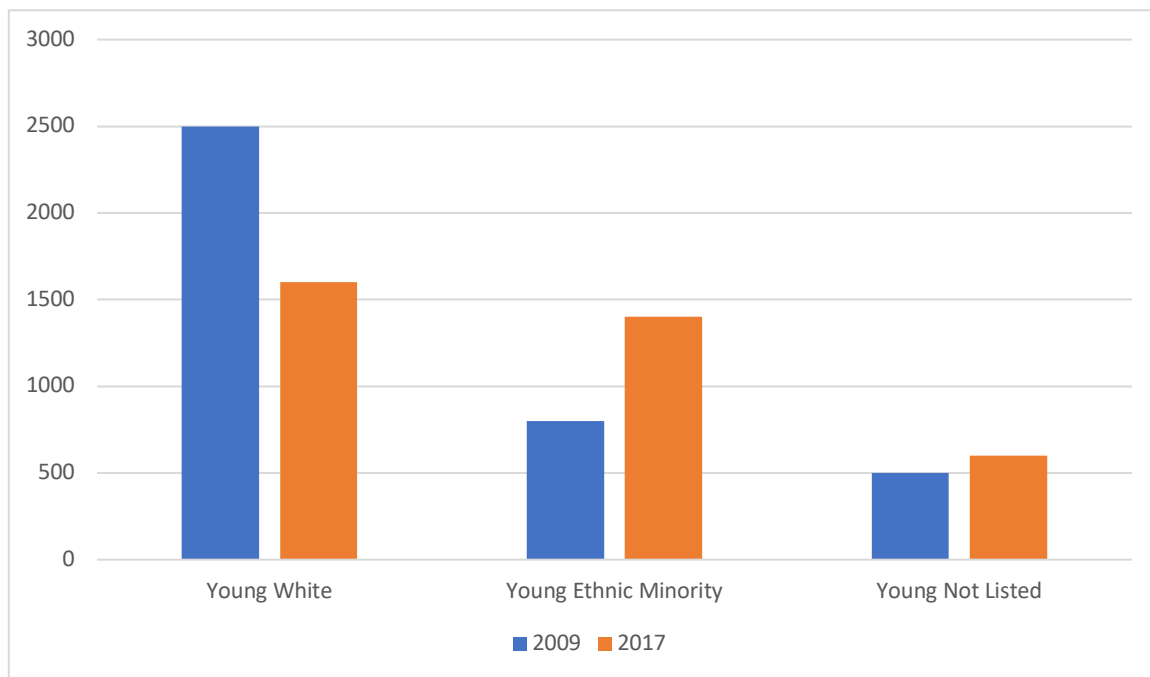
2.3 Knife Crime all Ages

There were 4,500 white people of all ages convicted of knife crime in 2017, compared to 2,000 from ethnic minority groups of all ages. There were 1,200 people whose ethnicity was not stated, (MoJ, 2017).

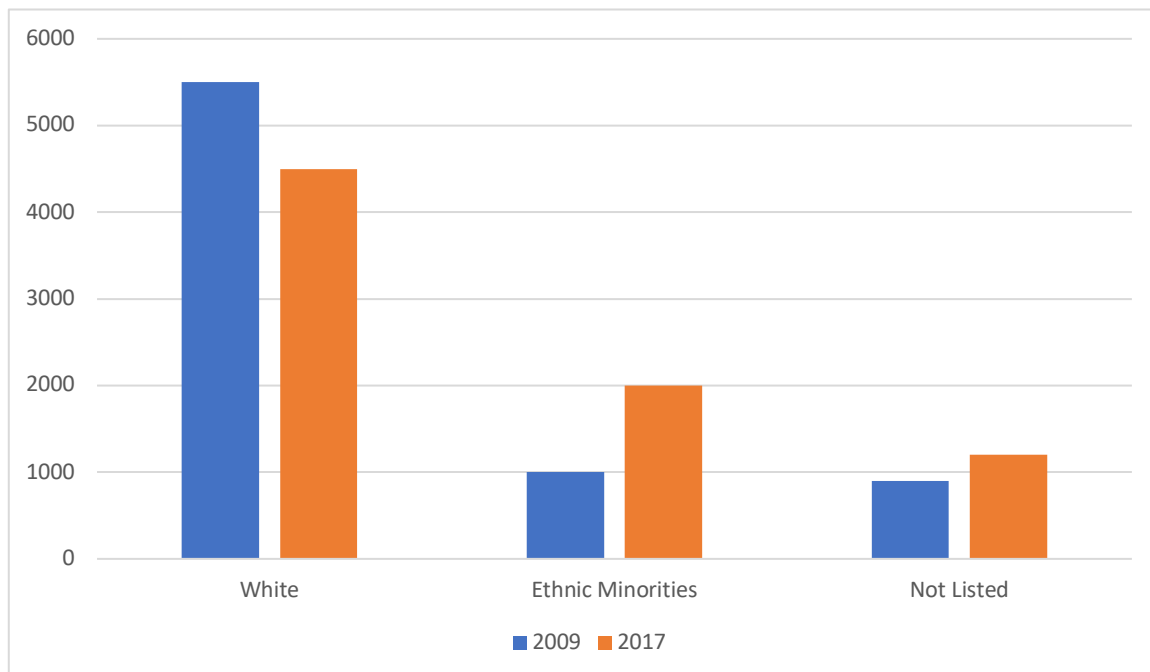
From the statement 'there are more younger people from ethnic minority groups committing knife crime than older', (Panjwani, 2018), the figures back this up as there were 1,400 young people (Under 25) from ethnic minority groups committing crime, which is more than double the 600 over 25's. The counter argument is 'there are more white adult committing knife crime and due to this the number regarding ethnic minorities has decreased'. This is also true as there are 1,600 young white people committing knife crime compared to 2,900 white adults. This means that there are 2,300 more white adults committing knife crime than there is ethnic minorities.

2.4 MoJ Knife Crime Figures

Looking at the figures from the Ministry of Justice from 2009-2017, young white people committing crime decreased 900 in 8 years from 2,500 to 1,600, while young ethnic minorities have risen 600 from 800 to 1,400, people who are not listed have increased by 100, from 500 to 600. These figures seem to be a pattern looking at knife crime from all ages also, white people committing knife crime decreased 1,000 in the same time, from 5,500 to 4,500, Ethnic minorities increased 1,000, from 1,000 to 2,000, and not listed increased 300 from 900 to 1,200.

Figure 1: Young people and knife crime in the United Kingdom;

The table above shows figures of young people convicted of knife crime from 2009 – 2017. In this research young people are classed as individuals who are under 25. As seen in the table above, the number of young white people convicted of knife crime has decreased in this period, whilst the number of young people from an ethnic minority committing knife crime has increased to almost double, this is a worrying statistic and fuels the labelling of young people from ethnic minority backgrounds as criminals. The number of individuals who have been convicted of knife crime who are not listed has also increased from 500 to 600.

Figure 2: Adults and knife crime in the United Kingdom;

The table above shows the number of people convicted of knife crime in the United Kingdom from 2009 to 2017. These figures include the figures from the previous graph, but also show the figures of adults committing knife crime in the United Kingdom. This graph follows the same pattern as the previous one, with the number of white people committing knife crime declining in this time, but also the number of people from an ethnic minority background committing knife crime rising. Not listed has also followed suit with their figures.

2.5 Knife Crime Trends

There is clear trend while looking at these figures. Currently there are more white people committing knife crime than ethnic minorities, but there is a clear increase in people from ethnic minorities and a clear decrease in the number of white people committing knife crime during this period. This is an interesting point as ethnic minority groups seem to get a label attached to them regarding knife crime, yet there are more white people committing the knife crime. In reality perception won't be helped by the annual increase of knife crime committed by ethnic minorities. So why does this label given to them stick, and why does this label seem

to be true at the moment with the increase of people from an ethnic minority background committing knife crime?

2.6 Primary and Secondary Deviance (Labelling)

Labelling is a term first used by Howard Becker (1963), but the origins of the theory came from Edwin Lemert's theory of primary and secondary deviance in 1951, these theories could give a huge reasoning in why knife crime seems to be labelled to young people and people of an ethnic minority.

Lemert (1951), explains deviance is when a person acts outside of the social norm, and this gave the basis of his theory. Lemert explains that a child who didn't receive praise or discipline while at home was more likely to act outside of the social norm, and because of this they become a troublesome child and in turn enter the primary deviance stage of his theory. The child is likely to be given a reputation by others, whether this be by other children, parents of other children, teachers or people in their local community. If this happens the individual is likely to develop into the second stage of his theory, where they accept the label they have been given, 'secondary deviance', (Crosswhite and Kerpelman, 2009). Lemert believes that if a person is told that they are something enough times, for example 'a criminal', then they are likely to act in that manner and gain the characteristics of the label given to them, and in turn, turn into that label and become that label, (Rosenberg, 2010).

2.7 Labelling, Howard Becker

Howard Becker's, (1963), book 'Outsiders' developed Lemert's theory further, and here is where a quote by Becker got the minds of other theorists working. Many theorists tried developing Lemert's theory but it was Becker who had most success and defined deviance as, *'Not a quality of a bad person, but the result of someone defining someone's activity as bad'*. This quote meant that it was society that decide if a behaviour was good or bad, and if society thought the behaviour was bad then that person would be labelled. This would then influence that individual's behaviour in the future. Becker, (1963), believed that people were not born deviant but society would give them that label, and they would become deviant

“social groups create deviance by making rules whose infraction creates deviance, and by applying those rules to particular people and labelling them as outsiders. From this point of view, deviance is not a quality of the act the person commits, but rather a consequence of the application by other of rules and sanctions to an 'offender.' The deviant is one to whom that label has been successfully applied; deviant behaviour is behaviour that people so label”
(Becker, 1963, p62).

Becker and Lemert's theory's both overlap as they both agree in the fact that a person is not born deviant, but they can become deviant if a label is applied to them.

2.8 Labelling Link to Knife Crime

These theories are interesting in regards to knife crime, as through the years people from ethnic minority groups have been labelled as criminals, especially in big cities such as London, Birmingham, Manchester and Liverpool, and in turn knife crime numbers in ethnic minority groups have increased greatly in these cities and in turn the United Kingdom (MoJ, 2017). Another argument could be that the number of terror offences have increased in the United Kingdom through this time, (Moj, 2017), and usually the person is of ethnic minority background, consequently many people have been labelling individuals from ethnic minority backgrounds as terrorists. This could be linked with labelling theory, as if these people are being called terrorist regularly then they could feel unsafe in their city and carry a knife for protection. This thought isn't being too sceptical as explained earlier, Bedfordshire police (2020), believe 'young people carry a knife for protection or to make themselves feel safer', this can be applied to people of ethnic minorities also. People of ethnic minorities may feel unsafe in their communities because of the rise in terrorism and therefore carry a knife in case of an altercation, by doing this the individual is committing a knife crime offence and therefore can be prosecuted if caught, (Jackson, 2016). This could be linked to the rise of knife crime numbers in people of an ethnic minority. The consequences of labelling an individual should not be underestimated. This prejudice could turn lives of others in a negative manner.

2.9 Knife Crime Homicide Figures

It's not just knife crime that is worrying, it's the seriousness of it, in terms of homicide due to knife crime rather than carrying a knife. There were 285 knife crime related homicides in the year ending in March 2018. This number is the highest since records began more than 70 years ago, (Treadwell, 2019). Young men aged 18-25 are most affected but there has also been a 77% increase in knife crime homicides committed by people under the age of 18 between 2016 to 2018, with an increase of 93% of people under the age of 16 taken to hospital due to knife attacks in the United Kingdom, (Treadwell, 2019). Currently, twice as many men die from knife crime as women. Research shows there is a greater chance of being killed by a knife if you are from a poorer family, or you are a member of a gang, (Ralphs, 2019).

2.10 Increase in knife crime and Younger People Getting Involved

Treadwell, (2019), believes there are three key areas why knife crime is increasing and why younger people are getting involved. These areas are; toxic environments for children created by austerity, children and young people fear becoming knife crime victims and children and young people do not trust authorities to protect them.

Stephen Chase, (2019), backs Treadwell's idea. Chase said, 'Knife crime is a symptom of the toxic environment that adults create around children, who then become both perpetrators and victims, it is created by politicians and politics of austerity'. It wouldn't be unreasonable to believe this theory, for if an individual has been failed by their home, school, neighbourhood or communities then these experience could fail in nurturing and protecting them, and therefore that individual may never reach and achieve their potential in society, leaving the individual fearful and vengeful. This could result in the individual joining a gang, or carrying a knife and committing violent acts of crime themselves. According to Chase, (2019),

'The vast majority of crime is committed in neighbourhoods that suffer from social disadvantage and no investment into, therefore turning individuals to crime, and then in turn knife crime', (Chase, 2019).

2.11 Austerity in the UK link to Knife Crime

Chase, (2019), shows the impact of austerity, he explains that there has been a £422.3 million reduction in spending on services for young people in the United Kingdom between 2013 to 2019. On average works out at a cut of £70,383,333 annually. Since 2010, 3,500 youth service jobs have been lost, 600 youth centres closed, resulting in 130,000 places for young people lost.

With massive cuts to services for young people, an increase in crime involving young people was inevitable, many of whom have turned to knife crime (Weale, 2020). Children and young people need these services as a safe place for them to go. Chase, (2019), believes when these type of cuts happen the crime rate increases. He suggests that more investment is necessary for these young people as crime rates are increasing, and demand for these services is at an all-time high, but there isn't enough services in place to deal with this demand. Government seem to brush this issue aside and they believe that,

“Councils, not central government, are best placed to know what their communities need and they need to take decisions on how much they spend on youth services”,
(Government spokesmen, 2019).

Youth clubs have a huge role and should be valued and supported, as they can make a huge difference to a young person's life and their communities. They create a warm, friendly and safe space for young people, (Kotinsky, 2014).

This is a worrying statement as they have cut costs of youth services across the board. Some areas may need it more than others, but each community needs to decide how much of their budget to allocate to youth services. This could lead to less monies being spent elsewhere in the community, causing that community to become disadvantaged and lead to more crime and knife crime in the area, ironically requiring further central government funding for youth services to try and prevent this from happening, (DCLG, 2013).

Austerity isn't generally mentioned when discussing knife crime, but it will be interesting to see the public view when asked the questions for research and whether they too believe that austerity has a part to play. This issue isn't prominent within the media, it's usually 'bad

parenting', 'no good youths', 'young Asian/black' and 'hooded thugs' who get the blame rather than austerity. This is interesting as to whether it's the media creating this 'moral panic' around these stereo types, and the government aren't reacting to this, as they believe austerity may be the main issue when it comes to knife crime, and therefore the government failing the public.

2.12 Afraid of Becoming a Victim

According to Treadwell, (2019), children and young people are afraid of becoming victims of knife crime and therefore turn to knife crime out of fear. Peter Traynor, (2018), believes that, carrying a knife sometimes begins when an individual is afraid of being a victim.

Traynor also says that many of the people that he researched had gone to the authorities for help but had been ignored by local authorities. This could be evidence to Chase's theory of austerity, as local authorities are not able to keep up with demand from the public for youth services.

Through Traynor's research, (2018), he found an individual from London who believes that authorities don't care when the victim is from a gang, in relation to result of gang violence as much as they do when the victim is a 'normal person'.

"The one time I went to the police when I was stabbed they walked into the house and said how many people done it? I said so and so many people done it from a gang and they all kind of looked at each other as if it's gang affiliated or whatever isn't it? So they didn't really care. Bur if it was just a normal person they'd have taken it a lot more serious", (Traynor, 2018).

2.13 Trust in Authorities

Children and young people don't trust the authorities is a comment that people hear when talking about knife crime. It is often those carrying knives that believe this statement, (Treadwell, 2019). Iain Brennan, (2018), believes that, It is possible for young people who

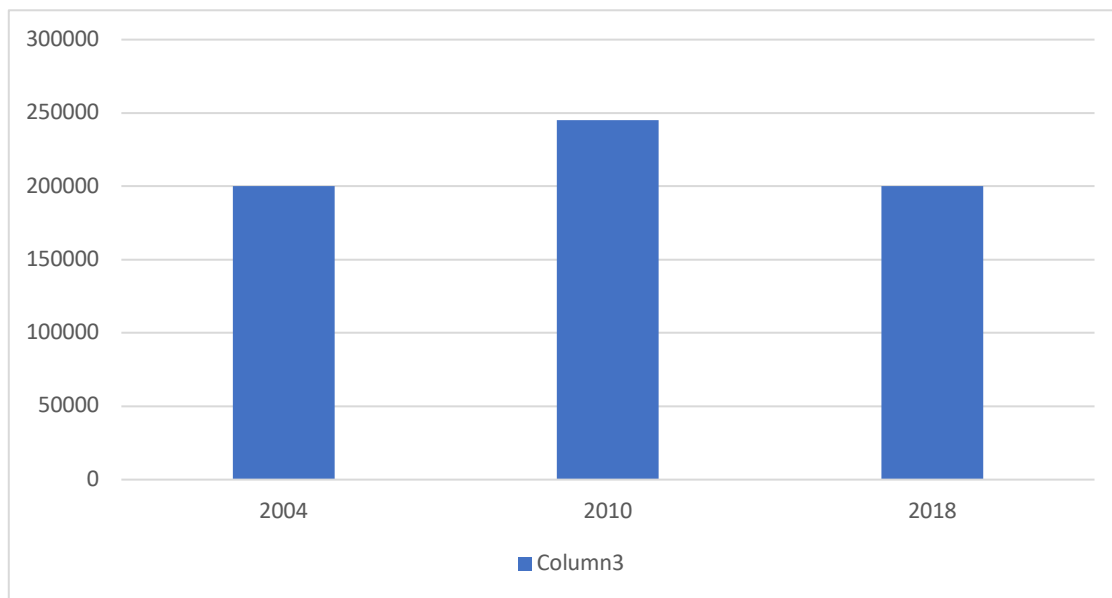
reside in a high crime community may not see the police as being able to protect and look out for them, or even be willing to protect them from harm. Brennan also believes that it is not surprising that young people may carry a weapon to feel safe in their communities and that people already involved in crime may also do so.

Looking at Brennan's beliefs it is hard not to see the similarities with Chase's, (2019) austerity theory. In these areas it is likely that the local government is deprived of funds and unable to set up young offender services to help individuals involved with crime as explained in Chase's theory. Brennan, (2018), believes that communities who have a high crime rate are already bred into distrusting the police service, possibly due to the individuals' experiences with the police service, relating to abuse or in the case of ethnic minority communities, institutional racism. Brennan explains another reason for distrust in the police is that as violence and criminal activity have risen the identification of the perpetrator has fallen, and because of this tensions between communities and the police have grown and continue to do so. This could lead to further criminal activity in communities and create even more hostility between the two.

Austerity doesn't seem to be spoken about too much when it comes to knife crime but it does seem to be a link between communities and knife crime. It will be interesting to see the public's opinion on this matter, and to see if this really is a key link when it comes to knife crime on the streets of the United Kingdom in 2020/21.

2.14 Police Cut Backs and Link to Knife Crime

Another link that has become apparent is that of the police cuts in the United Kingdom, more specifically England and Wales. From 2004 to 2018 police officers in England and Wales have remained the same, (200,000 officers), but in 2010, there were 245,000 officers, meaning that there has been a decrease in 45,000 officers in eight years in England and Wales, (Home Office, 2018).

Figure 3: Police officers 2004 – 2018

The graph above shows the number of police officers in the years highlighted, and as seen in the graph the number of police officers in the United Kingdom are decreasing.

The rate of knife crime has increase over the last decade or so, this could be coincidental , but it could also be linked to police cuts and less officers visible on the street, leading to individuals feeling less safe. This is an area where public opinion will be important, as if this is the case, the government may face problems in the future and they may need to act on this.

2.15 Government Strategies in Tackling Knife Crim

There is much discussion among people in authority on how knife crime can be stopped. The Government have put in plans to try tackle this issue, one being giving the police greater powers to try and combat knife crime, such as powers for surveillance, stop and search and punish suspicious young people, (Home Office, 2020). The government views this initiative positively but giving the police more powers could have a bad response from communities. Individuals may feel threatened or intimidated by the police with these powers and therefore commit more crime to rebel or carry a knife to feel safe similarly to Traynor's, (2018), theory and in turn more knife crime will be committed and community relationships broken. It will be insightful to see the opinions of the public when it comes to tackling knife crime, as people have different thoughts on the issue and on prevention. Seeking the opinions of everyday people who live in the community could raise good ideas on how to tackle issues,

as these are the people who see and feel how safe their community is on a daily basis, unlike those in authority. This may also promote a sense of inclusion and strengthen the relationship between the public and those in authority, as well as aid the Implementation of solutions to stop knife crime or at the very least ensure more people are prevented from committing knife crime in the future.

The figures on knife crime look serious and there are plans in place to tackle it, but by taking the percentage compared to the whole country you are more likely to win the lottery than be the victim of knife crime. Members of the public have a 0.014% of winning the lottery, (Lotto, 20120), and there is a 0.09% chance of an individual being a victim of knife crime, (Jacobs, 2017). This puts it in perspective. So is knife crime a moral panic within society?

2.16 The Media and Moral Panics

From the work of Stan Cohen in the 1970's regarding youths and crime, moral panic is a term that the media have adopted to 'blow up' news to sell newspapers and clicks, to in turn create a panic within a community, county, or country. By doing this members of the public will be worried about the topic and they will buy newspapers or click on articles to find information, and by doing this make money for the news companies, (Marsh and Melville, 2011).

Oxford dictionary, (2020) defines moral panic as;

'an instance of public anxiety or alarm in response to a problem regarded as threatening the moral standards of society'.

As discovered labelling can have adverse outcomes for individuals, but it also creates stigma towards certain groups in society. So how and why does public perception change on individuals over the time? Everyone can be a news reporter with the click of a button due to the increased use of mobile phones over the last decade, (Jacobs, 2017). An individual can upload a picture or a video to social media, and within minutes it is accessible to thousands of people. For example, if a hooded teen was shoplifting and the footage released, it would appear the teen was up to no good and contribute towards the stigma of teens wearing hoodies, despite the fact that on the same day, many other teen across the country will have

entered a shop wearing a hoody and will have paid for their goods. This wouldn't warrant reporting, so shop owners and members of the public only see the negative report on social media, and when they see an individual in a shop wearing a hoody they automatically think that that person is up to no good. This label given to teens wearing hoodies has created a moral panic within society.

2.17 Cohen's Moral Panics

Cohen, (1973) stated that there were five stages in the making of a moral panic. In the first stage an individual, a group or something is seen as a threat to society's norms and is followed by the second stage where the media identifies a symbol that every person can easily identify. The public then identify this symbol as something of a cause for concern, with more people identifying the symbol as concern the government or authorities then need to give a response to the public, which is the fourth stage. The fifth and final stage of this is when communities/society changes their day to day routine, either by government advice given or from their own actions. This seem to fit in with knife crime;

The first stage of Cohen's (1973) theory is that people identify that knife crime is rising and members of communities feel a unsafe due to it. The second stage is where the term knife crime began circulating in the media and this gave the public an easy term to remember, and one that they identify with killings in their communities, instantly creating concern. The third stage is that people then associate the term with death, wrongly identifying knife crime figures as individuals dying, regardless that knife crime numbers are higher as criminals could have robbed/burgled houses using a knife where nobody got hurt, and this crime falls under knife crime. If society is unaware of this, these figures will be related to stabbings, creating even more panic. Stage four sees the government respond by placing more police officers in high knife crime areas. Advice and guidance change almost weekly. During stage five an individual changes their day to day life in response. In knife crime terms, an individual may feel unsafe and decide to move to another area of a city or the country or it may be that an individual fears being out after dark so make sure that they have completed their tasks to return to their homes during daylight.

Members of the public could be panicking about something that is extremely unlikely to happen to them or to anyone they know, but due to media coverage huge panic is created within society. Cohen, (1973), shows that the media can create a panic, with the aim to increase newspaper sales and in more recent times online clicks. There are many examples of the media creating moral panics such as; youths/young adults wearing hoodies, terrorism/Islamic extremism, HIV/AIDS, mass shootings, sex offenders/paedophilia, and momo challenge, these are recent examples but through the years there have been many more, (Waterson, 2019). Although these things happen, they are very rare, so if an individual is concerned about this happening to them, they have more than likely been influenced by the media, unless they have been extremely unlucky to have been in the wrong place, at the wrong time.

As identified in the objectives in chapter one, this research will establish public thought on the theory as to whether they believe knife crime is a moral panic or not. Online research indicates this is possibly be the case. The way knife crime has been reported, promotes the idea that the media are trying to push this panic further. The images they show are of young males wearing hoodies, where they are hiding or carrying knives. This could easily create a panic as the media seem to be labelling hoodies and connecting them to knife crime. This will inevitably create more panic within society, and in turn discriminate against young people and individuals who wear hoodies, as a result of labelling from the media, (Freeman-Powell, 2019).

2.18 Chapter Conclusion

Moral Panic seem to be a huge part of society, although it labels individuals and possibly turns individuals to crime, it is somewhat entertainment for people and is a topic of discussion between friends, work colleagues and other members of their community. It gives individuals something to keep an eye on daily and give opinions on when it is the topic of discussion. Although it can be entertainment for many, the media companies are the big winners with the amount of clicks and papers they sell due to it, it can be argued that the media are the puppet masters, and are influencing members of the public who are the

puppets, in a way that gets them more engaged with the topic, and creates more business for these companies to make profit from (Anderson and McLaren, 2012).

Labelling and moral panics work hand in hand and can create huge panic within society. Becher, Lemert and Cohen's idea are all relevant today, maybe more than ever and it is interesting to see these theories in practice, It will be interesting to see the public's view on this matter, and to see if the public were aware of the existence of these theories. It will be intriguing to see if the public believe that knife crime is linked to these theories or if they believe that is something that is in society as a result of something else. This will be an interesting area of investigation in the coming research.

All that has been found and discussed in this literature review will lead on and form the basis and provide a platform to build on to discover public opinion regarding knife crime. There is still a great deal of information required to expand this topic further, which hopefully will be gained when conducting further research. As became apparent during the writing of this literature review, as new information regarding knife crime surface, it satisfied the question asked, while raising further questions. This makes the topic a vast and convoluted one, and one that requires more research using public opinions on matters, to confirm that the information found is really a true reflection of society or something the media and, or government want the public to believe. Either way, information found during this literature review stands this dissertation in good stead for the coming months to build on and to research further, and in turn hopefully find answers to the questions raised.

Chapter 3

3.0 Methodology

The aim of this research is to find the beliefs of the public regarding knife crime in the United Kingdom. Quantitative and qualitative methods are methods that are used when conducting a research project. The literature review chapter will help in this chapter also, as the literature review gives a background to the topic. This research will attempt to find out all of the objectives outlined in chapter one, along with providing recommendations on how to tackle knife crime in the United Kingdom.

3.1 Quantitative Research Method

Quantitative method is used for collating data which can then be measured and statistically analysed, one of the more popular methods is a questionnaire. This would then give an overall thought on the topic. The data can highlight the public's thoughts and opinions over matters, so if more people have chosen a certain option on a question over another, this would be seen as an overruling answer, and the answer that the public lean towards, (Antonius, 2003). For example, if a question on a questionnaire was 'Should cannabis be legalised?', and eight people ticked the 'No' box and two ticked the 'Yes' box, then this would be an overriding majority and it would be clear that the majority of the public believe that it shouldn't be legalised. This is a good method to see what the public's perception of a specific topic would be. Although this method can be problematic, as if there was a 50/50 split or close to this in the answer, researcher will not have found a definite answer, although it would give them room to research into that specific area further.

Although quantitative research gives an overall figure and an overall feeling regarding the topic, there are however some negatives to this method.

Quantitative research methods are strong but they do not take place in a formal setting and often this form of research is done on the streets with members of the public, who frequently want to leave as soon as possible. As well as this, quantitative research participants are not able to explain their answers as the question asked is usually a closed answer question, (Carr, 1994).

Denscombe, (2010) believes that for quantitative research to be successful, large amounts of data is needed to have a good idea of the public's feelings towards the topic in question (Jenn, 2006). The flip side of this is, If the researcher isn't able to get a large enough number of participants to complete the questionnaire the data gathered may not be a true reflection of public feel regarding the topic. Another negative with this method could be that the researcher may have a personal bias towards the topic, therefore the questions asked maybe misleading, to lean towards the bias of the researcher. It is pivotal that this isn't the case when conducting this type of research to have accurate and balanced results.

Denzin and Lincoln, (1994) highlights that quantitative research aims to find out what behaviour the public deem to be acceptable from a numerical and objective point of view, whilst qualitative methods try to gain knowledge by the researcher conducting interviews, documents and using personal experience or visual materials. A qualitative method would have been an interesting one to use in regard to the publics feelings and behaviour towards knife crime, but due to the pandemic it was difficult to arrange this, therefore a quantitative method would serve the best purpose.

3.2 Qualitative Research Method

Denzin and Lincoln, (1994) then explain that qualitative research is a good research method as the questions aren't closed like they are with quantitative data, but by doing this the researcher could lose the overall public perception that they are trying to ascertain regarding the topic, as the interviewee can elaborate and expand on their answers to the questions they are asked. The researcher needs to analyse the answers given to them and interpret each participants answer to try and find a theme regarding the topic. This can lead to answers being misunderstood by the researcher and therefore the researcher creates a possible bias in participants answers to suit their research or to what they believe to be true.

There are some negatives to qualitative research too. Qualitative research takes time and this can sometimes be problematic for researchers. Each participant is an individual, in different environments, situations, events, conditions and context, therefore meaning that every interaction with a participant would not be the same and cannot be replicated and therefore

not be identical. Another downside to this method is that the researcher will need to know a lot about the topic in hand, and almost be an expert to be able to interpret what participants are saying to get a collection of data to understand the public's beliefs, (Punch, 1998).

3.3 Research Method Being Used

Both these research methods have positive and negative aspects. After contemplating both methods, it was decided that this dissertation would be using quantitative research. After researching both qualitative and quantitative data, it was decided that quantitative data would suit this project more than qualitative, due to the time scale. As well as this, not being an expert in knife crime and youth offending it would be difficult to interpret answers and therefore could lead to unbalanced results. These were the reasons in deciding to conduct quantitative research rather than qualitative.

Quantitative methods are more specific to the topic to find out public opinions, and this was a huge factor in the reasoning to use quantitative methods over qualitative. If more people tend to lean towards a certain answer then it would be more accepted that this is the genuine belief of the public, rather than the interpretation of answers by the researcher. People would be more willing to complete a questionnaire rather than conduct an interview, therefore more data would be collated which would provide more data to analyse, allowing the researcher to gain a better understanding of the public feeling.

By using quantitative methods like a questionnaire or a survey, there would be a lot of data to examine. Excel spreadsheets were used to manage and to record the data, making it clearer to analyse and to understand by organising the data into a format that is easier to read. Excel also helps with mathematics, ensuring there was no mistakes in adding data together to get the true outcome. Using excel took away any human error, provided the data was recorded correctly within the spreadsheet, which was checked numerous times making sure all figures were true and correct.

3.4 Data Collection Method and limitations

As explained above these methods are a very good way to complete a dissertation in the current climate. Coronavirus has had a huge impact on the world, and continues to do so. Face to face questionnaires/surveys and interviews were going to be the main research methods for this dissertation at the beginning. Meaning that there would be a mix of quantitative and qualitative research within the dissertation, but due to coronavirus these methods are no longer viable, as this would be breaking the coronavirus rules and regulations. Due to this limitation, it was decided that online questionnaires/surveys would be the best method to complete research, while assuring the dissertation adheres to the government guidelines in the current climate. As outlined earlier in the dissertation the title of this piece of work is, 'Knife crime in young people and ethnic minorities, is it that bad?'. The dissertation aims to find out if young people and people of ethnic minority commit more knife crime than other members of society or if this is a ploy set by news agencies to sell papers and make profit and in turn creating a moral panic amongst members of the public. By watching the news, perception by members of the public seem to be that they are worried and scared of knife crime in the United Kingdom. The main aim is to see if this statement is accurate.

3.5 Research Areas of Interest

Some areas of interest regarding the topic as highlighted in the objectives in chapter one are, if people are scared of knife crime or is it a moral panic created by the media, the public's opinions on youths wearing hoodies, the public's opinions on people of ethnic minorities and whether they believe that there is a stigma attached to these individuals. An interesting area of the topic was to see if members of the public believe that men or women were more involved in knife crime more than the other, and why. Also the public's opinions on why knife crime happens in today's society was an interesting area to research. By asking the public these questions via the questionnaire, which can be found in the appendices at the back of this dissertation, there were a mix of opinions and views to analyse. There was also concern that people may be in a rush to complete the questionnaire and therefore not give their true feelings of the topic, therefore the questionnaire was short, sharp and to the point. At the top of the page there was a guide to how long the questionnaire would take. By doing

this participants realise what is required from them and in turn take their time to complete the questions. Other disadvantages to a questionnaire could be that there is no way to tell if the participant is being truthful or how much thought they have put into the answer. As the questionnaire will be online, there is no way in explaining the context of the question, therefore individuals may read and interpret the questions differently. Although these are some negatives to questionnaires, there are also positives/advantages, as questionnaires are really practical and can collect a large amount of data in a short period of time and at a low cost, even more so with an online questionnaire as this is a simple email to the participants. Data can also be gathered quickly and effectively, even more so by using Excel spreadsheets. Data is analysed objectively meaning that it is focused and targeted on the numbers rather than on feelings and interpretation of data, (Popper, 1959). By weighing up both these advantages and disadvantages, it was decided that questionnaires were the best quantitative research method for the dissertation.

3.6 Time Scale for Research

There is a tight timeframe to when the questionnaire needs to be completed by. Analysis of results needs to be completed by December 2nd, therefore all questionnaires were need to be completed by November 11th, so the data can be organised and analysed to meet the December 2nd deadline.

3.7 Participants

All research was conducted at home due to coronavirus. This was not the original plan but was adapted to continue in line with government regulations. At the beginning there was the hope to have between twenty and thirty participants between the ages of; 18-25, 26-40 and 41+, this number turned to forty participants, with a mix of fellow students, family members, friends and work colleagues completing the questionnaire. Seventy questionnaires were sent out, and sixty four of these were completed, meaning that there was more data received than anticipated, which was a great surprise and gave more data to analyse to establish the publics opinions and beliefs regarding knife crime and youth offending.

Chapter Four

4.0 Analysis of Results

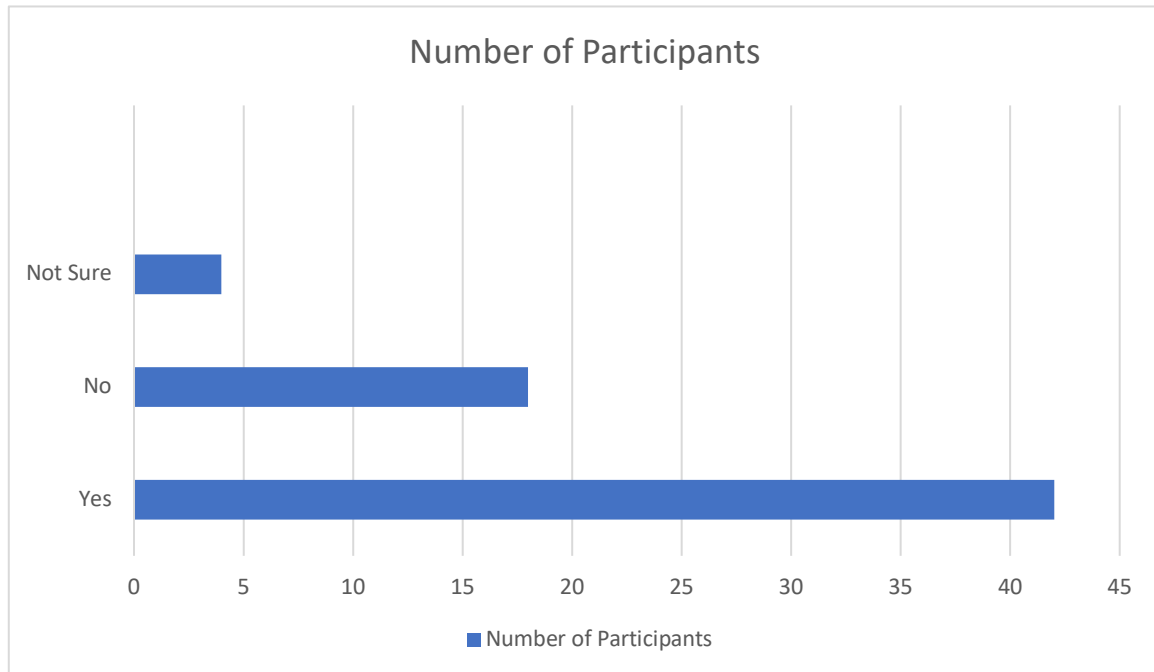
This particular part of the dissertation was the most difficult to complete due to COVID-19. Finding participants and getting the questionnaires to participants was difficult and very time consuming, as not all participants had email, smartphones or laptops to access the questionnaire, so some questionnaires were completed by hand and sent via post, this resulted in wasting time where it could have been spent in other areas and incurred a cost. Even though this was tricky it was manageable and all questionnaires were given to participants, and all participants completed the questionnaire thoroughly. In total there were 64 participants, aged between 18 and 53 with a split of 36 males and 28 females who completed the questionnaire. As stated above all questionnaires were completed and sent back, but this was a bit difficult as not all questionnaires were sent back on time, meaning there was a delay in analysing the results on the thoughts of the public relating to this matter. As found in this stage, if results were analysed by the deadline date, they would not have been a true reflection, as results handed in late gave different answers and in turn changed perspective on some answers. Therefore it was important to wait for all the questionnaires to be sent back before analysing, to have an accurate account of the most fair results and a true reflection of public opinion.

Through this analysis, each question will be broken down into a subheading, results bar graphs will be used to show the public's feeling towards knife crime and the media. This will give a clear idea as to whether people hold similar opinions or if they disagree, along with this it will be interesting to see if theorist's ideas come into play with the public, or if theorist's ideas are old fashioned and do not apply to the modern day.

4.1 Question 1

Do you believe knife crime is high in the UK?

Figure 4: Question one results

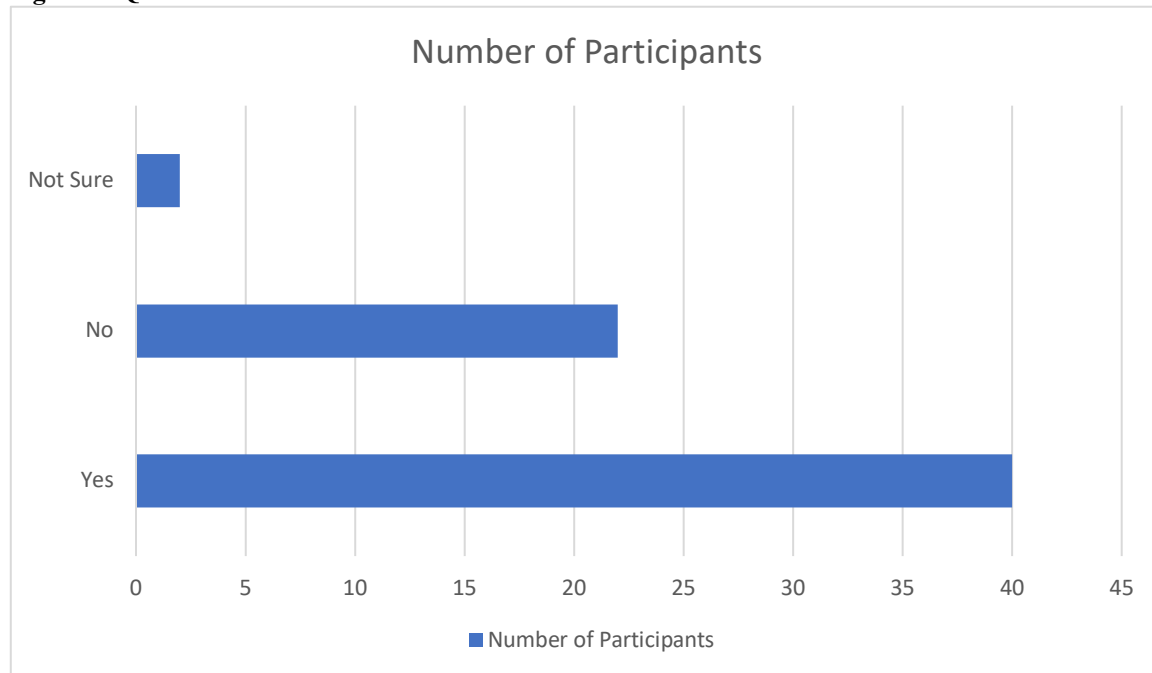


As seen in the graph above, 42 participants out of the 64 believe that knife crime is high in the UK, with 18 others believing it's not, with a further four people unsure of this. This means that the majority of participant believe that knife crime is high in the UK and this is an accurate statement. In 'civilised' countries the UK is one of the highest in regard to homicides, with the USA being the highest. Per 100,000 people there are 5.3 homicides in the USA. Comparing this to the UK, where there were 1.8 per 100,000, meaning that per 100,000 there is nearly three times as many homicides in the USA than the UK. Comparing this to knife crime figures, in the USA there are 0.49 people committing knife crime per 100,000, but in the UK there are 0.48 people committing knife crime per 100,000. With the size difference of the countries being USA populating 328.2 million, and the UK populating 66.65 million this figure is worrying. The UK is almost one fifth of the size of the USA but the knife crime figures are almost identical per 100,000 leaving the UK with one of the highest knife crime rates in the world, (Jamieson, 2019).

4.2 Question 2

Do you believe that knife crime is increasing in the UK?

Figure 5: Question two results



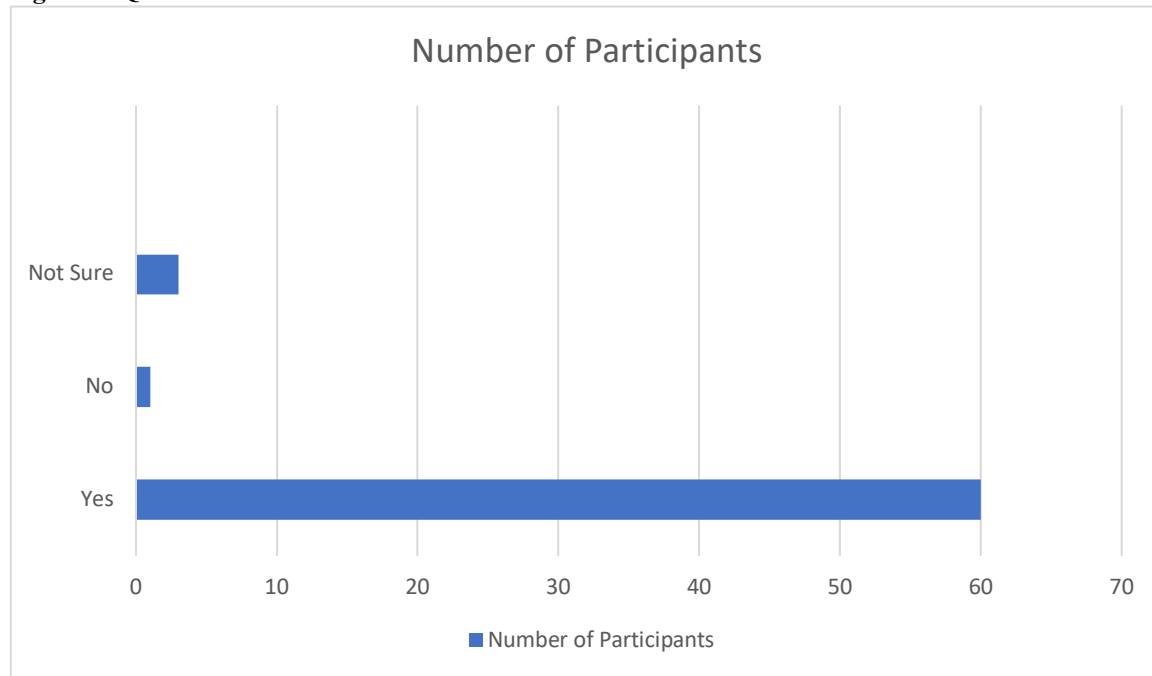
40 participants believe that knife crime is increasing in the UK, 22 believing it isn't with a further 2 unsure. The reality is that worryingly knife crime has been increasing in the UK since 2009. An increase of 49% was seen in knife crime from 2011 to 2019, a further 7% increase from 2018 to 2019, which suggest that knife crime figures are rising, (Grierson, 2020). In 2020, there was a 1% decrease in knife crime in the UK. This appears promising but we must consider the country was in a full lockdown for three months, which brought down all crime numbers, so it would be expected that this number will increase for the next figures. Even though knife crime has decreased this year, there has been a 14% increase in knife crime offences in South Wales, between June 2019 to June 2020, resulting in a 16% increase to the offences per 100,000 in Wales. If these are the results with lockdown being in place and other areas of crime decreasing, then this is a worrying sign for when life return to normal, (Ben Kinsella Trust, 2020).

The participants opinions back the figures shown, meaning the public realise knife crime is an issue in the UK, and this isn't slowing down, This helped achieve the objective in chapter one of 'Public's thoughts on knife crime in the United Kingdom'.

4.3 Question 3

Do you believe that young people (Under 25) are involved in knife crime more than older people(26+)?

Figure 6: Question three results



Many people believe that young people are involved in knife crime more than older people. This statement is actually false. As found out earlier in the dissertation there were 4,500 white people who committed knife crime. Only 1,600 were younger than 25, therefore there were 2,900 people over 25 convicted. 2,000 people from an ethnic minority background were convicted of committing knife crime, 1,400 were under 25, so in this case the statement would be true. There were also 1,200 people convicted of knife crime whose ethnicity wasn't disclosed, 600 were under 25. This means that in total 7,700 people were convicted of knife crime, 3,600 were under 25, leaving 4,100 people over 25 being convicted of knife crime.

From this question a number of worrying factors have become apparent. One being that there are more young people from an ethnic minority background being convicted of knife crime than older. The other, more participants of the questionnaire believe that the younger generation are committing knife crime more than the older generation. It is difficult not to associate this with Becker's labelling theory, discussed in chapter two. If young people are being labelled as something by the public, then this prejudice can stick to a group, and in turn the public's feelings can be negative towards that group. This helps the research in terms of

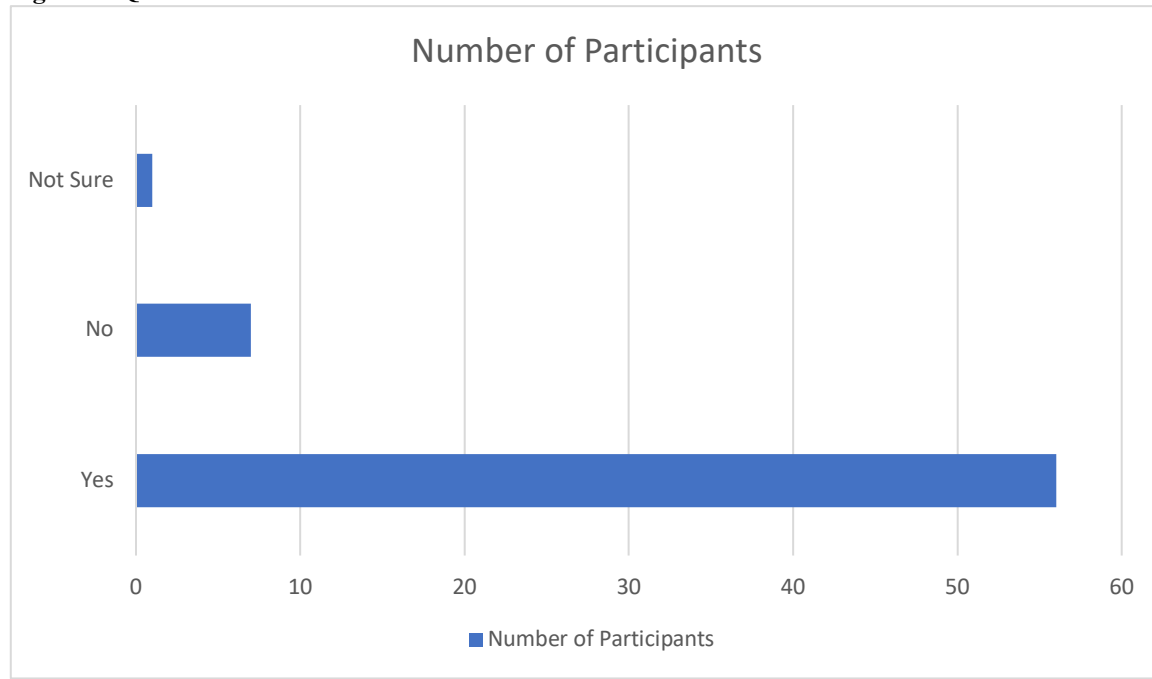
reaching the objective ‘knife crime within youths in the United Kingdom’, as well as touching on another objective ‘behavioural theories and link to knife crime’

It is worrying looking at the results from this question, that 60 people believe that young people are involved in knife crime more than adults, with only 1 person believing that this statement isn’t true and a further 3 people unsure of the statement. Again, this question has helped towards achieving some of the objectives set out in chapter one, whilst linking the research conducted from the literature review in chapter two, regarding young people and knife crime. These figures show that the majority of participants believe that young people are committing more crime than older people, but as found in chapter two this is not the case.

4.4 Question 4

Do you believe that people from an ethnic background are involved in knife crime more than white people?

Figure 7: Question four results



This was an interesting area of the questionnaire. 56 participants believed that people from an ethnic background were more involved in crime than people who were white. This is interesting because earlier in the dissertation it was found that in 2017, 4,500 people who committed knife crime were white, compared with 2,000 people who from an ethnic background. There were also 1,200 people whose ethnicity wasn't stated, (Moj, 2017). Taking this into consideration, even if all 1,200 people whose ethnicity wasn't stated were from an ethnic background, which would be highly unlikely, there would still be 1300 people more who were white committing knife crime. The results showed the participants were of the belief that people from an ethnic background committed more knife crime than white people. This opened up a new question to why is this the case.

One reason could be that the media report more knife crimes involving people from an ethnic minority than they do those involving white people. Consequently the public hear more of people from ethnic minorities committing crimes than they do white people, therefore making people that this is the case. Another reason could be that even though white people commit

more knife crime than people from an ethnic minority, figures from 2009 to 2017 suggest that the tides are changing in this regard. From these years white people committing knife crime has fallen from 5,500 to 4,500, and in the same time people from ethnic minorities committing knife crime has risen from 1,000 to 2,000, (Moj, 2017). Again the general public may have heard less about white people committing knife crime because it is decreasing, but hear more about people from ethnic minorities committing knife crime, because numbers have been increasing.

With regards to the results of this question, it can be seen that the public who participated in this questionnaire could be prejudiced about ethnic minorities in regards to knife crime and not even know it. This could have been an interesting topic to investigate in this dissertation, to see if there really is a prejudice in this field, but due to COVID-19 this would be difficult to research within the timeframe set.

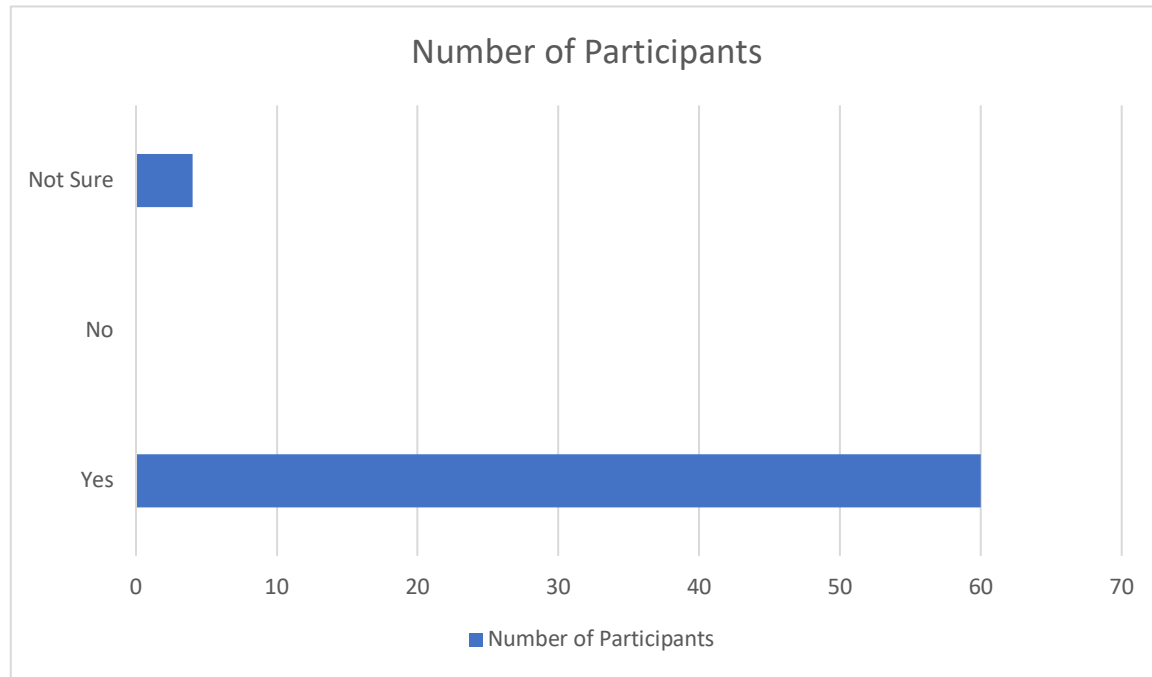
After studying Becker and Lemert's theories it could be argued that people from an Ethnic Background are being labelled as something they are not, and in turn the public are being 'brainwashed' in believing the label given.

This question has linked in Becker and Lemert's theories from chapter two, and has again helped in achieving an objective set out in chapter one, these objectives being 'analysing knife crime in ethnic minorities', and 'behavioural theories and seeing if there is a link to knife crime'. Participants believe that people from an ethnic minority background are involved in knife crime more than white people, but as found in chapter two this is not the case, as the number of white people convicted of knife crime in the United Kingdom is higher than that of people from ethnic minority backgrounds, in fact the number of white people convicted knife crime is 2,500 higher than those convicted from an ethnic minority background.

4.5 Question 5

Do you believe that men are involved in knife crime more than women?

Figure 8: Question five results



Figures of the graph above clearly show that the participants believe that males are involved in knife crime more than females, with 60 people answering 'yes', 4 answering 'not sure', and 0 people believing that women are involved in knife crime more than males.

This result was expected as the 'view' of someone involved in knife crime is usually a young male. Unlike previous results the answers given from participants fits in with the statistics. Males do commit more knife crime than females.

Looking at offences committed but not prosecuted in 2018, as these as the only comparable figures available for men and women, there was a total of 40,829 offences involving a knife or a sharp instrument, this was a 6% increase from the year before in England and Wales, (BBC, 2019). Out of these 40,829 offences, 1,509 were committed by a woman. This seems to be a small proportion of the total, which it is, but comparing these numbers to 2014, there was an increase of 73% in women committing knife crime in the UK. In this four year period, there were a total of 5,800 offences committed by women, (Grierson, 2019). Comparing this to males, in the same four year period there was a total of 120,286 knife crimes committed, (Shaw, 2019). Although the figures for females are considerably less, they are following the same trend as seen earlier in the dissertation. Knife crime has been rising rapidly through the

last decade or so, and this seems to be the case for females committing the crime as well as males.

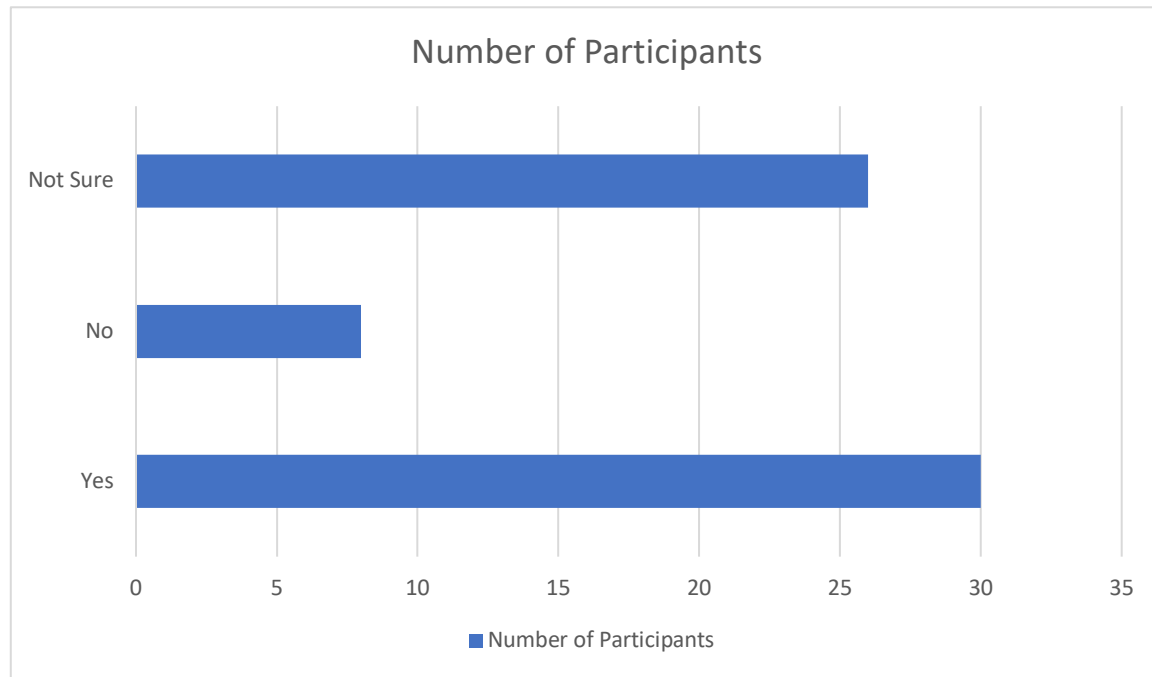
It is a worrying sight that knife crime is rising in males and females rapidly. With the rise in numbers continuing, it could be time for the government to have a new strategy on tackling knife crime in the UK.

Although this question hasn't helped in reaching one of the objectives set out, it was interesting to see the participants belief in this question. Almost all participants believed that men committed more knife crime than women, which is factually correct, but it could be argued that men have a label attached to them for participants to answer this way with no statistics given to them in terms of knife crime and genders.

4.6 Question 6

Do you think that the media makes out that knife crime is worse than it is?

Figure 9: Question six results



This was an interesting question in the questionnaire, as the results for this question are the most varied. 30 participants believing that the media portrays knife crime to be worse than it is, with 26 participants being unsure, and 8 thinking this is not the case. Along with this it is the most ‘not sure’ answered question, giving the impression that people aren’t educated in knife crime to know if the media are making a ‘story’ out of an incident or if the incident is as bad as its being reported.

One participant made a comment under the question stating that ***“The media enjoy making the public panic, to then make money of selling newspapers for people to keep up with stories for something to talk about”***. This was an interesting comment, as this supports the idea of the media creating a moral panic within society, which supports Stanley Cohen’s, (1973), ideas on creating moral panics within society, by going through the five stages, which was previously discussed. This comment from the participant is one worth attention.

The idea of media outlets creating people panic in society from all ages, from toddler to O.A.P’s is both worrying and morally wrong. Creating this panic around society could have a

negative effect on communities, and could encourage other people to carry a knife to feel safe and protected, as Peter Traynor, (2018), explained earlier on. Which could then create more knife crime in society, and in turn creating more victims and fear within communities making this a vicious cycle.

This question helped to achieve the objective ‘influences from the media create more panic rather than report it’. Which is one that is worrying, as it seems that the media are driven by clicks and views, rather than reporting factual information without causing a panic.

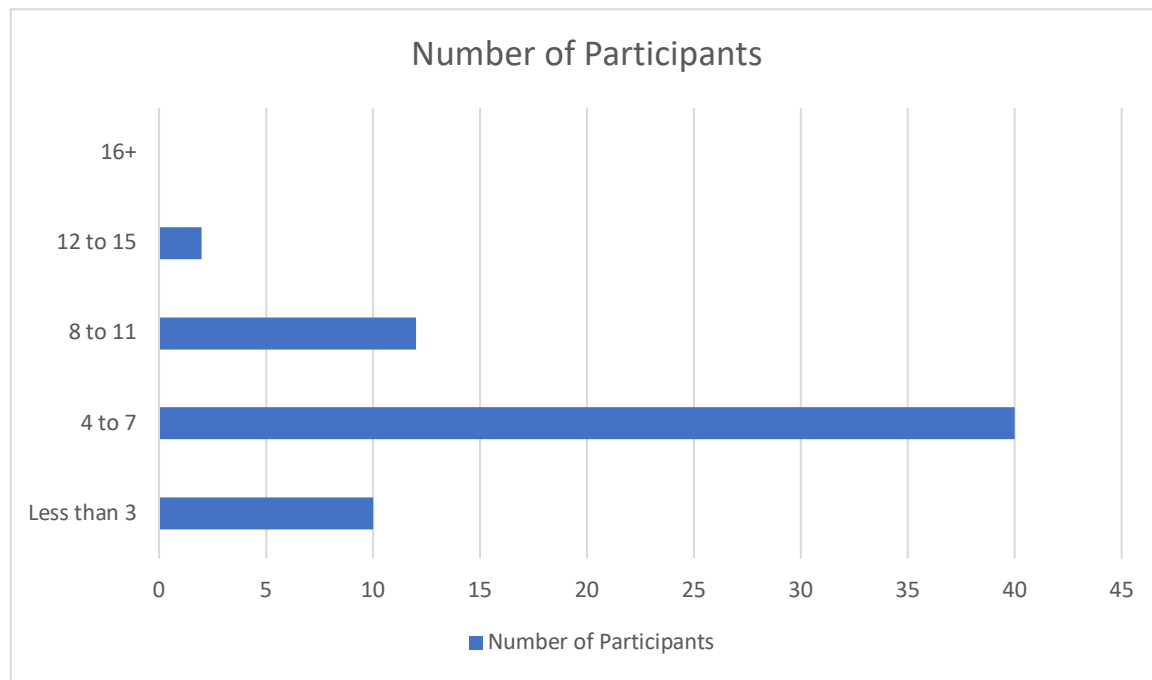
This is a question that in hindsight should have had a ‘Why?’ after it. It would have been interesting to see the participants reasoning to why they answered the way they did, and gain a better understanding for this area. With one participant giving an interesting comment, it would have been insightful to compare other participants views regarding the media and knife crime.

As found in chapter two, the media are interested in making money for their companies therefore they ‘hype’ stories that they believe will sell more. From this question it can be seen that some of the participants do not understand this and therefore potentially fall into the trap of believing everything that is seen in the news to be 100% true. This can then fuel towards Cohen’s (1973), theory of moral panics.

4.7 Question 7

How many times would you say that you read/listened/watched something that is reporting knife crime?

Figure 10: Question seven results



The idea of this question was to ascertain how often the public hear of knife crime in the media. There is a clear winner in this question with 40 participants stating they read, hear or watch about knife crime 4 to 7 times a week. 10 participants answered less than 3, 12 answered 8 to 11, 2 answering 12 to 15 and 0 participants answering 16+. Looking at these results, the majority of people answering hear about knife crime daily which seems a lot but looking at figures from the Ben Kinsella Trust, (2020), there were 47,349 knife crimes from June 2019 to June 2020, this means on average there were 134.5 knife crimes committed a day in England and Wales during this time. This shows a lot of knife crime goes unnoticed by the public, the reasoning being, the media doesn't cover knife crimes such as an individual carrying a knife, and the knife being seized by police officers using stop and search, because this would be 'boring news'. The media are more interested in the gory news such as murders, or rampages within the UK which would be more appealing to the public, creating more revenue for the media outlets. It could be argued that by doing this the media are indeed trying to create a moral panic within society, as they report on the one 'scary' pieces of knife

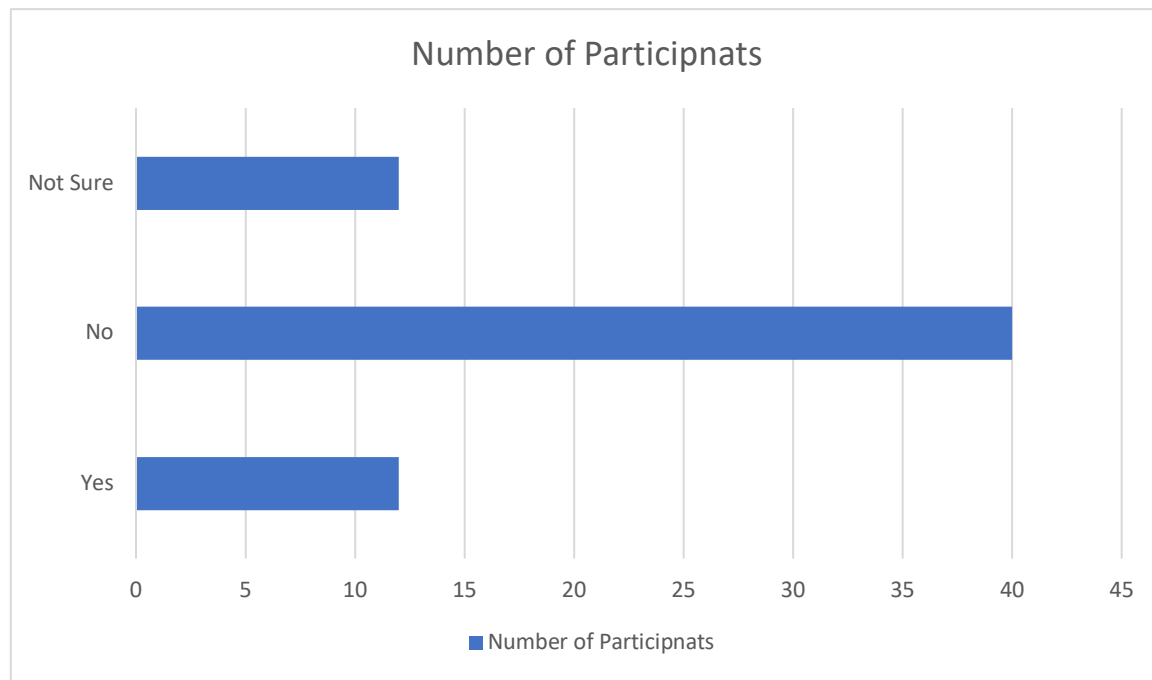
crime, but not on the low level where the police have done a great job in reducing knives on the street.

It can also be argued that the media is now source of entertainment to the public, rather than informing them and could be viewed as not having the public's best interest at heart and possibly making the media a less reliable source of information. Again this question helps to achieve the objective of 'influences from the media create more panic rather than report it'.

4.8 Question 8

Do you believe that there is a prejudice against young people from an ethnic minority, more than people young people from a white background? Why do you think that?

Figure 11: Question eight results



Not everyone answered this question which makes it difficult to understand the reasoning behind these answers. If this questionnaire was done in person, maybe the participants would feel more comfortable to discuss these opinions rather than writing them down. What is interesting is that 40 people said that they believe there isn't a prejudice against young people in ethnic minority groups, but according to the research conducted earlier on in the dissertation, there does seem to be. This is an interesting area of the questionnaire, as people may have answered 'No' to avoid feeling uncomfortable or prejudice themselves. Therefore this question may not be 100% accurate. Again, if this question was asked in person and explained to the participant that the answers given must be their own feelings and that they wouldn't be judged adversely, because the dissertation is looking for the most accurate answers to have the best outcome. With 12 people answering 'Not Sure', this question is the joint second highest in regards to participants answering 'Nor Sure', suggesting that people were either uncomfortable giving their true feelings or that people were genuinely unsure if there was a prejudice against young people of an ethnic minority, which can be viewed as

worrying that members of the public cannot see the prejudice in the media, society and communities around the UK.

It was interesting that 11 out of the 12 people who answered 'Yes', were either currently living in London or Birmingham or have previously lived there. These two cities are where knife crime figures are some of the highest in the UK, (Butcher et al, 2019). Therefore it could be suggested that these people have been living in cities where knife crime is high, and in turn have seen all sides of knife crime in their cities. From seeing it on the streets to seeing it on their local news media channels. Therefore having a better understanding of the topic than others who haven't been as close to the 'action' and believe that knife crime hasn't got a prejudice. To back this statement, one participant expanded on their answer stating;

"I have lived around knife crime in my city for many years, and the media like to report it and be on the scene within minutes. Often they describe the suspect as young and involved in a gang. If the suspect is white they say 'young man involved in gang violence'. If the suspect is black they say 'young black man involved in gang violence murders young white male' or something along those lines. If the suspect and the victim were black they would report it as 'two black males both from gangs have gang face off, leaving one gang member dead'. It is not right that the media publish this before any facts, more often than not the victim was just passing by but the media jump on the bandwagon of them being in a gang, just because they were black!"

This statement is difficult to understand to an individual who doesn't live in these cities but by this participants view, it is difficult to see past the violence in the cities that individuals see on a regular basis and deem it to be 'normal city life'. From this participants statement it is clear to them that the media have made a prejudice against people from an ethnic minority background but the numbers in the table above suggest differently. For example one participant said;

"I have lived in a city for a number of years and have not witnessed a single knife crime let alone one with prejudice attached to it. I have heard it in the media in other cities but I haven't witnessed it in mine at all, and to be honest I don't see people from an ethnic minority or a white person and think of knife crime, so I must say that I do not believe that there is a prejudice against a person of ethnic minority or a white person . I do think that

the media sometimes blow it out of proportion to get the clicks and views but I have no evidence to suggest that is true. Maybe it's just the city I live in, I'm not sure".

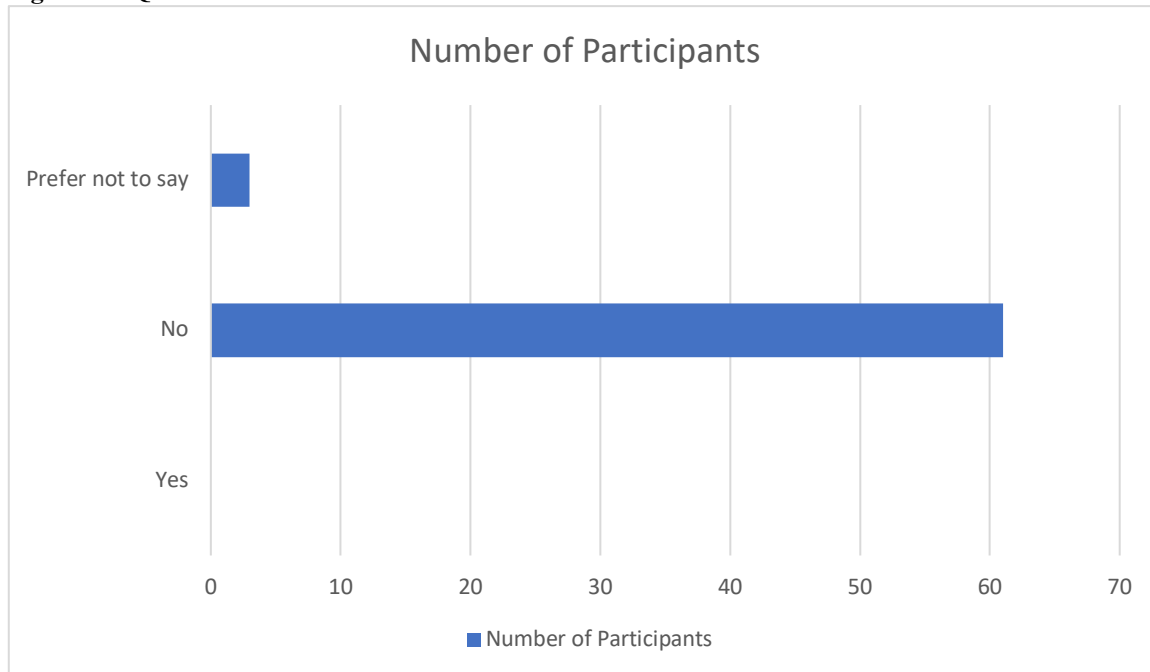
Both statements have come from participants living in large cities in the UK. One believes that there is a prejudice to people from ethnic minority more than white in terms of knife crime, the other doesn't and believes that it is a level playing field in this area of knife crime. What was evident in both of these statements was, even though they disagreed in terms of the question, they both added that the media were big factors. One suggesting that the media were against black people in terms of knife crime and the other suggesting that the media blows stories out of proportion to gain clicks and views. This can be seen as the media look to make a story to gain more clicks and views, and in turn making them money, regardless if the story is 100% true or not, which if true can be very worrying, meaning the media can create their own news to suit the public audience to gain revenue, even if it is not true, this could then in turn create a prejudice against certain members of society. This brings back Howard Becker's theory, (1963) back into play, that individuals can be labelled and act up to these labels, in this case it could be the media labelling certain members of society.

With this in mind the answers and feedback from this question can be seen as support for Becker's theory back in 1963 which can be seen in chapter two, which would suggest that even though his theory is nearly 60 years old, there is still evidence to back it, meaning that this theory has not gone out of date with the fast moving times of today, which shows a lot of respect for Becker's work. This also supports the objective 'analyse knife crime within white people and ethnic minorities in the United Kingdom' set out in chapter one

4.9 Question 9

Have you ever been involved I knife crime?

Figure 12: Question nine results



The expectations of this question was that all 64 participants would answer ‘no’, therefore giving an understanding that everyone was new to this area of crime, and in turn being neutral to the topic to have the best understanding of public beliefs. But this was not the case.

61 participants answered ‘no’, 0 participants answered ‘yes’, and surprisingly 3 participants answered ‘prefer not to say’, suggesting they may have been involved in knife crime at some point, as there is no reason for them to not answer ‘no’. All three people were in the age bracket of 41+ which suggests that they are now older with family, and may have been involved in knife crime in their youth. If COVID didn’t prevent this, it would have been beneficial to ask these participants if they would be willing to be interviewed regarding their answer to this question. If they agreed it would be interesting to see the reasoning behind their answers and if another research area would be highlighted in regard to knife crime.

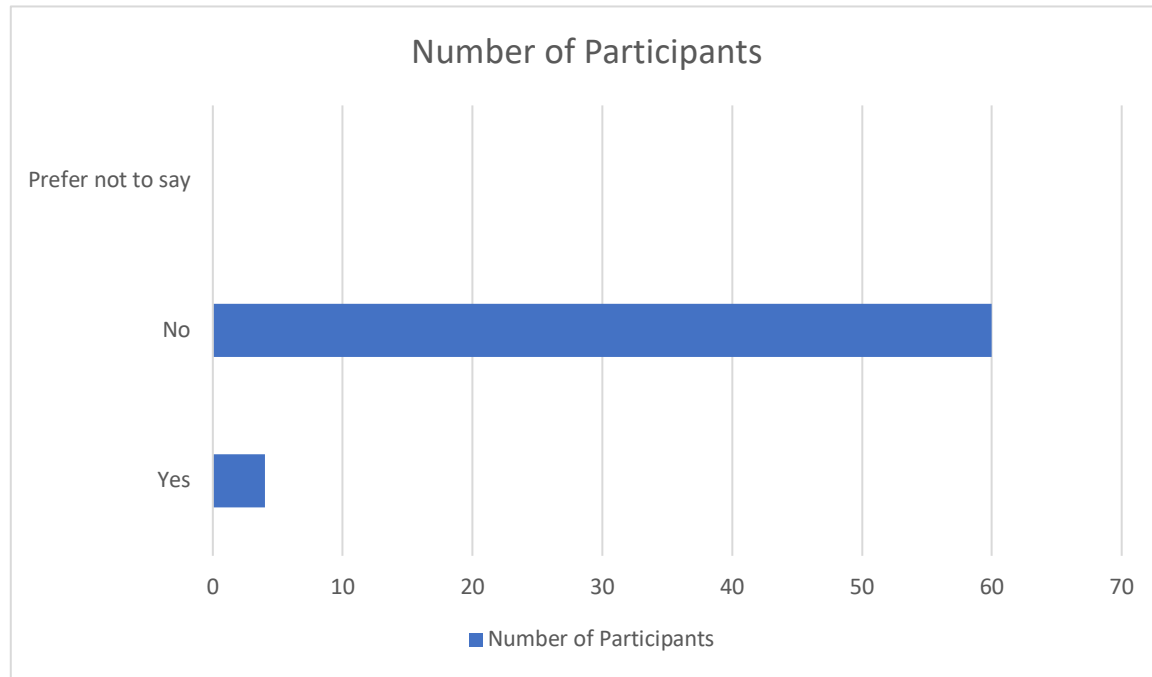
It could also be that the three individuals didn’t read the question and just circled any answer. If this were to be the case it would be disappointing as this may affect the credibility of the other answers given, meaning this research isn’t 100% accurate. Considering and viewing these three participants answers to different questions, there is no reason to believe that this is

the case in regards to this research. It cannot be presumed that they have been involved in knife. The answers for this question were expected with zero participants ever being involved in knife crime.

4.10 Question 10

Have you ever been a victim of knife crime?

Figure 13: Question ten results



Individuals were warned that this question was one that could have caused distress, by evoking bad memories.

Out of the 64 participants, 60 participants have never been a victim of knife crime, but there were 4 participants who had been. This was surprising, and not expected. Two participants expanded on this answer. One stated that ***“I got stabbed in the leg in my late teens on a night out in Liverpool”*** and another stated ***“I got held at knife point and told to give them my purse and phone”***. The other two participants circled the answer but did not expand.

Finding that four people who participated in this questionnaire had been victims of knife crime was both worrying and exciting. Worrying that this research may evoke bad memories and cause upset, but exciting from a research perspective, and gaining insight into feelings and different ideas from individuals who have witnessed knife crime first hand.

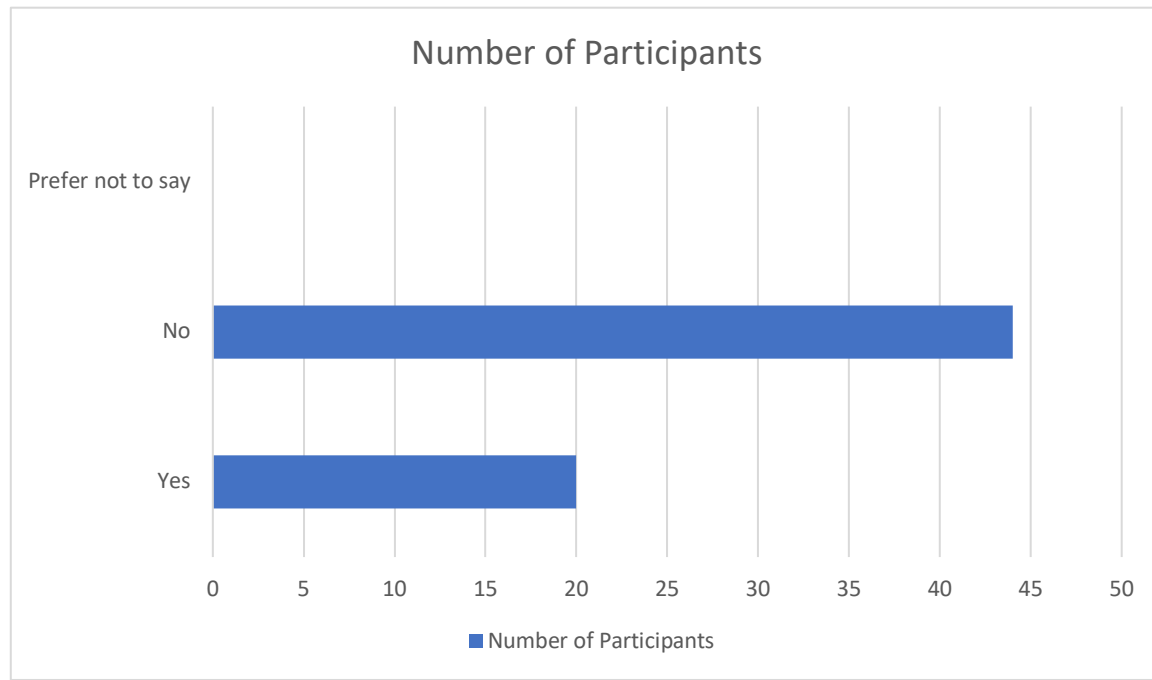
Had it been apparent before starting the research that there were individuals participating who had been a victim of knife crime, it would have been interesting, with their permission to

conduct an interview regarding their experience, how the process was handled and the outcome, to gain a more in depth perspective of the topic, and in turn giving the dissertation a first-hand view of knife crime, and topics surrounding it. A comparison could be made between the perspective of those who have experienced knife crime and those individuals who have no experience of how this crime would impact on their daily life and rely on media reports. It is important to be aware that one or all of the individuals may have chosen to decline interview.

4.11 Question 11

Have you ever witnessed a knife crime?

Figure 14: Question 11 results



44 people answered that they had never witnessed knife crime, 20 people confirmed they had. The number of people who answered 'Yes' was higher than expected. The number was expected to be lower due to the area of the U.K. where most of the participants live, as there doesn't seem to be a lot of knife crime taking place in these areas.

From the previous question four people had been victims of knife crime, therefore four people were expected to answer 'Yes'. A further 16 people have witnessed knife crime, but have not been a victim. Out of the 20 people who answered 'Yes' to this question, seven of them were in the 36-40, and nine were in the age bracket of 41+, leaving four people in the age bracket of 23-28, who have witnessed knife crime in their lives. This was a surprising statistic, as it is believed that more youths are involved in knife crime than other members of society, you would expect more youth to bear witness. These figures argue against this. The counter argument to this could be that the people who have stated they have witnessed knife crime are not involved in it. It may also be argued that the perpetrators could be youths,

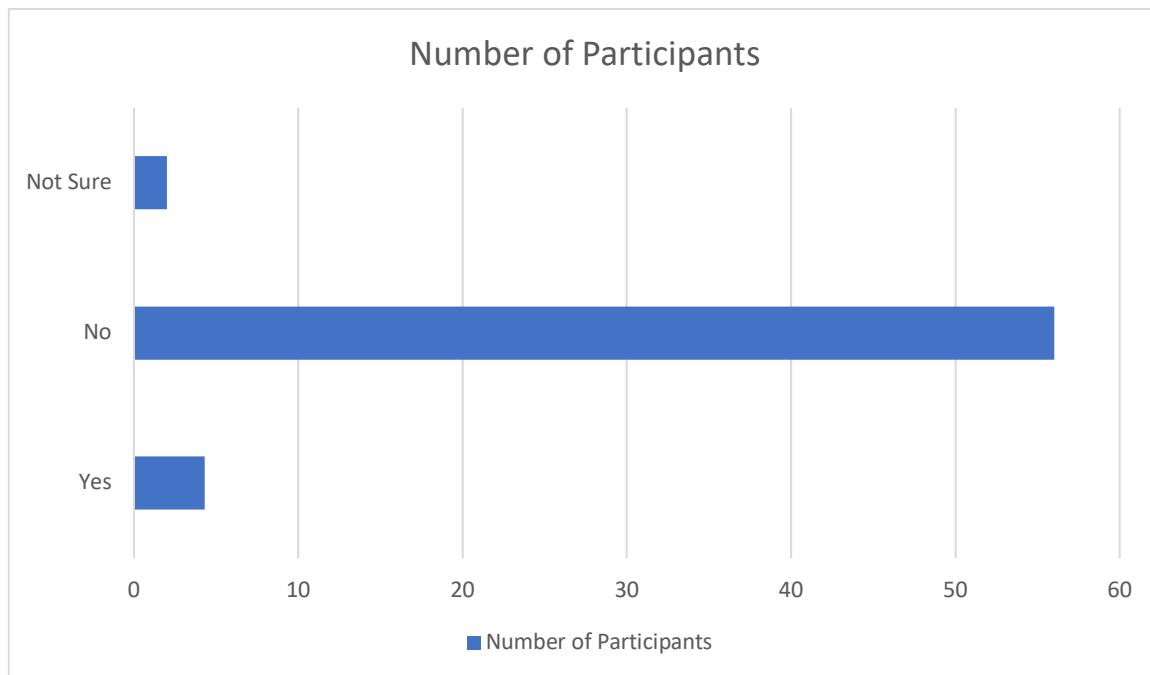
which supports the claim of ‘youths being involved in knife crime more than older people in society’.

It is difficult to have a real perception of this area of the topic as statistics can be used different ways to suit the agenda, as seen with the example above. But what is evident from this question is that around a third (20/64) of participants have witnessed a knife crime happen. This is worrying as one in three people have witnessed a knife crime which could have a negative effect on their well-being and their mental health. As seen earlier, some members of society carry a knife to feel safer, if one in three people are witnessing such a crime, it could lead to an increase in the number of people carrying a knife for their own safety, so instead of tackling knife crime, becoming involved in knife crime.

4.12 Question 12

Do you think that government is doing enough to support police officers in tackling knife crime?

Figure 15: Question twelve results



This question was to form an understanding of the public's ideas on how the government is trying to defeat knife crime and supporting the officers on the ground in trying to overcome this issue.

As seen in the graph above, 56 participants do not believe the government is doing enough to support police officers in tackling knife crime, 6 believe that they are and 2 were not sure.

These figures were expected as members of the public enjoy criticising the government, who are in a no win situation. The government could get a positive result in this question, if the impossible were achieved and there was no knife crime happening in the U.K. The government believes it is doing all that is necessary to tackle knife crime, but knife crime figures are still high. Despite this question not having an area for the participants to expand their answers, many did, with 23 of the 56 participants who answered 'No' provided rather

harsh criticism of the government. Providing an area for all participants to expand on, could have raised many points of discussion, which could have been analysed thoroughly to see if any patterns could be found. Although there was a clear pattern found in the answers given and that was police cuts, this can also be seen in the literature review in chapter two. Here are some answers that participant gave regarding this question;

“How can you expect the police to deal with knife crime effectively when the government are cutting back the number of officers on the street.”

“Doing enough to support police officers? What support?”

“Yes they are! Doing enough to support knife crime, the officers? No so much!”

“They could start by employing more police officers.”

“They need the officers on the street first to be able to support them.”

“They support the police?”

“We need more officers on the beat to tackle such an issue, and where are they? Losing their jobs that’s where. The government should be ashamed to issues their causing. Not only in regards to knife crime but all crime in general. We need more police officers.”

“I understand that the government need to be in their budget, and sometimes that involves making cuts, but how can they justify having less officers on the streets?”

“Instead of cutting police officers jobs, why don’t they cut their wages and have more of a budget to help the police look after us all?”

These nine quotes clearly show a trend and all point towards the police cuts that were discussed previously in the dissertation. This is understandable, as there have been cuts within the police, so less officers on the streets, but is that really the only reason for the high knife crime figures?

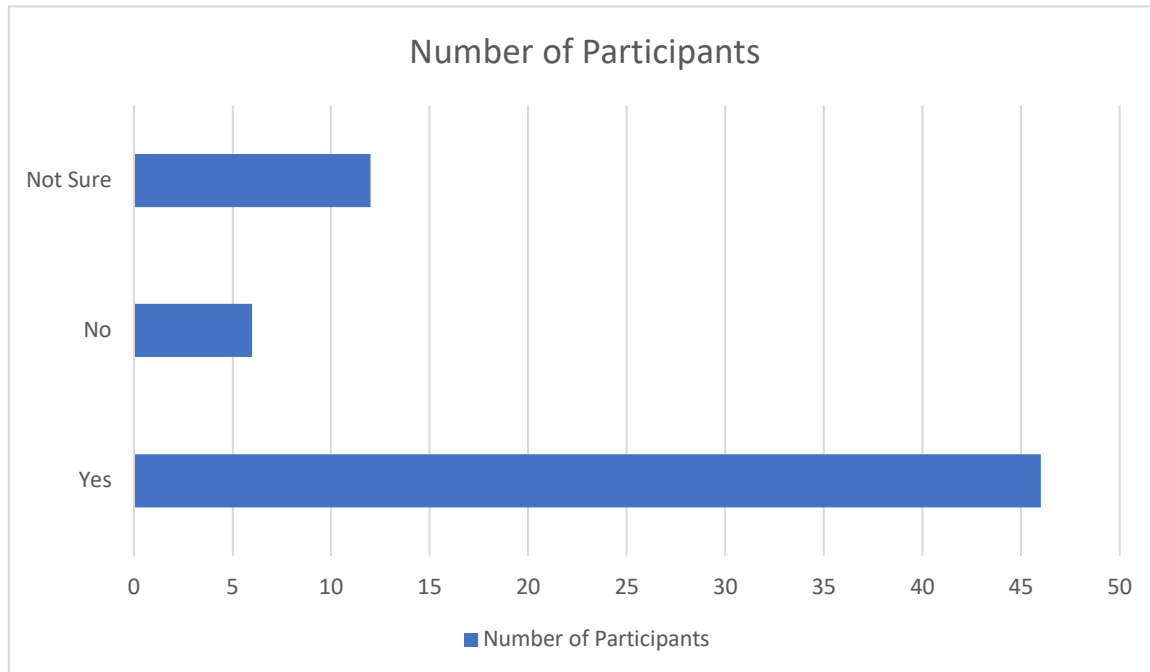
This question, like others has highlighted the need for further researched in regards to public perception on this topic. Is this really what the public think or is this more of an opportunity to slate the government in any way possible? Would there be a similar reaction to asking members of the public if the government are doing enough for other areas of crime such as drugs, theft, motoring and so on? As touched on earlier, the government are in a lose/lose situation, receiving very little credit when they perform well, and heavy criticism when things go wrong, it seems that the public enjoy 'abusing' the government in any way possible.

This area of the topic opens more questions in terms of the public's ideas of the government and this could be an interesting topic to research in the future.

4.13 Question 13

Do you think the police are doing a good job in reducing knife crime in the UK?

Figure 16: Question thirteen results



This was an interesting question to follow on from the previous, as many of the participants made their feelings known regarding the government and their support for police officers. On the whole the participants didn't believe the government were supporting the police as they should do, but, 46 of the participants believe that the police are doing a good job in reducing knife crime, 6 believe that that they are not, and 12 were not sure.

This was an interesting take on the issue and it could be that the participants are not 100% educated to knife crime in society, so if they don't see it happening then they believe that the police are doing a good job in reducing it or it may be that they believe the police are performing well, considering the limited resources they have, as one participant pointed out.

“I believe that with the resources that the police have at their disposal they are doing all they can in tackling this. There has been a cut in police officers on the street so the presence isn't like it used to be, but they are doing what they can in these times. If the government could support them more then maybe we can see real progress in this area of crime and in others”

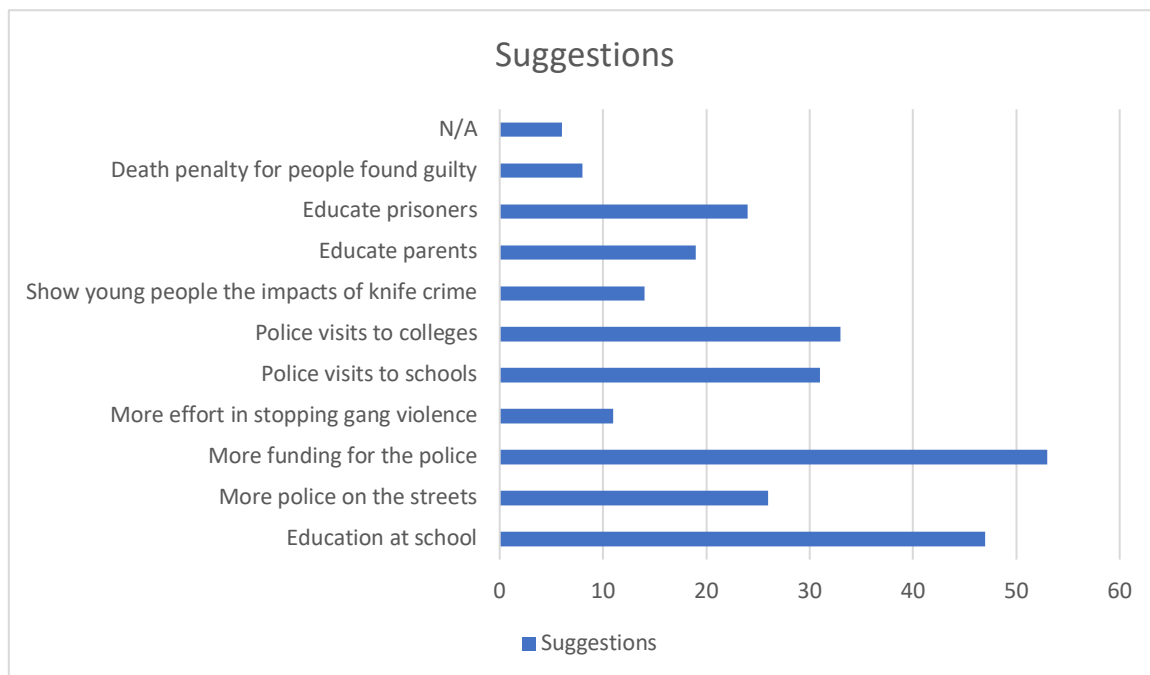
This was a good statement to have for this question. The participant highlighted that knife crime continues and is not going away, but they believe the police are doing all they can but with more government support this issue could be resolved. As seen earlier in the dissertation, coupled with falling police officer numbers, is an increase in knife crime. It is evident that more government support will help reduce knife crime in society, this area of the topic is one to keep an eye on in the future. The answers given for this question again link to the police cuts, highlighted in chapter two. This also helps in achieving the objective ‘analyse knife crime statistics and seeing what changes need to be made by government to improve knife crime in the United Kingdom’.

4.14 Question 14

Any suggestions on tackling knife crime in the UK?

As this was an open ended question it was difficult to read all suggestions statistically, therefore a graph has been compiled showing how the suggestions were mentioned. Some participants gave more than one suggestion, which explains the elevated number of responses in relation to the number of participants. Of the 64 participants, only 6 people answered N/A, meaning they had no suggestions and supported the government's current strategies are best going forward in reducing knife crime.

Figure 17: Question fourteen results



There were some interesting suggestions in ways to tackle knife crime, funding for the police, education at school and police visits to colleges, being the top three suggestions, followed by police visits to school. It is clear that the participants believe education on knife crime is an important key factor in tackling the issue. As seen in this dissertation educating young people is an important factor in regard to reducing future knife crime incidents. It was no surprise from previous answers that more police funding was top of the list. There is no one solution to prevent knife crime from happening, but taking the suggestions from above into account,

there could be ways in reducing it in the future. Knife crime is ongoing and the effort to prevent it is a marathon not a sprint. The suggestions above give hope and ideas of ways to reduce the rate of offending and hopefully bring peace in communities throughout the U.K.

This question has helped in reaching the objective ‘analyse knife crime statistics and seeing what changes need to be made by government to improve knife crime in the United Kingdom’.

Chapter Five

5.0 Conclusion and Recommendations

5.1 Introduction

This chapter will bring a conclusion and recommendation for further future research in regards to Knife crime. Knife crime is a huge problem in society, but as seen it can be reduced significantly, with the combined effort of the public, organisations and government. It will take a significant amount of monies to make this happen, but it is not impossible. Engaging people in activities, teaching from a young age and stopping reoffending are huge areas in which the problem of knife crime can be reduced.

5.2 Concluding Findings

Knife crime and the media, is it that bad? After comprehensive research, knife crime is a big issue in the United Kingdom but not as bad as the media depict. There is an annual 2% rise in the number of people committing knife crime, but this includes the smaller knife crimes such as carrying a knife and robbery with a knife, where a knife wasn't actively used in the crime, (Grimshaw, 2018). The media tend to sensationalise crimes where knives were used, to capitalise on newspaper sales and online clicks, whilst creating a moral panic of knife crime in the United Kingdom, especially in the larger cities.

The stereotype created is that of young people carrying knives, this research shows that in part this is true, as there are more younger people from ethnic minorities committing knife crime than older people, however there are more white adult males committing knife crime than there are younger. Interestingly, these figures highlighted the truth about knife crime in the U.K., and not the view often reported by the various media and news outlets.

It can be argued that the media can influence public views of knife crime and can portray young people negatively or positively to suit an agenda, (Patal, 2017). Knife crime occurs every day, and as the figures show, it is committed by all ages and genders, but media reports lead us to falsely believe that it is young males, both ethnic minority and white who are

responsible. This is due to the sensational headlines and carefully chosen photographs the media outlets use to report such crimes, to attract clicks and increase newspaper purchases, this in turn creates a label for young people in society. The literature reviewed and the research carried out on this topic found this to be true. Young people are guilty of committing knife crime, but what is not portrayed by the media is, that the incidence of knife crime committed by older adults is greater than committed by young people. This creates a negative stigma for young people in their community and in society, and one which could prevent an individual reaching their full potential or even cause them to aspire to their label, which could raise the number of knife crime incidences in the U.K. and have a negative effect on all its communities and on society as a whole.

5.3 Research Analysis

The research conducted for this dissertation was strong. All questions in the questionnaire were answered by all taking part. Consideration was given, in the form of prior warning, to the fact that some participants may find particular questions uncomfortable. That said all participants answered these questions. Quantitative research was carried out by using the collated data from the questionnaire to help gain more knowledge. Some questions led to unexpected responses, so providing a blank area for the participant to expand, would have proved valuable and led to further questioning and more theoretical research. Some participants expanded in the space between questions and this information was invaluable, giving a personal account of their experience and views of knife crime, changing some answers to qualitative as well as quantitative data. Despite this, the research conducted was successful and answers were found for important issue in regard to knife crime. Gaps in knowledge from the literature review were found, as explained above and filling these gaps was a successful part of this piece of work. Research conducted supported theories found in the literature review, such as Lemert's Beckers's and Chase's, which was interesting as these theories are a number of years old and are still relevant in society today.

If this research were to be conducted in the future, the questionnaire would continue to be the research method of choice, however it would include space for participants to respond. This would allow the collation of both quantitative and qualitative data, allowing deeper analysis, taking in to account both the figures provided by the quantitative data and the information

retrieved from the participants accounts, from the qualitative data, making the research even more thorough.

5.4 Limitations

Originally interviews were to be an important research tool but due to Covid 19 restrictions these were unable to take place. Virtual interviews could have been conducted, but trying to arrange time slots proved difficult. Therefore a questionnaire became the best solution as participants could complete this in their own time, and return it with ease.

All questionnaires were returned, but not all were received by the allotted time, which meant the analysis of the results timeframe delayed. Covid also affected the dissertation in another manner, as after contracting the virus, work on the dissertation was stopped for around two weeks to recover, and had an effect on the time management side of the dissertation in terms of completing certain tasks by a specific date. These dates were pushed back in accordance and made the dissertation difficult to complete by the time wanted.

The strength of the research was found in the literature review in chapter two, although there were limitations here also. The literature review relied on online sources, online library and journals. More variable sources would have been nice to use, such as hard copy textbooks, journals and articles. Chapter three then allowed the questionnaire to find any flaws within the research conducted or find information to support it. Due to the restrictions in place regarding Covid-19 and the time restriction of the dissertation, finding people willing to participate was difficult, therefore the decision to switch solely a questionnaire was taken. This allowed participants to complete the questionnaire when they had time, and in turn more responses were received than expected. This switch allowed the research to be conducted and therefore receive the opinions of the public, which may not have been received if this switch hadn't been made.

It is worth considering that the research was conducted via questionnaire, so it may not be 100% accurate as participants could choose boxes randomly if they decided they didn't want to do it, this would mean that some answers given and analysed in chapter four may not be correct. This would be a disappointing issue if it were to be true, but after analysing the data and comparing this data to theories and research conducted in chapter two, this issue is not

believed to have occurred and that the data collected is that of true opinions from the participants.

5.5 Achievement of Aims and Objectives

The aims of this dissertation were achieved as the aim was to identify if youths, both white and from an ethnic minority background in the United Kingdom are given a label when it comes to knife crime. This was done via primary and secondary research. The objective was to gain knowledge and information to about knife crime to establish that knife crime is rising in the United Kingdom or if the media are using it to create revenue and in turn create a moral panic.

Six clear objectives were used to achieve this;

1. To analyse knife crime statistics and discover what changes need to be made by government to improve knife crime in the United Kingdom – this objective was met in chapter two, where knife crime statistics were analysed and government strategies were looked. Both in chapter two and chapter four recommendations were found on how the government can tackle knife crime in the future, such as school/college visits, educating parents and prisoners, more police officers on the streets in the United Kingdom and bigger funding for the police.
2. To evaluate and analyse knife crime within white people and ethnic minorities in the United Kingdom – primary research allowed to look into statistics on convicted knife crime offenders from both white people and people from an ethnic background, this came to light in the literature review in chapter two. Here interesting statistics were found, that individuals may not expect. This made for an interesting discussion and further questions on in the analysis of data in chapter four, and results of these can be found in question eight, in this chapter.
3. To evaluate and analyse knife crime within youths in the United Kingdom – in chapter two this objective was met. Although there is a rise in youths committing knife crime, there is also a lot of adults committing it, this suggests that knife crime is a problem that is apparent in all ages and not just within the youths of the United

Kingdom. This objective was also touched on in chapter four, under question three and eight, where participants believed that youths were committing more knife crime offences than older members of society, and in question eight where youths were analysed in further detail from the participants answers, specifically white youths and youths from an ethnic minority in committing knife crime.

4. Researching behavioural theories and seeing if there is a link to knife crime – this was achieved in chapter two, looking at Lemert's, Becker's and Cohen's theories were a big part in achieving this objective, and all three theories can influence an individual to commit knife crime. These theories analyse the behaviour of individuals in specific communities and the reasoning in why individuals may turn to crime. More research could be done in this area as there are many more theories and theorists to discover. This limitation allowed the research to focus on these specific theories, rather than researching a number of theories to find more specific detail and analysis, to be able to link it to knife crime in the United Kingdom.
5. Analysing knife crime influences from the media and seeing if the media create a moral panic rather than report it – in the literature review in chapter two this objective was analysed and Cohen's theory on moral panic was researched. Here it was found that the media tend to play on the darker areas in society, meaning the more gruesome crimes and this is where knife crime suits their need. Knife crime has a title that attracts readers, and for media outlets this is a dream. By having the term knife crime in a media article draws a reader to the article. By drawing the reader to the article it creates revenue for the media outlets via clicks, views, and sales of newspapers which will in turn make the media report on the topic more to generate more income, this will eventually turn into a moral panic within society.
6. The final objective was to research the public's opinions on knife crime in the United Kingdom. This was achieved in chapter four. Chapter three set out the methods that were going to be used in achieving this objective, chapter four is where the results of these methods were analysed. In chapter four there are fourteen questions in finding the public's thoughts on knife crime in the United Kingdom. Sixty four individuals from different ages, genders, jobs and backgrounds participated in the research, meaning there was a balanced view on the topic, and not a biased one. All individuals

completed the questionnaire in full meaning that the research was completed fully. Some answers given were ones of surprise, and others were expected. Many of the participants answers supported theories and research found in chapter two, which helped in achieving the aim of this dissertation.

5.6 Recommendations

The research conducted brought forward relevant information for this paper, however to make recommendations viable, more research needs to be taken. Research conducted in this paper consisted of a questionnaire, this would suggest that more research methods need to be undertaken to bring further perspective to light. For example, conducting a focus group or interviews along with a questionnaire/survey. A research area that could have been included in this paper as more of a forefront could be knife crime figures of women compared to men, as well as looking at figures in more detail about knife crime in different cities and town within the United Kingdom, instead of looking at knife crime figures of the United Kingdom as a whole. By doing this, the research would be more viable as it will be based on individual areas of the United Kingdom.

Conducting a focus group would bring individuals from all backgrounds together to discuss knife crime. This would then bring out the feelings of individual that may not have come to light if they were not in the focus group. The flip side of this could be that individuals may feel pressure in giving their true feeling of the topic if it clashes with another participants opinion. The focus group would need to consist of individuals from all backgrounds, so that a balanced view can be taken as knife crime can affect all members of society, not just young or old.

Interviews would be a great way to find the true feelings of the participants regarding knife crime. The researcher can interview people from all backgrounds, for example, different ages, genders, social status, and jobs. This would be interesting to see if these factors can alter their opinion on the topic. A negative for this method would be that to conduct several interviews would be time consuming, and when the researcher is tight to time with their schedule this could become a problem for them. The timeframe for this research has limited the investigation that has been conducted. If the researcher would be given more time, more

research methods could be utilised to gather more information and opinions from the participants. This would then give the researcher more data to analyse and draw from, and to form more opinions and ideas surrounding the topic, from the different research methods used.

5.7 Conclusion

Covid-19 is an unprecedented time and completing work in this time is difficult. Not having human contact in research and having research completed online was difficult. Completing this project in these times was a challenge, but hasn't been impossible. Gaining knowledge of knife crime and the statistics, looking at what is true and false and looking at behavioural theories, has been very interesting and one that has been enjoyable in difficult times such as lockdowns. It has helped with mental health and has helped keep the brain functioning and tested in these times. Completing this task in these times, although very difficult, has in some ways provided relief.

Knife crime is an issue that has been around for generations, but has spiked in recent times. Although worrying and upsetting it is not fair passing the blame to young people in society. Older adults are as much to blame for this, and members of the society as a whole in buying into the label of young people and knife crime. Media outlets are a huge factor in this in terms of labelling these groups of people, but these outlets seek headlines to attract readers. Knife crime can be decreased if it is dealt with correctly as some methods found through this dissertation, but to do this the government needs to provide the resources to the organisations who need funds most. Will this happen in the future? Only time will tell.

Word Count: 16,467

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7.0 Appendices

7.1 Questionnaire that participants answered for research.

THIS QUESTIONNAIRE WILL TAKE NO LONGER THAN 10 MINUTES TO COMPLETE. PLEASE READ THE QUESTIONNAIRE CAREFULLY AND COMPLETE IT TRUTHFULLY.

PLEASE CIRCLE YOUR ANSWERS AND FEEL FREE TO EXPAND ON THE QUESTION IF THE QUESTIONS ASKES TO DO SO. THANK YOU.

Name:

Date:

Gender: MALE / FEMALE / PREFER NOT TO SAY

Age: / PREFER NOT TO SAY

Ethnicity: /PREFER NOT TO SAY

1. Do you believe knife crime is high in the UK?

YES

NO

NOT SURE

2. Do you believe that knife crime is increasing in the UK?

YES

NO

NOT SURE

3. Do you believe that young people (under 25) are involved in knife crime more than older people (26+)?

YES

NO

NOT SURE

4. Do you believe that people of an ethnic minority background are involved in knife crime more than white people?

YES

NO

NOT SURE

5. Do you believe that men are involved in knife crime more than women?

YES

NO

NOT SURE

6. Do you think that the media makes out that knife crime is worse than it is?

YES

NO

NOT SURE

7. How many times would you say that you read/listened/watched something that is reporting knife crime on a weekly basis?

LESS THAN 3

4-7

8-11

12–15

16 +

8. Do you believe that there is a prejudice against young people from an ethnic minority more than young people from a white background? Why do you think this?

YES

NO

NOT SURE

WHY?

.....

.....

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.....

9. Have you ever been involved in a knife crime?

YES

NO

PREFER NOT TO SAY

10. Have you ever been a victim of knife crime?

YES

NO

PRFER NOT TO SAY

11. Have you ever witnessed a knife crime?

YES

NO

PREFER NOT TO SAY

12. Do you think that government is doing enough to support the police in tackling knife crime in the UK?

YES

NO

NOT SURE

13. Do you think that the police are doing a good job in reducing knife crime in the UK?

YES

NO

NOT SURE

14. Any suggestions on tackling knife crime in the UK?

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