

Women, Ethnicity and Trustworthiness Towards the Metropolitan Police Service.

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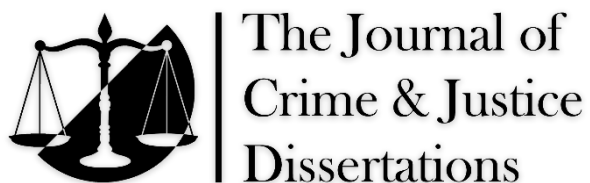
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Abstract

Trust in the Metropolitan Police Service (the Met) has significantly declined in recent years. The Met has lost the public's trust because of a number of high-profile incidents, see the murder of Sarah Everard, accusations of racial profiling as well as highly publicised homophobic, racist, and misogynistic messages between police officers on WhatsApp (Akram, 2022). The murder of Sarah Everard and other high-profile media reports on the Met Police have had a unique impact on women (Simon et al, 2021). As supported by the quantitative work of Simon et al (2021), women are indeed significantly impacted by the Met's failings. Other literature sources have collected data on both genders but haven't emphasised the greater failure in women's trust. This dissertation has identified the absence of qualitative data as a reason for the lack of in-depth understanding of women's trust towards the Met Police. Therefore, this research project fills this gap by using qualitative interviews with female students in London to gather answers to research questions based on women, ethnicity, and trustworthiness. The software NVivo helped in analysing the data gathered in this research project, which produced two themes: 'Ramifications of Police Failings', and 'Feelings of Influence'. Further research is needed to investigate the female perspective specifically regarding how the Met can change as to better promote public confidence. This study recommends that the Met can regain trust and legitimacy by understanding women's experiences and thoughts on the organisation.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

1.1 Introduction

Across the United Kingdom and the city of London there is a surge of distrust growing towards British Police forces. Namely, the Metropolitan Police Service operating across London has gained a population of people who no longer trust them, this comes after many controversial Police failings that have damaged public opinion (Brown, 2023). Moreover, many women have lost trust towards the Metropolitan Police and are affected due to these Police failings. Therefore, it is important and beneficial to research this problem and seek solutions. In addition, this chapter will discuss the importance of this issue, and the research questions that this paper aims to answer in relation to the research problem. Furthermore, this chapter will discuss the key terms throughout the project with their meaning, followed by the project's structure.

1.2 Key terms

One of the key terms and themes throughout this research project is trust. Trust is an important term in each chapter and therefore it is initially imperative to recognise what the concept of trust concludes, and why it is important to understand it. The definition of trust is different between authors and one's opinion of it, so there are many ways of defining what trust means. One way of describing the meaning of trust is to see it as a concept where a trustor (subject) and a trustee (object) are in some way dependent on each other (PytlikZillig and Kimbrough, 2016). Another way is described as a "binary relationship between two entities", these entities translate to a person and an organisation, and the confidence from the person that relies on the organisation being the relationship (Xiu & Liu, 2005, p. 483). Other authors argue that the refined concept of trust goes beyond the boundaries of rule following in an interdisciplinary way, this meaning that the concept of trust is explored through many different academic definitions and put together as one (Hupcey *et al.*, 2001). Overall, the concept of trust is how an individual feels towards other individuals, groups, organisations, and many other kinds of objects. Discussed through the data collection and thematic analysis from participants, trust is a key term and continues throughout this paper.

A second term throughout this project is distrust. As an opposite to trust, distrust is a term that comes up many times throughout this research project's chapters, but mainly throughout the thematic analysis sections. To define distrust is also a matter of individual opinion, and some authors argue that there are still gaps in people's knowledge on what distrust is compared to trust, and the relation

between the distrust and trust process (Six and Latusek, 2023). Another author argues that the state of distrust is a signal that things are not as they seem and do not appear normal, and this may be what the feeling of distrust is (Schul *et al.*, 2008). This research relies on the public's open-ended perceptions to ground the term 'distrust'. This approach to 'distrust' is similarly upheld by Hardin (2004) in stating, that just like trust, if one feels trust or distrust, then there are specific grounds for that distrust. Namely, Hardin (2004) accepts that the concept of distrust is highly interpretative and has a cause. It is useful therefore to ground such interpretations in public perception, as these are the recipients of the Police service. Indeed, their interpretations are arguably the most important for substantiating the term above any other. For this reason, the present research leaves the term distrust somewhat open-ended and relied on participants to define this term, to give it meaning.

1.3 The Research problem and research questions

In many recent years, the Metropolitan Police Service has been the main topic of controversy and Police failings in the media, resulting in a lack of public confidence and the resignation of Commissioner Cressida Dick in the year 2022. This event proceeded as a result of ongoing issues such as sexism, racism, discrimination, homophobia, and misogyny within the Metropolitan Police (Akram, 2022; Zempi, 2017; Gold, 2022). Although it may seem like controversial Police failings have started recently, they have not, an example being the infamous 1999 MacPherson Report on the 1993 racially motivated murder of Stephen Lawrence (Brown, 2007; Neal, 2003; Zempi, 2017). Another example being the Scarman Report published in 1981 following the Brixton riots (Neal, 2003). Modern examples of the Met's failings include the 2021 murder of female pedestrian Sarah Everard by Police Officer Wayne Cousins (Beighton, 2021), and the Police shooting of unarmed man Chris Kaba (Harrop, 2022). Furthermore, because the Metropolitan Police have caused problems around sexism and racism that have affected the trust of so many women (Rainbow, 2021; Jones, 2023; Simon *et al.*, 2021; Jordan, 2004), this research project will be investigating women's thoughts, feelings and opinions of their levels of trust towards the Metropolitan Police.

The dominant problem that is the focus of this research project is that, although the Met made mistakes many years ago, the trust levels of the public have continued to lower due to previous high-profile events, such as the failed murder investigation of Stephen Lawrence (Brown, 2023). In addition, women are specifically being affected by the Met's actions, with more than half of women no longer trusting the Metropolitan Police (Smith, 2023). Women are losing their feelings of safety in London, but the Met do not seem to be improving their reputation as a Police force to gain back trust from women (Casey,

2023). Therefore, this research project will be seeking data through qualitative research interviews with female students in London. This research will seek to answer the following research questions:

1. Are women from ethnic minority backgrounds in London more likely to have a lack of trust towards the Metropolitan Police?
2. To what extent do women of all backgrounds find that the Metropolitan Police has gained lack of trust through the media?
3. What do women believe is an efficient way of restoring trust and improving gender and racial issues in the Metropolitan Police?

1.4 Structure of the research project

Through relevant literature review in chapter two, gaps were found with a need for further research to find a greater understanding and a larger knowledge of women's distrust in the Metropolitan Police. Qualitative data collection through interviews are analysed in chapters four and five through the two found themes of 'Ramifications of Police Failings' and 'Feelings of Influence'. The methods to conduct the qualitative research are explained in methodology chapter three. In chapters four and five you will find thematic analysis of the research data, and chapter six is a discussion chapter that outlines the findings from the previous thematic analysis chapters. Lastly, chapter six is followed by a conclusion, bibliography, and appendices A and B.

Chapter 2: Literature review

2.1 Introduction

Researchers have made significant progress in understanding how and why trust in the Metropolitan Police has declined and how to improve it. However, there is still a need for more research to fill the gaps in the literature. This chapter first argues that the women's loss of trust in the Police is an important aspect to focus on when trying to research the media's impact on people's perspectives. This chapter also argues the significance of female ethnic minorities who are affected through the media. Another argument in this chapter points out that considering female perspective when giving a Police improvement briefing is a gap that needs to be filled. This is something to be explored in this project as well as it applying to the amount of domestic and female targeted crimes poorly handled by the Met Police. This chapter also aims to explore how female perspective has been impacted through further research in regard to the murder of Sarah Everard.

2.2 The reviewed literature

To begin, Hohl, Bradford and Stanko (2010) have contributed to the literature by examining how the media influences the public's perception of the police. This study is a meta-analysis that draws upon three prior work. The first of these works is a study on the mass media and public perception. Second is a real-world experiment to see how local newspapers and articles impact the public perception of the Police. Third is a study that examines perception information on public trust based on survey data from the first study (Hohl, Bradford, and Stanko, 2010). This third study finds that the press has small influence over public opinion, but positive Police communication through the press could enhance trust. It is through these data findings that the authors put together a conclusion of how media changes perceptions and follow theories such as the confidence model and procedural justice theory (Hohl, Bradford and Stanko, 2010). The first study the authors investigate looks at content analysis of newspapers that were printed between 2007 and 2010. Throughout this study it was a common finding that there were few reports on Police engagement, and this is something that could cause a lack of confidence because of the small amount of positive publishing's (Hohl, Bradford and Stanko, 2010). The second study found a positive response to Police trust through newspaper prints because of the Police reaching out and communicating through local newspapers, therefore creating a better feeling of trust. Other previous studies have also found an inseparable link between community engagement and Police fairness as they are closely correlated (Stanko and Bradford, 2009). However, since published in 2010,

there is a possibility that if updated now, study two could have different findings due to change in Police behaviour, and it is since proven that trust is still an issue more than a decade on (Smith, 2023).

The third study revealed that the people with a low perception of the Police are more likely to feel lied to due to Police behaviour, and their trust is impacted by the lack of communication from the Police (Hohl, Bradford and Stanko, 2010). Study three is additionally supported by Jackson and Bradford (2010) stating that there are strong links between the British public's perception of the cultural meaning of the Police and the assumptions that the public have of the Police. Furthermore, this third study finds that there is a more motive based trust in the Police, and this is not encouraged by the media, which as a platform, has a large influence on the public. The studies put together perceive that each newspaper may have different norms, images, and ideas of social norms that the Police intend, and suggests that this is not always a consistent theory (Hohl, Bradford and Stanko, 2010).

Overall, Hohl, Bradford and Stanko's (2010) study demonstrates that there is a strong relation between the topic of trust in the Metropolitan Police and the media. Due to this, there is a need for a gender and ethnicity gap to be filled within these authors' study as it is based on overall public perception, and is focused on all genders, ages, and ethnicities, rather than just women. Since 2010 there have been some important and significant events such as the murder of Sarah Everard, and Police officers being racially biased that have made a strong impact specifically on females of all ethnicities (Jones, 2023). The Met Police have also been forced to change their ways of policing, working towards a better plan to gain trust back by 2025 due to these events (Metropolitan Police, 2021). This gap in the literature will be explored through the qualitative data collection from female students and gain an insight into more updated Police perceptions and why they are caused. Additionally, it will be explored why women are made to feel such distrust, and how the media may have influenced this.

Farrow (2022) has also explored the subject of public confidence in the police. Provided by charity Cumberland Lodge, this briefing had been written on the legitimacy and confidence in policing and the criminal justice system from a public's perspective. Author Kathryn Farrow has investigated the falling rates of confidence in the Police throughout Britain, but more specifically, in the country's capital. Throughout research between 2016 and 2022, this briefing has looked not only into how British policing affects the people of Britain, but how Police forces across the world make their citizens feel in terms of confidence in them. (Farrow, 2022). Farrow discusses in the brief that there are worrying signs of decline in public confidence, and black people in the community have a significantly lower confidence rate in the Police than white or Asian people do. Farrow believes that having a Police service that represents the communities that it serves, is an important way of addressing the lack of trust and

confidence in them, and that it is crucial, now more than ever that Police concentrate on restoring the public trust (Farrow, 2022). This point by Farrow (2022) is upheld by Bradford, Jackson and Stanko (2009) who state that unsatisfactory encounters with the Metropolitan Police have a more negative effect on Police trust and positive experiences make a greater impact on legitimacy and trust. Prior to this literature, the Mayor of London, Sadiq Khan had taken on board research conducted into the public's confidence levels and had intended to restore them so that people feel safe again and regain trust (Khan, 2022).

Created for the purpose of recommendations to all the British Police, this literature piece has additionally created a movement for the Metropolitan Police so that they can recognise the issues of the declining confidence in them (Metropolitan Police, 2021). Throughout the briefing, Farrow has specified many times that the main issue of confidence specifically lies within London policing and that this is something that must be tackled immediately (Farrow, 2022). As this is a briefing, the researcher has found a gap in the literature that will permit further research to be conducted to attempt to seek how female members of the public can contribute in suggest new policing strategies to the Met that can assist them in improving their reputation. Due to the focus of this project being on women, ethnicity and trust, it is important to recognise that it has been acknowledged that Farrow (2022) is missing the key element of opinion from women who are most affected as an outcome of bad policing throughout recent years (Jones, 2023). Relevant questioning through qualitative research will be able to fill this gap and find ways that women can suggest ways of improvement for the Metropolitan Police's trust and legitimacy with women and the overall public. This gap being filled is something that can be compared to the proposed plan to improve trust in the Metropolitan Police that claims their vision is to be the most trusted Police force in the world (Metropolitan Police, 2021).

Another piece of literature relevant to the subject of female trust is a study created by End Violence Against Women. The Piece titled 'Almost half of women have less trust in the Police following Sarah Everard's murder' is a nationwide survey that has been taken for the purpose of exploring public confidence, and especially women's confidence in the Police. Sarah Everard's murder has made a significant impact on the perception of the British Police force and especially the Metropolitan Police. Therefore, the purpose of the study is to try and measure this impact. Authors Simon, Blyth, and Baird (2021) have taken an online sample of 1699 people across the country, of both men and women to share their thoughts on the Police over a twenty-four-hour period (Simon, Blyth, and Baird, 2021). The findings from the study show that 71% of women think that the culture of policing must change to respond better to violence against women and girls. 1 in 10 women are less likely to report to the Police

after the murder of Sarah Everard, and lastly 65% of people believe that the government need to do more to stop violence against women and girls (Simon, Blyth, and Baird, 2021). Furthermore, the study points out the Home Office's efforts by dedicating £5 million to keeping women safe. This goes towards things such as more CCTV and street lighting (Home Office, 2021). However, the study is firm to point out that these efforts still do not narrow down the cause of violence against women and girls (Simon, Blyth, and Baird, 2021).

Not only is this study important in showing the true negative impact that the murder of Sarah Everard has had on the nation, but additionally demonstrates that the government's efforts are no longer enough to recognise the problem and resolve it (Simon, Blyth, and Baird, 2021). The murder of Sarah Everard was committed by a serving Metropolitan Police officer, and this is essentially one of the main root causes of distrust towards the Metropolitan Police Service in most recent times (Simon, Blyth, and Baird, 2021). The first gap in this literature is the sample of women and men from around the country that Stop Violence Against Women have used in their study. Because this overall piece is a focus on the Metropolitan Police and no other Police forces in the country, it would make more sense to focus on women who live and work in London who have experienced the Metropolitan Police the most. A second gap to be filled in this literature is the use of quantitative data that has been collected by the authors. Instead of online surveys, this project will be collecting qualitative data. Therefore, by talking to women and hearing their thoughts and feelings in a private and safe setting, a gap will be filled to expand the limitations of a quantitative study and hear how women have responded to this murder. Throughout the research in this project, findings from females who study in London will show how their overall perspective has changed towards the Metropolitan Police since the murder of Sarah Everard, and in addition it will be researched how the media may have had an influence on this distrust.

2.3 Summary & Research Questions

To summarise, the prior arguments have drawn attention to the existing weaknesses in the literature regarding women, ethnicity, and trustworthiness in the Police, specifically the Metropolitan Police, and are therefore in subsequent need of further research. Therefore, the following research questions have been gathered:

Are women from ethnic minority backgrounds in London more likely to have a lack of trust towards Metropolitan Police?

To what extent do women of all backgrounds find that the Metropolitan Police has gained lack of trust through the media?

What do women believe is an efficient way of restoring trust and improving gender and racial issues in the Metropolitan Police?

Chapter 3: Methodology

3.1 Introduction

One of the main aims of this project is to allow women to talk freely and openly about their trust or distrust towards the Metropolitan Police Service and suggest ways of future improvement. The research additionally aims to seek if women of different ethnicities feel differently towards the Met and if the media plays a large part in influencing the female participants. Within the literature review, there were gaps identified, and to try and fill them, the research conducted would need to have an in-depth view of female opinions. Therefore, the optimum way to do this is through qualitative research. Furthermore, this study has conducted one to one interviewing with a total of six female participants who are all students in London universities.

3.2 Research strategy

The semi-structured interview method (Bryman, 2016) was applied as it permits all participants to answer the questions openly, this then produced the insightful answers looked for in this research project (Crowther-Downey and Fussey, 2013). By using pre-planned and written questions, the researcher could look for the optimum answers to the main research questions and make sure that the participant's answers are relevant to the topic. The choice of qualitative research over quantitative research was made due to the type of data that was needed, this is because quantitative research would not fulfil and support the needs of this study (Bryman, 2016). An example of this being, if the participant was answering a survey, they would not be able to speak in depth about a personal experience or opinion.

3.3 Sample

The sample began with two female students who study at London universities. These participants were obtained through the researcher's access to university resources. Once the individuals had been identified, snowball sampling was applied (Bryman, 2016: Crowther-Downey and Fussey, 2013) by enquiring whether other female participants wanted to take part in answering questions on the Metropolitan Police. This researcher also contacted known female students through student groups and forums on social media. The researcher conducted the interviews over an online video meeting in a remote room that was completely private. The interviews took place during suitable hours for both the interviewer and interviewee and permitted enough time for the questions to be answered properly,

taking no longer than half an hour. Before the interviews, all participants gave consent through a signed and dated consent form that had a provided information sheet that would inform participants of the details of the interview (See appendix A). All interviews were recorded on a phone and then transcribed and given back to the participant for them to view and check for any mistakes involving their answers. Once all data was checked over and agreed, it was then applied to the rest of the project.

3.4 Data analysis method

Once all the interview data was collected, the researcher used software NVivo and the grounded analysis theory to examine the data (Charmaz and Belgrave, 2015). The data analysis method chosen is thematic analysis. This form of analysis permits qualitative data to be analysed in a way that searches through the data to find and identify any patterns and report them (Braun and Clarke 2006). This analysis method describes data and uses interpretation in the process of finding codes and constructing themes. The software NVivo was found to be useful for gaining thematic insights into the data collected and would help to organise it (Bazeley. 2007).

3.5 Ethics

Before the interviews were to be taken, there were many measures put in place to ensure all ethics were met. To begin, a consent form/ information sheet (appendix A) was constructed and given to each applicant through email for them to sign and send back. This form ensured participants were consenting to several measures, including their consent for the answers to be shared throughout the project and used academically. The participant also consented to the interview being recorded, for a transcript to be taken, for any errors to be corrected, and for their answers to be quoted. The participants names and personal data remained anonymous, and this is something that was written in the consent form. Due to keeping the participant's identity anonymous, only the relevant information needed was included in chapters four and five of this research project. This method prevents readers from using jigsaw identification to find out who each participant is (Saunders *et al.*, 2015). Before participants agreed to the interview, it was ensured that any disability that the participant may have was known to the interviewer. There was also a trigger warning given to the participant before they began the interview, which would ensure that there was a warning in case of any upset or harm.

3.6 Limitations

The samples of students interviewed from the university had an age range from 20-50 and some, but not all, had personal experience with the Metropolitan Police. Although a slightly larger sample of participants would have been more satisfactory, the six interviews that were conducted brought a great deal of interesting data to light. In terms of ethnicity, the female participants included white- British, black- British, south American, and Asian. Although it is insightful to hear from a range of females from different backgrounds, the students that participated were respondents from a range of students that were asked and not individually selected. The six participants that took part did so by their own decision, and the others decided not to take part. However, due to the nature of the topic, it is possible that perhaps many females may have been more hesitant to answer such questions on the female's perspective of the Police, due to its controversy. Due to this issue, the project could further benefit from a larger and more willing sample of women to further give their opinions on the topic. As such, analysis of this data collected does not focus on the number of participants that took part.

Chapter 4: Ramifications of Police Failings

4.1 Introduction

Two key themes emerged from the six interviews that the researcher conducted with the sample of female students. The two themes were 'Ramifications of Police Failings' and 'Feelings of Influence'. Chapters 4 and 5 will now unpack these two themes and explain how they help answer the research questions.

4.2 Participants' answers

The first theme found throughout the data was 'Ramifications of Police Failings'. This theme was created through two second cycle codes of, 'distrust', and 'noticeable Police bias'. Throughout the coding of the interview data, there was a total of ten codes found. Within these there were common codes of 'uncertainty' and 'criticisms'. These codes were combined to create the second cycle code of 'distrust'. From the beginning process of transcription, it was clear to see that all participants had at least one or multiple forms of criticisms of the Metropolitan Police. One of the most common answers throughout the questioning referred to a controversial incident involving the Met Police, the murder of Sarah Everard. When asked "Do you trust the Metropolitan Police?", Participant 1 spoke of the following:

"...that force in particular has had negative stories coming from what they've done, for example, with the Wayne Cousins thing...", (Participant 1).

Another participant in relation to overall trust additionally gave a similar answer.

"...because of a lot of stuff that's going on in the media, you've got the Sarah Everard case and just things like that, it affects the entire Police force across the UK, I think particularly the Met, they miss out on a lot of bad stuff that they should have picked up on...", (Participant 2).

And again:

“for example, with Sarah Everard and how she was killed by a Police officer. And then how I've heard in some cases where Police officers have taken women and maybe raped them, but they feel like they cannot tell the Police officers because you know..”, (Participant 4).

With participant 4 making direct reference to murder and rape committed by a Police officer, this reference combines with the similar answers given by Participants 1 and 2 that also describe the murder of Sarah Everard as a negative story, and the Met having not picked up on things that they should have. These forms of criticisms are something that have repeatedly come up throughout the interview questions, but noticeably they mention the Sarah Everard case. Taken together, all answers by Participants 1, 2 and 4 to this question, demonstrate that there is one strong and common criticism of the Met Police, the high-profile murder of Sarah Everard.

Another section of the second cycle code ‘distrust’ is ‘uncertainty’, and this can be seen throughout several interview answers. When asked “Do you trust the Metropolitan Police?” many of the participants gave quick but unsure answers:

“...yes and no...”, (Participant 2).

“... yes and no, so its 50/50 I think...”, (Participant 4).

“...can I say I do and I don't? Yeah, I do. And I don't...”, (Participant 5).

As shown, the answers that Participants 2, 4 and 5 have given indicate the uncertainty of their feelings of trustworthiness, however these are not the only uncertain answers. When asked “what could be done to improve the Metropolitan Police’s confidence levels?” two of the participants displayed uncertainty within their answers:

“...so it's really hard because it's so easy to say what they're not doing right. But when you're saying, oh, okay, what should they do then? And you're like, oh, I don't know...”, (Participant 4).

“...I don't know, sorry, that's a tricky one. I don't know. That's all I've got...”, (Participant 5).

Participants 4 and 5 have displayed clear uncertainty within their answers when discussing improvements that could be made to increase confidence in the Met Police. It is this uncertainty that creates an expression of distrust, due to the constant problems that the Met has presented. Furthermore, the struggle to answer this question establishes one ramification of Police failings. The code of 'uncertainty' continues throughout other interview answers from many participants. When being asked "Would you agree or disagree that the streets of London are made safer for female pedestrians by Met Police officers?" four out of the six participants displayed uncertain parts of their answers, some stating:

"...I don't know. I'm not too sure on that. I feel like, I don't know what to say to that...", (Participant 4).

"...I'd say not necessarily because, well, I don't know...", (Participant 5).

"...No, not really, because I don't really have much understanding on that specific question...", (Participant 6).

With regards to the research question 'Are women from ethnic minority backgrounds in London more likely to have a lack of trust towards the Metropolitan Police?' evidence highlighting the participants' answers indicates a significant relation to ethnicity and trustworthiness of women. This is because only one out of the four participants that show evidence of 'uncertainty' are not from an ethnic minority background. Therefore, 'uncertainty' is shown from more ethnic minority participants' answers for the question "Would you agree or disagree that the streets of London are made safer for female pedestrians by Met Police officers?".

In contribution to the theme of 'Ramifications of Police Failings', a second cycle code of 'noticeable Police bias' was generated from the codes 'reference to gender differences' and 'awareness of racial issues'. Throughout the six questions asked to the participants, 30 'references to gender differences' were recorded. As all the participants were female, this demonstrates a strong contribution to the research question 'What do women believe is an efficient way of restoring trust and improving gender and racial issues in the Metropolitan Police?'. When asked "Explain your thoughts on the Met Police being labelled as a sexist institution by the media" participants stated:

“...when there are a few men who like being sexist and misogynistic I think it does reflect badly on the force as a whole and people then assume that every male officer’s like that...”, (Participant 1).

“...when I joined as a volunteer, it was like inside a football pitch. Only males.”, (Participant 3).

“...I think everything, well, everything that relates to sexual violence, domestic violence, crimes that occur. Uh, more to women or seem to occur more to women seem to have a, definitely a sexist approach...”, (Participant 4).

In confidence, Participants 1, 3 and 4 clearly stated in their answers that they felt that there was a form of sexism or gender inequality in the Met Police aside from the media portraying it. Participant 3 speaking as a volunteer of the Met describes the gender inequality “like a football pitch” being only males or mostly males in the force. This answer demonstrates that the deficiency in gender equality in the force seen by experience has given a feeling of Police bias and distrust. Participant 1 speaks of how the few officers that are caught being sexist portray an overall sexist look for the Met as an industry. This demonstrates that as a ramification of the bad actions of individual officers, female members of the public can portray the industry as sexist, and create the perception of Police bias and distrust, therefore being a ramification of Police failings.

As one of the most controversial topics of the Met Police, participants constantly addressed racial issues. Not only do racial issues occur often, but so does Police bias towards people of minority backgrounds, with dissimilar ages and genders, especially in use of Police powers such as stop and search (Yesufu, 2013). The code ‘awareness of racial issues’ displayed a total of 9 times in participants’ interview answers. The main question containing awareness of racial issues was ‘Would you agree or disagree that there is any relationship between a person's gender, age, and race and how the Met Police treat them?’ This question produced awareness of a type of racial issue from all six participants. Here are just some examples:

“...I would say obviously with race and different ethnicities have got a lot of institutional racism within the Police force I mean there's not a lot of ethnic minorities working for the Police, there's not enough diversity for them to understand how to deal with it...”, (Participant 2).

“...Young people, in the Youth Justice System, a lot of it is to do with their age and their race. That's a massive thing that we see a lot, so...”, (Participant 5).

Participant 2 states that there is a lot of institutional racism in the Met and not a lot of diversity in the people who work for them, therefore the Met struggles to understand how to deal with the racial issues due to the deficiency in diversity. Participant 5 uses their experience to elaborate the fact that it is common for younger people in the Youth Justice System to be targeted, with their race playing a large factor in this. Both answers give insight into the main issues that the Met are struggling to tackle, and overall show distrust from the participants. It is additionally insightful to see that all participants mentioned racial issues within the Metropolitan Police.

4.3 Conclusion

Overall, the theme of ‘Ramifications of Police Failings’ has displayed a range of opinions from women who feel that their view of the Met as an institution as well as its officers has been impacted by certain events, failings and police behaviours and has reflected many feelings of uncertainty but also solid opinions.

Chapter 5: Feelings of Influence

5.1 Participants answers

The second theme generated from the data is 'Feelings of Influence'. Created from combined second cycle codes of 'acknowledgement' and 'certainty', 'feelings of influence' expresses the participants' mentions of 'personal experience', 'being made to feel safer', 'media influence', 'suggested improvements', and 'compliments' throughout the interview questions. Three of the codes that make up the second cycle code of 'acknowledgement' are 'media influences', 'suggested improvements', and 'compliments'. Throughout the questions, all six participants made 24 mentions of 'suggested improvements'. Having improvements suggested to the Met Police is a beneficial way to try and improve trust and the Police experience for females. From their bad reputation, the Met promotes negative feelings of influence that encourage women to want better treatment. When asked, 'Please describe in your opinion your thoughts on whether you think the Metropolitan Police Service fulfils their role in protecting women from violence', participants stated:

"...not taking victims seriously, like the victim's code, and I know that type of thing they don't always investigate properly, so on their first response from the first on scene to take each victim seriously and not think it's fake...", (Participant 1).

"...just building up relationships with the community, having more empathy, and just maybe more training...", (Participant 6).

Participants 1 and 6 both acknowledge the improvements that are needed towards women when policing. Participant 1 states that the police do not take some female victims' cases seriously and suggests a proper investigation, while Participant 6 proposes improving community relations.

The mention of media strongly acknowledges another form of 'influence'. This contributes towards the research question 'To what extent do women of all backgrounds find that the Metropolitan Police has gained lack of trust through the media?'. Not only mentioned by the participants, but also in many newspapers in recent times. It is not untrue that the media produces many articles on the Met Police, and if not most, then all of them are negative, and this can create a bad 'influence' (Graziano, 2018). When asked, 'Explain your thoughts on the Met Police being labelled as a sexist institution by the media' Participants 1 and 5 stated:

“... what you see in the media does affect your own opinion and view on it massively I think...”, (Participant 1).

“...the media does not help at all, you know, not making the Police look like they're good or trying to help people at all...”, (Participant 5).

Both participants agreed that the media plays a major role in shaping public perception of the Metropolitan Police. Participant 5 believes the media doesn't assist the Met at all. During interviews, participants mentioned relation to the media 24 times, all of which relate to its influence on public opinion.

The last code that makes up the cycle code of “acknowledgement” is ‘compliments’, and this is something that is not often heard about. Although the media reports on the Met Police's shortcomings, they also acknowledge the Met's professionalism and success. From their opinion and experience, some participants stated:

“...But in some ways, there are very good Police officers, and they try their best to respond to the public and respond to a female as well...”, (Participant 3).

“...but I think through recent years they have tried to combat that. And although it's not perfect, you know, it's still down to the individual officer...”, (Participant 4).

Although a compliment to the Met was only displayed a total of 5 times by the participants, they still acknowledged that the Metropolitan Police are not always unprofessional. Participant 4 demonstrates their confidence in the Police making improvements, and Participant 3 acknowledges that some officers respond to females well. These positive experiences can influence an overall positive opinion of the Met.

The code ‘compliments’ leads on to the second part of ‘Feelings of Influence’ that is ‘certainty’. The second cycle code of ‘certainty’ is made up of codes ‘personal experience’ and ‘being made to feel safer’. ‘Being made to feel safer’ can contribute to a better and broader perspective of the Met Police, especially if someone has had a positive experience. Two of the participants displayed an experience with the Met that made them feel safer:

“...I have had experiences where in London when it's a bit crazy and chaotic, when you see a Police officer I would say I feel safer when I see the Police because they are there obviously to help you out when you need them...”, (Participant 2).

“...if I witnessed a crime, I would tell the Police because I personally haven't experienced anything to tell me differently. So my personal experiences have been good, and have been positive...”, (Participant 4).

Both participants showed ‘certainty’ with their confidence for the Met, as they felt they could rely on them to keep people safe, and report crimes due to their positive experiences. These types of experiences can also contribute to a more positive outlook on the Met.

Lastly, one of the most influential things for a person’s opinion is personal experience, and throughout the interviews, personal experience was brought up 12 times. The Metropolitan Police often face problems and controversy due to multiple bad personal experiences. The media has reported this many times, creating a loss of trustworthiness. Most of the participants share their unsatisfactory experiences, stating:

“...So I work in probation and even at work, I had a case the other day where we had to get the Police involved but the way they acted towards me that day was horrendous. They were really rude, really abrupt. So that sort of makes your trustworthiness go down...”, (Participant 5).

“...I've had a friend that's had dealings with the Police and the way that they resolved her issue wasn't even satisfactory to them, I felt...”, (Participant 6).

And one insightful comment:

“...but I personally haven't had that towards myself but then again I am a white female...”, (Participant 1).

It is evident that most of these personal experiences are negative and it is clear that this creates a certain influence of ‘distrust’ that Participant 6 has expressed through the bad treatment of her friend by the Met. Participant 5 has also been honest and spoken of a bad experience they have witnessed in

the workplace. The comment made by Participant 1 is interesting to hear and contributes to the research question, 'Are women from ethnic minority backgrounds in London more likely to have trust problems with the Metropolitan Police?' As it demonstrates an insight into racial issues from someone who is not from an ethnic minority background.

Throughout the data analysis there was one code named 'Big headlines' that was rolled into a second cycle code of 'negativity'. These codes were not included in the creation of themes, but collected the moments where participants would talk about some of the biggest controversial headlines, such as the murder of Sarah Everard, the murder of Stephen Lawrence and the inappropriate WhatsApp messages sent between serving Met officers.

5.2 Conclusion

Throughout the theme of 'Feelings of Influence' participants displayed a range of experiences that are influenced by police acts, behaviour, and public treatment. This information is insightful to how females perceive the met through the way that they work, and how police officers can change female opinions through their behaviour.

Chapter 6: Critical discussion

6.1 Introduction

This chapter builds from the prior data analysis chapter that argues that Ramifications of Police Failings and Feelings of Influence were found from female participants throughout the qualitative data, due to forms of media influence and events such as the murder of Sarah Everard. In support of this overarching argument, this section demonstrates how the prior data analysis themes of Ramifications of Police Failings and Feelings of Influence, supports Hohl, Bradford and Stanko's Influencing Trust and Confidence in the London Metropolitan Police (2010) in finding that the media have a large responsibility in influencing distrust in the Met Police. In addition, this section argues that the findings given by the participants fit with suggesting improvements to help the Metropolitan Police. This supports Farrow's Cumberland Lodge (2022) briefing on improving trust and legitimacy. Furthermore, this chapter argues that the murder of Sarah Everard has had an extreme impact on the female perspective of the Police in London, thus supporting Simon, Blyth and Baird (2021) on the impact that this murder has had on female trust. Together, these points synthesise the prior data analysis chapter findings with the literature presented in chapter 2, to argue that the overall female perspective in London towards the Met Police is heavily impacted by the media, and deficiency in diversity, but additionally represents how females think the Met can improve their performance and gain back trust.

6.2 Revisiting Hohl, Bradford and Stanko (2010)

The prior data analysis chapter of 'Feelings of Influence' supports Hohl, Bradford and Stanko's (2010) findings that the media is largely responsible for the influence of bad perception and distrust in the Metropolitan Police. While chapter 5 of the present study found evidence that women feel "the media does affect your own opinion and view on it massively" and "the media does not help at all", Hohl, Bradford and Stanko (2010, p.133) observed "Feeling the Police are not transparent and forthcoming in keeping the public informed is closely linked to a lack of and low levels of trust". This study also similarly found "Levels of trust vary more amongst those with low levels of perceptions of Police information provision" (Hohl, Bradford and Stanko, p, 133, 2010). Whilst there are some differences between how the people who do trust the Police and the people who do not are influenced, Hohl, Bradford and Stanko (2010) capture how the Metropolitan Police's lack of transparency through the media induces a distrust towards them. This evidence in the 2010 study supports the response from the participants in this present study that declare that the media does not help their perceptions. The theme of 'feelings of influence' is supported through the work of Hohl, Bradford and Stanko (2010)

regarding the public response to the Met, this contributes to the theme of Ramifications of Police Failings. Namely, if the Metropolitan Police made a stronger effort to improve trust through the media, then more trust could be achieved.

Hohl, Bradford and Stanko's (2010) findings of how types of media coverage affect perceptions of the Met additionally supported the two prior data analysis themes of Feelings of Influence and Ramifications of Police Failings. In this present study, chapters 4 and 5 both demonstrate how different types of media have an effect on the female perspective "because of a lot of stuff that's going on in the media, you've got the Sarah Everard case and just things like that" and "not making the Police look like they're good or trying to help people at all". Hohl, Bradford and Stanko (2010 p, 49) observe in figure 3 that the type of media covered between 2007 and 2010 reported that positive topics such as 'treatment in direct encounters' and 'community engagement' were at a low. This 2010 study demonstrates that the lack of positive Police reporting can create more of a distrust in the public. The current study establishes that the change in media since 2010 has covered only the most catastrophic Police events instead of the positive events, affecting trust in the Met Police. This furthermore supports the theme of Feelings of Influence. In addition, if the media were to cover more positive topics on the Metropolitan Police, then this might possibly contribute to a broader trust within the public opinion.

6.3 Revisiting Farrow (2022)

Chapters 4 and 5 present evidence that supports Farrow (2022) regarding the previously found theme Ramifications of Police Failings in hearing suggested Police behaviour improvements from the public. Chapter 5 in the present study found evidence that women wanted to suggest improvements to the Met Police by stating "building up relationships with the community, having more empathy" along with "first on scene to take each victim seriously", Farrow (2022 p,29) detects that "treating others with respect" and "making reasonable decisions" are ways in which the Met should approach their work. Whilst the Police already aim to improve on such behaviour (Metropolitan Police, 2021), both Farrow (2022) and the present study, suggest that the public still want more from the Met, thus supporting the theme of Ramifications of Police Failings and contributing to the evidence of lack of trust. Noticeably, the Metropolitan Police should take on more female feedback and suggestions on how they can improve trust, confidence, and legitimacy.

The prior data analysis chapters discuss participants' response to present racial issues displayed by the Met Police, and this is supported by Farrow's (2022) briefing in displaying racial events that have created distrust. Chapter 4 under the theme of Ramifications of Police Failings demonstrates evidence

of females' awareness of racial issues in the Met, "I mean there's not a lot of ethnic minorities working for the Police, there's not enough diversity for them to understand how to deal with it". Farrow (2022 p,27) observes the current difficulties of diversity within the Met "As of September 2021, 7.9% of Police officers in England and Wales were BAME" and points out that "Over a quarter of forces in England and Wales do not have a single Black officer" (Farrow, 2022). Whilst the 2022 study was published a year prior to the current one, Farrow still supports the evidence of lack of diversity in the Met. This lack of diversity demonstrates how female members of the public feel distrust due to the Met's faults. To improve racial issues, the Met must become more diverse, as suggested by each female participant and in the Cumberland Lodge briefing "Only with significant progress in this area will the Police begin to reflect the communities they serve" (Farrow, 2022 p,27). The evidence in this present study indicates that no individual female has specifically noticed racial issues within the Met, and that each participant has commented on it. Conclusively, the Met need to improve on their diversity within the force to then fix the racial issues that have caused women to have distrust in them.

6.4 Revisiting Simon, Blyth and Baird (2021)

Chapter 4's theme of Ramifications of Police Failings support Simon, Blyth, and Baird's (2021) evidence of women's loss of trust due to the murder of Sarah Everard by Met Police officer Wayne Cousins. Within the data analysis chapter is evidence that supports how the qualitative data has gathered women's acknowledgment of the incident "Um, for example, you know, with Sarah Everard and how she was killed by a Police officer". Other evidence states "that force in particular has had negative stories coming from what they've done, for example with the Wayne Cousins thing". Simon, Blyth and Baird (2021) observe that "47% of women and 40% of men reported declining trust in the Police following the case's publication" and additionally found that "1 in 10 women (10%) would be less likely to report sexual assault to the Police following the Sarah Everard case". This study shows that women's distrust in the police has increased due to the Sarah Everard case, and the 'Stop Violence Against Women' study's statistics support this finding. Ramifications of Police Failings is additionally demonstrated through the ramification of the murder of Sarah Everard as causing women to feel distrust. Overall, the murder of Sarah Everard has had a significant impact on the public and specifically women's trust in the Metropolitan Police.

6.5 Conclusion

This chapter has argued that the Metropolitan Police has caused distrust through media influence, failings in Police actions, and lack of diversity within the force. This chapter has supported this claim by demonstrating how the findings from the previous data analysis chapters support the work of Hohl,

Bradford and Stanko (2010), Farrow (2022) and Simon, Blyth and Baird (2021). Meanwhile, the present research has provided evidence that women in London specifically have a distrust towards the Metropolitan Police due to Police failings that involve gender and race. This chapter furthermore demonstrates that, although the Met already have a plan to improve their reputation, they will need to further work with female members of the public to achieve this. In summary, there is a reasonable evidence-base to reform the Police. Namely, to boost female's trustworthiness of the Police, reformers should further educate and employ the right officers so they can engage and help females of all ethnicities who rely on them and gain a trustworthy and sustainable reputation.

Chapter 7: Conclusion

7.1 Introduction

The Metropolitan Police Service has endured many failings over the years that have had a great impact on the public's trust, specifically women. Social attitudes towards the Met have been changed due to the representation of police failings presented through the media.

The examination of previous studies found that there is a strong link between the Metropolitan Police and the media in causing distrust. It has additionally found that the murder of Sarah Everard is one of the main causes of women's distrust in today's society, and police briefings have the sole aim of regaining public distrust.

The literature has both quantitative and qualitative research to uncover data based on all types of people in the public. Therefore, a gap was identified in the literature, specifically females' trust and opinions and how they are impacted, but additionally how they could help with suggesting ways the Police could gain back trust. This then formed research questions as it is valuable to see how females trust has been impacted by the media, and how much of an impact the murder of Sarah Everard has had on their opinions of the Met. It would additionally permit females to give suggestions on problems they think the Met can improve upon to help them gain back trust within the public. To find such females to help answer these research questions, a snowballing method between female students studying in London was formed on a basis that they were willing to participate, or if they had any previous insight that they wanted to share. The research collected a total of 6 contributors.

From the data, two themes occurred. The first was Ramifications of Police Failings. This examined how the consequence of failings by the Met was a loss in trust and a large change in opinion by women. The second theme, feelings of influence, found the link between distrust and the media, demonstrating that the medias reporting on police failings is a reason for lack of trust.

7.2 Research question one

The answer to the question 'Are women from ethnic minority backgrounds in London more likely to have lack of trust towards the Metropolitan Police?' in this study is clear and solid. Throughout examining the data collected, the answer to this question appears to be untrue. Every female participant shared their distrust in the Met and with reason, and this was not singled down to a specific

ethnicity. All six participants were not of the same ethnicity, yet all of them stated how they distrusted the Met in one form or another. Therefore, in this study, it was clear to see that the participants of an ethnic minority background have just as much distrust in the Metropolitan Police as the participants who are not of an ethnic minority background.

7.3 Research question two

The answer to the second the question ‘To what extent do women of all backgrounds find that the Metropolitan Police has gained lack of trust through the media?’ confirmed that this extent was wide. The lack of communication from the Met to the media has affected females, especially after reports of the Sarah Everard case. Many times throughout the qualitative data collection, females would mention the influence of the media from their own opinions. The case of Sarah Everard was additionally brought up many times as a way of explaining that as one of the most reported Police failings, this murder had significantly affected their trust. Many participants believed that if the media published only positive reports about the Police, then most people would trust them again. These participants additionally believe that this would rarely happen. Overall, and to a large extent, the media has influenced all six participants’ trust.

7.4 Research question three

The answer to the question ‘What do women believe is an efficient way of restoring trust and improving gender and racial issues in the Metropolitan Police?’ differs. Some examples given by participants believe that creating more diversity within the Met will help give more understanding and additionally solve many racial problems. To gain back trust, the police can reflect this onto the public, creating a positive improvement. Participants believe that this is a solution as there is not enough diversity in the recruitment of police officers.

When it came to gender issues, participants believed that not only should more female Police officers be recruited in the Met, but female officers should be placed more on dealing with crimes such as domestic violence. Participants suggested this because they believed that female officers would have a more caring and sympathetic approach to victims. Additionally, participants suggested that the building of a better relationship with the public is what is needed to regain trust. Overall, many participants had suggested improvements, and this is something that could be considered by the Met as it could make a positive future impact.

Further qualitative research could most definitely be made towards these research questions. A more lengthy study conducted permitting data collection from a larger group of female participants is beneficial to get a better insight into female distrust, and how they think the Met can improve. A further study with more participants may additionally find a broader range of opinions and reasons why females may or may not trust the Metropolitan Police to discover if a larger sample suggests that the first research question in this study is to be answered differently. This information could be further utilised in the promotion of the Met Police gaining back trust from the public. This would then suggest a new reform for the Met, providing that they adhere to what the public feel is needed to help them feel safe.

7.5 Final conclusion

In closing, this research identified a gap within criminological literature surrounding people's trust in the Metropolitan Police and has demonstrated how females can have a great contribution in helping the Metropolitan Police Service gain back trust from the citizens of London. There is still work that can be completed towards this cause, particularly around gathering more data and an insight into the female opinion. By extending our knowledge towards this problem, more can be done to ensure that the Metropolitan Police is using their absolute optimum resources and efforts to gain back trust after such terrible failings on their behalf, and overall recover the trust of the public and make London feel like it is in safer hands once more.

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Appendix: NVivo code example

Name	Files	References	Created on
<input type="radio"/> Acknowledgement	1	1	23 Mar 2023 at 18:...
<input type="radio"/> Compliments	1	5	21 Mar 2023 at 15:15
<input type="radio"/> Media influence	1	24	21 Mar 2023 at 11:38
<input type="radio"/> Suggested improveme...	1	24	21 Mar 2023 at 12:...
<input type="radio"/> Certainty	1	23	21 Mar 2023 at 11:20
<input type="radio"/> Made to feel safer	1	2	21 Mar 2023 at 12:...
<input type="radio"/> Personal experience	1	17	21 Mar 2023 at 12:...
<input type="radio"/> Distrust	1	1	21 Mar 2023 at 21:05
<input type="radio"/> Criticisms	1	43	21 Mar 2023 at 12:...
<input type="radio"/> Uncertainty	1	22	21 Mar 2023 at 11:32
<input type="radio"/> Negativity	1	1	27 Mar 2023 at 12:...
<input type="radio"/> Big Headlines	1	10	27 Mar 2023 at 11:52
<input type="radio"/> Noticable police bias	1	1	24 Mar 2023 at 16:...
<input type="radio"/> Awareness of racial iss...	1	9	21 Mar 2023 at 13:...
<input type="radio"/> Reference to gender dif...	1	30	21 Mar 2023 at 11:42