Crime Minister:

The Harms of Power and Policy.

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Abstract

This dissertation investigates the contemporary shifting political leadership of the United Kingdom and how policy choices have resulted in significant social harm. This work argues that there are patterns of problematic policy reform that has been spearheaded by the UK political establishment. In support of this argument, this dissertation offers a critical analysis of original semi-structured interviews with experts in the field of criminology and policy reform. The findings are clear: senior political forces have caused avoidable harm in UK society and moving forward, a new model for positive (harm preventing) reforms should be established.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

Valgarðsson et al (2021) have referred to the recent political affairs in the United Kingdom as chaotic, disgraceful, and shameful. In the last fifteen years, the UK has seen scandals, recklessness, crimes, and ethical violations. They were by the institution whose role is to protect the public and public interest. The policies and actions of those in power are alarming. They have harmed millions, causing crime, illness, exclusion, and death. Most recently, there have been new discoveries of Government illegal activity. But, there have been no consequences. For example, there was misconduct related to COVID-19 (Bennister, 2023). This chapter will outline the key methodological issues of social harm. It will cover the impact of Government policies and members' actions on society and trust in democracy. It will also cover how harms from power and policy affect citizens (Mulgan, 2007). Social policies are comparable to criminal justice policies, as they both seek to function in the interest of society. Widespread studies on the effects of the criminal justice system on those of low socio-economic status are available. Yet, the formation and continuation of harm through the framework of Government power on the less powerful seems lacking. Few studies focus on political harm and offending. Yet, these issues affect most of the UK (Winlow and Measham, 2016). The aim is to find overarching or opposite concepts. They are key to the topic of this research project. They will be of use to build support for future changes in research and policy. These changes will come from the themes found (Lumsden and Winter, 2014). It is to expose links to harms and crimes by the very bodies that decide what those are. They decide who the culprit is, what the punishment is, and why it is so (Kiely and Swirak, 2021). This inspired research into earlier governments and harm from social policy. It found that studies and literature show similar interest (Pearce, 1976; Box, 1983; Kramer et al., 2002; Tombs, 2018). Exploring prior Government policy and authority aided the understanding of power dynamics. It showed how they cause harm in society. It also led to thinking about innovation. This research aims to understand the social composition of power interactions in a democratic society. The aim is to prevent harm and aid accountability for the future. The findings contributed to a framework for justified, harm-preventing action and policy. It will help future Prime Ministers and governments make informed decisions. This study aimed to test if political measures lead to or permit social harm. The research showed where the institution should worry for society. It should worry about crime and harm. Crime is only an option for those without power. Democracy fades as government grows more complex. The Prime Minister and Cabinet members decipher crime. A democracy selects leaders with meticulous consideration. British society faces many problems, yet the Prime Minister's efforts do more harm than good. The most recent figure of societal dissatisfaction in the Government is at 80%, the highest since records began at 80% (McKay

et al., 2023). The researcher designed the study to determine if society has normalised the harms of social policy and if it is possible to change these norms. It was to examine where the focus should be in political and social matters. Does power and crime beat harm? And, how would this affect society's future? Experts in the field provided an understanding of power and policy construction. This research includes a literature review using secondary sources. It builds a framework for the research question. The next chapter outlines the methodology, sample selection, and ethics needed for the study. The next chapter of the study presents the findings and analysis of four themes, “The Real Enemy”, Protest and Acquiesce, “Golden Ticket”, and Grenfell: A Metaphor. This follows with a conclusion and recommendation for future change and research.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

2.1 Introduction

This literature review will explore whether the power of status at the top of the Parliamentary office affects the outcome of criminal policy and practices compared with those with less power and influence. It will also outline the impact of government policy on society concerning the victims of those policies, the harms, and fatalities they cause, and why the "respectable criminal" remains unimpeachable (Ross, 2017). It will provide a critical and zemiological approach to the structures of the criminal justice systems in place, and the direct cause and effect of Government policies on the already marginalised members of society (Davis and White, 2023). It will demonstrate how punitive policies by the elite are criminal and are more destructive than deviant behaviour conducted by ordinary member of society (Tombs and Whyte, 2018). Many studies of the powerful focus on the relationship between money and power, such as state-corporate crimes or white-collar crimes, this literature review will focus on power and recklessness, where there may be no individual motive for personal gain behind the decisions made but the recklessness is ruinous for many (Box, 1983).

Montesquieu advocated for a separation of powers[1], that each 'organ' of the state should not intertwine but should scrutinize one another to aid authenticity[2]. The Legislative is a branch of the Government whereby members of Parliament in the House of Lords and House of Commons whose roles are to deliberate over potential legislation that theoretically members of society and is accountable to the Executive (Case, 2021), the Government is the elected cabinet and Prime Minister. For Montesquieu, aristocracy within government or each house of Parliament can lead to a more competent and balanced Government, yet with Prime Ministerial executory powers, quick decision-making may be effective, yet despotism can cause oppression (Waldron, 2013). Each branch is intended to check and balance the other to reduce corruption and secure integrity (Waldron, 2013)[3]. Democracy

1 Before this era, the Magna Carta [1215] bill was created to establish rights to all against tyranny of the King and nor the King John of England, or his Government shall be superior to the law and that liberty should be fought for (Walsh, 2006). It is deemed to be the founding document towards evolving into the Criminal Justice system in England and Wales and the Human Rights Act [1998]. Documentation from the C13th notes the first use of the term 'Parliament' or the 'Great Council' were used to describe elected agents to aid the King in upholding the law in counties or shires (Helmholz, 2016).

2 In contemporary Britain, there are three branches of the state under the separation of powers responsible for creating laws, implementing them into policies and practices (Waldron, 2013).

3 Each minister must follow the ministerial code which makes references to honesty, integrity and to be accountable for their actions 2022 (Gov, 2022). Furthermore, each member of parliament is to follow the Local Government Authority Code of Conduct which is in place to ensure public trust within democracy (Gov, 2020).

is imperative in order to have a legitimate government and a functioning criminal justice system (Ross, 2017)[4].

2.2 Crimes, Harms, Power & Policy

The objective of the rule of law is to uphold norms and values within society, to protect law-abiding citizens from maltreatment of others and human rights, deter crime and punish those who participate, right to a fair trial and a transparent, honest Government that operates in the best interests of the public who democratically elected them (Bowie and Renan, 2021). However, those who are entrusted to do so sometimes fail to conduct fairness and obey regulatory measures. Violation of laws by those who implement them results in societal uncertainty, damaging policies resulting in rising crisis and crime rates for the powerless, widespread social harms and even fatalities (Tombs, 2018). Additionally, crime is designed on behaviours that most likely would not concern those with power, influence and wealth and should they do so, would be deemed an oversight, mistake, or negligence (Kramer and Michalowski, 2002). Furthermore, Marxism examines how power is unequally dispersed within society, that the ruling class are unconcerned with or potentially disregard their oppression of lower classes, and that Government is a coercive, self-serving, fraudulent hegemony operating under the guise of populist consent (Jessop, 2012)[5]. According to Box (1983), crime is not socially constructed but rather constructed by autocrats through social exclusion, disparities of equality, corruption, and power imbalances. This leads to social harm as actions or omissions committed by the Government and their policies are more often than not decriminalised (Yar, 2012). Zemiology interlinks with critical criminology as critically, the concern is the structure of the criminal justice system[6]. Zemiology focuses on responses and accountability to causes of harm. Furthermore, that crime causes harm, and why harm is neither criminal action nor inaction despite clear, intentional, or senseless suffering being imposed (Copson, 2018).

The Government describes crimes and harms caused by itself as disasters, negligence, and failures. The Government often refuses to show remorse or accountability for the aftermath or victims. The lack of due process, culpability, or justice results in a double victim of those affected, and many would deem the choices made by the Government as criminal, abhorrent, and evil if committed by an 'ordinary'

4 Without democracy the death penalty may still be in place were it up to Politicians or Prime Ministers alone and, a YouGov poll between 2018 to 2023 shows that the favourability or unfavorability of capital punishment is either coequal or ambivalent (YouGov, 2023), meaning that more than half of death penalties could result in miscarriages of justice, public turmoil, and a despotic establishment (Ross, 2017).
5 Following on from Enlightenment, individual autonomy and liberty is essential for self-constitution, yet Marxists would maintain this is only possible through transformation of social entirety (Yar, 2012).
6 Furthermore, that social policies and problems do not fully interest the oligarchs and despots in control.

citizen (Tombs, 2018). The Prime Minister of the elected party is essentially responsible for Government policies and decisions (Whyte, 2015). Formerly[7], a multitude of the British public have been subjected to policies that affect their quality of life, shortages to basic needs and human right violations, either in the name of neoliberalism, capitalism, political pressure, power and control, or omission (Davis and White, 2023). In contemporary society, this is reflected in the number of distrust in the Government. In 2021, a survey comprising 30,000 participants revealed that two-thirds or around 63% feel that politicians are out for themselves and less than 10% feel they are working to better their country (IPPR, 2022)[8].

It is the elite, the powerful and the exclusively, privately educated members of parliament[9] that constitute what is criminal behaviour. They can also generate poverty, crisis and suffering for millions (Davis and White, 2023). Additionally, policies and criminal justice systems are designed to provoke fear in the public to abstain from criminal activity and favourability of the public vote by those who create them[10]. However, those at the top of 'laying down the law' are oxymoronic, being lawmakers and lawbreakers themselves, causing widespread harm and death (Box, 1983). However, those at the top of 'laying down the law' seldom face criminal justice consequences, unlike lower-class members of society and those with less power (Raymen, 2019)[11].

2.3 Thatcher & Neo-Liberalism

Prime Ministers and members of parliament have implemented policies and laws that have negatively affected millions of people and have contributed to rising crime figures (Jennings et al., 2020). In 1979, neo-liberalism underpins Margaret Thatcher's Conservative Government. Thatcher promised to fight crime, to help the family and to create a more prosperous country[12], however, this would be far from

7 Focussing on the last five decades.

8 The study shows that this distrust in democracy and leadership comes from failures of the Government that affect the many. Lack of ownership, criminal responsibility and accountability typically escapes the elite, thus causing victims on a mass scale as a direct result of Government (Tombs, 2018).

9 With most elected members of the 2019 general election having studied at Oxford, Cambridge, and the London School of Economics.

10 Crime is a socially constructed concept which is influenced by culture, societal and political demands, and what is criminal alters over time which is meant to fulfil the everchanging needs of the public.

11 There is sufficient evidence that illustrates the correlation between social class, socio-economic factors and higher crime rates and imprisonment figures. In 2022 alone, London recorded 52% more crimes in the most impoverished areas, 2.1 times more for violence, sexual offences and robbery than compared with the least disadvantaged areas (TFL, 2023). This is not an indication that those who are indigent are intrinsically deviant yet that crimes have been constructed to presume criminality dependant on social class (Young, 2017). Robert Merton's theory of strain amongst the working class explains that opportunities for success escape the working class due to their lack of wealth, status, and worth which places a prerequisite to commit crime to achieve socially approved aspirations (Young, 2017).

12 Winning 7,878 more votes than the opposition.

reality (Reiner, 2007)[13]. Under Thatcher's reign, she implemented an unprecedented hike in interest rates to shrink inflation, while this was successful it also destroyed the workforce sector and unemployment, specifically in the industrial sector (Webster, 2023). Thatcher deemed that high earners paying tax was a disincentive to work and cut tax from 83% to 60% for the highest earners under the 'trickle down economics' theory, which favours the rich financially when combined with cuts to housing, education, and welfare, this dismantles social cohesion. Also, the ideology was to promote consumerism and to increase wealth, competition, and range of services for oligopolies (Whyte, 2015). Thatcher's right-to-buy scheme generated a mass shortage of housing for low-income families, around 10% of England and Wales comprised low-income families during the 1960s yet under Thatcherism this rose to 43% of the population living below the poverty line by 1985 (Farrall et al., 2017). Permitting the sale of council homes meant that affordable housing was declining, and the lack of council homes available did not run parallel with the construction of new ones, resulting in homelessness mounting by 30% between 1980 and 1991 (Farrall et al., 2017)[14]. With an individualistic approach and uniting morality with success resulted in a rise of criminality and lack of social control despite the parties' punitive boasting on "law and order" (Hay et al., 2016). Just five years after Thatcher's win in 1984, recorded crime had hit an all-time high from 3,499,107 recorded offences to 5,276,173 by 1991 (GOV, 2016). However, recorded theft by an employee was at an 18-year low, highlighting that unemployment rates were at this highest they have been since records began at almost 12%. (Leaker, 2023) [15]. Recorded theft, handling and selling of stolen goods was at an all-time high in 1985, it is important to note that theft denotes as a crime of poverty and a result of social exclusion (Webster, 2023)[16]. Favouring capitalism over human life in the name of neo-liberalism creates a self-fulfilling prophecy of inequality, crisis, harm, and death (Monaghan and Prideaux, 2016).

Thatcher resigned in November 1990 after a debate of no-confidence sparked by her own cabinet. John Major would be her successor. The 'Tory sleaze' slogan was used to describe misconduct and a string

13 Neo-Liberalism advocates for a free market, deregulation, and privatisation, which has been combined with moral, economic efficiency (Reiner, 2007).

14 The consequences of Thatcher's policies saw 2,500 excess deaths per year, 500 excess deaths per year from liver cirrhosis alone towards the end of the 1980's, the trickledown effect from suffering and sickness for the less financially well (Hurst, 2014).

15 Predictions of rising or falling crime rates were now to be based on the number of inequalities and unemployment within society (Webster, 2023).

16 This would embark on several white-collar scandals of tax avoidance in Government office, and the penalties of such are much harsher for those of lesser status, wealth, and fiscal harm (Monaghan and Prideaux, 2016). Thatcher also introduced the MP's expense form system, rather than publishing pay rises for members of parliament during a time of economic crisis, they could claim for expenses of travel to and from work, renting another home outside of their constituency and even toilet roll for their office (Monaghan and Prideaux, 2016).

of corruption by members of Parliament[17] (Monaghan and Prideaux, 2016). Between the years of 1992 and 1995, there were 130 resignations by members of Parliament after scandals came to light, around half were either due to financial delinquency or around the other half were of a sexual nature (Keeble, 1998). Major's principles regarding traditional family values, decency and courtesy only magnified the hypocrisy of the Government following a string of scandals becoming exposed as members of Parliament abandoned traditional values themselves (Keeble, 1998)[18]. Major also created the Criminal Justice and Public Order Act [1994] which was criticised for giving police more heavy-duty powers to stop and search without the notion of suspicion[19]. Moreover, the prison population had risen by around 20,000 people between 1992 and 1995, associated with the aftermath of the predecessor Prime Minister, quoting Major saying "We should condemn more and care a little less". More than a third of people charged with a crime had either housing issues or substance issues and were living below the poverty line (PRT, 2023).

Furthermore, the encouragement in sales[20] to Matrix-Churchill[21] of ammunition, information, and weapons of destruction[22] to Saddam Hussein, a Prime Minister, president, and a patron for terror in Iraq (Mark and Monaghan, 2016). Major requested an inquiry[23] into how this happened, stating his party did not know of it, however, the inquiry concluded that they were aware of the party usurping their own policies in 1988[24]. Accountability has escaped the elite, no minister of Government or company producing and selling the weapons, for the 47 British service people that were killed in the Gulf War of Iraq against Kurdish people, which may never have happened had the British Government not armed Hussein and his assassins (Davis and White, 2023)[25]. Neo-liberalism is a shift in morals and priority at the cost of others (Monaghan and Prideaux, 2016), which is arguably immoral itself. The

17 Or for the ordinary person would be described as deviant behaviour.
18 It was unearthed that John Major himself had a four-year affair with Edwina Currie, another Conservative member of Parliament, whilst they were both married to other people (Keeble, 1998). A solicitor or legal counsel costed upwards of £150 per hour, with the rising prison population and cuts to legal aid presented as an attack on due process and the financially weak (Webster, 2023). Major also created the Criminal Justice and Public Order Act [1994] which was criticised for giving police more heavy-duty powers to stop and search without the notion of suspicion and would allow a "no comment" response in police questioning open to inference (Webster, 2023).
19 Furthermore, it would allow a "no comment" response in police questioning open to inference (Webster, 2023).
20 1985 until the Gulf War in 1991 by easing export controls in the name of neo-liberalism.
21 A British machine manufacturer.
22 Laws and regulations were already laxed due to the law being rushed through parliament in 1939 for the war.
23 The Scott Report (Whyte, 2015).
24 From a whistle-blower's signed note and kept it covert.
25 A spokesperson for the Ministry of Defence, Ian MacDonald, when asked on their view on the findings of the Scott Report and the Government said, "truth is a very difficult concept" (Parliament, 1996).

combination of dishonesty and the anti-social bombast of the Conservative party would be Tony Blair's union into dismantling Conservative leadership and creating the New Labour Party which came into office in 1997, trust absconded the Conservative party once more, this time by the public after 18 years of political and societal anguish (Keeble, 1998).

2.4 New Labour "Tough on Crime"

New Labour promised 'great, radical reform' which they achieved, by abandoning key former labour policies such as disengaging from socialist rhetoric, the linkage of policies to class inequalities and implementing a punitive, risk-based criminal justice system (Jacobson et al., 2018). The introduction of the minimum wage, increased funding for the NHS, support for working families, and the incorporation of human rights into legislation through the Human Rights Act 1998 were all initiatives implemented by New Labour. These initiatives provided members of the public with legal avenues to address any infringements or violations of their human rights (EHRC, 2023). Despite the socialistic success of the aforementioned, the prison population grew to a record high of 82,501 in 2008 from 73,657 in 2003, potentially owing to the Criminal Justice Act 2003 (ONS, 2021). It introduced Imprisonment for Public Protection sentences for those who did not warrant a life sentence but were 'dangerous' enough to be detained indefinitely, or without hope of emancipation. Furthermore, Blair and his office constructed over 3,400 new offences, almost one for every day he was Prime Minister (Edwards, 2015). From 2005 to 2007 those who received IPP sentences grew from just over 1,000 to almost 3,000, despite IPP sentencing being abolished in 2012 due to the inconsistency of its use, there are still 1661 people in prison serving an IPP as of 2021, self-harm rates are double of those who are serving a life sentence and 81 people have ended their own lives while serving an IPP in prison as of 2022 (PRT, 2023). Finally, New Labour is notorious for the youth crime problem and criminalising children which imprisoned over 1,400 children between 1999 and 2010 (Edwards, 2015)[26]. This will then be present on a clearance check for life as a spent conviction[27]. By December 2007, authorities had issued 6028 ASBOs to children aged 10 to 17 (Berman, 2009). A revision of ASBOs started in 2014, not through criticism of the long-term effect on a young person's future in employability issues or its excessive, counter-productive use but as the Home Secretary, Theresa May put it, they were 'too costly' and 'time-consuming' (Edwards, 2015).

26 Home Secretary of the time, David Blunkett has expressed his 'deep regret' over the creation of the policy.
27 With majority of those sentences lasting longer than six months for breaking the terms of an anti-social behaviour order, or ASBO (Edwards, 2015).

Conversely, the creation of the Human Rights Act 1998 by New Labour also highlights the violation of human rights towards countless members of society of the same leadership. In February 2003, Blair broadcasted to British citizens that there would be an invasion of Iraq, in London alone 1.5 million people protested in the 'Stop the War' march which took place in cities around the globe (Canning, 2018)[28]. Article 11 of the Human Rights Act 1998 affords the right to assemble, associate and permits citizens to object and oppose political action (GOV, 1998), which is a vital component of a fair and just democracy (Kramer and Michalowski, 2005). Chilcott (2016) found that Blair intentionally misled Parliament and British citizens into believing that a global terrorist attack from Hussein was imminent and that their regime had built sophisticated weapons of mass destruction. Since the invasion between March 2003 and 2008, enemies killed over 200,000 Iraqi civilians, including 179 British troops sent to the Iraq war under the instruction of fighting for freedom and life from Blair. However, the public found that Blair deceived them in an 'unjustified' and 'unnecessary war' in the Chilcot Report 2016 (Chilcot, 2016). The report cost £15m in taxpayer's money, and the cost of the invasion was over £8.4bn, yet there would not be a finding of illegal wrongdoing in the report (Canning, 2018). Tony Blair was the first Prime Minister in the United Kingdom to be accused of war crimes in 2011 (Walklate et al., 2011). In 2017 a high court judge would decide otherwise, and he nor his administration would not be held to account for the baseless harm caused (Cooper and Whyte, 2017).

Furthermore, the 7th of July 2005 saw a terrorist attack by four suicide bombers in London on forms of public transport, killing fifty-two members of the public and injuring over seven hundred citizens. The Chilcot report uncovered British Intelligence warned Blair that a UK terrorist threat was a possibility should he decide to invade Iraq. Blair perhaps infringed on article 5 of liberty and security, article 13, the right for an effective remedy to a breach of these rights under the Human Rights Act 1998, and most importantly, the right to life (EHRC, 2023). Blair earned the nickname 'Bliar' in the British press because of his decisions in the Iraq war, and his cabinet lost faith (Cooper and Whyte, 2017)[29]. The cost of invasion was just over 10 per cent of what would be lost in the fiscal crisis, which ignited the creation of policies by the Government to recoup the loss. Cooper and Whyte (2017) describe these policies as producing 'violent poverty', draconian control and victims of the Government (Cooper and Whyte, 2017).

28 Blair joined forces with American, republican president, George Bush in retaliation to the 9/11 2001 terrorist attacks in New York City (Walklate, et al., 2011).
29 Despite three consecutive Parliamentary wins throughout his time in office and would place Chancellor of the Exchequer, Gordon Brown as Prime Minister in 2007.

2.5 Gordon Brown & The Financial Crisis

The gravest fiscal turmoil since the Great Depression occurred between 2007-2008 on a global scale under Gordon Brown's Labour Party (Reiner, 2020)[30]. Brown borrowed money to bail out banks facing collapse who also turned to the Government for loans. Brown and his party were faced with a capitalist issue, whereby Labour parties typically centre their ideology on socialism, welfare, and the working class (Reiner, 2020). The recession of 2008 brought on unemployment because of a lack of profit or productivity, this rose to 8.4% or around 2.7 million people, the highest since 1995 (Oxfam, 2013). It brought on an inability to afford to live, with inflation costs failing to rise alongside wages, meaning that the top 10% of earners in England and Wales was around £55,000 annually compared to the bottom 10% who took home around £4,700 each year by 2008 (Oxfam, 2013)[31]. The increasing crisis predominantly affects low earners, between 2009 to 2012 Local Authority statutory homelessness acceptance had risen by 34%. People were losing their homes because of increased mortgage costs, cost of living, unemployment, and lack of wage growth. The number of people who had slept rough within the last 6 months by March 2009 was at a 5-year peak of almost 6,000 people and property repossessions were at 75,000 in 2009, the highest in 12 years (ONS, 2021). There were around one thousand excess deaths solely due to suicide within the same years. Gunnell et al, (2015) estimated that there were between 30,000 and 40,000 self-harm incidents to suicide attempts between 2007 and 2010, the figures were highest in areas of lower employment and reduced opportunity. Burglary and theft rose by 4% and 25% respectively from 2008 to 2009 (ONS, 2010). Furthermore, an Office for National Statistics report shows that the peak in victims of crimes from reported incidents is the highest it had been for the last 13 years at 44,559 between March 2009 and March 2010 (ONS, 2023). Brown would step down from the next general election after being unable to 'form a government'. However, with societal scepticism and financial anxiety, there would be no clear, single leader of Government by citizen votes. Additionally, researchers discovered that over 90% of voters were aware of the expense scandal in 2009 (Graffin et al., 2013), over 40 MPs were accused of abusing expense forms[32] which are

30 The decline in Mortgage-Backed Securities caused major deficits for banks, as they had lent money to people who could have not normally afforded a mortgage yet lower mortgage rates in an attempt to boost the economy meant they could, but it did so for companies and investors. This meant there was a housing shortage. Eventually, interest rates rose to make it less financially attractive for banks and individuals to lend money (Reiner, 2020).

31 Showing a ratio of inequality pay gap of 12:1, up from 8:4 in 1985 during the last economic crisis (Oxfam, 2013).

32 Brown, Cameron, and Clegg were all accused of abusing MP expenses however, only Clegg would repay £80.20 that he admitted to owing (Graffin. et al., 2013).

ultimately paid by taxpayers and during a time of economic anguish, this resulted in the Coalition of Conservative leader David Cameron and Liberal Democrats leader, Nick Clegg (Graffin et al., 2013)[33].

The financial crisis would dominate political concern and how to repair the damage caused. The Government imposed austerity measures upon society for a decade and the UK Welfare Reform Act in 2012, in a paper named 'Welfare that works' (Giulietti and McConnell, 2022). These measures and policies included harsher sanctions for missed Job Seeker's appointments, stricter restrictions on who is eligible, and cuts to Tax Credits for example[34] (SHU, 2022). The Coalition blamed the previous Government for irresponsible lending, not market failures, and shows the Government's power to shift blame and culpability from themselves to the poorest, most marginalised members of society (Arietta, 2022). There is insufficient research to prove that disproportionate treatment works within society and, the Act was a choice despite the Prime Minister stating he had no other. It was an attempt to recoup the loss of £7.4 trillion by a collective £30 billion in cuts to welfare, housing, and social services, harsher sanctions and punishment of those on in-work and out-of-work benefits for mistakes or deception, a pay freeze for NHS workers that lasted 7 years, and a bedroom tax who only affected working aged people who lived in social housing, which is known for its sole purpose to assist persons in need of housing who cannot afford private sector prices (Giulietti and McConnell, 2022). There were other options available that would potentially have resulted in less harm and crime, such as proportionately taxing the wealthy (SHU, 2021). Cameron stepped down in 2016 due to the decision for Britain to exit the European Union by his cabinet, and Theresa May[35] would continue with cutbacks, affecting poorer areas that were already suffering before 2010. Under collective watch and authority by the Coalition and May, recorded violent crime has risen by 65.1% by 2917 due to 20,000 police force job cuts that fractured public trust and safety, Durkheim would describe this as anomie (Dawson, 2015). Furthermore, around half a million more children would live in poverty, around 335,000 excess deaths had occurred due to unforgiving austerity measures imposed and diminishing living standards, increased financial pressure on those on the lowest incomes, and declining mental and physical illness (Walsh et al., 2022). To conclude, the Government had depicted people in need as a drain on society

33 Not unusual after a crisis such as During the First World War 1915-1916, 1931-1935 during the Great Depression, and during the Second World War between1940-45 (IFG, 2022).

34 Housing Benefit—Changing the rules of assisting low-income households with renting privately, introducing a 'bedroom tax' on social housing tenants. Increasing the amount a non-dependant must contribute to a benefit claiming household. Capping benefits at a maximum amount of what will be given to assist working aged people. Local authorities reduced council tax support by 10%. Replacing Disability Living Allowance with Personal Independence Payments who are subjected to numerous, rigid medical assessments. Child Benefit – Freezing and withdrawing benefits from households. Tax Credits – Reducing payments and the eligibility for working and child tax paid to lower income families, increasing working hours for eligibility.
(SHU, 2022).

35 Theresa May had been Home Secretary since 2010 until she was nominated by David Cameron in 2016.

and public spending for decades, and they felt like a burden once more, by the power of their Government narration, worse so in times of crisis imposed on them (Mills, 2018), apparent in the highest recorded suicide rates in 16 years as of 2018, 6,507 (Walsh., et al 2022).

2.6 Boris Johnson & The Pandemic

Once more, the Prime Minister failed to secure support in legislation for the European Union deal she had agreed upon within their own party. Boris Johnson won the vote to become Prime Minister in an early Conservative leadership ballot in July 2019 (McCabe, 2019). Johnson, a former Eton and Oxford student, Bullingdon Club member[36], and Mayor of London. Despite being described by his Conservative colleagues as "diminished in terms of integrity…and credibility"[37], "incompetent" and "lied his way through life…and politics"[38], they elected him to run the Conservative party (McCabe, 2019). Within six months of Johnson as Prime Minister, COVID-19[39] would start a global pandemic, taking the lives of millions around the globe and by the 5th of May 2022 the United Kingdom would have the highest death toll in the world (Pratt and Lutyens, 2021), as Government favoured saving the economy rather than human life[40]. The virus would cause physical illness, stress, mental illness, and death, so would the Government's virus-tackling policies, which affected those with existing inequalities the most (Ali et al., 2021). Johnson declared there would be a national lockdown[41] whereby citizens would be confined to their homes other than essential travel outside to stop the spread of the virus, with around 8.9 million people prohibited from working through furlough with many businesses permanently closing if they were not essential, and around 800,000 people losing their job altogether within 12 months from March 2020 (Ali et al., 2021). The hospitals postponed appointments, GP surgeries rejected patients, and mental health services stopped conducting in-person sessions. Ordering a pizza delivery became faster than dispatching an ambulance (Paton, 2021). Conversely, in the first wave of the first lockdown crime had dropped due to restricted mobility, shoplifting was down by 62%, theft and theft from a vehicle down by 52% and 43% respectively, and assault was down by 36% through lack of social mobility (Halford et al., 2020)[42]. With the restriction on mobility and rules of one hour per day of exercise

36 A private, strictly male dining club associated with Oxford University, known for its elite members who often behaved criminally in their behaviour. Including vandalism, sexist behaviour, and bullying (McCabe, 2019).
37 In 2018, Guto Harri who was director of communications for Johnson's mayoral administration.
38 Former Conservative Minister Chris Patten in May 2019.
39 A respiratory virus, the first case was located in December 2019 in Wuhan, China.
40 The Coronavirus Act would gain Royal Assent on the 25th of March which gave Government power to detain suspected infected people to their own homes or quarantine them.
41 On the 23rd of March 2020.
42 Or that routine activity theory cannot be fully carried out due to lockdowns and barriers to freedom of movement and choices (Cohen and Felson, 1979).

outside, only necessary purchases of supplies and medicine meant that homes had increased surveillance by their occupier, assisting in burglary figures dropping by 25% (Halford., 2020). Contrarily, domestic abuse and child abuse recordings dropped by 45% and 41% (Kourti et al., 2023). Contrarily, a report carried out of domestic abuse calls to police when the first lockdown restrictions were eased from the 13th of May showed that domestic abuse had in fact risen by 21% during this time, victims were unable to safely contact the police or lifelines due to the perpetrator's presence, and as it was prohibited to leave their home without "reasonable excuse" (CSEW, 2020).

Furthermore, prisoners who were within two months of their date of release and were assessed low risk were told that up to 4,000 of them would be eligible for early release under the Temporary Release Scheme in April 2020 to assist in creating more space in prison to control the spread of COVID-19 (Pratt and Lutyens, 2021). The Government abandoned the scheme on August 19th, 2020, and as of September 30th, the scheme only released 316 prisoners (Pratt and Lutyens, 2021). The aim was for those who are health compromised, those with symptoms, and new arrivals to be adequately shielded from the virus. This was effective in preventing the further spread of the virus and potential deaths in prisons, this meant that all prisoners were subjected to up to 23 hours per day in prolonged, solitary confinement, and blocked access to work, education, and visits. This drove mental health crisis through the roof in prison, causing 284 deaths that were classed as 'natural' but found to be premature, and unpredicted, and suicides were up by 28% in the first year by eighty-six deaths (MOJ, 2022).

At the time of writing, the current Prime Minister of the UK is Rishi Sunak, after a COVID-19 inquiry in October 2023 investigating the management of the pandemic, a leading scientist referred to them as "Dr Death", when Sunak introduced the 'Eat Out to Help Out' scheme, this contributed to thousands more deaths in aid of boosting the economy (The Guardian, 2023a). The Inquiry also found that Johnson saw the virus as 'nature's way' of 'dealing with old people' (Guardian, 2023b), the World Health Organisation declared a global pandemic on the 11th of March, and Johnson would depart from the Government test and trace scheme the next day, he would downgrade the guidance on PPE the day after that and on the 19th of March would direct the NHS to move elderly into care homes to free up hospital spaces, whether they have COVID-19 or not (The Guardian, 2023a), pushing the virus on to one of the most vulnerable groups (Pratt and Lutyens, 2021). This contributed to 29,542 excess deaths in care homes within the first five months (Morciano et al., 2021). Lastly, Johnson intentionally lied to Parliament and undermined their democratic process, resulting in him being found guilty and fined for attending his own birthday party. Reportedly paying a £50 police notice, as socialising of any kind was against the law and was fineable up to £10,000 for the average member of the public that were also

prohibited from visiting the ill, the missed, and the dying (Taylor, 2022). Johnson and his cabinet's risk-taking was unjustified, they were aware of the risks involved and carried the risk out regardless[43]. The elements of their actions were intentional, foreseeable, and desired, or reckless in criminal law (Paton, 2022).

2.7 Conclusion

Political rhetoric invents the need to create or change policy and legislation, which can result in governmental violence and injury, discrimination, and a violation of human rights (Jennings et al., 2020). Yet those responsible are often excused from punishment and retribution. Government decisions cause significant human loss, whereby punishment is harsher for lower-class individuals who are victimised multiple times in society due to their lack of influence and privilege (Whyte, 2015). Many could accuse the state policymakers of perpetrating social harm (Tombs, 2018), and violating human rights, though not specifically defined in criminal law (Paton, 2021). However, the charge of gross negligent manslaughter could be applied following the four necessary elements; a duty of care was owed to the deceased, negligence by an act or omission was in breach to the deceased, this caused death and it amounts to gross negligence, this offence carries a maximum of life imprisonment (Paton, 2021). Dishonesty is a component in a number of crimes that include theft, burglary, and fraud. Fraudulence and recklessness in the harm or outcome of these crimes is apparent throughout this literature review. Democracy, deriving from the Greek word demokratia, means 'people's power', connoting the ability to choose and significance yet, some of the Governments, Prime Ministers, and policies mentioned throughout this review were never authorised by the people (Davis and White, 2023). Democracy can result in democide as it is likelier for those with low income, education, and wealth to take part in voting and protesting policies, as the power imbalance is mostly disproportionate to them (Giulietti and McConnell, 2022). Criminals are not only those labelled as such by the Government (Box, 1983).

43 Over 230,000 Britons have died from COVID-19, had advice from leading experts been followed and social distancing followed sooner, the number may be much less (Guardian, 2023).

Chapter 3: Methods

3.1 Introduction

Researchers commonly conduct criminological research for authoritative Criminal Justice bodies, policymakers, and at the commission of powerful presiders. However, this paper intends to transpire as self-reflexive (Lumsden and Winter, 2014). The majority of criminological studies cover visible crimes and victims, such as youth crime or violence, this research will expand on harms and crimes contained within a framework of power (Davies and Wyatt, 2020). To accomplish this, critical approaches were applied to ensure the research obtained open and transparent data, aiming to achieve ethical and authentic results. A critical epistemological position will support these results. This chapter will outline the methods used to obtain qualitative data, participant sampling, and the justification for the sample selection. Additionally, it will include any issues that arose during the duration of the research. It also includes the procedures used to uphold ethics and legitimacy of the research, and methods used for thematical analysis.

3.2 Methodology

Interpretivism allows narrative to be subjective to how the narrator understands a subject, by how they experience the reality of it and express significance or triviality, different realities produce various results. While it is an epistemology of its own, analysing of the data from a transformative and critical position (Petintseva et al., 2020). Qualitative research is a naturalistic investigation of social phenomenon used to identify 'why' by analysing in-depth subjective or objective perceptions or words and meanings (Petintseva et al., 2020). 85% to 90% of published criminological studies depend on quantitative data, conceivably that it is laborious to scrutinise qualitative research, that an informative figure or indication can be obtained in less time, and can provide statistical analysis that can be repeated for test and accuracy purposes (Copes et al., 2016). In this case, qualitative research was obtained during semi-structured, remote interviews with consenting participants to study their opinions, feelings, and insights to amalgamate comprehension (Petintseva et al., 2020). Though to remain steadfast to the research question, quantitative research would be unsatisfactory therefore, a qualitative research approach was applied. Due to the research subject and the sample selection, it is valuable and imperative to offer the participants subjective interpretivism rather than interpreting the data from numerical information (Copes et al., 2016). Consequently, hour-long semi-structured interviews were conducted with a series of questions posed to each participant, of which can be found in the appendix of this paper. Semi-structured interviews allowed for a guide of conversation that aided

open-ended responses so that the conversation was not fixed and promoted deeper discussion and in-depth communication on a subject (Copes., et al, 2016). This method was adopted to maintain the importance of holistic, non-partisan information, and descriptive material that prompted further exploratory questions with in-depth justification (Ikeyi, 2021). This can result in sensitive discussion and potentially harmful information when researching deviance or victimology yet can result in the same when discussing powerful institutions or interviewing the elite (Petintseva et al., 2020). Of all the persons contacted for invitation to be interviewed, five professionals agreed, with each participant specialising in one of the following which links to the foundation of this research; Zemiology; critical criminology; state crime; Government and Parliament; and criminology. An issue that evolved from the beginning of the research was that initially, five participants agreed to interviews. However, one of the originally proposed contributors ceased email communications before the arranged interview date, meaning that other purposive selections had to be carried out. This modified the initially planned timeline of the study, as interviews were not completed until March, initially the proposal anticipated this would be January. A further issue was that Microsoft Teams malfunctioned on an arranged interview day, an attempt to change the communication platform over to Zoom could not be achieved as personally, an individual account for this programme does not exist. To avoid this in the future a contingency plan will be discussed in advance with participants. Over five hours of data have been coded, meaning they have been examined, and relationships or conflicts have been discovered through thematic analysis. Thematic analysis is to unearth the meaning of what is being told, as this is focal to the research by theorising large qualitative data from the participants. This revealed themes that have produced a vantage point for findings, discussions, and recommendations (Sandberg, 2022). The themes have then been scrutinised or explored further through secondary sources, to widen the rationalisation or enlightenment of discussion. They have then been presented in the findings and conclusion (Sandberg, 2022).

3.3 Sample Selection

Purposeful sampling was carried out by researching academics and employees via the internet that work within the field of zemiology, policy making, critical criminology and Government roles (Petintseva et al., 2020). A summary of the aims and objectives of the research paper was outlined via email, proposed interview questions, along with a brief of the ethics that will be followed should they wish to participate. Five participants agreed to participate between thirty minutes and up to an hour of their time. The participants involved were a Professor of Social Policy and Criminology, and considered a founder author of zemiology; a long-standing member of Parliament for the Labour party; a senior lecturer in Critical Criminology and the Institute for Power, Crime and Society; a Senior Criminology

Lecturer, with previous experience in working for local Government; and a senior lecturer in State Crime and a Director of a State Crime research group. The participants will be identified as the following for anonymity purposes in the findings: Zemiology Professor, Member of Parliament, Senior Critical Criminologist, Senior Criminologist, State Crime Director.

Ten members of the Conservative party were contacted to participate which was to keep the study from being non-partisan and to gain knowledge from the two leading political parties. One reply was received whom rejected the invitation, with no other replies. This has altered the original design and purpose of the research as impartial invitations to both leading Political parties would have facilitated non-partisan results from Government representatives, however, as no Conservative member desired to participate, the results take account of a Labour member's interpretation only. Each interview was recorded via Microsoft Teams audibly and transcribed onto a Microsoft Word document. Systematic planning of the sample selection was required as due to the complexity of Government constructs and constraints, random sampling could have affected the study negatively. The study sample provided comparable and contradictory knowledge and information. Each participant was invited to contribute due to their experience and intelligence of one specific criminological and sociological area, the individuality of their insight and psychological perception facilitated each interview to be analogous of each other, yet not duplicate of one another (Ikey, 2021).

3.4 Ethics

Criminology has a high-risk association with power such as labelling, stigmas, categorising, discrimination, punishment, and the harms related to these. Also, implications of restrictions on liberty and opportunities which is why extensive planning within this research has followed, along with ethical methodologies (Lumsden and Winter, 2014). The ethical clearance process consists of minimising harm and maximising honest, authentic results by upholding integrity and fairness. Furthermore, clearance was obtained from UCEN Manchester by setting principles that outline participant anonymity, informed consent, and protection of personal information will be undertaken throughout. All participants have been informed of their right to withdraw at any time from the study, in keeping with voluntary participation, and each participant gave informed consent, please see appendix. A research proposal was presented in December 2023 to UCEN Manchester, along with ethics and proposal in UCEN Manchester A1 research proposal forms, and participant consent forms in UCEN Manchester A3, clearance was granted subsequently. Please see Appendix A1, A2, and A3 for the attachments. Ethical issues arose before interviews took place because participants needed anonymity and confidentiality. Although the semi-structured interview questions were designed to exclude personal information, the

proximity of the interview could reveal concepts or procedures that might identify a participant to their employer or colleague. This information was not included in the findings to uphold ethical considerations and the right to privacy (Wright. et al., 2017). A password-protected device stores all information, and data is due to be destroyed six months after submission. The study remains conscious of information that may be harmful to others or the participants, should any be disclosed the relevant authorities or mentor will be contacted (Wright.et al., 2017).

Chapter 4: Findings & Analysis

4.1 Introduction

Thematic analysis resulted in the identification for four themes; "The real enemy", Protest and Acquiesce, "Golden ticket", and 'Grenfell a Metaphor. Verbatim extracts of data obtained during interviews have been utilised to encapsulate the themes.

4.2 'The Real Enemy'

An issue detected by all participants was that Government rhetoric compels some members of society to look at others with less than them and attribute blame on those individuals when truly this is deflection and victimisation of all public:

> "…This really frustrates me that it's one set of poor people attacking another set of poor people, and whereas the real enemy are those that have devised policies that have made people this way." - Member of Parliament.

This participant distinguishes that deprived people are almost advocated to feel contempt against other deprived people due to deflection and power influence, that policies are so polarising that the Government can persuade others into trusting that policies that affect them negatively are liable to members of society with equivalent hardships, or worse (Duffy et al., 2019). Distrust of Government is also propagandised by the media, who also hype up animosity within society, and the media is trusted to self-regulate its publications (Chadwick, 2017). At a time when scepticism and social unrest due to increasing inequalities, further potential impending crisis, and the weight of apprehension on much of the public it would be easier to take advantage of low morale by the government through discording behaviour and rhetoric (Juan-Torres et al., 2020).

> "Your worth is only what you can economically produce in an environment of not much, they're kind of condemning an entire set of people to a very miserable life and in some cases, causing people to die as a result of"- Senior Criminologist

The above extract from a participant shows that there is a sense of a 'something for nothing' mentality that has been built up over time, that your worth is based on your financial contribution. Should you

face adversity or dependence it should be apparent that suffering will follow, rather than compassion and care, a 'good for nothing' mentality has followed (Reeve, 2017).

Furthermore, the discussion with this participant touched on how we differentiate ourselves from one group to the next, depending on our personal circumstances, and that benefit claimants, union members, and immigrants has become a matter of controversy. They also express that despite these social divisions, due to Government incompetency in fulfilling its role to protect its citizens and treat them equally, it is now ordinary to anticipate society to rely on charitable action or humanity from strangers rather than their own government (Sosenko et al., 2022).

> "The reason that my life is crap, the reason that I'm poor, the reason that I'm in a low-paid job or in no job is because of those people over there that look different, sound different, and come from a different area or world" – "it's no longer the responsibility of the state to look after the citizen… it's the citizen's job to look after other citizens…" – Member of Parliament

The welfare state was created to unify people, to assist in healing social ills, and to bond equality with equity, however in modernity, the welfare state is being used to divide attitudes and alienate others (Mould et al., 2022). The need to rely on Government welfare has escalated considerably throughout the last five decades, however, the increase in barriers and restrictions have increased also, producing the escalation of charity and social contributions (Taylor-Gooby, 2016). Conversely, the Government present this as solidarity, or a Big Society, rather than their failures as they pardon themselves from liability and with each crisis reinforces the need for good Samaritans. However this also further liberates the Prime Minister and their cabinet from executing their duties, which saves the Government resources and reduces public expectation in the inevitable future harms which will induce the need for support (Mould et al., 2022). Charities and goodwill are propping up the Government with food banks growing from 66 in 2010, to just over 2,500 by 2020 (Sosenko et al., 2020). The need to ascribe blame is felt by all who experience the harm caused by intentional shortfall. Yet, we are sidetracked by deceptive intelligence, and falsely accusing others which results in no remedy, it only aids hostility. Furthermore, this is counter-productive within a society that must rely upon one another (Taylor-Gooby, 2016).

They describe that harms caused by powerful entities are becoming standard practice:

> "a lot of inequalities in harms are being normalised…it's not only the big bosses and big companies that are crooked."- Senior Critical Criminologist

For example, the handling of the pandemic by Prime Minister Boris Johnson caused excess deaths, deprivation, isolation, mental health crisis, increases in domestic violence, education disruption, and what once was ordinary, typical behaviour within society was criminalised. Just over 28,000 convictions and almost 125,000 fixed penalty notices were issued during the pandemic (Webster, 2023). Furthermore, a cost-benefit analysis of lives saved through lockdowns by May 2020, assuming all lives are worth equal amounts, was £355 billion (Dolan and Jenkins, 2020). However, this did not consider deaths caused by the barring and delay of access to emergency services, charities, unemployment or reduced income, and lack of access to helplines (Dolan and Jenkins, 2020). Due to the relaxation of COVID-19 restrictions, the Government saved £1.5 billion in state pension costs in less than one year through the deaths of over sixty-five year olds, or 'accepting their fate' as stated by the Prime Minister on WhatsApp (Webster, 2023). The deadly decisions made by Prime Ministerial policies once again have not been taken deadly seriously, corporate manslaughter and negligence apply at a minimum, yet it has now become probable fallout to response of crisis or emergency by the Government (Paton, 2021)

This interviewee described that harm is used by the Government as a means of control, yet if ordinary people were to behave in this way, they would feel the harms of the criminal justice system:

> "No one else is allowed to use violence, but the state is allowed to use it against people and allowed to monitor and control violence"- State Crime Director

Behind each criminal action is an element of power, as infliction requires causation, recklessness, or intent yet the more resources and authority an actor has, the more asymmetrical the consequences are between them and non-elites (Ruggiero, 2017). Violence is used by the state to legitimise control, but lack of accountability and justification results in those acts neither being legal or illegal, that it is not considered a violation (Chaudhary, 2018). Policies link to wilfully engineered devastation, infringement on human rights, life expectancy, and life itself (Petrie, 2014). Furthermore, this statement highlights that to have a victim you need accountability, and their rhetoric will derive from such admittance by describing harm as an accident, misfortune, or disaster:

> "…because they think of it as an accident, because that is the discourse that the powerful use and they often don't think of the persons killed as victims... and that's

> great for the powerful… If you don't have a victim, you don't need accountability.” - Zemiologist.

This participant identified that harm is only recognised should you be identified as a victim, failure to acknowledge this results in a removal of sympathy, support, compensation, and remedy, which is furthermore harmful (Marshall, 2023). The fact that the Government negotiates who can be treated as a victim adds insult to injury, by eroding credibility through social processes that the processes of social policy have initially caused (Marshall, 2023).

4.3 Protest & Acquiesce

When discussing the effects of past and current harms from policies, participants encouraged public demonstrations to try to undermine the Government's omnipotence. The participants also acknowledged that acquiescence plays a part due to being oppressed, and that policies have weakened the nation's prospects for necessary change in policy, practices, and democracy.

> “if there's a huge vanguard of non-profit organisations telling us the protest laws are wrong, then I think it's up to people to collectively act against those laws and resist them… perhaps not follow them as closely as the government might like and, to pull away from this idea that just because it's the law… laws take too long to change in any meaningful way, especially when you're an absolute government.” - State Crime Director.

Protests have materialised throughout history and signify resistance to compliance, advocation for change, and unity for a group of aggrieved or discriminated individuals, whether that includes themselves or on behalf of others (Clement and Scalia, 2016). Examples of prominent demonstrations in British history include the Suffragette movement, Pride, Climate Change, Poll Tax, Stop the War, and the People's Vote (McInerney, 2023).

> “it's quite clear that if you want to defend ordinary people's interests then people are going to have to look to protest and look to organise themselves outside and challenging in that way.” Senior Critical Criminologist.

Protesting is a human right under Article 11 (GOV, 1998), and rights are to be protected in England and Wales by the Government, and the Government typically reacts. However, their response can exhibit

defence of society's right to influence and spread awareness through social movement or it can use powers to constrain them (Hindman, 2023). In 2022, the Johnson-Conservative Government enacted the Police, Crime, Sentencing and Courts Act which diminishes rights and provisions for peaceful protesting and demonstrations, and increases police powers to arrest those who do (Liberty, 2022). In 2023, the threshold for what constitutes a legal protest or movement was lowered further, and sanctions were intensified, by defining disruption as 'serious' to the 'life of the community' (Amnesty, 2024). This includes noises, treating static demos the same as marches, restricting the duration of protests, and protesting alone. Penal sanctions have doubled at a minimum, with fines up to £2,500 for attending a protest and generating noise that causes alarm, or up to six months in prison for organising your own demonstration and attending alone (Amnesty, 2024). Additionally, the 'Defending Democracy Policing Protocol' has been proposed under the Sunak-Conservative Government, this would prohibit protesting in particular areas and refer to social movements as 'mob rule', 'rioters', 'extremists', and 'hate mobs', which is the divisive language used to demoralise and criminalise those who have human rights to object or campaign against oppression (Hindman, 2023). Protests are on the rise with 83 reported protests in 2007, 154 in 2010, and 280 in 2019 (Bailey, 2020), whereby 126 of those demonstrations were reported to have used 'confrontational' tactics, not necessarily violent but disruptive and seen as a nuisance which is an arrestable offence, as outlined in the proposed protocol. Furthermore, hate crime had risen by 196% during this period of increasing protest (Barber, 2022). The state uses its power to prohibit freedom of speech which may explain the rise in confrontational protests, and the rise in protests can be justified by the expansion of inequalities felt throughout England and Wales over the last two and a half decades, and that disparity continues to grow, which breeds additional fear for the future (Hindman, 2023). It was mentioned that vigour in numbers is needed to protest Government dishonesty and it could debilitate harmful messages:

> "Protests weaken the Government's poisonous messages… we're gaining strength from our ability to unite in large numbers and make our voices heard and that helps us combat the lies" – Senior Critical Criminologist.

The participant highlights that infringement of freedom of speech is harmful, yet the polarisation of it has seen create of a 'them' or 'us' society, which is perpetuated by Prime Ministerial rhetoric and their cabinet, which has also seen a rise in conspiracy theorists and apprehension of being labelled 'woke' or encountering the 'cancel culture' (Wilhelm, 2022). These terms represent different reactions to potentially offensive or harmful, prejudiced opinions which perpetuates estrangement within society (Wilhelm, 2022). Conversely, most participants pointed out that society has been underprivileged,

burdened with policies that cause disadvantage and victimise them, which leave them debilitated or discouraged about change:

> "It's because they've ground people down, even to the point where people don't believe that change will happen…" – Member of Parliament

The participants proceeded to explain that acceptance is expected of society and that it is preferable in the eyes of the Government and became passionate when asked about how they envisage Prime Ministers mocking the public:

> "That then suits them cause it's they've taken the **** out of you and you're not even fighting back" – Member of Parliament.

Freedom of speech is interlinked with democracy and must be safeguarded from abuses of power to be legitimate, lawful, and morally ethical (Gunatilleke, 2021). However, the legitimacy of democracy no longer relies on social majority or parliamentary sovereignty alone (Murkens, 2018). Criminalising a human right of free speech within a democratic society problematises the concept of democracy (Murkens, 2018).

Another participant described how it is a tactical decision to aid in conceding defeat. The discussion surrounding coercive policies, that coercive commodification has been intentional, and that over time, punishments have become more severe, in an ongoing alarming narrative of worsening prison environments, economic and living conditions, and healthcare decline is used to intimidate individuals to conforming:

> "they'll [Government] use any tactic they can, including dragging things out to make people forget and lose energy"- Zemiologist.

Furthermore, a participant revealed their concerns in the deduction of rights and abilities for the public to assert sentiment and that this is premeditated:

> "You take more away from them [members of society] than they've got less opportunity to stand up for themselves… they're kind of consciously in all cases trying to hold people down in that way… it'll become a crisis at some point." –Senior Critical Criminologist.

Two factors were called attention to from the above exert that conveyed that the more deprived and enervated a person becomes, the more reliant they are on the circumstances they are protesting, or calling for support of, and are forced into tolerance (Power, 2018). For example, there is a socio-economic gap in protesting as people with time, resources and civic abilities are most likely to protest. Conversely, others cannot afford to protest due to the socioeconomic pressures and lack of support (Rodon and Guinjoan, 2018) Secondly, the crisis-protest paradox was acknowledged, that citizens protest against disadvantages and deprivation, yet this causes further crisis through new anti-protest laws, increased penalties, and suppression, and that itself may develop into a crisis (Power, 2018).

Finally, this participant outlined their feeling of submission within society, which connects with earlier statements of acquiescence:

> "There's a sense of submission approach and I think that needs to be turned around" - State Crime Director.

The participants indicate that there is a submissive approach from society to harmful policies, which would coincide with the structural subordination within society, that it is an administerial technique, and that effective resistance would need reform from both sides (Scambler, 2018). It is owing to the absence of resources and influential power that the majority of society feels coerced into accepting what has been accepted for decades (Scambler, 2018).

4.4 'Golden Ticket'

This research recorded a collective response based on impunity, the causes, and motivations for it. Each participant described one or more explanations of how exemption is connected to power, and how that has occurred. A participant gives details on how people with power conjure up a fictional "golden ticket" that excuses their actions from being criminal:

> "…a lot of powerful people do not see their action as criminal when they do crimes because they don't imagine that they can be criminal because they think they've got a golden ticket" - Senior Critical Criminologist.

The perception of crime is deep-rooted throughout history to focus on acts or omissions of the powerless and to criminalise immoral actions of those who are disproportionately imprisoned (Fredrichs, 2015). Furthermore, the top Government has disproportionate powers that determine

what is deemed as an offence or punishable, while simultaneously contradicting their own politics and convictions which generates further reinforcement of power (Davies and Wyatt, 2020). Pluralism is arguable as power does exist throughout numerous areas of society yet, the power a Prime Minister and their cabinet hold is the only area of society with ruling power and dominates the criminal justice system (Davies and Wyatt, 2020). Therefore, elected, and non-elected officials, and influential political parties should be nucleus when examining ultimate power within society (Webster, 2023).

The experts describe how the positioning and structure of the institution create a barrier to liability, or a privilege to behave wilfully. Another expert identifies that those who are motivated by their own gain correlate with impunity rejecting culpability, and they assert that the system deliberately constructs itself this way.

> "They've got a certain position in society that entitles them to behave in that way."
> - Senior Critical Criminologist.

> "Self-interest means that there's a lack of accountability and impunity, the system is designed that way…" - State Crime Director.

Twenty Prime Ministers have been educated at Eton, with only three studying politics and economics, for which the course has been critiqued for teaching social stratification (Leith, 2019). The first Prime Minister in England was imprisoned for corruption before moving into 10 Downing Street, corruption has been maintained behind the door of number 10 yet on the Transparency International Corruption Perception Index, the United Kingdom scores relatively low as corruption within Government is portrayed as unexceptional though unideal (Zaloznaya, 2015). An abuse of Government positions of authority for personal gain or self-gratification exacerbates social inequality and poverty, deteriorates the legitimacy of the Government, and undermines justice and equity (Zaloznaya, 2015). Self-interest is present in each Prime Minister's efforts to distinguish themselves from their predecessors, and public perception can turn their position of dominance into defence, which strengthens the need for resilient self-interest[44] (Bennister, 2023).

Two participants below acknowledge that parliamentarians fail to uphold honesty and self-accountability, resulting in the dismissal of a bill in Parliament. This is because expecting integrity was

44 For example, Tony Blair's involvement in the Iraq war and the public reaction towards Theresa May's BREXIT deal (Bennister, 2023).

considered inconceivable and regulating it would be unmanageable. Furthermore, we should expect that authority and untruths have a causal relationship.

> "A 5-minute Rule bill was introduced to Parliament to make it illegal for parliamentarians to lie in Parliament by Diane Abbott, and it didn't pass. One of the reasons it didn't pass is they said "it will be impossible to control such a thing, them lying" - State Crime Director.

> "It feels like something that's almost expected. The politicians lie, big businesses lie, people who are in all forms of authority lie…it seems to be it's a reasonable way to go about business" - Senior Criminologist

A post-truth political system governs England and Wales, where no public statement can be deemed realistic or factual, and people often deconstruct them without any consequence, repeatedly forgetting about them (Oborne, 2014). It is not an expectation that the powerful are to abide by laws and regulations, even if it is them who create them (Kooistra, 2021). Research shows that people in a position of power are more likely to act hypocritically, to take risks, disregard the perception of everyone else, and discount questions of morality and justice (Kooistra, 2021). Furthermore, the more superior a position a person holds within an institution or organisation, the less they are concerned with justice, honesty, and equality below them which indicates that justice is a concept subjugated to the powerless (Anderson and Galinsky, 2006).

The Member of Parliament explains that impunity is not afforded to anyone in the United Kingdom, however, contrariwise harmful acts and omissions escape equitable scrutiny within the institution:

> "…if criminal proceedings were brought on any of these cases, no Minister is above the law and criminal proceedings can be brought against ministers, we don't have immunity for politicians or Prime Ministers in this country... but criminality is not always found" – Member of Parliament

Studies show that when a scandal is uncovered within Parliament and by Prime Ministers, creating a scapegoat diverts negative attention away from the accused or responsible, ensuring that those in power can firmly maintain their usual course of action (Graycar, 2015). Often

followed by some way of an apology, letter of resignation, or an inquiry to the pretence that justice and fairness are universal (Graycar, 2015). A participant acknowledged that power is deep-seated and doubtful to change, which can be related to why impunity and power appear to go hand in hand.

> "Power is really centralised, it's really entrenched. It's very, very hard to break into that…" - Zemiologist.

As the interviewee stated, secrecy and liberty exploitation are embedded in tradition under a system of conventions, which pits the most senior members of Parliament and the leading Government's interests to the post, including society and voters (Guerin et al., 2018). The systemic strength of power only weakens the necessity to be accountable, and the power a Prime Minister can fire or hire at whim has only proven that this is an attempt to connect with the public politically, not for a person's capabilities (Guerin et al., 2018). For example, Theresa May's Equality Strategy in 2017. Whitehall has become a high-stakes setting for which obscurity and circumventing evidence have advanced, yet this risky behaviour is never career-ending for Prime Ministers (Davis and White, 2023). Whitehall is deep-rooted in political history, and perhaps a devolution or division of power may initiate a need for a Government of the Government, which can explain the want to keep power centralised here (Ayres et al., 2018).

4.5 Grenfell: A Metaphor

Each participant connected the devastating events of the fire at Grenfell Tower when discussing disastrous policies and decisions that affect the masses caused by the Government and, accountability for the consequences[45]:

> "Whether one person's killed and then series of disasters, most recently stuff on Grenfell…the logical outcome of that would be that if the powerful know that they

45 In 2017, The fire of Grenfell killed 72 inhabitants of the building, which was caused by a series of Government, profit-minded acts and omissions through health and safety failures and neo-liberalistic ideologies (MacLeod, 2018). The flammable cladding installed engulfed the building in nine minutes, when standard, harmless cladding would have provided forty minutes of resistance, and it would be discovered this was due to frugality and recklessness by the influential and powerful elite (Hodkinson, 2020). The majority of the council housed tenants were from a diverse, working-class background (Tombs, 2019).

> may be exposed, they'll be held to account that they would change the way in which they behave…" – Zemiologist.

In 2017, The fire of Grenfell killed seventy-two inhabitants of the building, which was caused by a series of Government, profit-minded acts and omissions through health and safety failures and neo-liberalistic ideologies (MacLeod, 2018). Due to the series of Government, profit-minded acts and omissions, health and safety failures, and neo-liberalistic ideologies, the building's flammable cladding, installed by the influential and powerful elite, caused it to be engulfed in nine minutes instead of the expected forty minutes of resistance (Hodkinson, 2020). Many council-housed tenants of Grenfell Tower[46] were from a diverse, working-class background (Tombs, 2019). The discussion prompted analogous responses to the Grenfell fire and highlighted how the Government's absence of guilt has caused further distress and harm when considering the possibility of whether holding the influential and powerful elite accountable for harmful policies would weaken or strengthen trust in democracy and trust in Government (Burke, 2018). The Senior Critical Criminologist noted the absence of answerability and justice despite there being clear actors and trials, and that muddying the waters results in mystification:

> "The Grenfell thing is interesting because there was a moment very quickly when it looked really straightforward legally to prosecute powerful individuals and organisations. It was just the evidence was just all there… accountability gets lost in massive information…" – Senior Critical Criminologist.

Furthermore, the discussion triggered contemplation of how human rights are violated through policies before and in the aftermath of Grenfell existing in social policy decisions, and that inequality is exclusively for marginalised people (Sanchez, 2019). The Member of Parliament indicated that there are other shocking events that have transpired at the hands of the Government:

> "The most shocking thing I saw was Grenfell up in flames… Turns out the Government had their hands on that one too…" - Member of Parliament.

Under the Human Rights Act 1998 (GOV, 1998), the events of Grenfell violated many human rights, for the tenants, surrounding areas,, and wider society; Article 11, the right to safe and suitable housing; Article 8, the right of respect for private and family life; Article 5, the right to equality and non-

46 Fourteen of the flats were sold privately under Thatcher's 'Right to Buy' scheme.

discrimination and the right to be free from torture and degrading, inhuman treatment; Article 13, the right to an effective remedy; and Article 2, the right to life (Sanchez, 2019)

Due to their intangibility and inability to punish a force, natural disasters, accidents, and ruinous coincidences cannot be held criminally responsible (Crewe, 2019). The relationship between onus, blame, accountability, recognisance, and justice is entity to entity, yet power is a force yielded by entities (Crewe, 2019). Culpability and responsibility are a conflictual social procedure, created by those who have influence, control, and ability to create what is a criminal, punishable, harmful action yet also represent non-criminal, harmful action through policies to the detriment of countless people (Davies and Wyatt, 2020). Notably, other harms by Government policies were not used as examples of social policy harm, such as over 330,000 deaths since 2010 from designed austerity measures through increased physical and mental health inequalities, disability hate crimes intensified by 213 per cent due to rhetoric of the deserving and undeserving, food bank parcels having to be supplied 7.5 times per minute on average in winter 2023, 30% of children live in poverty within the United Kingdom and the ongoing COVID-19 inquiry, where power and control meant that the public was to sequester under threat of punishment but this fear was not shared by the Prime Minister and their cronies (Machin, 2023). The State Crime Research Director referred to Grenfell as a pinnacle event for anticipated widespread alarm and apprehension, yet indicated that their expectations have not been met:

> "After Grenfell we would expect people to be running around the streets screaming" - State Crime Director.

This event has perhaps been most selected in conversation regarding harm from policies by the Government due to the horror of the optics and, that other harms caused by insufficient Government policy scrutiny have not been visually observed in this way. They have been unexposed until they become unmanageable, ungoverned, and out of control, like the fire of Grenfell (Burke, 2018). Furthermore, the stigma associated with poverty and inability to care for oneself or one's family has been perpetuated throughout political history as a failure to accept responsibilisation, this type of disparity is concealed by many through fear of being further degraded by others (Chamberlen and Carvalho, 2022). It highlighted that inequality and disdain for inferior members of society are structured by the elite, like the construction of Grenfell Tower (Burke, 2018). There have been no criminal responsibilities assigned to any persons for the harm caused and cost to life. The Member of Parliament proceeded to interlink the Grenfell fire with impoverished members of society, and how policies have exacerbated their vulnerability:

> "I get so frustrated that the poorest communities get the policies that this government have really battered them with" – Member of Parliament.

The Prime Minister bears ultimate responsibility for policies and decisions, and social policies implemented by every party since Margaret Thatcher has had preventable, destructive and fatal outcomes (Stewart, 2021). New Labour became a neo-socialistic party, essentially moving the party to the right to become third-way or more central (Stewart, 2021). Finally, a participant explained that discriminatory, or uneven dispersal of opportunities and wealth form part of the structure of society, and are ingrained in the foundation when summing up this section of conversation:

> "inequalities are built-in… having that kind of class conscious outlook that that notices the differences between what's normal for more privileged groups compared to less privileged groups in terms of expectations and values and everything and how that impacts on what happens to them and the choices they've got and how limited their horizons can seem in those contexts." Senior Critical Criminologist.

Neo-liberalism and its worth have been favoured over the quality of human existence, and the state continuously expects citizens to devote their trust to them, despite recurrent grave failings in the name of saving £293,368 in cheaper cladding in this instance (Bulley and Brassett, 2021). Tombs (2019) finds the atrocity of events at Grenfell Tower as social murder, due to political, economic, and criminal justice flaws. The handling of how justice and accountability have been absent before, during, and in the aftermath of harm at Grenfell Tower has paved the way for further social harms by the state to be overlooked and, discounted by those whom it should concern most (Tombs, 2019). Lack of clear strategies breeds an absence of faith and confidence in authority, which often substantiates fear for the future (Graham-Harrison, 2017).

Chapter 5: Conclusion

To conclude, criminology has persistently centred around what makes a criminal or a victim, what behaviours are deviant, and the criminal justice system, the emphasis on punishment, and that this will initiate rehabilitative mindsets (Davis and White, 2023). Combining this with the dynamic of global and more divisional crises, we should ask whether we should dedicate attention to decreasing crime figures, increasing security, and predicting criminality, or whether we should centre our focus on predicting harm from social ills. Additionally, does society and those who can influence challenge the structures in which this is designed effectively? (Canning and Tombs, 2021). The research has shown that society and dominant figures of authority are either tolerant of harm from social policy or they are acquiescing in it, this in turn causes further harm, damage, and injustices within the population (Davis and White, 2023). Firstly, it was identified that society is divided over who to blame for harm and that the Government blames the people they require conformity from as a deflection tool and causing conflict within communities of vulnerable people. Secondly, a Marxist mentality is depleting, that the idea of a revolution against harmful policies is gradually disappearing through the effects of wearisome policies and increasing legislation against free speech, which also damages democracy. Thirdly, a "golden ticket" theme was recognised, which also takes the form of a 'get out of jail free' card, that hierarchy is demonstrated and normalised within the Government, as is the exemption of facing justice and legitimacy. Finally, Grenfell is a metaphor for social harm and social murder from policies, it represents distrust in society, and that scrutiny is needed more than ever. The visual representation of Grenfell shocked the nation, and what is even more shocking is the lack of justice, which concern has sparked the interest of this research and concluded it. Harms from social policy have been investigated and addressed, but the issues arising from them have not been remedied. Furthermore, the statistics and conclusions to arise from inquiries could be used as a preventative model attempting to reduce harms and repair trust for the future and for the systems currently in place. The more complex the Government becomes the less prominent citizens needs become, yet a recommendation would be to overturn this formation and assemble a complex society, which would require less Government control, which is in line with neo-liberalism. With increasing crisis has seen power more centralised, yet *Fair Society, Healthy Lives:10 Years On* (Marmot, 2020), addresses the prerequisite for breaking the mould, eliminating structural barriers, and handing power to the individuals on whom policy would have a greater impact (Marmot, 2020). While this is a healthcare review, the report appropriately connects socioeconomic positions with opportunities, welfare, crime, and social equity, and identifies that praxis should be from the individual it would serve, not from the structured elites. Social policy is used to

identify the criminal, the 'bad' person, the needy, and the undesirable, where it should be used as a tool to unify society, ameliorate social ills, strengthen democracy for those to whom it matters most, and eradicate the 'bad' autocrats from ruling in self-interest. Power is a vehicle that could drive positive change and support for those who need it most, yet it forever exhibits ignorance and self-governance. Harms from power and social policy are not legitimised, they are just not presented as paramount, as this would draw attention to the themes identified, which is bad for business and damages the legitimacy of the Government once more.

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