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UNDERGRADUATE DISSERTATION RESEARCH PROPOSAL FORM

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DRAFT RESEARCH TITLE QUESTION: Does how Police use Stop Search Powers Race/Ethnicity Impact INTRODUCTION: In recent years, there has been an increased awareness of potential bias in police stop search of black and ethnic minorities. The public, political, legal, and sociological responses to "racial profiling" have sparked interest in investigating how police officers and minorities communicate and interact during stop searches and determining whether officer decision-making is racially and ethnically neutral (Ramirez <i>et al.</i> 2000). Racial profiling occurs when constables use race and/or ethnicity as the leading factor guiding officer decision-making during stop searches, rather than behaviour. Typically, the term "racial profiling" has been applied to police–public confrontations during stop searches, with claims that people from different racial and ethnic backgrounds are stopped more frequently or are subjected to searches. If there is bias during police stop searches, it could potentially lead to the public losing confidence in the police and undermines legitimacy (Fallik <i>et al.</i> 2012). Over the last few years, police use of stop search has come under public scrutiny due to the media drawing significant attention to links between these stop searches and the ethnic/racial backgrounds of people (Warren & Farrell, 2009). My dissertation will investigate whether this increased public scrutiny that has been produced by the media has impacted public perception of the Police in the UK and their use of stop search powers	
SUMMARY OF RESEARCH OBJECTIVES: In my study I will be collecting information to try and understand public perception of police stop search use. In order to do this, I will have 3 key research objectives:	

1. Explore the ways in which race impacts how police conduct stop searches.
2. Analyse why race may have an impact on stop and search by the police
3. Investigate if the Police are biased against black and other ethnic minorities.

LITERATURE REVIEW:

The purpose of my literature review will be to analyse and investigate some of the available literature which discusses matters relating to racial and ethnic minorities and the police. The use of discretion by police officers is a crucial component of their work, and this is assumed to account for the disproportionately large numbers of people from racial or ethnic minorities that are stop searched by police (Antonopoulos 2003). In England and Wales, this practise is authorised by the Police and Criminal Evidence Act (PACE) (Bowling & Phillips, 2002) and some believe it potentially might be linked to the perception that those from ethnic and racial minorities are not treated fairly and so they lack confidence in the criminal justice system (Miller, Bland & Quinton, 2000)

The first comprehensive investigation into the Home Office on black people's encounters with the police did not identify any pattern of discrimination in police use of stop search powers (Tuck & Southgate, 1981). However, Smith (1997) reported that the outcomes of this investigation were not statistically significant due to the sample size being too small. Furthermore, Walker (1987) implies that Tuck and Southgate's research was biased due the fact that the study was conducted in a small area.

SUMMARY OF RESEARCH –SURVEY METHOD:

The research method will be quantitative and qualitative in nature. Therefore, a questionnaire consisting of open and closed ended questions will be used.

I will create my survey using Survey Monkey and post it online on social media platforms to reach a wide audience. I will also ask people to share it to reach those outside of my circle. My sample size will be approximately 100 participants. This large enough sample size will enable a higher reliability of the research investigation. Having 100 participants will also give me enough data to analyse.

My questionnaire will have a variety of question styles, to collect both qualitative and quantitative data. Qualitative data is useful as it will enable me to gather information on peoples' opinion and how they feel about subjects. It gives them the opportunity to extend their answers. Quantitative data will enable me to assess for patterns in my research investigation. It also enables for easy comparisons. Quantitative data will enable me to calculate means, standard deviations and other statistical tests if necessary. I will collect qualitative data by asking open questions, whereas quantitative data can be collected by asking closed questions and using

Likert Scales. Scales are a quick way of gathering an overview of people's opinions, without having too many detailed answers to go through. This also means you can easily compare different groups of peoples' opinions (Bernard, 1996).

Another benefit of questionnaires is that it reduces risk of bias, as participants might not feel confident to answer questions face-to-face, particularly if they can be identified. It will also enable me to reach a wide variety of people and is not too time consuming

The purpose of my questionnaire is to gather opinions from both the public and police officers

SUMMARY OF SAMPLING FRAMEWORK:

I will be using self-selected sampling. This is a quick and easy method to get lots of participants to take part in my survey. I will create my survey using the online tool Survey Monkey. I will then post the link on my social media to get people to take part. I will also ask people in work to take the survey. Additionally, I will ask people to share my survey to reach a wider audience. By having a large target sample size, I will increase the reliability of my results, as sometimes self-selected sampling can be a bit biased. This will hopefully eliminate this bias.

My target sample will be any Police officer serving in the South Wales Police force or the London Metropolitan Police force. I will ask police officers that are of any age and at any point in their career. I will also target PCSOs and police staff. I think it is important to include members of the police force who are at varying stages in their career as it will reduce the risk of bias, if I were to only ask a very specific type of police officer. I will also ensure I will include police officers from all racial and ethnic backgrounds so I am able to compare opinions between these.

All police officers have the power to use stop search, however PCSO's and police staff do not. I think it is important to not exclude those who work for the police but not have stop search powers as they will have good knowledge of the organisation.

I will also give the questionnaires to members of the public. This would enable me to compare public and police perception.

ETHICAL ISSUES:

I am conducting my sampling via self-selected sampling, this allows individuals to choose if they wish to participate to it or not. At the beginning of my survey, I will provide participants with a consent form. This will provide a brief overview of the research study and will further outline their right to withdraw at any point of the study, even after their questionnaire has been submitted.

The questionnaire raises sensitive matters such as personal opinions on race and biases. For example, I am looking into racial and ethnic background and whether this impacts police stop search use. This may cause emotional distress to participants. As such, participants will be offered counselling, along with the contact details of the researcher and supervisor. The aim of this is to ensure they feel supported by myself during the study. The participants will also be reminded of their right to withdraw.

I have chosen to do an online survey to try and reduce the risk of people not expressing their true feelings. Further to this, I will ensure all participants know that their answers will be anonymised to further reduce risk of people not feeling comfortable to answer honestly and maintain confidentiality. I will anonymise participants by not asking them for names and instead, assign them a number.

There may be possible risk to the investigator. For example, I might be accused of being unprofessional. Therefore, I will ensure that I strictly follow and adhere to the UWTSD code of conduct (UWTSD, ND)

TIME SCALE:

Survey Timescale

Create Survey: 1 hour

Posting Survey on Social Media: 5 minutes

Time for participant to complete survey: Max 20mins

Time Survey will be available to be shared: 2-4weeks

Data Analysis: 3 hours

Write up: To be completed by 2/1/22

REFERENCE LIST:

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Tuck, M. and Southgate, P. (1981) *Ethnic Minorities, Crime and Policing: A Survey of the Experience of West Indians and Whites*. Home Office Research Study No. 70. London: HMSO.

UWTSD, Research Ethics and Integrity Code of Practise. Available at: [research-ethics-integrity-code-practice.pdf \(uwtsd.ac.uk\)](https://www.uwtsd.ac.uk/research-ethics-integrity-code-practice.pdf) (Accessed, 14/05/22)

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Warren, P. Y. and Farrell, A. (2009) 'The Environmental Context of Racial Profiling', *The ANNALS of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, 623(1), pp. 52–63.
