Does the Police use of social media

assist to increase community confidence

in the use of stop and search

as a policing tactic?

Paul STUBBS

Canterbury Christ Church University

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Abstract

Despite a vast amount of research, opinion and historical connotations, stop and search remains a key tool for fighting crime within England and Wales. Throughout recent decades, there has been considerable effort, motivation and drive for the police service to ensure legitimacy, accountability and effectiveness.

The purpose of this study has been twofold: firstly, to identify whether the police use of social media increases community confidence in the use of stop and search; and secondly, to be used as a catalyst for further discussion, planning and the identification of research gaps.

Authored by a policing practitioner, this paper refers to key literature whilst exploring the use of social media and stop and search. The thesis highlights the explosion of digital innovation and the challenges presented by police use of stop and search.

Four recommendations are made: the need for both further research and increased training provision for police officers in the use of social media; the introduction of an officer's social media handbook; and finally the need to use a wide range of social media platforms.

Contents

Introduction

This thesis provides an analysis of the use of social media surrounding stop and search within the Metropolitan Police Service (MPS) during a seven-month period between September 2018 and March 2019. The significance of conducting the research in London is that the MPS is the highest user of stop and search (Home Office, 2018) and therefore can provide a rich source of data to be reviewed.

The objective of this research is to increase the understanding of a fast-paced amalgamation of social media and stop and search. The research question is: Does the use of social media affect the community confidence in the use of stop and search as a policing tactic? Stop and search is steeped in history, whilst the increased interest in the use of social media is still in its infancy for police forces. There is limited research available surrounding the police use of social media and there is minimal research with regards to social media use and stop and search.

The purpose of this study is to research and create an awareness of how heavily intertwined the relationship is between the use of stop and search legislation and social media. It is hoped that this research thesis can be the launch for further discussion, planning and future research to identified gaps. The thesis is underpinned by two areas of interest: the first area of interest is stop and search and the second, social media.

The term stop and search is used throughout this thesis. Stop and search is an investigative power used by the police to prevent and detect crime (Bowling and Phillips, 2007). This policing tactic can be conducted within a number of legislative frameworks; the most commonly used being the Police and Criminal Evidence Act 1984 (PACE).

Appel *et al* (2020) suggest that social media can be considered in number of ways. Firstly, within a practical setting, users can receive and send digital information via several platforms or digital networks (Facebook, Instagram etc.). Secondly, social media could be recognised as a marketing tool to increase business presence and revenue. Lastly, social media could be described as being a hub where individuals spend a significant amount of their lives. For the police, social media is a way of engaging, reassuring and communicating with the public. A literature review is conducted within the thesis overseeing both stop and search and social media. Stop and search is entrenched with a number of opinions including the value of legitimacy and procedural justice. These important themes are explored and cross referenced with how social media can contribute to stop and search. The literature review then progresses to social media which has seen an expeditious growth in use which no one could have foreseen (Romero *et al*, 2011). The use of social media has been reviewed

both within a policing sphere and within a wider organisational context. The review of the general use of social media literature offers a wider understanding of themes. A number of key areas of social media are discussed, including the fact that it has been seen to drive citizen participation whilst seeking to increase transparency (Bullock, 2018). It is felt that any introduction of technology within the theatre of policing is both dependent on and shaped by a range of policing influences/culture (Chan, 2003). This will be discussed throughout the thesis.

The second component to the thesis is the methodology. Within this section, both research design and the philosophical approach are given consideration. The researcher conducted an action research project using a mixed method approach (Creswell *et al*, 2003). A quantitative review of Twitter data is conducted in order to identify themes and provide topics of conversation. Secondly, a qualitative approach was undertaken in the form of semi-structured interviews. These interviews were conducted in order to provide a greater depth to earlier identified themes. The methodology is followed by a discussion outlining thoughts of the emerging themes and identifying further research work.

The next section within the thesis provides a reflection from the researcher. This is the first piece of academic research undertaken by the researcher, resulting in the need to improve knowledge and skill set. Issues surrounding time management and how this research is situated within the model of evidence based policing are explored.

Finally, recommendations are made with the purpose of mitigating findings whilst assisting police forces to develop a new approach to using social media to support stop and search.

Literature Review - Stop and Search

History

Prior to 1984 and the introduction of Code A (The Code of Practice for Statutory Powers of Stop and Search) which is embedded within the Police and Criminal Evidence Act (PACE, 1984) a nationwide stop and search power was not available to police.

Nationally, the police service made use of other pieces of legislation such as the Vagrancy Act 1924. Within the Metropolitan Police Service's geographical area of responsibility, Section 66 of the Metropolitan Police Act 1839 was available and widely used. This Act was commonly known as the "sus law" and allowed police officers to stop and search a member of the public if they suspected that the person has anything "stolen or unlawfully obtained" on their person.

Between the 10th and 12th April 1982 a riot in Brixton, South London occurred. This was the first large scale racial confrontation between black British youths and the British Police (Appiah and Gates, 2005). Lord Scarman was commissioned to lead a public enquiry into the disorder and concluded that the police use of the sus law was a major aggravator for the disorder (Scarman, 1981).

In April of 1981, the Metropolitan Police Service (MPS) responded to a sharp increase in crime in Brixton by deploying the "uncompromising" Special Patrol Group (Waddington, 2002). Operation Swamp saw approximately 1000 people stopped and searched by officers utilising their powers. The vast proportion of these people were young black men. The operation was criticised by Lord Scarman due to a lack of engagement and consultation with the local community and officers. Scarman's review firmly placed the highly contentious topic of stop and search into the political spotlight where some suggest it still remains (Bowling *et al,* 2002).

Scarman's report (1981) made a number of recommendations regarding stop and search with the view of increasing accountability and professionalising stop and search. In 1984, the government passed the Police and Criminal Evidence Act 1984. Quinton *et al* (2000) suggest that the introduction of PACE did little to refute concerns or reduce community resentment towards the use of stop and search.

Accelerating forward to the Stephen Lawrence Inquiry, Macpherson (Macpherson, 1999) reiterated Lord Scarman's stance that the confidence and trust of the community was severely affected by the police's misuse of stop and search legislation. The Lawrence Inquiry concluded that ethnicity was a criteria disproportionately found within the use of stop and search. This conclusion caused wide controversy due to locating racism within functions of whole organisations (Murji, 2007). The Home Office introduced several changes to the policing practice of stop and search after three

recommendations by Macpherson. These major changes to the whole of the stop and search process sparked "the most extensive programme of reform in the history of the relationship between the police and ethnic minority groups" (Bowling and Phillips, 2003).

> 61. That the Home Secretary, in consultation with Police Services, should ensure that a record is made by police officers of all "stops" and "stops and searches" made under any legislative provision (not just the Police and Criminal Evidence Act). Non-statutory or so called "voluntary" stops must also be recorded. The record to include the reason for the stop, the outcome, and the self-defined ethnic identity of the person stopped. A copy of the record shall be given to the person stopped. (Macpherson 1999 rec: 61).

This led to the introduction of stop and search forms which were provided to members of the public as a record that an individual had been stopped. This allowed for scrutiny to occur by senior officers to identify trends and emerging issues such as disproportionality (EHRC, 2010).

> 62. That these records should be monitored and analysed by Police Services and Police Authorities, and reviewed by HM Inspectorate of Constabulary (HMIC) inspections. The information and analysis should be published. (Macpherson 1999 rec: 62).

This recommendation has led to the creation of community monitoring groups (CMG) which has been overseen by the College of Policing. The approved best practice suggests that all forces should have processes in place that allow members of the public to hold the chief constable to account for the use of stop search powers in their force area (College of Policing, 2016). Whilst there is some debate regarding how to ensure the effectiveness of such a group, it is clear that CMGs act as a conduit to bridge a gap between the police and the community. The CMGs liaise with harder to reach groups and ensure that stop and search is transparent whilst challenging police where appropriate. Kalyan and Keeling (2018) suggest that confidence will increase due to the engagement with hard to reach groups and highlighting a more transparent process.

> 63. That Police Authorities be given the duty to undertake publicity campaigns to ensure that the public is aware of "stop and search" provisions and the right to receive a record in all circumstances. (Macpherson 1999 rec: 63).

This has been undertaken by police forces across the UK. There have been a number of forces that have created information on websites and via other media regarding stop and search in order to

ensure a greater understanding of police powers (The Met, 2019). The individual forces' response has been overarched by government campaigns e.g., know your rights. (Government Digital Service, 2017). The introduction of these recommendations by the Home Office shows the emergence of greater accountability and transparency regarding the police's use of stop and search. Bland *et al* (2000) suggest that the reforms provided "on-the-stop" accountability due to the implementation of recording and the instruction to provide an individual with a copy of the stop form, however despite the changes to PACE guidance critics suggest these reforms provided a "superficial response to community engagement" (Shiner, 2010).

Advancing to 2010 and 2012, research continues to suggest that the disproportionate use of stop and search against black and Asian members of the community remains despite increased scrutiny and various initiatives (EHRC 2010, 2012). An example of an initiative to increase scrutiny within the Metropolitan Police Service was the change programme titled "STOP IT" (Supervision and Leadership, Transparency and Openness, Operational Use, Performance, Intelligence and Tasking and Training and Knowledge) (Police and Crime Committee, 2014). The STOP IT programme was introduced by the former Commissioner of the Metropolitan Police Service, Sir Bernard Hogan Howe and publicly supported by the Mayor's Office for Policing and Crime (MOPAC). The objective of this new initiative was to ensure a more intelligence-led approach to stop and search, as it was felt this would improve both trust and confidence in the use of this tactic (Police and Crime Committee, 2014).

In addition to the launch of this programme, MOPAC introduced and set stop and search targets. The newly introduced target for the MPS was that 20 per cent of all searches needed to result in a positive outcome. There were a number of outcomes described as positive including an arrest, issuing of a fixed penalty notice or cannabis warning. These targets were not consistently met, with some suggestions that this was due to the resistance of the officers working in this arena (Savage, 2003).

Two years later in 2014, government concerns continued regarding the impact that the use of stop and search powers had on police legitimacy (Home Office, 2014). In an attempt to tackle the concerns, Theresa May (Home Secretary), introduced the Best Use of Stop and Search scheme (BUSS). This collaboration with the College of Policing intended to increase transparency whilst restricting the use of Section 60 "No Suspicion" powers due to the "controversy and potential to cause community tensions." (Home Office, 2014)

In 2015, the BUSS scheme was supported by the London Mayor, Sadiq Khan, who publicly stated that he would do everything in his power to cut stop and search (Evening Standard, 2015) however in 2018 the political pendulum swung back towards favouring the police use of stop and search due to

an increase in violent crime in the capital. In stark contrast to his previous comments, Mayor Khan stated that there will be a "significant increase" in targeted stop and searches by police in London as it was a "vital tool" for police to keep communities safe (Independent, 2019). The sentiment of increasing stop and search to support the police's response to reducing violent crime has been openly supported by other senior politicians and police officers.

The increased political spotlight and clear motions of support have sparked anger and angst amongst those who believe that stop and search alienates communities and that other approaches should be considered (The Guardian, 2018).

Whilst it is felt that there is no hydraulic relationship between stop and search and reducing crime (Bradford and Tiratelli, 2019), there is a suggestion that stop and search in conjunction with other police tactics can assist in reducing crime (Weisburd *et al*, 2014) especially crimes such as possession of an offensive weapon (Fitzgerald, 1999), or at best show some marginal reduction (Tiratelli, Quinton and Bradford, 2018).

To surmise, there have been a number of political efforts to re-engineer the power in order to make it less caustic towards society. The use of stop and search has been recognised as contributing to major disorder (Scarman, 1981). It is clear to see that the use of stop and search is extremely contentious, and despite numerous initiatives can seriously impact the trust and confidence of the public (Miller *et al*, 2000).

Legal framework and use

The primary purpose of stop and search is to enable officers to "allay or confirm suspicions about a crime and individuals without exercising a power of arrest." Officers may be required to justify their use of the powers both in individual circumstances or overall pattern of behaviour to their supervisor and/or in court (Home Office, 2015).

Justification in this context is the officer's threshold of "reasonable grounds to suspect" (PARA 2.2 CODE A PACE, 1984). Reasonable grounds is a legal test which a police officer must satisfy prior to employing any stop and search powers. Due to the sheer perceived subjective nature and ability to manipulate, this specific area of legislation has been a real bone of contention, with suggestions that officers use their "spider senses" as opposed to being able to explain their reasonable grounds (Ericson, 2007).

In 2010, The Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC) concluded that stop and search is embedded within the Human Rights Act, namely, Section 5 (Right to Liberty and Security), Article 8 (Respect for Privacy) and Article 14 (Non-discrimination). With regard to the Terrorism Act 2000, stop and search is a deprivation of liberty (Gillan and Quinton v The United Kingdom ECHR 755, 4158/05). There are eighteen pieces of legislation available to officers to stop and search a member of public without his/her consent (Home Office, 2015). The two most commonly used parts of PACE 1984 are (Home Office, 2018):

Section 1 of the Police and Criminal Evidence Act 1984

Section 1(2)(a) of PACE "provides police officers with the power to stop and search any person, vehicle, or anything which is in or on a vehicle, for stolen or prohibited articles, points and blades, or fireworks. Prohibited articles include offensive weapons and articles with which a person is going equipped to steal or cause criminal damage.

Section 1(2)(b) gives the accompanying power to detain individuals and vehicles for the purpose of conducting a search."

Section 23 of the Misuse of Drugs Act (MDA) 1971

Section 23(2) of the MDA provides "that a constable may search a person suspected of being in possession of a controlled drug and detain them for the purpose of the search. They may also search any vehicle or vessel in which they suspect the drug may be found, and can require the person in control of the vehicle or vessel to stop it for that purpose."

This provision specifies that the person must be suspected of being in possession of the drug, not merely to have used it or been present during its use by others. With respect to a vehicle, the provision similarly requires the officer to suspect that the drug may be found in it.

Preventative Ability

There are other "preventative" parts of the legislation available to the police which do not require "reasonable grounds to suspect". One heavily discussed police power is Section 60 of the Criminal Justice and Public Order Act 1994 (CJPOA). It is felt that police use of S.60 has historically been misused by causing a real concern amongst local communities whilst affecting their confidence (Delsol, 2010, Walker *et al*, 2009). To safeguard these powers a "senior" officer must authorise the use of this power whilst adhering to a strict legal framework. The senior officer must also adhere to a number of "best practice" BUSS scheme recommendations and approved police practice guidelines established by the College of Policing (Home Office, 2014).

Use of Stop and Search

To place further context on stop and search, an understanding of the volume that the legislation is used is needed, accompanied with the results gleaned from utilising the tactic. It is also important to highlight the use by the MPS to identify the influence the MPS has in comparison to other constabularies. The MPS has an increase from 11,763 a month in Oct 2017 to 22,840 a month in Oct 2019.

MPS – All use of Stop and Search Oct 2017 - Oct 2019

SOURCE: Stop and Search Chart 1. Met Police Stats and Data Oct 2017-Oct 2019

An interesting point is that despite being another metropolitan force, Greater Manchester Police use stop and search 15 times less than the MPS. It should be noted however the demand picture with regards to tourism and the sheer size and demographics are not comparable. A further discussion outside the scope of this thesis could be held recording the difference in demands and level of violence and officer proactivity each force has. Critics would suggest there is evidence to indicate that stop and search has little effect on crime apart from drugs offences (Bradford and Tiratelli, 2019). However, there are also thoughts surrounding issues of under recording and it should be noted that this would also have an impact on the data (Miller *et al*, 2000).

In the year ending March 2018, 282,248 stop and searches were conducted by police in England and Wales. This represented a reduction of 7 per cent from the previous year and the lowest number of stop and searches carried out since the current data collection began in 2002 (Home Office, 2018).

Stop and search volume 2001-2018

Numbers	Type of Search			England and Wales
Year	Section 1 (and associated legislation)	Section 60	Section 44/47A	Total
2001/02	741,000	18,900	10,200	**770,100**
2002/03	895,250	44,398	32,087	**971,735**
2003/04	749,444	40,436	33,798	**823,678**
2004/05	861,494	41,611	37,013	**940,118**
2005/06	888,675	36,276	50,047	**974,998**
2006/07	962,897	44,707	42,834	**1,050,438**
2007/08	1,053,001	53,501	126,706	**1,233,208**
2008/09	1,159,374	150,174	210,013	**1,519,561**
2009/10	1,177,327	119,973	108,685	**1,405,985**
2010/11	1,229,324	62,429	11,787	**1,303,540**
2011/12	1,142,909	46,973	-	**1,189,882**
2012/13	1,012,196	5,346	-	**1,017,542**
2013/14	900,129	3,909	-	**904,038**
2014/15	540,083	1,061	-	**541,144**
2015/16	382,625	970	-	**383,595**
2016/17	303,501	631	-	**304,132**
2017/18	279,598	2,501	149	**282,248**

Change 2016/17 to 2017/18

2016/17	303,501	631	-	**304,132**
2017/18	279,598	2,501	149	**282,248**
Number	-23,903	1,870	*	**-21,884**
% change	-8	296	*	**-7**

SOURCE: Stop and search Table 1. Home Office, 2018

Of the total 282,248 searches, 279,598 stops and searches were conducted under section 1 of PACE. These figures again show a similar reduction of 7 percent from the previous year.

An interesting point however, is that the reduction rate has started to slow for the first time since 2014. One explanation is the new-found political influence to increase the use of stop and searches. Another explanation is that the rise in the use of stop and search is due to the "real" rise in knife crime in England and Wales over the past few years (Brown, 2021). Brown (2021) articulates that although the effectiveness is not clear, senior police leaders have linked stop and search to a reduction in knife crime after the Home Office has been encouraging forces to use stop and search powers more frequently in their day-to-day operations.

Miller *et al* (2001) further explain that the use of stop and search is not equally apportioned and this conclusion is supported, with the Metropolitan Police Service accounting for 48 per cent of all searches conducted in England and Wales during the year ending March 2018. Miller et al (2001) continue to say figures suggest that in England and Wales there were 5 searches per 1000 population, however in London the search rate is 15 stops per 1000 population. When dissecting this data, one needs to consider that the people stopped by police may not reside in that geographical location e.g. a person may be stopped whilst visiting London or attending sporting events or protests.

Upon reflection, it is important to contemplate current affairs when drawing any conclusions from this data, e.g. within the time period the data has been abstracted, the capital has continued to be subjected to terrorist attacks and an unprecedented rise in homicide and youth violence; this is not comparable to other parts of the country.

Outcomes

Whilst predominately perceived as an investigative power (Lustgarten, 2002), the purpose of stop and search is to enable police officers to allay or confirm suspicion about individuals without exercising their power of arrest (Home Office, 2017).

After the introduction of the BUSS scheme, a wide range of outcomes was introduced and recorded across England and Wales. Notably, the intelligence or preventative qualities of the policing power were not considered as an outcome. There could be a number of reasons why, however it could be cited that both the intelligence and preventative aspect is not quantifiable therefore making it difficult to measure. The outcomes agreed within the BUSS schemes are (Home Office, 2014):

- Arrest
- Caution
- Summons
- Penalty Notice for disorder
- Cannabis/Khat warning
- Community Resolution
- No Further Action

The BUSS scheme was introduced in 2014 by the Home Office in order to increase accountability and transparency surrounding stop and search whilst improving community engagement (Home Office, 2014). In the year ending March 2018, 17 per cent of all stop and searches led to an arrest; this is comparable to the previous year (Home Office, 2018). The statistics also suggest that an alternative outcome was submitted in 13 per cent of occasions, therefore meaning that in 70 per cent of occasions stop and search led to "no further action" being taken. It is perilous to reach too many conclusions from this data. Whilst critics of the tactic often make reference to the high "no further action" statistic, there is a distinct lack of research regarding the fact that stop and search is a preventative/investigative power, but some consideration should be given to the fact the powers could be misused by officers (Delsol, 2010).

Social media

The use of social media within the public sector has been described as a "fifth wave" of information communication technology (ICT) (Mergel, 2012). Historically, government agencies have often used traditional methods of disseminating information (Dixon, 2010) however throughout the last decade there has been a sharp rise in digital media. The explosion of social media has allowed a wide reach to the communities whilst provoking thought and discussion (Graham and Avery, 2013). Nearly nine in ten adults are online within the UK, with statistics suggesting adult internet users spend on average a day a week online. The mobile use of the internet via smartphones has seen a twenty percent increase since 2016, confirming that the use of the smartphone is the most popular method for using the internet (Ofcom, 2018). In 2017, 10 percent of users say they don't think about whether the factual information they find online is truthful. This demonstrates a clear increase in the use of the internet, the need to ensure accurate content but also the scale of potential this medium has to damage an organisation's reputation extremely quickly.

Within the UK there is a small cohort of main social media applications which are used extensively. There were 44,670,000 Facebook users in the United Kingdom in January 2020, which accounted for 66% of its entire population (Kingdom, 2021). Twitter is the most commonly used social media application used by UK police forces and it is believed that there are 17.1 million users in the UK. YouTube is rated the second most popular application in the UK with 37.1 million. People aged between 18-24 years old watch on average 486 videos a year (Cast from Clay, 2018). This again offers an insight into the potential reach for police forces across England and Wales.

Lastly, the Instagram application is interesting as whilst the total volume of people using is significantly less than Facebook (17 million), studies suggest that over half the time spent on Instagram was the most popular platform for people aged between 18-24 years old. This is significant as it clearly demonstrates that some media platforms are preferred by different age groups – could this be a consideration to police forces in order to engage with all demographics of society?

It is prudent to discuss social media with regards to engagement, especially as this thesis research will seek to identify whether or not confidence can be increased/maintained. Social media has been the subject of numerous studies and scrutiny by a plethora of industries whilst affording opportunities to people which a decade ago would not seem possible.

Brodie *et al*, (2011) provide a definition of engagement, stating that it is a "psychological state that occurs by virtue of interactive, co-creative customer experiences with a focal agent/object (e.g. a brand)." There has been a significant volume of academic research into the "engagement" however

due to social media being a relatively new concept, the specific research for this topic is limited but fast evolving.

It is fair to say that there is little information available regarding the police use of social media (Liberman *et al*, 2013) therefore a key consideration is why some posts are more popular than others i.e. what resonates with a member of the public. This needs to be explored, as it is evident across all forces in the UK that officers receive little training with regard to the use of social media. This ad hoc approach leads to inconsistencies across all departments (Goldsmith, 2015), however the benefit of considering what resonates will assist in the communication strategies for all media departments. After the London riots in 2011, a number of recommendations were made by the HMIC (HMIC, 2011). In response to the recommendations, police forces across England and Wales adopted a more localised approach in an attempt to move away from centralised corporate accounts. The thought process was that a more localised approach with local communities may increase engagement due to a more personal touch (Meijer and Thaens, 2013). This is an important issue and has been commented on by senior figures within the policing environment due to the awareness of the impact social media can have on local communities (ACPO, 2006). It is thought that effective use of social media will also allow members of the public to understand the challenges faced by a modern-day police service (Gwent Office of Police and Crime Commissioner, 2018). Fernandez (2017) articulates why police engagement via social media is so important whilst Berger (2016) provides a comprehensive framework suggesting six reasons why specific social media campaigns/posts are so popular:

> **Social Currency** – does the audience need to engage and what will they gain from it, will it make them look good? This would assist police with engagement strategies.

> **Trigger** – does the post encourage people to think about anything i.e. revive any thoughts? This notion is useful and offers some consideration to how tweets by police could provoke thought and conversation. This could be beneficial especially when discussing stop and search as it is emotive.

> **Emotion** – does the post activate emotion? It is believed that if the topic is emotive then it is more likely to reach a wider audience. Again, this is relevant due to thoughts and discussions around stop and search.

> **Public** – are the settings on the social media platform created to allow the content to be viewed by all? This is good advice and branches into whether social media platforms are accessible for all? Further exploration could be conducted to consider other options such as how alternative language could be used or whether messages could be translated.

Practical value – is the post useful and does it provide a different aspect from other posts? This is beneficial within a law enforcement context. In addition to stop and search, could accounts be used to give crime prevention advice, especially relating to hotspot areas.

Stories – the ability to engage an audience with a story. Does the topic or post have an ending?

Despite the oversight from senior officers, it is still felt that the current police use of social media platforms is not effectively engaging with the public. Whist the police are using social media to promote good news stories (Chainey and Tompson, 2012), it is felt that the current structures do not advocate a two-way conversation and this is felt to be detrimental (Brainard and McNutt, 2010). Schneider (2016) suggests that nowadays it is almost expected by the public that the police have an online presence within communities and it is interesting how engagement is conducted. Due to the fact that the concept of trust (Shkabatur, 2010) is linked with engagement, some thought and perspective needs to be given to advancing with social media as the police simply cannot adopt a one-size-fits-all approach due to different needs of the community (Cao, 2011).

Research suggests there are differences in how social media messages are received and how the different social media platforms embrace the population. The use of social media is often seen as being more beneficial in highly populated areas (Garett and Jenson, 2011), whilst removing the previous barriers associated with traditional media methodology (Bertot and Jaeger, 2010). The impact of police use of social media does change the mood of the public (College of Policing 2017), whilst affording officers and staff the ability to react immediately to breaking news (Kwak *et al* 2009). Social media also offers the police an opportunity to provide a truly reflective insight into day-to-day activities. This opportunity allows the public access into the policing environment and contributes to a more transparent relationship.

Continuing from the theme discussing the importance of engagement, there are clear links and reasons why a social media strategy across the police forces is important to ensure success (Stevens, 2011). Despite the vast majority of public sector agencies owning some social media digital footprint (Snead, 2013), it is felt that a good social media strategy will allow for greater, more meaningful exchanges between the police and public (Kudla and Parnaby, 2018). If police forces adopt a systematic approach (Fink *et al,* 2011) towards social media and promote clear objectives (McNamara and Zerfass, 2012) within a well-advertised framework, there will be a more consistent and effective outcome. This will again steer towards a more transparent relationship between the police and the public due to there being clear governance and accountability (Fink *et al*, 2011).

An effective strategy will allow social media to reach previously unheard members of the community (Bertot *et al*, 2010) which is essential to promote legitimacy and trust whilst moving away from traditional methods of dissemination of information to a user-user approach (Clark & Aufderheide, 2009). This is important especially when discussing stop and search, as there are some members of the community that feel disproportionality affected by stop and search (Ellis, 2010).

To summarise, social media is fast evolving as a primitive tool to all industries, however there is little academic research with regard to what type of content meaningfully delivers, but it is obvious that certain strategies suit relevant criteria e.g., police disseminating crime information during the riots (Crump, 2011) or as a means to seek intelligence or crime appeals (Meijer and Thaens, 2011).
As there are a significant number of people owning mobile phones with the ability to use social media, there are now an untold number of opportunities available to the public which were unthinkable a decade ago. The introduction of social media has allowed people to "act as journalists" and afford them the ability to disseminate information extremely quickly (Newman *et al*, 2011). Whilst this does afford a number of benefits, it must be noted that there is also a reputational risk being presented. It is therefore imperative for a multitude of reasons that the police are able to respond in a timely fashion (Rice, 2011) or risk a fall in confidence (Dencik *et al*, 2018).
The progression of social media has also allowed the criminal fraternity immeasurable ability to organise criminal behaviour which has led to serious public disorder (Crump, 2011 and Lotan, 2011). Denef *et al,* (2011) suggests that the recent developments in police use of social media have been shadowed by three key purposes. Firstly, to raise public trust by increased accessibility and transparency, secondly to increase operational efficiency and lastly to save monies by using social media as an engagement tool. However, the use of social media is not restrained to engagement with the public or external stakeholders, it allows police forces to interact with departments whilst allowing staff to express themselves (Mawby, 2013). There are also other aspects to the police use of social media including intelligence gathering and enforcement (Bartlett *et al*, 2013).

Despite police forces and governments across the world investing heavily in the use of social media (Perin, 2009), there are concerns that the current model of policing is not "fit to deal" with the data that social media provides (House of Commons Home Affairs Select Committee, 2011). There have also been issues around inappropriate use of social media with the national lead stating there must be "proper control" over its use (Sommers, 2014). This again highlights the concern encompassing reputational risk and the need to ensure a great overarching strategy, otherwise the social media policies could do more harm than good. The recent recruitment drive for social media specialists by

police forces across England and Wales is again further evidence that reputation is a problem that needs urgently addressing (Goldsmith, 2015).

To concentrate on the question in hand, does social media increase confidence in police use of stop and search? Consideration needs to be given to some theoretical issues surrounding legitimacy and procedural justice as these concepts are at the apex of this discussion. For example, when legal decisions are made by officers, they can have a largely negative effect on the public if they are perceived to be conducted unfairly (Stone and Pettigrew, 2000) due to being entwined with social connection and fairness (Tyler, 2013).

Legitimacy

Upon the formation of the Metropolitan Police Service, Sir Robert Peel constructed nine principles of policing and it can be argued that these still remain the cornerstone of legitimacy today (Bronitt and Stenning, 2011). Stop and search is a key part of this due to a wide number of implications previously mentioned. With the recent violent crime epidemic, stop and search is embedded as part of a wider violence reduction strategy, including the Policing Vision 2025 (Association of Police and Crime Commissioners, 2017). Whilst Hough (2007) suggests the refreshed style of police leadership has moved away from the concept of consent, there is a real opportunity to hardwire social media use to increase awareness of the decision making and rationale of any decision thus advancing the procedural justice principles.

Public opinion surveys often reveal that the vast majority of the public support stop and search, provided it is used fairly (Fitzgerald, 1999). If the police are seen as legitimate then public confidence will increase (Tyler, 2004), whereas if the police are rude and/or disrespectful then they are likely to resist or disobey (Terrill, 2003). There are a host of advantages of a perceived legitimate police force which include an increase in the reporting of crime thus allowing the police to have a greater understanding of ongoing occurrences. There may also be an increase in intelligence being submitted by the communities therefore assisting the police to achieve a reduction in crime and an increase in prevention initiatives. The supervision of the stops conducted also contributes to the legitimacy perceived by the public (Jones, 2003). The scope of legitimacy is vast, and although there is a need to illuminate the theory it would not be appropriate to discuss further due to the constraints of this thesis. These notions highlight that legitimate and proportionate use of stop and search is essential if the police authorities wish to maintain and/or increase public confidence. It is also clear that a collaborative approach to the use of social media can be of real benefit to senior officers when seeking to continue to improve legitimacy.

Procedural Justice

Continuing with themes of fairness and transparency, procedural justice is key in order to accomplish a legitimate police service (Tyler, 2001). Procedural justice provides a greater understanding as to why an individual complies with the law (Bottoms, 2002), which again coincides with legitimacy themes. Tyler (1999) has suggested that the public have four key expectations regarding procedural fairness:

> **Voice** – the ability to participate and comment on events/occurrences.
>
> **Neutrality** – the need to consistently apply the law, remain unbiased and ensure transparency in decision making.

> **Respectful treatment** – individuals are to be treated with dignity and respect at all times.
>
> **Trustworthy authorities** – authorities are well meaning and sincere when assisting all parties.

The use of social media is essential to advance the concepts expressed by Tyler. It advocates technological advances within society whilst still appearing relevant and up to date with the public and younger generations. All four aspects of procedural justice will be explored with reference to the use of social media.

Voice

Citizen participation is a theme that has remained consistent throughout a number of reviews and studies (Scarman 1981, Macpherson 1999). One of the most positive proposals to come out the work by Scarman focuses on community (Cain and Saidgh, 1982), and insisted that community consultation increased accountability. The increased scrutiny of stop and search demonstrated by the Home Office's public consultation evolved with the introduction of community monitoring groups and the recommendation of community consultation upon implementation of a S60 authority (BUSS, 2014), again emphasising the desire to increase the voice of individuals. Additionally, the introduction of Independent Advisory Groups (IAG) and other such consultation schemes lend themselves to the evolving digital age. Numerous engagement strategies, increasing police accessibility to all sectors of the community could be implemented using social media. Developing the use of social media allows communities to comment and ensure their voice is heard which is a key dimension of government interaction and public satisfaction (Van de Bos *et al* 1997). The police use of social media also allows individuals to provide immediate feedback rather than the previous archaic surveys. Consultation increases confidence (Kelling *et al,* 1974) and the use of this medium allows the public to promote their feelings and seek change expeditiously (Gregory, 2010), however despite these newly introduced mechanisms some critics suggest these are merely a "superficial response" to engagement (Shiner, 2010). The use of social media also affords the opportunity for members of the public to hold officers to account (Keane, 2013) whilst allowing them to express their thoughts and feelings (Schneider, 2011) thus contributing to the procedural justice principles.

Neutrality

Neutrality is intrinsically linked to discretion which is an important aspect of stop and search practice (Phillips, 1981). It is documented that discretion cannot be individualised as it is attributed to an officer's values and beliefs (Alpert and Durham, 2004; Waddington, 1999; Skolnick, 1966). It is

accepted that stop and search can embarrass members of the public and is extremely emotive. (Stone and Pettigrew, 2000).

Social media can promote the use of stop and search highlighting positive "good news" stories which may allay community concerns around discretion. It is important that the community feels confident around police discretion; it is accepted that a vast majority of encounters/engagement are conducted by officers using their discretion.

New technology needs to be considered when exploring discretion. The national introduction of Body Worn Cameras (BWC) (following randomised control trials and pilots across the country) allows officers the ability to record interactions. BWCs enable interactions to be recorded which has given some comfort to members of the public and police officers alike. The footage has also been used on social media as part of various engagement strategies with the community, thereby providing reassurance and public confidence.

There has been an increase in the use of Twitter during routine policing to both disseminate crime information (Crump, 2011) and to address concerns of public order situations regarding police decision making. Notifications are often dispatched regarding the implantation of S60, normally with some rationale attached which contributes towards the increased perceived legitimacy (Bullock, 2017).

Conversely, the increased use of social media appears to only capture a small target audience, namely, younger and educated individuals, with older citizens seeing minimal value in the medium (Rudell and Jones, 2013). This is concerning as it suggests that whilst there are many benefits to the use of social media, it restricts the audience who receive it thus potentially alienating certain demographics of society. There is a distinct lack of research regarding this issue as a large proportion of studies have focused on decision making being linked to racial profiling and disproportionality.

Respectful Treatment

Within the climate of stop and search, civility is critical as people who are engaged with in a fair and proportionate manner are less likely to feel a victim of racial profiling or being treated unfairly (Tyler and Wakslak, 2004). Skolnick and Fyfe, (1993) articulate that there are clear divisions within the community in relation to discrimination. Social media could be at the forefront of tackling the concerns by advertising a consistent and widespread engagement plan.

The disproportionate use of stop and search against black and minority ethnic groups is intrinsically linked to the fairness of the policing tactic and whether or not it is being carried out in a discriminatory manner (Macpherson, 1999). Data suggests (Home Office, 2018) that in the year ending March 2018, those who consider themselves to be black are nine and a half times more likely to be stopped as those who considered themselves to be white. A similar pattern has been noted for

people who consider themselves to be from a BAME group as they are four times more likely to be stopped as those who considered themselves to be white (Home Office, 2018).

Ethnicity breakdown of stop and search use 2017/2018
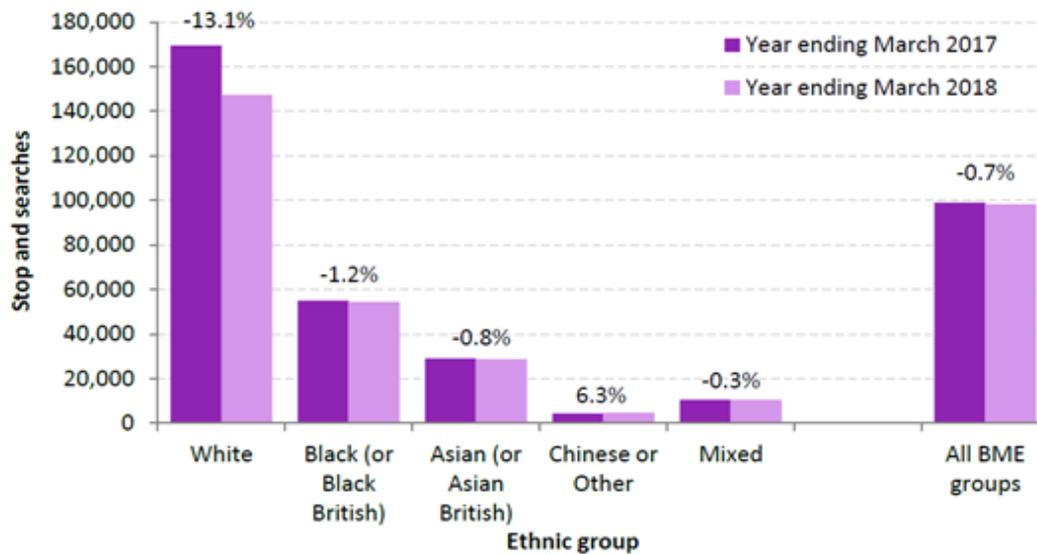
SOURCE: Stop and Search Chart 2. Home Office 2018.

Some caution needs to be taken when analysing these figures. Firstly, the comparisons drawn are using data nearly four years old thus fairly historic. Due to changes in societal demographics, it is highly probable that the ethnic breakdown has changed which could affect the results. Additionally, further information regarding the "available population" needs to be considered (Waddington, 1999). Although there is a need to consider who uses public spaces (Miller *et al*, 2009) the MPA (2004) declare this concept as a smoke screen. The notion of available population was further developed, with studies researching crime patterns, trends and demands with conclusions being drawn that the "available population" were more likely to be stopped and searched within these areas (Miller, 2000). Social media could be developed to incorporate this and engage and converse with the local communities. This topic is engrained in debate and will be discussed later on within this thesis. The introduction of social media has allowed organisations to continuously interact with stakeholders thus increasing their legitimacy (Suchman, 1995), but also portraying to the public a transparent process.

Trustworthy authorities

Despite changes in technology, the police service continues to promote a positive perception and image via external communications. Social media provides a type of civic engagement that promotes transparency, trust and accountability (Mawby, 2002). The use of social media can display these images/videos whilst promoting "good news" to the community. As previously outlined, stop and search has the potential to exacerbate poor relationships with society. It has become clear that certain authoritarian approaches to policing alienate members of the public from the police (Reiss, 1992), and community engagement and meaningful involvement is key to gaining trust. Over the past number of decades, the thought of ensuring a collaborative approach of both the public and police to reduce crime has gained traction (Friedman, 1992).

Specifically with regard to stop and search, social media allows officers the opportunity to showcase positive finds via a quick and inexpensive medium. There are a multitude of reasons for police use of social media outside the scope of stop and search. An example of this is when the police service seeks assistance from the public e.g. finding missing people. However, it should be considered that despite a new medium of engagement, the simple fact is that the same officers are behind the tweets, inferring that the same views and values may penetrate through (Bullock, 2018).

To summarise, the introduction of social media can be positive for police services, especially when appealing for assistance (Crump, 2011), however at the same time is fraught with danger (ACPO, 2013). There is a real opportunity to engage with younger individuals who predominately have a lack of trust of the police (Chow, 2011). However, there is a need to ensure that each management team has a clear objective and strategy as to how social media will be used within their area of responsibility (Stevens, 2010). There is also a need to ensure that police forces across the UK are current and relevant (Wright, 2006).

Methodology

Problem Statement

It is well documented that the use of stop and search over the last number of decades has provoked debate whilst dividing opinions amongst our communities. Recently, there has been a surge in police use of social media with a clear intention of increasing engagement amongst all corners of the population. Private sector use of social media is driven by the desire to increase "brand awareness" and confidence in the organisation. There has been little research conducted regarding police use of social media and how it may correlate with stop and search. There is value in conducting a mixed method approach to ensure an in-depth understanding of any identified issues.

Purpose of the Study

The intention of this study is to ensure a greater understanding of how the police can use social media to increase confidence in the use of stop and search.

Overview

When designing the methodology, consideration was given to each of the stages of the research plan as per the research onion (Saunders and Thornhill, 2012). This particular model is outside the scope of this thesis, however the model provides a number of considerations prior to moving onto the next phase of designing/planning the research.

This section examines the preferred methodology which has been chosen to conduct the research, whilst comparing the other options available. This section will also explain the rationale for the decisions behind the choices whilst outlining the philosophical considerations which underpin the chosen methods.

Buckley (1976) alludes that this section highlights the strategic approach and actual conduct of the research thesis. This research has used a mixture of both interviews and data analysis as it is believed that using this approach mitigates the negative connotations of both quantitative and qualitative research (Johnson *et al*, 2007). Furthermore, the researcher wanted to gain some context surrounding the topic, therefore utilised both qualitative and quantitative methods of research to ensure some context was achieved above and beyond the questions asked due to methods complementing each other (Corbin, 2008).

The research is focused on operational policing practices and as such related theoretical studies are discussed and analysed. It is hoped that the findings will assist any future decision making within the Metropolitan Police Service (MPS). The philosophical considerations will be documented prior to

discussing the research methodology. Finally, ethical considerations will be outlined before some reflection.

Researcher Position

The researcher ensured that any derived findings are based on documented evidence whilst supported by statistical analysis. It was important not to make assumptions relating to either the ontological and epistemological aspects of this research due to the researcher themselves being a police officer (Creswell, 1998). This was an important consideration regarding this research, as stop and search has been an inherent part of the researcher's policing career (ontology), and since knowledge will have been gleaned both internally (work colleagues) and externally (stakeholders and community) their epistemological assumption was also relevant (Guba and Lincoln, 1994). As a result, a decision was made that the preferred methodology would use both pre-acquired data from the Metropolitan Police Service (MPS) and also via engagement with both officers from within the organisation and community members.

Philosophical approach

Although highly contentious, every researcher will have an opinion on what is perceived as true, how knowledge is gained and what can be gleaned from findings (Lincoln and Guba, 2000). These views frame how we perceive the world and is referred to as a paradigm (Kuhn, 1962). This is relevant to this thesis due to the researcher's occupation. Weaver and Olson (2006) believe that a sound understanding of paradigms and their impact will enable researchers to have a greater, more in-depth understanding of methodology and data. The paradigm of the researcher will also influence the methodology used when conducting a study (Lather, 1986). It is important to consider the paradigm and how it affects the research due to the aspiration of the repository of the findings. If the paradigm is not considered then it could affect the validity of the results. Validity is a key aspect to this research thesis as one desired outcome would be to enhance transparency to the public. It is also hoped that the results will allow officers to make an informed decision by referring to this research. It is therefore imperative that the researcher outlines the paradigm of methodology for this study from the outset so some context can be based on the conclusions and data gained. Lincoln and Guba (1985) postulate there are four elements that form a paradigm. These four elements are epistemology, ontology, methodology and axiology.

Epistemology is the assumption regarding knowledge. These assumptions enable the researcher, stop and search in this instance, to reflect on whether knowledge is something that can be acquired or whether or not it can be personally experienced (Burrell and Morgan, 1979). Patton (2002) states

epistemology enquires into the nature of truth and form of knowledge. Ontology accompanies the epistemology within the theoretical framework and the two notions tend to blend (Crotty, 1998) but is widely regarded as an essential element in any research design process (Scott and Usher, 2004). Ontology refers to assumptions made regarding what establishes reality and whether it is objective or in fact a by-product of an individual's mind (Scotland, 2012). This is relevant with regard to stop and search as the researcher has practical experience of this policing tactic due to being a current serving police officer.

Consideration has been given to the most suitable available methods that will assist in achieving the desired outcome (Crotty, 1998). The process involves identifying the limitations of each process being used and what mitigations are utilised in order reduce the limitations whilst conducting the process (Moreno 1947, Crotty, 1998). The nucleus of this research thesis is the process to ensure transparency and deliver public confidence, therefore the researcher's axiology is essential to ensure validity. Axiology is when a researcher reflects on the validity and reliability of the research conducted and considers these elements during findings (Neuman 1997, Morgan 1998). Ensuring that reflection takes place will mean that the methodology is impartial and transparent, therefore increasing public confidence in the process.

Continuing on, it is believed that a researcher's paradigm can influence the methodology used (Morgan 2007). An in-depth discussion surrounding the researcher paradigms are beyond the scope of this thesis, however it is important that they are briefly considered due to its relevance in the overall process. Creswell (2014) notes that there are four key paradigms which are widely accepted as relating to research. These are: post-positivism, constructivism, transformative and pragmatism. This thesis is based on a transformative paradigm, considering segments of the community that are marginalised whilst identifying methods. The transformative theory continues to develop the constructive notion whilst offering additional thoughts surrounding both social and political implications which need to be considered. This is wholly relevant in a policing context as the theory considers segments of the community that are marginalised, whilst seeking to identify methods to overcome these adversities (Mertens, 2010). Using a mixed method approach also allowed a more comprehensive oversight and wider understanding (Somekh and Lewin 2005).

Excel

Researchers often find themselves lost in the sea of data and what is deemed as positive for one researcher may not work for another (Meyer and Avery 2009). Using an efficient method allows more time for the human mind to analyse and identify themes (Faherty, 2010). Microsoft Excel was used during this thesis to organise and code the data for analysis. It is believed that although not originally designed as a data entry tool, the software is an effective tool when undertaking basic research data analysis. It is often used as almost every researcher has a basic understanding of how to use it (Elliot *et al*, 2006). This software also allows for statistical analysis to be applied to the data.

Representation

The researcher took time to engage with the participants to ensure that the research provided a reflective representation of a cross-section of individuals involved in stop and search. The researcher took time to allay concerns; prior to any interview commencing, a handout was given to each person. The handout explained the concepts of anonymity, provided contact details and how consent could be revoked if needed. The purpose of the handout was to ensure the participants were comfortable, had all the information they might need and were not reluctant to become involved (Martin, 1994). Unfortunately, the researcher did not interview as many community members as initially hoped. Some thought has been given to why this may have been the case. It is felt that issues around confidence, trust and engagement could be linked.

It would be remiss of the researcher not to consider police culture when discussing the results to ensure that perceived occupational norms and values are considered when analysing the results (Cain, 1973). The consideration of police culture is important, especially when analysing the comments made by the cohort of participants who have a "working personality" (Skolnick, 1966), including what is accepted as a normal, routine practice (Manning, 1989). This is important as despite attempting to ensure a reflective cohort with regards to gender, length of service and rank, it is suggested that all the values will be similar as they would have manifested through the same working environment (Johnson *et al*, 2009).

Contrarily, despite the police culture being associated with negative connotations (Waddington, 1999) it has been suggested that with the evolvement of technological changes and developments in police culture, it is felt that the concept of police homogeneity is less of an issue than in previous decades (Punch, 2007 and Sklansky, 2007).

Another point of note is the fact that only a small number of individuals participated in the semi-structured interviews. As a result of this, an issue of under-representation of people involved in stop and search needs to be considered when reviewing the effectiveness of this research (Kruger, 1993). Although the aforementioned issues surrounding the effectiveness need to be considered, it is of some encouragement that a number of clear themes were unanimously threaded throughout the interviews. Due to the constraints of the researcher, thirteen semi-structured interviews were conducted in addition to the analysis of the DMC Twitter use data. It could be suggested that data saturation was not achieved, with critics suggesting that failure to reach data saturation will have an impact on the quality of the research (Bowen, 2008). Burmeister and Aitken (2012) state that saturation is obtained with good depth in the data obtained. Although there may be differing opinions about the data saturation of this research, it is clear there are some key themes to discuss and explore which will be discussed in the next section of this thesis.

It is well doumented that there is a need to consider media management as part of business-as-usual within the policing environment (Boyle, 1999), whilst accepting that the use of social media within policing is well established. Focusing on the Excel data (Table 1) it is clear that there is a difference in the use of social media as an engagement tool. The mean average indicates that Boroughs tweeted 28 messages during the review period. There was an overall range of 2 to 112 throughout the seven months and a median of 20. This was suprising, as Twitter use has been accepted as an effective medium of communication with regard to both the ability to reach out to a wide audience and secondly at a relatively reasonable financial cost (Surette, 2015). The MPS was the first police organisation to embrace a relationship with the media and establish a specific department to deal with media relations (Chibnall, 1977). The evidence highlights that some departments have accepted the need to modernise and are proactively using social media at a different rate from others.

One of the most well received framework concepts around the adaptation of a new innovation within a workplace is Rogers (2003) especially within the communications arena (Stuart, 2000). Rogers (2003) suggests there are five key areas to adopting a new innovation, and outlined below are the five areas, with some comments as to how the Metropolitan Police Service (MPS) could incorporate some communications within Rogers' framework. If this framework was considered then there may be a more consistent approach to the use of social media and stop and search.

> 1. Knowledge – this is important; employees need to understand and learn that the MPS regularly uses social media within the policing environment. Additionaly, employees need to

undertand the benefits of using the medium and how it could adapt to their individual department's needs.

2. Persuasion – this step occurs directly after an individual has sought knowledge and has formed an opinion about the proposed social media application (both positive and negative). This is where some communications from within the DMC could prove to be useful to further encourage staff to use it. The DMC could use case studies to personalise the rationale given.

3. Decision – this is the most crucial stage as it is where an individual makes a conscious decision whether to adopt the new idea or not.

4. Implementation – at this stage the individual starts using the social media application as part of their daily business, however it is still important as an organisation or manager to provide support and/or assistance if required. It would be useful for staff to have clear direction from their line managers whilst ensuring a good communication process.

5. Confirmation – the confirmation stage is where an individual seeks reassurance that they are performing as desired. This is a crucial stage as the individual could quite easily revert to rejecting the new application. It would be prudent management to ensure they are aware of this stage and plan a response to ensure the appropriate support is offered.

The inconsistent use of social media documented within the data suggests that there is a need to provide training to staff (Step 1 in Rogers' 2003 framework). The training will ensure that staff are proactive with media relations as it is evidenced that there is often anxiety around media relations (Schlesinger and Tumber, 1994).

If the police do not engage with people via social media then the organisation will be left behind (NPIA, 2010). It is documented that within this modern society members of the public seek information and want to converse via social media (Dick, 2017). The MPS does have a social media policy and it is apparent that the ethos behind using social media is to allow staff to be more accessible. The MPS could also ensure that a social media approach incorporates the current local policing model (Skogan and Hartnett, 1997). A training package would ensure staff are provided with the relevant knowledge to ensure staff are effective and able to adapt to an ever-changing working environment (Birzer, 2003). Social media is a significant force in increasing awareness and communicating (Mangold and Faulds, 2009), which is why it is so important to ensure that if used as a medium it reaches a vast audience.

According to Mergel's social media strategies (2012) the MPS predominately adopts the "pull" media strategy when discussing stop and search via social media. This is where the MPS uses social media to provide information to the public with little interaction. One opinon would be to incorporate a "networking strategy" (Mergel, 2012) and the "pull" strategy which would enable more interaction. This increased interaction, over a period of time, would uplift the volume of followers of the account. Lieberman *et al* (2012) continue to explain the impact of where a "viral" post increased the NYPD's followers by in excess of 30,000 followers in one day. This evidence supports suggestions that if a post is well received, both the general public and local community will react/respond positively. It is further believed that this enhanced interaction will allow conversations between the public and the police.

Next, it is important to review whether the volume of Twitter users are representative to the local communites that the MPS protects. There are thoughts that the demographic composition of Twitter users has been understudied (Murphy *et al*, 2016), however some research regarding Twitter demographics has occurred but this has predominately been in the US (Duggan *et al*, 2015). The findings incidate that a disproportionate amount of Twitter users reside within urban areas – this would affect the outer London boroughs but also needs to be considered when refering to UK-wide schemes. The research also suggests that Twitter users tend to be younger within the age demographic and better educated than the average population (Mellon, 2017).

Obviously, the limitation to Duggan's reseach is that it has been conducted within the US, however it would be foolish not to draw some issues from it. Mellon and Prosser (2017) drew some conclusions regarding Twitter demographics after conducting research within the UK. The findings reinforce the US research and suggest that Twitter is not representative of the population. Furthermore, the review directs that Twitter is dominated by a male majority and this particular platform is the least representative of the UK in comparison to other social media platforms.

So where does this lead us to? Consideration needs to be taken with regard to how effective the current MPS Twitter use is. Using new technologies increases efficiencies, allows engagement and overlaps with the current College of Policing social media strategy. The College of Policing (2017) confirms that both social media and technology are important to ensure transparency, efficiency, co-production and partnership.

Action Research

Although often attributed to the educational environment (Corey, 1953), action research is conducted in the workplace of the researcher (Eden, 1996) and carried out by a person directly involved with the area being researched. Using a mixed methodology approach (Greenwood and Levin, 1998), the research within the thesis is action research due to the author being a serving police officer. It is ideally placed for an employee to conduct this research for a number of reasons. Consultants employed to improve performance within the working arena often charge inordinate fees and do not have the organisational understanding to provide any real focus on the challenges faced. As previously mentioned, some funding was obtained, therefore there was an overarching need to ensure value for money. It is hoped that this research may influence change (Elliott, 1991). The fact that the environment is uncontrolled and the method deemed unscientific, action research has been heavily criticised for collating information and data in a perceived non-scientific manner, causing tension between academics (Susman and Evered, 1978).

This research accompanies a growing number of academic studies being conducted by people within organisations due to various academic programs (Perry and Zuber-Skerrit, 1994). This is absolutely the case within the MPS and there is even a department which oversees corporate development. The fact that this research is being part-funded shows the direction the MPS is moving towards with a surge of pracademics (Sherman, 2013), which is positive as it allows employees to become involved in learning though action and reflection (McNiff, 2013) whilst being overseen by one department. The increased activity will construct important aspects of continual personal development and should lead to development for both the methodology whilst conducting research leading to working practices after the introduction of research findings.

Self-reflection will ensure the integrity of the research thus ensuring its reliability (Ivankova, 2015). Researchers using more perceived scientific methods will conduct research on people in general, whereas action research is different, as predominantly the researcher will conduct research on themselves, therefore self-reflection is critical regarding how one views themselves (Ontology).

Method Considerations

Sampling strategy

To ensure scrutiny over the research being conducted, a sampling strategy is essential. There are two types of sampling strategies: namely, probability and non-probability. Probability sampling is predominately used for quantitative research with a purpose of ensuring that a statistically representative sample is obtained (Ritchie and Lewis, 2003). This is achieved via a number of different methods. Qualitative research predominantly uses non-probability samples. For this research, the author is going to utilise purposive sampling. Paulys (2008) proposes that

purposive sampling can be divided into nine subcategories. Criterion sampling involves ensuring that specific individuals or groups are involved within the research as they have something specific to the topic.

For this research, the author adopted a criterion and theory-guided sampling approach as the two theories tend to overlap due to the similarities. This purposive sample technique will lead for identifying persons who have a knowledge of stop and search (Creswell and Plato Clark, 2011). The author had access to a number of key prominent members of the police service and local community. These individuals had good knowledge of the stop and search process but importantly were approachable and wanted to partake in the research process (Bernard, 2002). This group of individuals was invaluable as they all had a knowledge of stop and search and an opinion which was informed via experience.

Due to the constraints previously mentioned and the intent of the research, specific members were interviewed in order to maximise the efficiency of the validity of each encounter (Morse and Niehaus, 2009). The interviewees were personally selected, ensuring that no bias was shown, knowing that the sampling process is central to the research (Robinson, 2014). The knowledge of each participant allowed the author to obtain a broad and different perspective, ensuring diversity and that the community was fairly and proportionately represented, however they all had a common theme in that they are involved in stop and search within the MPS (Creswell, 2004).

There were two key categories in which the participants can be outlined:

- Police – law enforcement (Metropolitan Police Service).
- Business stakeholders – businesses located within the geographical area of responsibility of the Metropolitan Police Service.

The majority of the focus will be held within Newham and Waltham Forest (North East BCU) due to practicalities and convenience, however the individuals interviewed were representative of the communities of London which the MPS serves. A wide range of officers were spoken to, of different age, length of service, gender and rank. This ensured a good representation of officers within the sample. Unfortunately, the sample of non-police applicants was minimal despite a good advertising and communication plan. Whilst disappointing, it does lend itself to further exploration as to understanding why this happened.

Police research

Brown (1996) outlines four categories of police researchers. 'Inside Insiders', 'Inside Outsiders', 'Outside Insiders' and 'Outside Outsiders'.

Inside Insiders are police officers who are conducting research within the organisation. Inside Outsiders are former police officers who are now academics and can provide a valuable insight due to experience. Outside Insiders are civilian staff working within the organisation in a researcher capacity, and finally Outside Outsiders are all external commentators and researchers. The researcher for this study is therefore categorised as an Inside Insider.

Progressing from the previously discussed action research, it is now fairly common to see an evidence-based policing approach (EBP). The rise in EBP has led to an increased interest in police research. This is linked to this research as it is hoped that both the findings and recommendations are considered by the researcher's employer. An evidence-based policing approach to the improvements in practice is now commonplace and being led by the College of Policing through the "What Works Centre" (College of Policing, 2019). The EBP approach is also linked to legitimacy (Sherman, 2015), which is a key theme regarding stop and search. This work uses this approach to ensure the outcomes are based on clear evidence and analysis. The use of research in the arena of policing is not new, but despite this it remains ad hoc and dependent on the autonomy of the driving force (Bradley and Nixon, 2009). This research has been part-funded by the MPS via a specific funding stream (Sparrow, 2011) and some may believe this is due to an apparent renewed interest in stop and search (Rosenbaum 2010). However, the rise is research projects within an organisation can cause a strain on relationships between police staff and academics due to a lack of understanding and constraints due to alignments with budget calendars. Fortunately, this has not been the case with this project which has been part-funded by the MPS Research Team. Due to the researcher receiving funding, access to any relevant data was not an issue (Westmarland, 2011). This is in stark contrast to the private sector which often has an allocated budget for research projects (Kennedy 2010, College of Policing 2019). However, there are a number of other factors which directly affect police research that the private sector does not have to consider, for example political influence and public perception. The concept of public perception is important as any funding allocated has been derived from the public purse therefore needs to be accountable, relevant and offer value for money. This point is especially important as stop and search is currently relevant and topical. Over the last few years within the MPS there has been a recent shift in organisational learning due to the current Commissioner, Cressida Dick, introducing a programme called Leading for London (MOPAC, 2016).

Within recent years, a notion of ensuring increased education for senior police officers is enabling a refreshed outlook on police research conducted by police officers (Engel and Whalen, 2010). One suggestion for the increased strive of education is that police research does lend itself to supporting self-reflection. As previously alluded to, intrinsically linked to the public's trust and confidence thus

further legitimising the police service (Hoigaard, 2009). This refreshed approach is imperative to this research as the qualities of legitimacy, evidence and fairness underpin stop and search, therefore identifying a sound evidence base for the operational use of stop and search is an important part of this research.

Planning Considerations

This thesis used a mixed method research approach. Mixed method research is the use of both qualitative and quantitative data to present findings (Teddlie and Tashakkori, 2009). Although there are no engrained methods of conducting research (Willig, 2013) the researcher's personal attributes and skillsets were given attention to strive towards a successful process.

The researcher gave four key deliberations during the planning stage of this mixed method approach (Creswell *et al*, 2003). The four key applications when planning to conduct a mixed methods study are:

- Timing
- Weighting
- Mixing
- Theorising or Transforming Perspectives

Timing

For this research, the timing was deliberate with regard to the collection of both the qualitative and quantitative data. It was decided that the quantitative data would be captured first and analysed. The second phase of the research was collating the qualitative data via means of semi-structured interviews. An option of collating the data concurrently was debated, however due to time constraints was deemed not a viable option.

Weighting

Due to the limited amount of current research available in relation to the overall objective, a decision was made to give equal weighting to both components of the mixed methodology. The rationale behind this was to ensure depth in the research.

Mixing

Creswell (2003) highlights the importance of deciding when both the data sets should be amalgamated and how this is achieved during the research phase. A decision was made to connect the data sequentially. Although this method was more time intensive, it allowed the participants within the semi-structured interviews to provide some context to the data identified in the first phase (Driscoll *et al*, 2007).

Theorising or Transforming Perspectives

The last of the four considerations is how a theoretical perspective affected this research process. This is seen as a major concern when conducting the mixed method research (Hall, 2012) with some concerns that it simply was not possible to conduct mixed method research due to the incompatibility of paradigms (Guba and Lincoln, 1994). This research will be harnessed by a transformative paradigm approach which will be further explained later in this section.

Research Design

The researcher is alive to the fact that bias can bleed into the research project. There are a number of reasons for this including personal experiences, police culture and conditioning. In order to ensure that these factors remain in the background, the research will adopt a mixed method approach. The use of both qualitative and quantitative methodology will attempt to address this complex issue. The quantitative aspect of the methodology aims to place some context on the identified trends from the pre-acquired data. Analysis of this data will provide an additional dimension to the evaluation process. This will provide some value as the data is current and represents a realistic insight into the current MPS response to Twitter.

As referenced, this thesis used a mixed research approach which could be deemed controversial and there have been many heated debated from all sides (Johnson, 2004). It is often associated with the pragmatism paradigm (Howe, 1988) however, by undertaking the mixed method technique it is believed that a greater in-depth understanding will be gained and new potential research questions identified (Creswell and Clark, 2011).

The mixed method research approach uses both quantitative and qualitative data sets with a view of overcoming the disadvantages of using a single method type. The research for this thesis will be conducted within the mixed methods sequential explanatory design (Creswell *et al,* 2003, Subedi, 2006). An explanatory sequential design first enables the collection of quantitative data. Once this data has been gathered, further qualitative research is completed to assist in developing the results, analysis and interpretation of the results. It is believed this method will provide a better scope of the question in hand (Plano and Clark, 2011).

Consideration will need to be given as to how much resource is given to each area, ensuring that it is equally distributed. Each phase will link via the results that are provided, whilst reducing any perceived bias from the researcher (Creswell, 2009).

Quantitative

Quantitative advocates express a view associated with a positivist theory (Lincoln and Guba, 1985). In essence, the viewpoint clearly stands that any social experimentation needs to be performed in a manner similar to how scientists carry out experiments i.e. within a sterile environment with a neutral, non-biased point of view (Nagel 1986, Denzin, and Lincoln, 1994).

One of the criticisms of quantitative research is that it can be conducted with minimal contact with people therefore the results can be interpreted in different ways (Marsh, 1982), however in contrast there is a perceived tendency towards an anecdotal approach to the use of data by qualitative researchers when attempting to support a notion (Bryman, 1988) but be subject to rigorous statistical analysis.

The thesis will review and analyse information provided by the Metropolitan Police Service's Directorate of Media and Communications (MPS DMC). The data provides a seven-month overview of all Twitter entries made by MPS corporate accounts relating to stop and search. The reason why the social media department collates this information is to ensure a level of governance around the use of the various corporate accounts. One reason behind the use of various corporate accounts could be that the MPS are using Twitter as an engagement tool as it has been heavily documented that the police still hold a low level of trust within certain communities due to historic events relating to stop and search (Selsdon, 2009, Rollock, 2009).

One aim of the work is to identify possible trends, patterns or inconsistencies (Hammersley and Atkinson, 1983)

Once the trends were identified, the data was themed in order to develop into analysis (Charmaz, 1983). Whilst allowing themes to mature during the research process it is useful to predefine themes prior to the research taking place (Creswell, 2009).

Thought was given to six themes suggested by Loftland (1971) which would have assisted when introducing a coding system. The purpose for the codes was to not only effectively manage the data but also attempt to link the quantitative and qualitative data. The six areas are:

- Acts
- Activities
- Meanings
- Participation
- Relationships
- Settings

These areas were considered for this research but deemed not relevant, however the researcher derived the following three key areas to assist;

- Keywords

- Reactions (retweets)

- Social media value (dissemination)

The acquired data provided a number of areas of interest which were felt relevant including:

- Date – this was important to ensure a valid timeline is given.

- Full text – this allowed for keyword searches to be conducted and identify any apparent trends.

- Author – this allowed statistical analysis to be conducted in order to identify common themes as to whether a particular corporate account is more successful than another.

- Twitter retweets and followers were important so that a correct correlation could be made between the retweets and followers. Whilst this data will provide a good oversight, it has been suggested that some police-related statistics provide a selective picture (Skogan, 1974).

Additionally, further comparisons were made with nationally held data such as the census re: geographical populations in order to provoke the effectiveness of using Twitter as a medium. The hypothesis was that the themes around capturing the population and highlighting some key terminology may affect the public's reaction. All the information captured was processed using Microsoft Excel.

Qualitative

Qualitative promotors are often associated with constructivism, idealism and other paradigms. They argue that it is not realistic to achieve a neutral and sterile environment when performing a social experiment and in fact it is useful if the researcher has some knowledge (Guba, 1990).

There are a number of different methods that were considered for this thesis. The researcher will provide a brief overview and rationale for not using questionnaires and focus groups as part of the research design. The decision not to use either of these methods took some significant consideration as at first glance it would have seemed an obvious approach.

Questionnaires

Questionnaires are often used by a vast number of organisations (Stone, 1978) and are written in a number of different ways whilst affording the flexibility to be used for a number of reasons (Brace,

2018). One of the reasons for their popularity is that they are seen as a quick but effective method of conducting research. Whilst often used to capture data for analytical purposes, there is a misconception with regard to how easily they are able to be formulated, as particular attention needs to be paid to their construction (Eaden *et al*, 1999).

It is widely acknowledged that in order to facilitate research spanning a wide population, a questionnaire would seem the sensible choice, however this was not the case for this thesis for a variety of reasons (Rowley 2014). Firstly, the researcher wanted more granular detail from people who were able to contribute to the issues discussed. Secondly, the researcher also wanted to identify themes as opposed to a generalised approach and due to this it was felt that interviews were more appropriate. Lastly, it was felt that once the survey had been constructed and disseminated to the audience, there would need to be a continual need to drive compliance of completion rates for the questionnaire in order to ensure a reasonable return (Phellas, 2011). The need to constantly drive the questionnaire was a major factor in the researcher's decision. The researcher was aware that the working environment was already over-saturated with questionnaires and believed that the continued follow-up would in fact be detrimental to the relationship with the audience, thus adversely affecting any results gained.

Focus Groups

Focus groups are said to use group participants to gather data (Kitzinger, 1994) which are often formed by the researcher. Numerous academics (Stewart & Shamdasani, 1990) express an interest in this method due to the ability to exploit it across a number of disciplines whilst affording a wide range of benefits (Morgan, 1996).

The researcher will take the lead and often ask questions which provoke discussion. Carcey (1995) explains that the information gleaned from this technique often explains the rationale of a particular thought, attitude or perception expressed by a participant.

There are believed to be a number of advantages of using focus groups including allowing the researcher the ability to identify group values and norms in an expeditious manner (Mack, 2005), however there are also some perceived disadvantages which influenced the researcher's decision not to use this method within this research. Although some themes may be identified, there is a concern that they are only superficially outlined in relation to detail and as such could leave some unanswered questions (Wilkinson, 1998). This contradicts the rationale for using a mixed method approach with a view to gaining a greater depth into answers.

Finally, another aspect of the rationale for deciding not to use focus groups was the concern around "group norms" (Powell and Single, 1996). The researcher felt this could be detrimental to both the validity and reliability of the results gained, especially as group norms can be associated with a police culture where Skolnick (1966) argued that a group of officers have a "professional" personality. The police culture where a sense of loyalty and shared perspective (Brown 1992, 2007) is often seen may hinder true thoughts and feelings from being expressed, thus producing a skewed analysis.

In summary, due to the perceived issues around the importance of building relationships with participants and the desire to ensure that any thoughts are accurate and reflective, both questionnaires and focus groups were considered but dismissed in favour of semi-structured interviews. It was felt that a semi-structured interview would embrace the rationale for using a mixed method research methodology.

Interviews

Interviews are the most common form of qualitative research (Edwards and Holland 2013, King 2004) and it is evidenced that there is a correlation between the development of qualitative interviews and the advancement in understanding of research paradigms. Furthermore, it is suggested that each interviewer will benefit in a different manner pinned on their personal epistemological viewpoint (Edwards and Holland, 2013).

There are three main examples of interviewing under the umbrella of qualitative research, namely structured, semi-structured and unstructured (Bryman, 2011). Despite an array of different styles of interview, there are three key themes which run through all interviewing methodology (Mason 2002). Firstly, the fact that there is an exchange of dialogue between the interviewee and the participant, whether face-to-face or via electronic means. Secondly, despite a choice in how the interview is structured, the conversation will be framed around a specific topic or theme. Finally, there will some knowledge of the specific topic in question; this will allow a discussion and development of the topic area, which the researcher felt was important.

Despite concerns regarding interview bias (Doyle, 2005), the author chose one of the most popular interview types and opted for the semi-structured interview (Alshenqeeti, 2014).

Semi-structured interviews will allow the interviewee to expand and rationalise on the research topic. This style of interview will also assist in allowing the interviewer to see the perspective of the interviewee (Kvale, 1983). Additionally, it was also felt that a more structured interview would narrow down any answers thus minimising the impact of the interview (Stuckey, 2013).

Due to the fact that the author wishes to delve deep into the rationale of some answers of the participant, the interviews will be conducted on an individual basis, allowing the participant a real opportunity to fully express themselves without fear of reprisals or judgement. The researcher felt that using a semi-structured approach would enable the encounter to appear less formal, meaning the participant would be able to fully relax, allowing the validity of the answers achieved.

Whilst conducting the interview, it was imperative to build a strong rapport with the interviewee so that the new-found relationship would be able to overcome difficulties such as a passionate or upset participant (Cassell and Symon, 2004). The researcher felt that if the relationship was managed correctly then it would lead to a successful insight into the mind of the participant thus providing some useful and meaningful data to the research. The researcher felt that this was achieved, and it was really apparent when discussing stop and search due to the emotiveness of the subject.

The semi-structured interview offered flexibility whilst still remaining fairly conversational (Gall, Gall and Borg, 2003). Whilst conducting the interviews, thought was given to the possibility of interviewees reciting experiences as they may be embellished.

Due to the sheer nature of the question styles, the participants could respond in very different ways therefore making coding difficult (Creswell, 2007).

The researcher has received training in various interviewing techniques. It is felt that this assisted in achieving a positive outcome by ensuring the interviews were successful (McNamara, 2009). McNamara provides five recommendations that are suggested to enhance the quality of an interview due to effective interview questions. This framework was used by the researcher when constructing the question bank:

- The wording for each question should be open ended

- Ensure the questions are neutral

- Only ask one question at a time

- Questions need to be clear so that no alternative meaning could be ascertained

- Refrain from asking "why" questions

Creswell (2007) provides further clarification by suggesting that whilst the recommendations by McNamara are useful, the use of additional questions to clarify points or ensure that the interview is kept on the subject should not be overlooked. The use of the semi-structured interview enabled the interviewee to navigate the interview within the pre-considered parameters whilst ensuring that it remained professional.

Loftland and Loftland (1995) believe that in order to maximise the benefit of the interview, the author needs to ensure that personal bias does not influence the interviews. During the planning stage other forms of interviewing were considered such as telephone or internet-based before deciding on semi-structured interviews. This was a difficult choice as the use of a telephone interview method is popular mainly due the flexibility and versatility it offers (Carr and Worth, 2001). It was decided that the interview would be audibly recorded and conducted solely by the author. The main reason for this decision was to ensure that complete oversight could be achieved whilst ensuring the interviews were consistently conducted in a comparable manner; this would have been difficult if others conducted the interview or even took notes. It was acknowledged during the planning stage that conducting semi-structured interviews would be more time-consuming to conduct. In order to combat this, contingencies for time management and room allocation were considered and catered for. The use of semi-structured interviews also allows a level of anonymity (Sweet, 2002) which may in turn lead to a more honest/transparent interview.

Finally, the decision to conduct semi-structured interviews was made as it allowed the researcher to monitor non-verbal communication. This would have been lost if telephone interviews were conducted (Burnard, 1994). The author believes this is an important point as body language could

play a key role if the interviewer probes on specific points made (Sacks, 1992). This is something which was considered and documented by the author when conducting the interviews. Accelerating forward, the author needs to consider how many interviews need to be conducted in order to gain a meaningful insight into the research question, however this question sparks a number of differing views which lends itself to be fiercely debated.

Murphy and Rosenbaum (1998) state that funded research would require a cohort of over 100 participants – this is simply not feasible for my research, however Becker (2012) disagrees with this and advocates that one cannot place a numerical value on the question of how many interviews are enough? He suggests that the type of research being undertaken and what the specific objectives are will dictate what is required.

The number twelve has been suggested to be a reasonable number of interviews to collate enough data where new information does not alter themes. Conversely, Guest *et al* (2006) review that twelve simply would not command respect. These points of view were conducted prior to conducting the interviews.

It is widely documented that stop and search is a high contentious issue (Bradford and Tiratelli, 2019), therefore it was imperative that regardless of the number of interviews held, a fair, complete and impartial viewpoint is achieved. It was hoped that this would be obtained by interviewing a representative group of individuals (Vecitis, 2011). This is a key point to consider due to the objective of the thesis.

The researcher conducted thirteen semi-structured interviews and ensured the data was regularly reviewed throughout the process. The purpose of the review was to ensure that a fair and wide perspective was achieved without the constraints of numerical values. The questions can be found in the Appendix (Interview Administration.3)

The author planned to record the interview digitally and then ensure the conversation was accurately transcribed. The need for accuracy is highlighted when Becker (2007) commented that all representations are perfect for something. Despite having the ability to record interviews digitally, the author was under no illusion that he was responsible for ensuring that the interview achieved clear outcomes by asking pertinent questions and allowing the participant to express themselves (Polsky, 1998).

Ethical Considerations and Informed Consent

There have been a number of ethical breaches when individuals have conducted research (Caplan, 1992) which in the case of this thesis would be ironic due to one of the desired outcomes of this thesis being to increase public confidence.

Ethical considerations are often overlooked when conducting research and are deemed to be part of the researcher's own self-awareness, competence and commitment as opposed to any particular faults with the design of the research (Ponterotto, 2010). Ethical considerations should not be considered at a later stage as an afterthought (Mertens, 2010) and a clear process is needed to deal with any issues that may arise. During the research, ethical considerations were made as the researcher felt there was a possibility that due to the emotiveness of the topic, some participants may feel uncomfortable when asked to relive some experiences (Smith, 1999).

Although Mason (2001) questions the relevance of professional code of conduct when conducting research, the researcher believes that this is highly relevant as both the researcher and vast majority of participants are police officers bound by the Code of Ethics which is set out by the College of Policing (College of Policing, 2014).

Canterbury Christ Church University provides governance surrounding ethics for research by means of both a clear policy and scrutiny panel (CCCU, 2006). However, it would be naïve to believe that the ethical issues surrounding conducting research are completely covered by the ethics committee process (Guillemin and Gillam, 2004). In order to alleviate these issues, the researcher gathered some thoughts and planned for contingencies to overcome any hurdles that were met whist conducting research. Potential scenarios were considered as a result of the ethics committee application form. This made the researcher a lot more comfortable and provided some confidence. (Appendix – Interview Administration.1)

Informed consent was at the fore of any other considerations for this thesis as it has been deemed to be a central component of ethical protocol when conducting research (Tinker and Coomber, 2004). Furthermore, Crow *et al* (2006) explore this further by indicating that gaining informed consent will lead to better quality data being retrieved by the research. The positive arguments for informed consent are that it will increase the confidence of the participant therefore providing more honest views; secondly, it is felt that if it is widely known that a perceived fair process is being conducted then a wider pool of individuals will participate. This is something that the researcher considered and widely advertised that a clear, transparent administrative process would take place with participants engaging in the research process.

Approaching the research from a personal perspective, the researcher also believed that ensuring a clear ethical framework ensured both the integrity of the thesis and that there would be a positive reputation associated with the thesis.

In order to ensure a transparent "informed consent" process, a formal written request by means of an email was sent to all participants therefore providing a clear audit trail. The request highlighted

the objective of the research and was specific with what is required from the participant. (**Appendix** – Interview Administration.2)

Upon attending the interview location, each participant was personally briefed, and the researcher was in a position to answer any questions or allay any concerns raised. The purpose of this was to reinforce the objectives of the interview, confirm what was required and importantly the desired outcomes. The participants were also informed how their individual accounts would be used. Upon arrival to partake in the semi-structured interview, administration was completed which consisted of a consent form which outlined the participant's permission to be involved in the process. The consent form also explained how participants' information would be stored but also expressing how individuals could retract any implied consent. The researcher received some positive feedback from participants regarding this process.

Continuing with the theme of permission, the researcher ensured that permission to conduct the research was sought from all organisations involved, however the purpose of the research was to deliver key themes regarding police transparency and engagement with the community, therefore no reputational risk was caused.

There are a number of other considerations that were made by the researcher including the concept of a participant's privacy. Myers *et al* (2008) mention that there have been a number of high-profile breaches which have caused anxiety and concern amongst the public regarding privacy, and this was a consideration to the researcher.

In order to combat any privacy issues, clear processes were put in place in order to ensure that the data was stored correctly. The data gained by the author's research will be stored securely on the researcher's laptop and only shared with the student's supervisor and assessor for a meaningful and lawful purpose. The MPS data provided will be stored on a MPS-issued laptop and no personal information will be gleaned from this due to the nature of the topic area. This research is GDPR compliant. The author has sought specific permission from the MPS to use the data which has been provided. The data provided by the MPS is owned by the organisation and they have the autonomy to share the information with the researcher.

Anonymity and Confidentiality

Privacy is also intrinsically linked to both anonymity and confidentiality (Oliver, 2003) and underpins all research conducted, regardless of methodology or ethical stance (Wiles *et al,* 2006).

The importance of both anonymity and confidentiality cannot be underestimated. The researcher provided clear guidance from the outset to participants during the administration stage of the process, ensuring the participants clearly understood the expectations and parameters of the

research (Wright *et al,* 2004). Prior to the commencement of each interview, the researcher confirmed that the participant's confidentiality would be broken if they were at risk of harm or if any illegal activity had been disclosed. The researcher felt that this transparency from the outset provided some comfort to participants as it cleared any ambiguities.

The researcher's welfare and wellbeing (Lee-Treweek and Linkogle, 2000) was reflected upon prior to conducting research and this was factored into the planning. Thought was given to the volume of interviews being conducted by the researcher within the time period. The researcher ensured that sufficient breaks were taken in order to process what had been said. As a result of this specially allocated time and mental health management, there was no need to speak to others about what had occurred, therefore ensuring anonymity.

Throughout the research process, the researcher decided to use the most popular method to ensure anonymisation of the participants' pseudonyms (Corden and Sainsbury, 2006). The pseudonyms were used for individuals as opposed to organisations, the rationale being that organisations are predominantly deemed to be less in need of anonymity (Nespor, 2000). However, using pseudonyms as a vehicle for anonymisation may lead readers to draw their own conclusions. The danger of drawing conclusions is one reason why anonymisation is such a contested issue (Vainio, 2013). As previously referred, all data was managed in a correct manner and stored securely (Denscombe, 2014), ensuring the integrity of the research process.

Sensitivity

Sensitivity is a pertinent area due to stop and search being emotive whilst having the ability to alienate communities quickly. There have been national riots where stop and search has been a factor attributed to the cause. The research did not specifically evaluate particular stop and search experiences which provided a level of security. Due to the fact that the researcher conducted interviews with police officers, permission was sought and the questions posed were scrutinised and approved by both the police federation and management.

Welfare of Participants

As previously alluded to, there were a number of working practices considered prior to the research taking place. These working practices provided a safety net and mitigated any perceived welfare issues for the participants which was absolutely paramount for the researcher (Frankfort-Nachmias and Nachmias, 2008).

The Role of the Researcher

The researcher conducted the semi-structured interviews with willing participants. Each interview was audio-recorded and transcribed into comprehensive notes. During the administration process (carried out with the participants prior to the interviews), explicit permission was obtained from the participants and documented to record, transcribe and use the results gathered. The participants were also made aware that they could access the transcripts and withdraw consent at any time. During the interview, my role was to ask the pre-considered questions and explore further avenues my means of further questioning; this allowed the interview to flow as naturally as possible. The researcher noted body language and other environmental influences during the interview. No requests for the transcripts were made and no consent was withdrawn by any participant.

Researcher Bias

In order to achieve the most reliable results, thought needs to be given to the concept of bias. It is expected that bias exists in all research design, however acknowledging this and attempting to reduce the impact will ensure that the findings are more culpable to scrutiny (Smith, 2017).

The researcher is a serving police officer and as such will have a professional relationship with all participants. Furthermore, the sheer fact that the researcher has experience of stop and search as a police tactic will ultimately mean they have an opinion on the issue.

In order to minimise any bias, the researcher considered where the interviews were conducted, ensuring a neutral setting. The researcher did not wear uniform and used first name terms rather than follow a formal rank structure. The reason for these measures was to ensure the participants were relaxed so the best possible results were achieved. The research design, which is fully transparent, also reduced any bias as participants were selected to ensure that all sections of the community were represented.

Finally, the analysis bias was addressed by ensuring that the findings were documented in an objective manner.

Dissemination of findings

There has been little research conducted regarding the dissemination of findings despite its accepted importance (Kerner *et al*, 2005). Often individuals involved in the research process want to be made aware of the findings (Murphy *et al*, 2008). There are a number of other reasons why the dissemination of findings is important, however, primarily, it allows an evidence base for any discussion involving change. An important aspect of the dissemination is to ensure that the

organisers who would have an interest in the findings are able to understand and process the findings. This is often not the case with many organisations (Turale, 2011). The researcher was fortunate that the MPS does have a structure that facilitates the dissemination of findings. The internal MPS process also allows the key decision makers access to the researcher which is important, as there is a tendency for the dissemination to be more successful if the decision makers feel involved in the process (Heimans and Timms, 2008). This contradicts Sallis *et al* (2015), who suggest that there are significant delays in the dissemination of research findings towards individuals who it directly impacts.

Lastly, with regard to stop and search, there are a number of boards and panels which are supported by the community, therefore the researcher feels it's important that the relevant community parties are notified of the findings during the dissemination phase (Mendel *et al,* 2008). It is felt that this inclusive approach will continue to work towards increasing the confidence and support of the public.

Personal Reflection

From a professional perspective, it is essential that personal reflection takes place (Mckay, 2008) however from a personal note I feel that reflection promotes emotional intelligence and improves my own personal skills. There are numerous definitions of reflection with different purposes in mind (Chirema, 2007) however it is a continual process of self-awareness and analytical thought that is developed over time (Schutz *et al*, 2004).

There are a variety of different reflection models, however the College of Policing promotes the use of Gibbs' reflective cycle (1998). There are five elements to this model and I will structure this section utilising these headings:

- Description
- Feelings
- Evaluation/Analysis
- Conclusions
- Action

Description

I wanted to explore the concepts discussed within this thesis as I believe that stop and search is one of the most contentious policing tactics, certainly within the UK, and there is a case to suggest the world. This is against a backdrop of society moving at an electrifying pace with regard to technology and innovation, which is something that the police service has historically not been able to adjust to for a wide variety of reasons.

Feelings

I enjoy learning and honing new skills. I have received some truly world-class training throughout my professional career, however I have received little training to develop my analytical skills (Chappell and Lanza-Kaduce, 2010). I naïvely walked into this research masters having recently completing my undergraduate degree. I enjoyed the concept of learning and educating myself so that I would be able to achieve a broader sense of thinking whilst performing my job. I also wanted to increase my learning so that I can encourage an evidence-based approach to this subject which is fully supported by the College of Policing.

Evidence Based Policing is important to me as it increases legitimacy (Sherman, 2015) but also facilitates a true problem-solving approach underpinned by clear evidence. (Ingold and Monahgan, 2016)

I was naïve due to simply not comprehending exactly how time consuming conducting research (regardless of a favoured methodology) was. Running parallel to the research process I had to ensure that the correct permissions and authorities were received from my workplace. The stark reality of executing the research planned on an Excel timetable is very different and it was important for me not to allow that to hinder my progress but to accept the fact and continue.

At times I felt overwhelmed regarding the issue of time management in relation to both my personal and working life. Despite the fact that I feel I am a fairly motivated and organised person, my initial plans around how I was going to manage my time needed to be adapted. I learnt to accept this as some of the circumstances were out of my control.

I am a fairly confident person always seeking to improve, I was able to discuss my thoughts but also seek help both academically and with regard to identifying the correct people to assist me within the organisation (Newman, 1994). Identifying the correct people within my organisation was frustrating at times and required some tenacity. Once I found the correct individuals I was able to progress and seek the relevant permissions to allow me to carry out my research. I was proud to have received the permission, as I feel it does show how the police service has progressed with regard to academic research (Holdaway, 1983). Upon reflection, this process could have been a lot easier and is something that I will feed back to the corporate learning department within the organisation.

Upon commencing the thesis, I was concerned whether or not I would obtain the support from my colleagues. It is often documented that police officers are suspicious and have an ingrained culture regarding learning (Wells, 1997). My method to overcome any suspicion and activate some interest in the research was to openly advertise why it was important to do this research and how any learning would benefit everyone and assist in achieving the "mission" (Reiner, 1992).

Although police insider research is not a new concept (Heslop, 2012) and is becoming more prevalent, I felt that there was some pressure to ensure that it was relevant and worked towards developing an understanding of "routine police work". (Reiner,2000). I continued to make a conscious effort to ensure that both transparency and the Code of Ethics (College of Policing, 2014) was at the fore.

Evaluation and Analysis

I felt the best course was to adopt a mixed methodology incorporating some analysis on the current tweets being sent by the organisation. I thought that this was important so that some thought be given to what exactly is occurring at the moment, allowing the results to be a point of reference. I found this really useful as I was able to get some good quality data which highlighted some positive work whilst outlining some of the challenges faced.

As previously alluded to within an earlier section, there is a wide variety of benefits for completing surveys (Fricker and Schonlau, 2012) however I believed that staff and other potential participants were experiencing survey fatigue due to the sheer volume of requests being received in the workplace. I felt that this survey fatigue would negatively influence my research. I also wanted to meet the person I was speaking to so that I could gather the benefits of viewing the non-verbal communication and delve deeper into any particular points that were raised. This proved to be extremely interesting as the more passionate some participants got, the more hand gestures were made and movement on their seats!

Deciding what questions that I felt were appropriate to ask was a challenge. I wanted to keep some structure but at the same time allow the participant to feel comfortable and navigate the interview themselves. After some deliberation and seeking advice, I formulated my questions using a mixture of open and closed questions. I then made use of some of my occupational training around interviewing, for example, the use of prolonged pauses, clarifying any ambiguities and ensuring a brief summary of what had been said before moving to another topic area.

I felt that the interviews went fairly well as I was able to ask the participant to expand on any pertinent points, enabling me to clarify, identify context and develop in-depth explanations. The cohort of participants was fairly reflective of the organisation with regard to gender, experience and rank, however I did not include any police volunteers (MSC) who are also able to use the legislation. This is something that I could have done, although from my personal experience the police tactic is not particularly used by volunteers – however this may have been a good stance to interrogate and review. I found the participants a little sceptical at first although this could have been mistaken for inquisitiveness. I worked hard when completing the admin (consent forms etc.) to build a relationship with the participants. At first, I thought that the participants were both wary of me and the idea of them being interviewed due to their body language (non-verbal) communication as some had their arms crossed etc.

I would have liked to have had more community members involved in the research process. Due to time constraints and the lack of identifying willing participants, I was confined to who I was able to use, however, again this is something that could be expanded on with further research. This was frustrating and upon reflection, I may have been too ambitious with my initial plans.

With reference to time management, I learnt fairly quickly the need to ensure that the interviews were occurring in the most convenient location for the participant and during a time period where there was the least demand for that person. I ascertained this via trial and experience as on a number of occasions some interviews were cancelled last minute and had to be rescheduled.

Overall, I was able to draw some key themes from the interviews with some clear context and thoughts developed from the participants I spoke to. As a result of the positive connotations of the interviews, overall I am happy with the chosen methodology.

There was seven months of Twitter data which was provided by the MPS to me and was specifically around the use of Twitter for promoting stop and search. I felt that the duration of the data presented me with an accurate reflection of daily occurrences, so I am content. If time constraint was not an issue, it would have been useful to interrogate further into the followers' identity and use of other accounts – this is certainly something which could be developed by further research.

Prior to undertaking this research I had no formal academic input and very little knowledge/skillset around statistics. However, due to my occupational experience, I am fairly confident in analysing data using Microsoft Excel. Due to my familiarity with this software I made the decision to use this programme to analyse the Twitter data. I did have other options to use more statistical analytical tools such as NVIVO. I decided not to do this as I felt that I would be able to draw the information I needed from Excel within a format that was easy to understand. I felt that this was important, especially as I wanted to present my findings within the organisation with a view of assisting with any corporate change. Additionally, I also felt that this would make my results more accessible to colleagues and increase the chances of achieving the objective.

Another consideration was that I am not familiar with NVIVO which would have meant learning a completely new system. Whilst being fairly proficient with Excel, I did need to learn some new functions. As I referred to earlier, I asked for assistance in order to learn new functions from subject matter expects who were able to guide me. I enjoyed this process and some of these skills will certainly assist me in the future. If I was to continue to conduct further research in order to expand my current findings then I would need some academic inputs around statistical software.

Positionality of Researcher

The dynamic between researcher and participant has become a key focus for academic attention over recent decades (Ganga and Scott, 2006). I considered my managerial position within the organisation and during the recruitment stage of interviewers ensured that any communications could not be perceived as coercive. I also interviewed individuals who were of a higher rank than myself and as such it was important to make them feel comfortable and confident in order to obtain the best accounts. This is, again, why body language was monitored as it provided another perspective whilst giving a good insight into the emotions of that individual at the time (Meeren *et al*, 2005). This was done via consideration of language used and offering the opportunity for individuals to speak and ask questions if needed. It was important to consider these areas so that the information gathered would be of value, whilst affording people who are reviewing the data to get a better understanding of it (Finlay, 2002).

Conclusion

It is fair to say that throughout this process I have felt a number of emotions, but overall I have enjoyed the whole process. I underestimated the sheer volume of work needed whilst planning and conducting the research. I also learnt the importance of planning whilst ensuring there are contingencies in place allowing flexibility.

Overall, I am comfortable and pleased with my chosen methodology and content with the data that it produced for analysis. I was able to conduct some clear analysis from the Twitter data and articulate it in a presentable format which was easy to understand. The process for the formation of the questions took longer than I thought. The main reason for the delay was that I wanted to ensure that the relevant data was extracted from interviewees. The actual logistics of conducting the interviews (location and participants) was more involved than I first thought. I was able to overcome these issues and am happy with the data gathered and the clear themes identified.

Action

It is my intention to present my findings to the relevant individuals within the MPS so that I can assist with any future directions in relation to the use of social media and stop and search. The results from the thesis have opened a number of further avenues for exploration, including the potential to compare the MPS data to other national comparable forces. There could be more research conducted with community members and even consultation with the private industry to seek how social media is used to increase meaningful engagement.

Personally, I feel that I have grown as an individual with regard to personal resilience, as at times I have found this process challenging. I believe that my passion for learning has intensified; I have thoroughly enjoyed this process and am extremely grateful for the support offered from both the University and my colleagues.

Results

The purpose of this study was to develop a theory regarding the police use of social media, and ascertain whether it improves engagement whilst seeking to identify best practices. This mixed method research approach was conducted in London using Twitter data provided by the Metropolitan Police Service (MPS). Twitter has 320 million active users and there are in excess of 500 million daily posts logged (Shaban, 2019); this is the most used social platform by the MPS. The seven-month data did not include the summer months where it is expected to identify a seasonal rise in violent crime (Murray, 2021). The data was provided by the MPS and analysed using identifying key words. The semi-structured interviews were conducted with a mixture of individuals who had both experience and an interest in stop and search. The officers who participated were of varying lengths of service, age, gender and ranks. All officers who took part in the interviews did so of their own volition, and presented their thoughts which constructed the data for this study. Likewise, the community advocate volunteered to participate in the process and was actively involved in stop and search within London. All the interviews were held in the same location and room to ensure a controlled environment. This section of the thesis reviews the findings and discusses the data collected.

Analysis of the DMC Data variables.

There were a number of variables presented within the data provided including:

Date/Time:

This was the date and time a tweet was sent from an account

Author:

This defines who wrote the tweet

Full Text:

This proved difficult to conduct analysis due to the volume of free text, therefore a further key word searches within the text using a formula within Excel. The purpose of the key word search was to allow the researcher to identify further patterns/trends.

The key word searches were: KNIFE/ARREST/VIOLENCE/DRUGS/ASSAULT POLICE/PICTURE

Twitter Followers:

The number of other Twitter accounts that follow that specific corporate account

Twitter Retweets:

The number of times another account has re-posted a tweet. Twitter's retweet feature allows others to quickly share a post. (Twitter)

Population

The total population figure for the area the corporate account is representing.

Results for Data Variables

Author

The author was considered as there are a number of accounts with the MPS which were reviewed.

Table 1. Total number of tweets from all BCUS Sept 2018-March 2019

Month/Year	(All) ▾
Full Name ▾	**Count of Twitter Tweets**
Barking & Dagenham Police	37
Bexley MPS	2
Brent MPS	14
Bromley MPS	14
Camden Police	45
Croydon MPS	13
Enfield MPS	50
Greenwich MPS	12
Hackney Police	42
Hammersmith and Fulham	16
Harrow MPS	24
Havering MPS	8
Hillingdon MPS	56
Hounslow MPS	40
Islington Police	19
Kensington & Chelsea Police	10
Kingston Police	2
Lambeth MPS - Central South Command	25
Lewisham MPS	7
Merton Police	4
Metropolitan Police	1
MetTaskforce	112
MPS Barnet	43
MPS Firearms Command	7
MPS Haringey	48
MPS Southwark	21
MPS Specials	48
MPS Westminster	18
Newham MPS	34
Redbridge MPS	14
Richmond Police	5
Roads&Transport MPS	44
Sutton MPS	7

Month/Year ▾

As can be clearly seen from the table above, there is a large variation of use between the different accounts (2-112). This indicates that there is no clear direction and an inconsistent approach to social media use by the MPS. Of note, the task force tweeted significantly more than other areas but stop and search is seen as the core business of this department. Many successful businesses do have a social media policy and this point will be expanded within the discussion section of this thesis.

Full Text

As mentioned earlier, the full text proved difficult to analyse due to the fact that the tweets which were reviewed consisted mainly of free text. The author identified some pertinent words from the text which have been analysed. The key words were identified from the full text utilising an Excel formula. These specific words were chosen as the researcher felt that they had a direct link to stop and search and were also emotive as they were linked to violence and current affairs outlined daily in the national media and academics.

Knife

Stop and search is one tactic that is used by the MPS (BBC,2021) to reduce knife crime; as such, the word knife has been considered.

Table 2. Total number of knife tweets from all BCUS Sept 2018-March 2019

Month	Count of tweet mentioning Knife
⊟Sep-2018	
TRUE	50
FALSE	35
⊟Oct-2018	
TRUE	47
FALSE	60
⊟Nov-2018	
TRUE	60
FALSE	84
⊟Dec-2018	
TRUE	76
FALSE	60
⊟Jan-2019	
TRUE	97
FALSE	75
⊟Feb-2019	
TRUE	99
FALSE	65
⊟Mar-2019	
TRUE	73
FALSE	47
Grand Total	**928**
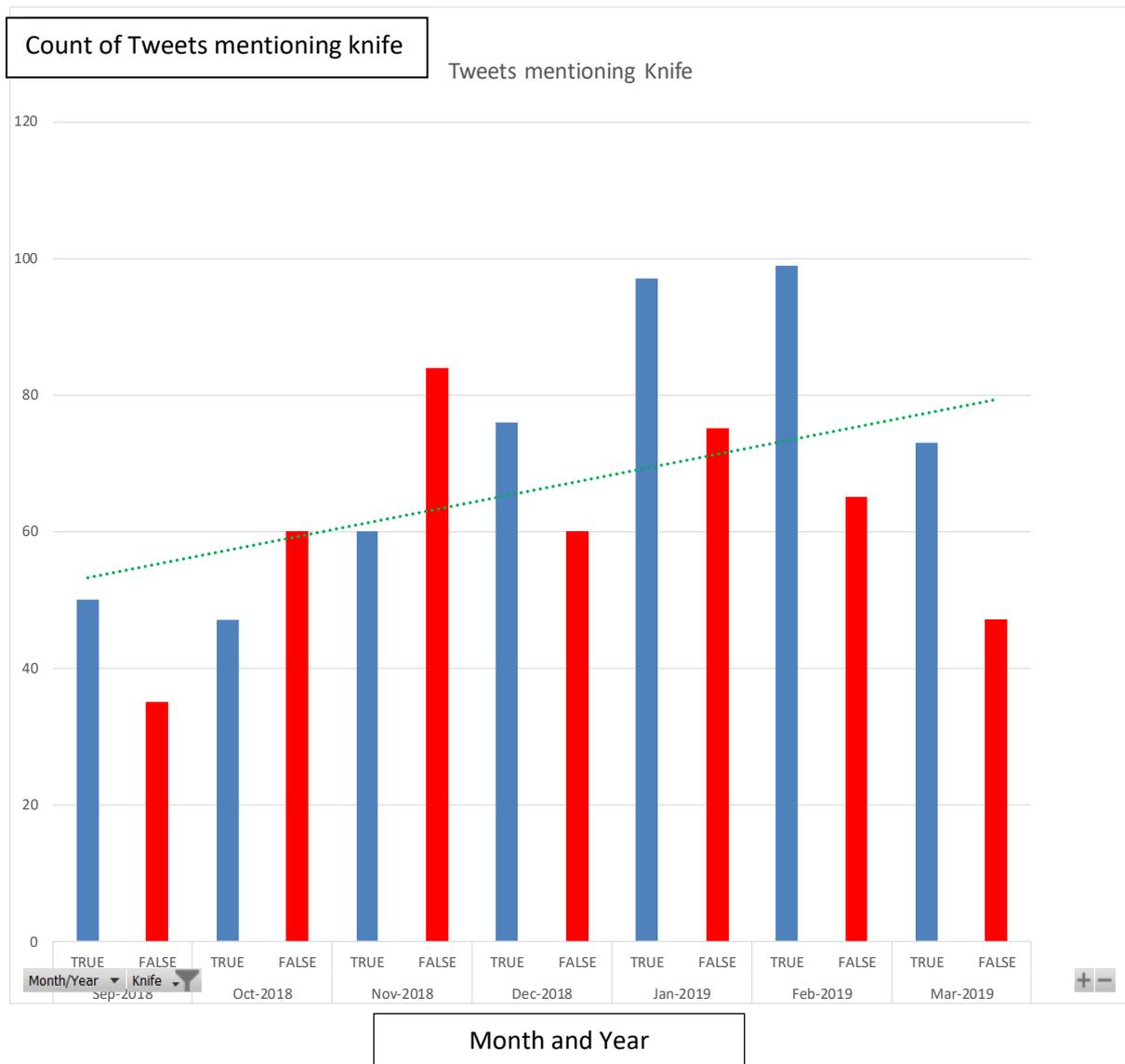
Chart 1. Chart of Tweets mentioning knife crime

The data presented in both Table 2 and Chart 1 indicate there is no real consistency within the data when reviewing the word "knife". It was mentioned 502/909 resulting in 54% of all tweets.
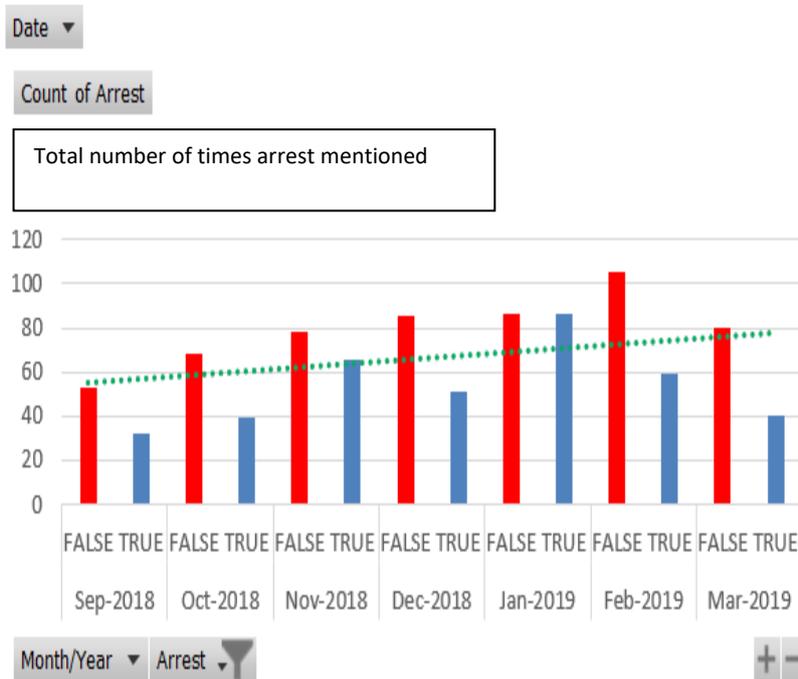
Arrest

Arrest is a key function of the police and therefore the word considered in this paper.

Table 3. Total number of assault tweets from all BCUS Sept 2018-March 2019

Row Labels	Count of Arrest
Sep-2018	
FALSE	53
TRUE	32
Oct-2018	
FALSE	68
TRUE	39
Nov-2018	
FALSE	78
TRUE	66
Dec-2018	
FALSE	85
TRUE	51
Jan-2019	
FALSE	86
TRUE	86
Feb-2019	
FALSE	105
TRUE	59
Mar-2019	
FALSE	80
TRUE	40
Grand Total	928

Chart 2. Chart of Tweets mentioning arrest

Here we have a similar picture as the previous reviewed data. The word "arrest" was mentioned 373/928 times resulting in 40% of all occasions. This is interesting as it could be argued that "arrest" is a key function of the police. It is also noted that this could be perceived as "good news" and actually enhance the effectiveness of stop and search.
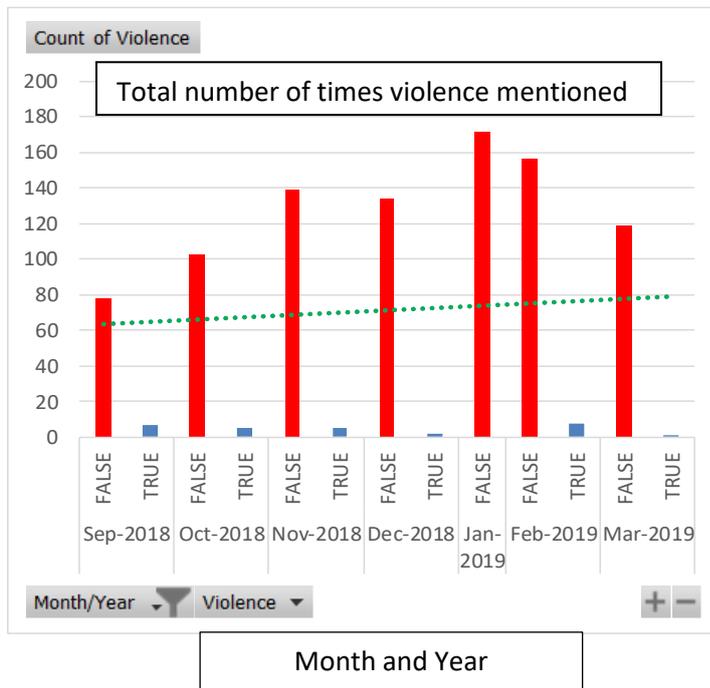
Violence

For some, stop and search is a necessary tool to tackle serious violence therefore the word violence has been considered.

Table 4. Total number of violence tweets from all BCUS Sept 2018-March 2019

Row Labels	Count of Violence
Sep-2018	85
FALSE	78
TRUE	7
Oct-2018	107
FALSE	102
TRUE	5
Nov-2018	144
FALSE	139
TRUE	5
Dec-2018	136
FALSE	134
TRUE	2
Jan-2019	172
FALSE	172
Feb-2019	164
FALSE	156
TRUE	8
Mar-2019	120
FALSE	119
TRUE	1
Grand Total	928

Chart 3. Chart of Tweets mentioning violence

This data indicates that 28/928 of the tweets included the word violence, representing just 3% of the total tweets. It could be argued that during the course of the timeline, the UK suffered an exponential rise in violent crime (Jump and Smithson, 2019), therefore promoting the use of stop and search could be beneficial to enable the public to see a police response.
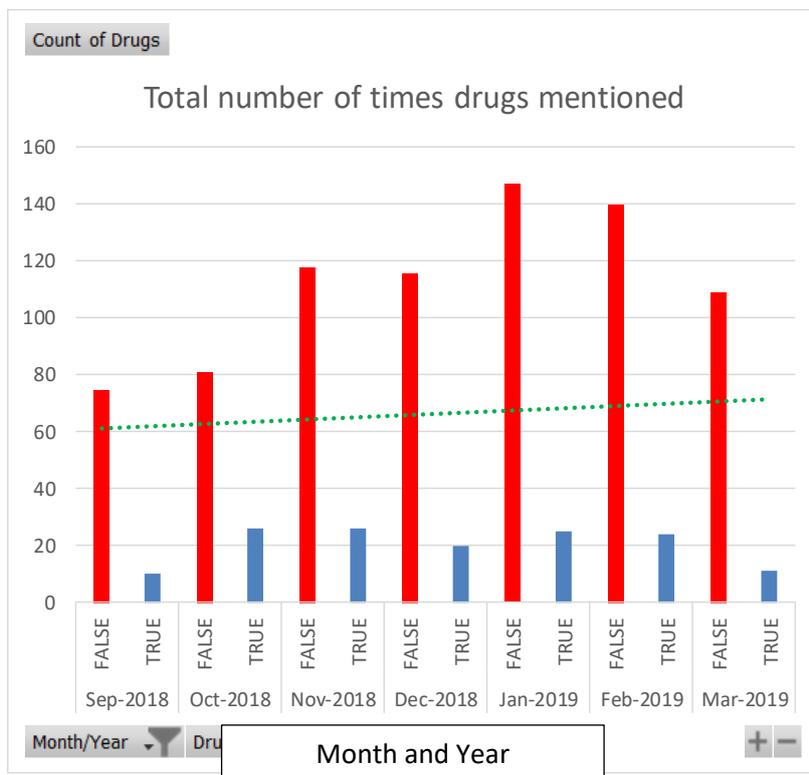
Drugs

The word drug has been included, as drug use can affect the communities' perceived fear of crime. This perception affects confidence in the police (Theall et al, 2009).

Table 5. Total number of drugs tweets from all BCUS Sept 2018-March 2019

Row Labels ⊼	Count of Drugs
⊟ Sep-2018	85
FALSE	75
TRUE	10
⊟ Oct-2018	107
FALSE	81
TRUE	26
⊟ Nov-2018	144
FALSE	118
TRUE	26
⊟ Dec-2018	136
FALSE	116
TRUE	20
⊟ Jan-2019	172
FALSE	147
TRUE	25
⊟ Feb-2019	164
FALSE	140
TRUE	24
⊟ Mar-2019	120
FALSE	109
TRUE	11
Grand Total	928

Chart 4. Chart of Tweets mentioning drugs

Drugs was mentioned 142/928 occasions, representing 15% of all tweets. This is interesting, as especially with regard to stop and search, drugs is at the fore of this topic (Kalyan and Keeling 2018). Again, one could argue that there is a heavy link between drugs and violent crime (Markowitz, 2000) therefore inciting the need to promote good news to the community.

Assault Police

Assault police is considered as it is an emotive topic to police staff and may resonate with some of the police accounts following.

Table 6. Total number of assault tweets from all BCUS Sept 2018-March 2019

Row Labels	Count of Assault Police
Sep-2018	85
FALSE	84
TRUE	1
Oct-2018	107
FALSE	106
TRUE	1
Nov-2018	144
FALSE	144
Dec-2018	136
FALSE	136
Jan-2019	172
FALSE	172
Feb-2019	164
FALSE	164
Mar-2019	120
FALSE	120
Grand Total	928

Assault Police was only mentioned twice over the six-month period from the data set provided. The topic of assault police provokes public interest and has been the subject of various national media campaigns. It was surprising that "assault police" was only mentioned twice, as it does "whip up" interest and coincides with Berger's (2016) six themes previously mentioned.
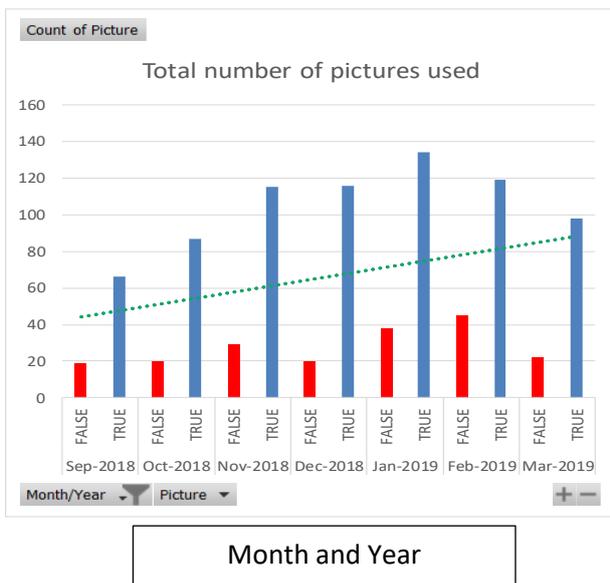
Picture

Pictures were considered, as incorporating a picture within a tweet increases engagement (Zarella, 2013)

Table 7. Total number of picture tweets from all BCUS Sept 2018-March 2019

Row Labels	Count of Picture
⊟ Sep-2018	85
FALSE	19
TRUE	66
⊟ Oct-2018	107
FALSE	20
TRUE	87
⊟ Nov-2018	144
FALSE	29
TRUE	115
⊟ Dec-2018	136
FALSE	20
TRUE	116
⊟ Jan-2019	172
FALSE	38
TRUE	134
⊟ Feb-2019	164
FALSE	45
TRUE	119
⊟ Mar-2019	120
FALSE	22
TRUE	98
Grand Total	928

Chart 6. Chart of tweets mentioning picture

Month and Year

This variable was the most consistent, with 735/928 tweets incorporating a picture with the tweet. This represents a total of 79%, and although the recipients would need to be interviewed, the finding, in principle, reflects Zarella's findings. It is fairly imperative that pictures are included in communications to the public and should be included within any future policies.

Twitter Retweets

The purpose of considering the volume of retweets is that it provides an indication of the footprint the tweet has reached within the social media platform.

Table 8. Total number of tweets from all BCUS Sept 2018-March 2019

Row Labels	Count of Twitter Retweets
Sep-2018	85
Oct-2018	107
Nov-2018	144
Dec-2018	136
Jan-2019	172
Feb-2019	164
Mar-2019	120
Grand Total	**928**

Chart 7. Chart of Total overview comparison
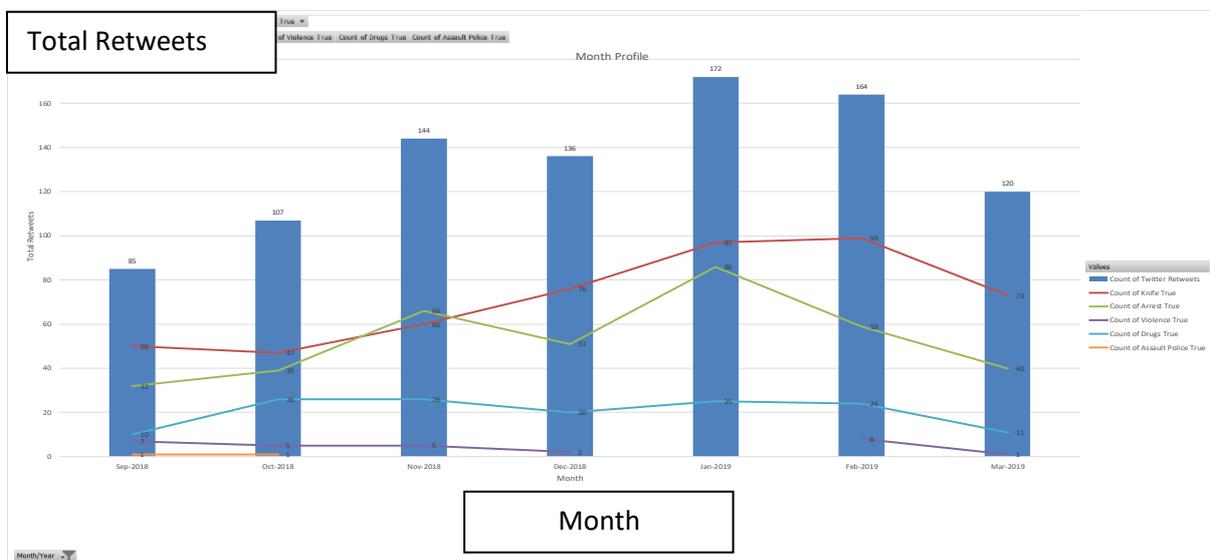
There is no clear, consistent pattern regarding the volume of retweets. Of note, all the identified key words are also fairly sporadic, with the knife count gradually increasing by circa 46%. The count of drugs retweets remained consistent around an average of 20 per month. Social media does provide another medium for community engagement, however questions surrounding its effectiveness remain. Further exploration in relation to what accounts are retweeting messages is needed. It is felt that if this exploration was conducted it would provide a better insight into how effectively messages are being disseminated.

Date

The purpose of referring to the date was to ascertain whether it is impacted by seasonal trends such as the summer, or whether regular events e.g. Halloween bear any difference.

Table 9. Total number of Twitter retweets from all BCUS Sept 2018-March 2019

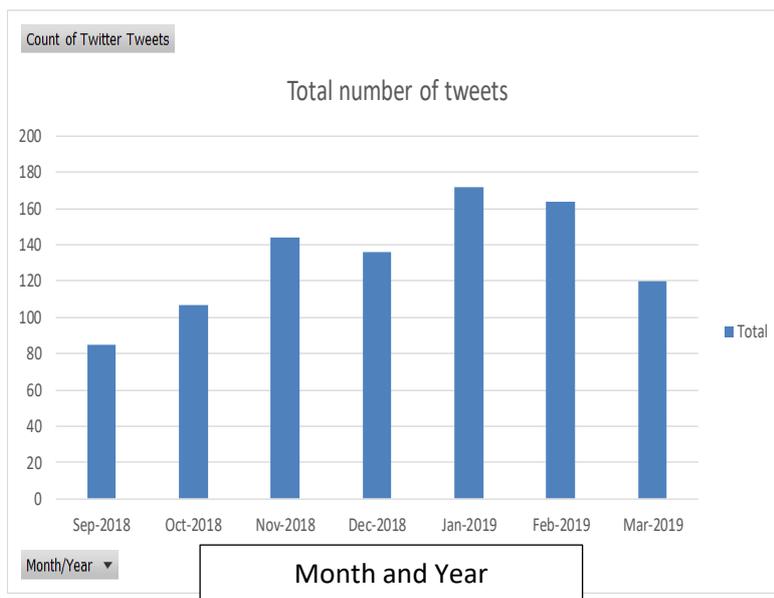| Row Labels	Count of Twitter Tweets
Sep-2018	85
Oct-2018	107
Nov-2018	144
Dec-2018	136
Jan-2019	172
Feb-2019	164
Mar-2019	120
Grand Total	928

Chart 8. Chart of Total number of Tweets

Table 9 and Chart 8 indicate that the data is fairly inconclusive when discussing dates; it is clear that there are no clear themes. Within the private sector there is often a difference in seasonal Twitter activity and this is something that the police could conduct (Achrekar *et al*, 2011).

Twitter Followers

Table 10. Total number of followers overview Sept 2018-March 2019

Month/Year	Average of Twitter Followers
Sep-2018	39,400
Oct-2018	24,614
Nov-2018	23,013
Dec-2018	22,383
Jan-2019	20,143
Feb-2019	19,886
Mar-2019	20,896
(blank)	
Grand Total	**23,248**

The average number of Twitter followers declined dramatically from September 2018 to March 2019 (-46%) with an overall average of 23,248 followers. This reduces the effectiveness of the social media platform as an engagement tool. This matter will be explored further within the discussion section, however some people may simply not have an interest in this arena, or it could be that due to a lack of police use it may not be deemed an attractive account to follow. Members of the public could simply go to Twitter for information about a specific police-related event, rather than actively follow an account. Lastly, one reason for the decline could be that corporate accounts were followed during major incidents or disasters but then unfollowed upon conclusion of the incident. It highlights the need to ensure effective retention and thought needs to be given to how accounts keep the interest of followers.
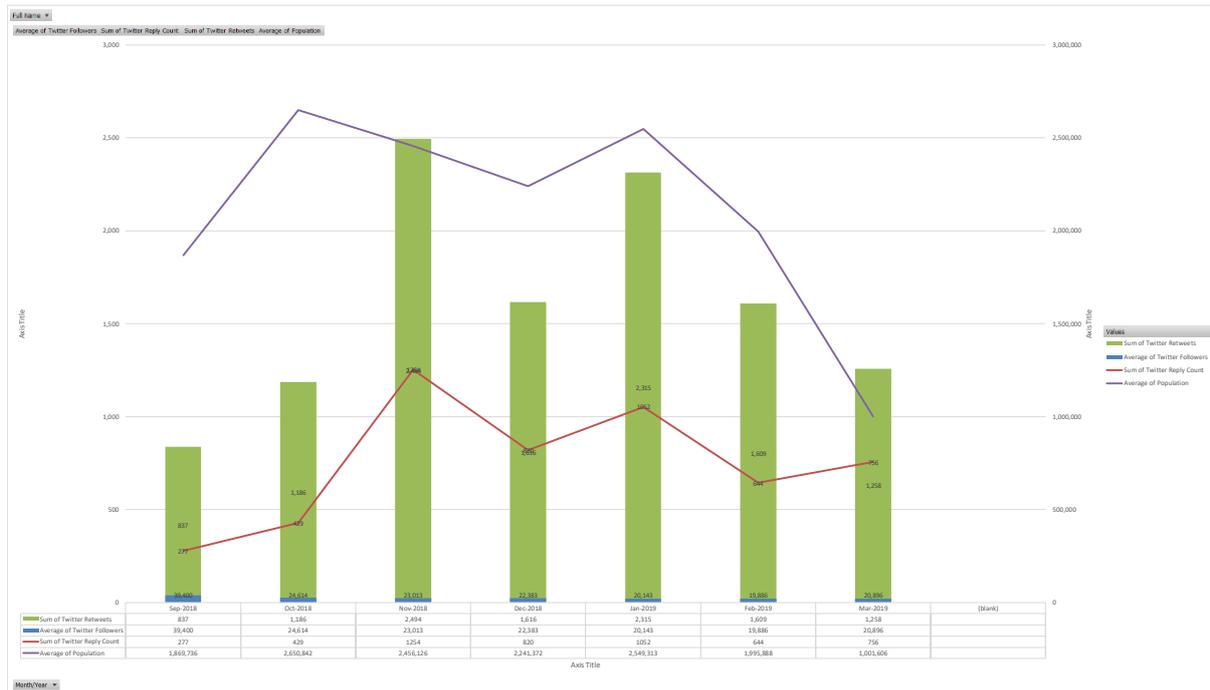
Population

Table 11. Total number of Twitter followers and average populations

Month/Year	Average of Twitter Followers	Sum of Twitter Reply Count	Sum of Twitter Retweets	Average of Population
Sep-2018	39,400	277	837	1,869,736
Oct-2018	24,614	429	1,186	2,650,842
Nov-2018	23,013	1254	2,494	2,456,126
Dec-2018	22,383	820	1,616	2,241,372
Jan-2019	20,143	1052	2,315	2,549,313
Feb-2019	19,886	644	1,609	1,995,888
Mar-2019	20,896	756	1,258	1,001,606
(blank)				
Grand Total	**23,248**	**5232**	**11,315**	**2,141,246**

The above table highlights the average population in comparison with average Twitter followers which is illustrated in the attached chart (*Office for National Statistics*, 2011).

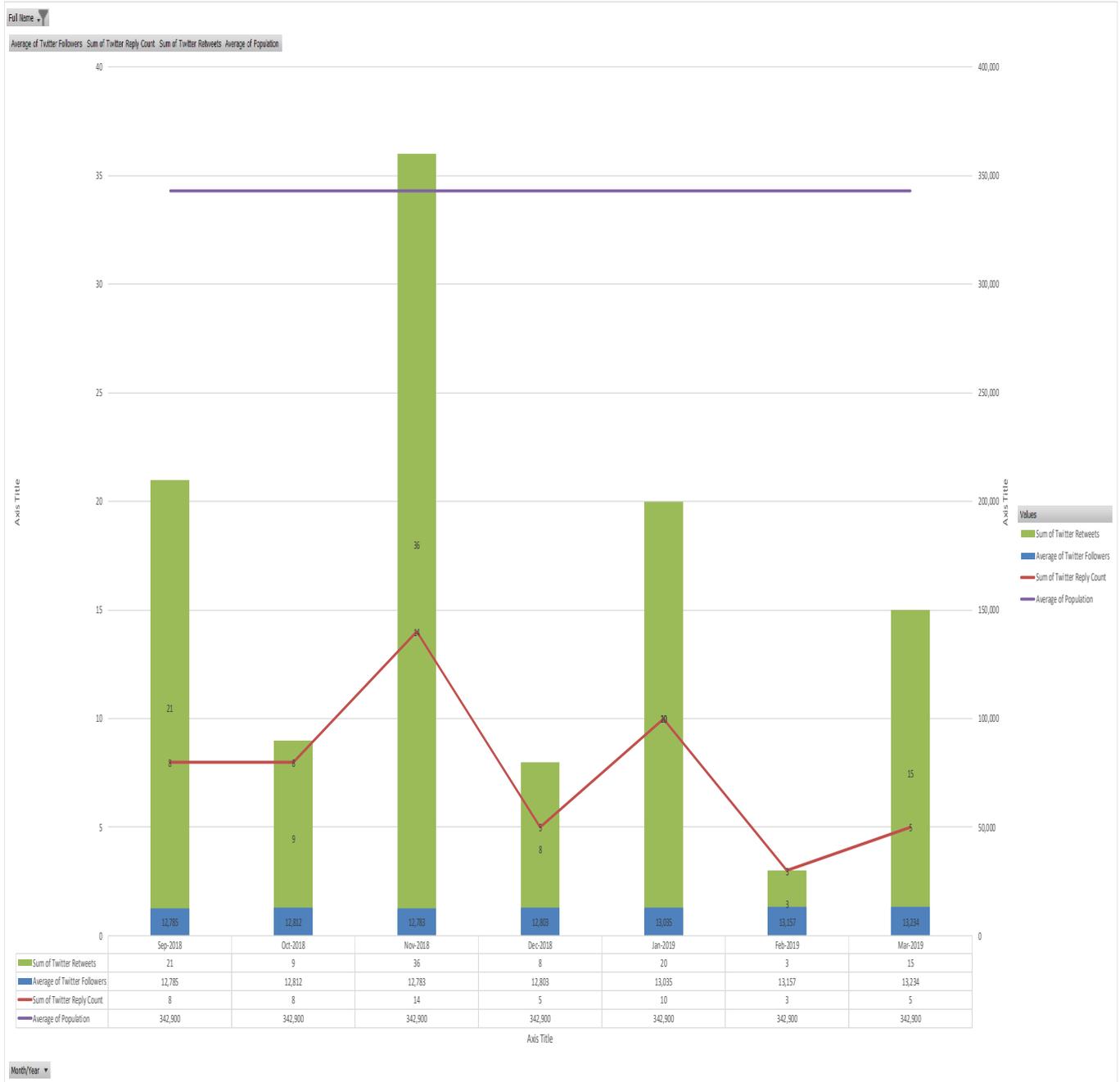**Chart 9.** Chart of Total Population Vs Total Twitter Followers

A more in-depth analysis would be needed and it would be prudent to localise the notion as well e.g. focusing on one London borough, for example, Newham.

Table 12. In-depth Twitter data for Newham compared with local population

Full Name	Newham MPS			
Month/Year	Average of Twitter Followers	Sum of Twitter Reply Count	Sum of Twitter Retweets	Average of Population
Sep-2018	12,785	8	21	342,900
Oct-2018	12,812	8	9	342,900
Nov-2018	12,783	14	36	342,900
Dec-2018	12,803	5	8	342,900
Jan-2019	13,035	10	20	342,900
Feb-2019	13,157	3	3	342,900
Mar-2019	13,234	5	15	342,900
Grand Total	**12,922**	**53**	**112**	**342,900**

Chart 10. Chart of Population (Newham) vs local Twitter Retweets

|	Sep-2018	Oct-2018	Nov-2018	Dec-2018	Jan-2019	Feb-2019	Mar-2019
Sum of Twitter Retweets	21	9	36	8	20	3	15
Average of Twitter Followers	12,785	12,812	12,783	12,803	13,035	13,157	13,234
Sum of Twitter Reply Count	8	8	14	5	10	3	5
Average of Population	342,900	342,900	342,900	342,900	342,900	342,900	342,900

This data shows that an average of 12,922 people follow the local Newham MPS corporate Twitter account against a population of 342,900 (Office for National Statistics, 2011). This equates to a total of 3.76% of the population who follow this corporate account, without the consideration that a vast majority of the verified followers will be police accounts or from other organisations. To further analyse this, there has been an average of 53 replies and 112 retweets over a seven-month period. It could be argued that this is not reaching a good representation of the community or meeting their needs, although a significant amount of work would need to be undertaken to understand where

the followers are based and how the needs of the community are met. Other considerations which would account for the lack of engagement could be good social media practice, e.g. how often does the account tweet and does the audience feel connected. Lastly, with regard to the results for the MPS DMC data, please see below an overview of all accounts.

Table 13. Total MPS DMC data from all accounts

Full Name	Count of Twitter Tweets	Count of Knife True	Count of Arrest True	Count of Violence True	Count of Drugs True	Count of Assault Police True
Barking & Dagenham Police	37	12	10		8	
Bexley MPS	2				1	
Brent MPS	14	7	3		3	
Bromley MPS	14	7	3		1	
Camden Police	45	22	18	3	5	
Croydon MPS	13	5	4		2	
Enfield MPS	50	30	24		7	
Greenwich MPS	12	7	7		3	
Hackney Police	42	29	25	1	9	
Hammersmith and Fulham	16	9	7		3	
Harrow MPS	24	17	5		3	1
Havering MPS	8	3	1	1		
Hillingdon MPS	56	34	14	4	9	
Hounslow MPS	40	27	17		10	1
Islington Police	19	10	4	1	2	
Kensington & Chelsea Police	10	3	9		2	
Kingston Police	2	1				
Lambeth MPS - Central South Command	25	19	9		5	
Lewisham MPS	7	5	4			
Merton Police	4	2				
Metropolitan Police	1	1	1	1		
MetTaskforce	112	62	61		34	
MPS Barnet	43	32	22	2	3	
MPS Firearms Command	7	4	5			
MPS Haringey	48	34	12	1	5	
MPS Southwark	21	12	12		1	
MPS Specials	48	15	15		3	
MPS Westminster	18	11	6		2	
Newham MPS	34	19	16		6	
Redbridge MPS	14	11	3		2	
Richmond Police	5	1	3			
Roads&Transport MPS	44	10	21		8	
Sutton MPS	7	2	2			

Chart 11. Total MPS DMC data for all accounts
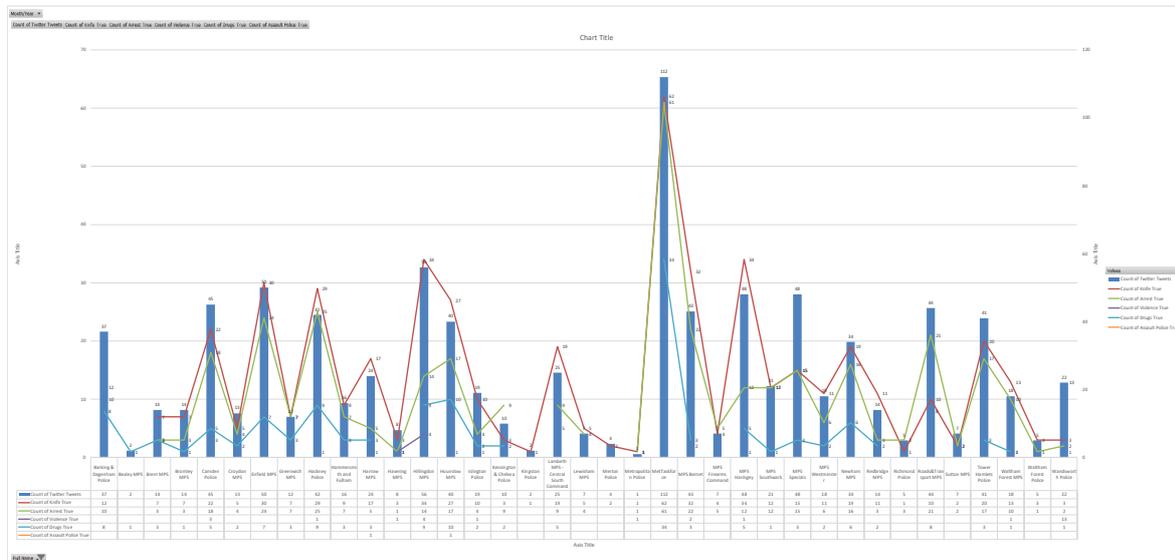
Both Table 13 and Chart 11 indicate that the MPS Taskforce account is almost three times more active than other MPS corporate accounts. The vast volume of tweets from the Taskforce account make references to knives (62 in total), equating to 55 % of the total volume of tweets made. However, this should not come as a surprise; violence reduction is one of the main priorities for the Taskforce which is documented across a number of platforms (Policeauthority.org, 2011). Further exploration of the Taskforce's corporate account may identify certain themes or patterns but unfortunately is outside the scope of the thesis.

Results of the Semi-Structured Interview

A total of thirteen semi-structured interviews were conducted, and the researcher chose a mixture of closed and open questions. The reason behind this decision was that a good question structure may draw out some essential information. Also, using both styles would allow for some more in-depth and thoughtful responses, whilst letting other themes emerge. During the interview the following nine research questions were asked:

RQ1. Please tell me about your experience of stop and search within the MPS?

RQ2. What are your thoughts around stop and search?

RQ3. Do you think there is a difference in how stop and searches are conducted depending on where geographically they are carried out e.g. city vs Home Counties?

RQ4. Do you regularly use social media?

RQ5. Are you a follower of any corporate MPS social media accounts?

RQ6. Do you think the MPS effectively use the MPS corporate accounts in relation to stop and search?

RQ7. How would you use the MPS accounts to engage with the community regarding stop and search?

RQ8. Do pictures of knives/weapons recovered posted on social media have a positive or negative impact on the community?

RQ9. Is there anything else you would like to clarify or add?

Inductive Coding

Inductive coding is a popular method to improve the understanding of qualitative data (Strauss & Corbin, 1998). The transcripts of the interviews were read carefully (Rice and Ezzy, 1999) a number of times in order to identify themes (Creswell *et al*, 2007) therefore allowing common categories to be explored, ensuring the richness of the data is captured. (Boyatzis, 1998). An important consideration is researcher assumption due to personal experiences (Gioia *et al*, 2013) therefore when considering the transcriptions, a deliberate thought was given not to see the responses via the researcher's lens (Onwuegbuzie & Leech, 2005) thus ensuring the integrity of the research (Coates, 2014).

The following procedure was adopted following the process outlined by Creswell (2007) to conduct inductive analysis of the data. Firstly, the data was organised into various files to ensure easy access; this was important, especially as there was a large volume of information. Secondly, the participants' interviews were transcribed, enabling the interviews to be recorded on paper.

The author made the decision to code the data by hand, despite the popularity of computers. The benefit of analysing the relatively small number of interviews enables the author to get close to the data which was then coded. The objective of the coding process is to ensure that there is some sense made of the data and order into broad themes. The four codes identified during the analysis were; legitimacy, doing the right thing, disproportionality and engagement. The codes and themes were then reviewed for consistency (Thomas, 2006).

Legitimacy

One participant was able to draw upon experience from the late 70's to early 80's prior to the introduction of PACE 1984. This participant stated that they felt the legislation prior to the PACE was written for a bygone time where accountability and requirements to record things did not exist.
The overall thoughts from the participants were that their personal experiences of stop and search were positive, however there was a clear tone that there has been an increase in accountability from the majority of participants. This does coincide with the introduction of the BUSS scheme (BUSS, 2014) and recommendations made in the Macpherson report.
The general consensus from the participants was that stop and search is a positive and valuable policing tactic. There was recognition that it can also be incendiary to communities.
The thread of legitimacy ran through, and it was felt that due to stop and search being legislated, it should be consistent throughout the UK. It was suggested on a number of occasions that the main difference was the sheer volume of searches carried out in London compared with other forces. This

notion is supported by the recent Home Office figures (Home Office, 2018). One participant, however, offered a view that within a busy inner London environment, some officers would have a harder attitude due to the fact that within their geographical area there would be help from colleagues if needed. This supports Mclean *et al* (2011), who conclude that there are some key differences between response and neighbourhood officers.

The theme of needing to ensure stop and search was intelligence-led shone through numerous interviews referring to legitimacy. A suggestion was made to replicate some best practice from other areas within policing. One suggestion was to adopt a stance similar to protest liaison teams where there are "no surprises" due to clear communication with the public and at times allaying fears. This particular idea was supported by another individual confirming that people are more comfortable with the police using stop and search if they understand why they have been stopped.

Doing the right thing

Participants cited a number of examples where using stop and search has allowed them to perform their role. One participant stated that they had recovered a firearm using the tactic, and another stated that they could not have stopped robberies without using stop and search. Throughout the interviews, there was a real sense of pride displayed from officers, with a desire to highlight their hard work and positive results.

Disproportionality

Disproportionality was raised, with some participants referring to the fact that a disproportionate number of black and ethnic members of the public have been stopped and searched in comparison to the white population. This supports information gleaned from the literature review (Ellis, 2010). A number of participants referred to the politicisation of stop and search and they felt that younger officers were not confident in using stop and search. It was clear that some participants felt frustrated by this and wanted clear support from their supervisors and line management.

Engagement

Engagement was considered as being a key driver due to the sheer number of complexities in policing a city. The majority of participants confirmed that they regularly use a social media platform, however it was mainly restricted to Twitter and Facebook. There was approximately a 50/50 mix regarding this, with some participants stating that they follow both the local and main corporate accounts and others stating that they did not follow the accounts.

However, there was a resounding thought from participants that the MPS do not effectively use social media accounts in relation to stop and search. Interestingly, the majority of participants felt that other social media platforms were being used to share good work but could be used to better advantage when discussing stop and search. The participants felt that effective use of social media would increase transparency and inform the public, thus increasing engagement. The rationale for their thoughts regarding increased engagement was as the MPS police with consent and need the support of the public to perform their roles and responsibilities. It was suggested that the use of social media with regard to S60 searches had improved, and it was felt that this would assist in improving legitimacy and engagement.

One participant stated that a wider use of messaging using more platforms would increase engagement. In addition, concepts including a multi-pronged approach that consisted of more engagement with schools and other institutions would increase engagement. The views were that the MPS should not take a "one size fits all" approach. This was supported when a participant referred to a recent television series which they felt showed the MPS in a sympathetic way "warts and all." It was felt that this transparency increased legitimacy and confidence in the MPS and was something that the social media platforms should replicate.

Conversely, one participant highlighted the need for some caution however, regarding the use of social media and how social media could in fact hinder the progression of increasing community confidence. A thought was expressed that some staff used social media for self-gratification and that their naïvety may harm public relations.

Semi-structured Interviews

Advancing to the semi-structured interviews, it was interesting listening and reliving anecdotes with the participants a number of stories and experiences (Seidman, 2006). The experiences were drawn out from the participants by asking several open questions designed to provoke thought (Rubin and Rubin, 2012).

There was a difference in some responses due to rank which, although from a small sample, was to be expected (King, 2003). As a result of asking open questions some key themes emerged, namely:

- Disproportionality
- Legitimacy
- Engagement and
- Sense of Officers doing the "right thing"

Disproportionality

There is a considerable amount of literature around these subjects and each theme could easily warrant a standalone thesis. To ensure some thoughts within the scope of this thesis, an overview of each theme is provided.

Nothing has been more damaging to the relationship between the police and the black community than the ill-judged use of stop and search powers (Bowling, 2007). "Disproportionate" refers to the extent or degree to which something appears to be inappropriate or 'out of proportion' to something else. Within the realms of stop and search this terminology has been applied to express an unequal use of the police power to an ethnic group (Miller *et al*, 2000).

During the interviews, one participant recalled that they had received a number of complaints from the community that a *"non-proportionate number of the black and ethnic community have been stopped and searched in relation to the white population."*

They went on further to articulate:

"Especially when you look at the demographics of the borough… we seem to have something like half the population Asian, quarter population black, quarter population white, that seems to be a rough breakdown, so one would normally expect stops and other issues to be in proportion, but they don't seem to be at the moment."

These comments are supported by the latest Home Office (2019) statistics which show that during the year end March 2019, 370,454 stop and searches were conducted across England and Wales within the PACE 1984 legislative framework. The MPS has a significant impact on these figures due to the sheer volume of searches conducted within the capital, therefore has a huge influence on this topic (Home Office, 2018). With regard to disproportionality, the highest rates were found among the three Black ethnic groups – Other Black (73 stop and searches per 1,000 people), Black Caribbean (26 per 1,000 people) and Black African (19 per 1,000 people). These figures indicate that for those who identified as black or black British, the disparity was even greater – they were 9.7 times more likely to be stopped and searched by an officer than a white person.

The issue of available population was expressed by one participant. As briefly discussed within the literature review, Waddington (2004) makes a case around this participant's view mentioning available population. On the other hand, Macpherson (1999) credits stereotyping to disproportionality, however during the interviews there was no evidence of this.

An intelligence-led approach is felt to be a fundamental part of daily business within the policing environment (Wardlaw and Boughton, 2006). In fact, there were some examples where participants referred to the need for stop and search to be intelligence led (BUSS, 2014).

Participant three said:

"I know the Metropolitan Police get a reputation for searching mainly for drugs, it is far easier to formulate your grounds for drugs, however, if you're educated enough and you do your research and you know that these people are, you can search for knives just as easily in my opinion. If you've got identified gang members, intelligence around gangs, where people are carrying knives then you've clearly got grounds to search these people the majority of occasions, certainly if you engage with them and they're anti, that raises your threshold for grounds but going back to the initial point, there are people carrying weapons and knives and guns you know."

These comments underpin the principles of a problem-solving approach (Goldstein,1979) and were reinforced by participant five who commented:

"I think if it's used properly it's a really effective tool, stop and search that is intelligence led is proven to take knives off the streets, reduce violent offences, I think if people know that they're likely to be stopped and searched they're less likely to carry weapons..."

To ensure an intelligence-led approach to stop and search, there needs to be a good intelligence flow within the organisation. A good intelligence flow allows officers to forecast where there may be

threat, harm and/or risk to minimise threats with scientific analysis (Ratcliffe, 2008). The benefit of intelligence-led stop and search is that it has the potential to increase legitimacy and perceived fairness from the community, thus reducing any thoughts of disproportionality (Myhill and Quinton, 2011). Participant two echoed this:

"Otherwise he's (officer) got to act on intelligence, well reasonable grounds is a very difficult thing for an officer to have to put into practice because how does he look at someone and think I need to stop you because I think you've got a knife, how does he know he's carrying a knife? This is where the problem comes about, if an officer's got that suspicion and he stops someone, albeit whatever race or colour, and finds nothing okay, providing the encounter has gone well and there's been no problems as far as that goes, okay that's another unsuccessful stop from the point of view that there's no weapon found."

Legitimacy

Gaining the support of the community and key stakeholders is central to the concept of intelligence flow. An engaged community with confidence in the police will proactively provide intelligence and have been referred to as "repositories of information" (Tilley, 2008).

Participant eight stated the need to ensure that people subjected to being searched were appraised.

"It's to engage you know if you can get them to relax and you know, not make it a pleasant experience but certainly not make it a degrading one… So... if you can get them laughing about it and just a little bit nonchalant and for them to understand that it is necessary and why it's necessary that it's all good, it makes them feel safe as well."

Tyler (2011) supports this view of the participant stating that if the police make an experience pleasant and are perceived as fair then this will increase the perceived legitimacy of the local MPS. Participant four moved on from this thought to a wider outlook. The participant felt that it was really important to explain what was occurring to ensure that onlookers and the community knew what was happening – ensuring transparency:

"I think you have to explain to people, people need to understand why you're doing what you're doing, if you don't explain it to them properly and they don't understand why you're doing it then they're going to be negative towards you straightaway or as if you've done it for the right reason and you explain those reasons even if they're angry and if you're patient with them and try to get your point across, some people won't listen but I think the majority of people if you explain it

properly and in a way that they understand then you're more likely to get a positive experience from it."

Participant eight said:

"It's about explaining stuff to people is a big, big thing in stop and search. If you explain something to someone before you do your actions, 9 times out of 10 they will say "Okay officer you do what you want", unless they're a wanted times whatever when they're gonna be on the... Then it's a different story but if you're targeting a specific area for like a spike in robberies and you're stopping youths and stuff, as long as it's explained to them, 9 times out of 10 they're alright with it."

Stone and Pettigrew (2000) support this thought, they indicate that clear communication will increase public support and this is where the MPS could utilise social media. This will be explored further within the recommendations section of this thesis.

There was also an air of frustration due to the politicisation and perceived interference from management within the organisation (Crank, 1998):

"About 5 years ago when Theresa May was Home Secretary and there was a big issue with stop and search powers and stuff like that"

Participant two felt:

"I think there's a level of fear of being stopped and searched, I think now people will carry knives and carry weapons because they don't believe that they're going to be stopped and searched because they've gone through a period where most people won't stop them."

This naturally led to further conversations around scrutiny:

"We were getting a lot more scrutinised, and I can't remember whether it was the Chief Inspector at the time on the borough or the DCI at the time, they didn't want as much stop and searches put on unless they were positive. That was a big thing at the moment, so I think they just got very scrutinised, a lot more than that what they used to and I think that was just the current climate of the at the time from supervisors"

Engagement

The participants felt happy that they could make a difference working towards a common purpose and wanted to share their perceived successes with the public:

"… I think public who have access to them sites as well need to know what's out there and they need to know what we are trying to do about it, they need to see evidence, the police officers, the foot soldiers if you like are working hard to try and protect them, to stop people carrying knifes, to stop people dealing drugs, to stop people carrying stuff that's going to help them steal their property you know and I think the public do appreciate it and the more they know about what people are doing that the more they understand and appreciate officers need to stop and search."

These thoughts could be expanded within the social media arena by ensuring more regular engagement with the public, explaining what has happened and why. It has been recommended that consistent, regular engagement between the police and public will assist in building relationships. Further research could be considered to seek whether any consultation has taken place to influence social media policies within the policing environment. This would be useful as it is often felt that the community may build an opinion prior to meeting the police (Bradford *et al,* 2009).

Another contentious topic was that of knife imagery. This has been widely debated within the British media (Barr, 2017) and one participant felt that it may "give kudos to gangs" to people who may be influenced. This was supported by participant two who felt that placing imagery online is "counterproductive" whilst continuing to say:

"…It's not that I disagree with putting weapons on there but it's the fact that you know so and so has carried out a stop and search and found a massive knife, that goes on social media if you know if you're a kid in that area, it's going to cause worry, it's going to cause concern, certainly levels of paranoia"

Interestingly, this point was raised within a recent survey by MOPAC where it was purported that knife imagery is more of an issue to young people who reside in an area where there is a perceived knife problem. The results of the survey need to be taken into consideration and support the need for specific social media strategies. Ramshaw, Charleton and Dawson (2018) also indicate that there has been some success with key media channels (although this was Instagram).

On the contrary, participant three felt that it was positive, whilst acknowledging there may be some negative aspects, but these are negated with the positive connotations of posting pictures:

"…Well not really unless you've got some small element of the community who think I'm not safe to go out on the street because there's people carrying these sort of weapons, there might be a few of those people but I think the majority of the community will accept that you cannot go out on the streets and the police are doing their best to keep us safe…"

The main rationale for posting the pictures links back to a previous theme regarding legitimacy and wanting to ensure the public are aware of the work they have done:

"..It shows that we're getting the knives off the street but at the same time I appreciate there are some people that don't realise the extent of the things that we deal with, the extent of the large zombie knives and machetes that people routinely carry and I think that does put a worry in some people's minds that they didn't, they were ignorant to it or didn't think that, that's what went on, you're showing actually that's a more regular occurrence than they thought."

Doing the right thing

Throughout the whole process of conducting semi-structured interviews there was a feeling portrayed by participants that they were "doing the right thing." The participants felt proud (Hopkins, 1983) to be able to use stop and search to make communities safer: *"Obviously the more we do that the more weapons that we recover the less that are likely to be used on people or on the people that are carrying them."*

Although there are numerous literatures demonstrating at times a difference in views between management and officers regularly performing their duties, there is a need for good supervision as it moulds good daily practices (Myhill and Bradford, 2013). It is clear that the concepts around scrutiny surround the need to be transparent and legitimacy. So where would social media be useful here? It could be suggested that supervisors could demonstrate this scrutiny via video streams or tweets to show that stop and search is scrutinised, thus increasing public confidence. A number of other organisations use a plethora of social media to ensure that a wide audience is catered for.

To summarise, the semi-structured interview offered a unique opportunity to listen to encounters from individuals heavily involved in stop and search. The themes discussed are not in their infancy and have been widely debated. There are a number of areas which would warrant further exploration whilst it would be advantageous to reflect on previous lessons learnt.

Conclusion

The aim of this study was to identify and broaden knowledge of a policing tactic, stop and search, whilst ascertaining whether social media could improve public confidence. Some context surrounding stop and search was discussed and it has been accepted that stop and search has historically been perceived as a contentious policing issue. A further insight was articulated discussing the current use of social media within both policing and wider circles.

The use of social media can afford new and innovative mechanisms of engaging the community which have previously been unimaginable. This is an important aspect of stop and search as engagement is a core component to procedural justice and community confidence.

This research seeks to develop an understanding of the current literature available for the ambience of policing within England and Wales. There is a significant amount of literature available regarding stop and search in England and Wales. The research surrounding this topic spans a number of decades. The researcher also discovered additional research conducted in other countries which piqued interest. Whilst worldwide research may not appear relevant due to cultural and legislative differences, it resonates due to the notion behind stop and search and the implications of how it affects individuals.

Unsurprisingly, a contrasting outlook was discovered in relation to research about social media; especially around the police use of social media. It is thought that this could be due to the relatively new use of social media by police forces. The research found that the police use of social media predominately related to the use of Twitter during fast-paced, operational events. Whilst this was useful, there was a knowledge gap regarding the police use of social media encompassing long-engrained issues such as confidence, dialogue with the community and how policy can affect police responses.

Expanding the concept of social media, the research discovered a significantly increased volume of literature within a wider context outside of the policing environment, however there was some clear overlap within law and order. Issues such as organisational reputation, engagement and a need for policy were alive and relevant to all areas.

Research into current police practices is useful, it provides a foundation to allow an evidence-based approach to policing whilst demonstrating a desire to improve ongoing police practices. It is felt that a desire for organisational change and search for transparency improves public confidence.

Using a mixed method research approach, this action research was conducted within an inner London borough. The research design took into consideration identified issues and feedback reviewed in the literature review before advancing to the quantitative phase of the research. Once the quantitative phase was completed and analysed, a qualitative approach ensued by means of a number of semi-structured interviews.

The quantitative phase encompassed a review of seven months' worth of Twitter data provided by the MPS. A number of key words were extracted from the data set and comparisons made against other statistics such as the population data. The review of this data indicated that there were no particular key words that spiked trends or patterns with regards to retweets. Interestingly, although emotive – the key words "assault police" received the least number of retweets with a mean average of 0.28.

The Territorial Support Group (TSG) tweeted three times more than other BCUs with an onus on circulating issues surrounding knife crime. It is felt that further exploration could be developed which would delve into why this could be.

Furthermore, the quantitative data suggested that currently, the Twitter use of the MPS was not an effective vehicle to reach out to the community of London. The data suggested that a minimal number of the population followed the corporate accounts. An example demonstrated that only 3.76% of the population was reached by a particular corporate account. Additional research could be conducted to indicate what accounts were following the corporate accounts. It is felt that this would be useful to continue to ascertain the effectiveness of this method.

Advancing to the qualitative phase of the research, a number of semi-structured interviews were conducted. This method was chosen to both accompany and progress the findings of the quantitative results. It was felt that this method was more appropriate than either a questionnaire or focus groups, due to the ability of allowing participants to express themselves whilst affording the opportunity to monitor non-verbal communications. Generally, there was a sense of "doing the right thing" from officers who were interviewed (Reiner, 2016). The other themes which arose were that participants felt that disproportionality and legitimacy were key, whilst expressing the need for engagement. These themes are widely documented within the academic arena, often sparking thought and debate. It was evident that individuals felt the need to ensure that a variety of media needed to be used, thereby ensuring maximum coverage.

Culturally, officers felt that they were using the tactic of stop of search for valid reasons, however accepted that there was a need to ensure engagement with the public. Aspects surrounding,

politicisation were expressed, but participants believed that despite any confusion surrounding central direction, they wanted to prevent people from being injured. During the interviews, participants accepted that there was a need for engagement, citing that a successful strategy would incorporate a multi-layered approach. Participants acknowledged the power an individual holds with their ability to influence others using social media (De Vries *et al*, 2012). A plethora of creativity, including using partnerships, early intervention and various media to open dialogue and conversation. Of note, a number of participants did not use or follow social media. Although the research was conducted with a small-sized cohort, it does question whether the outcomes regarding social media use are indicative of the rest of the organisation.

There were a number of study limitations including the researcher's experience. This piece of academic work was constructed using the available Twitter data provided in relation to stop and search, however this could be subjective. Additional exploration into how this particular medium is used to communicate other subject areas would be beneficial. Unfortunately, during the semi-structured interviews, there was minimal representation from the local community. Whilst disappointing, it does support previously mentioned concepts such as trust and confidence. Despite a wide range of different experiences and ranks, the cohort was from one geographical area within London. It should therefore be considered that the results will be affected by localised influences. Lastly, the research was conducted by an "insider" which may have influenced any answers provided by participants.

The world of police academia is fast evolving, and over the course of time is gaining more traction and support. This research has offered a further insight into the use of social media by the police. The research has confirmed the need to continue to increase engagement but ensure a multi-layered approach. It is believed that a multi-dimensional approach will increase the ability to consult and converse with a wider audience, whilst increasing engagement with hard-to-reach groups. In order to ensure that the mechanisms used by the police are consistent whilst allowing creativity, there is a need to review policies and scan for different training methods to ensure that all staff understand the rationale behind any given decision.

To conclude and answer the research question is difficult. The research conducted has suggested that the use of social media has the potential to engage with the public whilst increasing confidence. It is also as equally important to note that if social media is misused it can cause reputational damage.

The research indicates that the current approach by police towards Twitter use and social media in general does not universally improve confidence. There are some aspects within the current approach that are beneficial, but these are outweighed by the ad hoc approach. There is certainly a case for further research as previously outlined.

Technological advances will make the progression of this concept easier, however the current police practices will have to adapt to meet the needs of fast-paced advances within today's modern society. There are several real positive benefits for sourcing best practice from other organisations across all sectors whilst consulting with local communities.

Recommendations

These recommendations have been made as a result of identified issues from the literature review, review of Twitter data and lastly the semi-structured interviews. The findings from this thesis provide four recommendations which have been aligned to themes.

Recommendation 1.

Further research

This research has been conducted under the constraints of limited available resources, however has supported a number of current theories, including the importance of procedural justice (Hough *et al*, 2010). The use of social media supports procedural justice as it offers the opportunity for members of the public to engage and feel included in conversations (Braga, 2003). Currently, the MPS predominantly uses Twitter as the main social media platform. Further research into what platforms are more popular with certain aspects of the community would prove useful and likely increase engagement. This is important as social media is notorious for increasing "brand" awareness (Coulter *et al*, 2012). Additionally, further research regarding the most appropriate time to disseminate messages via the medium would be beneficial in order to seek a maximum, police-specific audience (Shahzad and Alwagait, 2014). Lastly, research into "what works" could be conducted. The proposed research could focus on consultation with communities to seek feedback as to how they would like to be approached and how to shape messages to them. This data could be used to mould future polices (this will be discussed in the next recommendation). Further research will support the police to identify best practice (Sherman, 1998) by providing a solid evidence base for future decision making.

Recommendation 2.

Social Media Policy/Handbook applicable for all officers

With social media rising in popularity and constantly progressing (Patel and Jasani, 2010) both private and public sectors are having to adapt. The adaptation needed is against a backdrop of fast-moving technology and innovation. One positive aspect of social media is that it affords opportunities (engagement, recruitment and news dissemination etc.) which were probably not considered available a decade ago.

However, with the positive aspects there are some potential negative connotations including the reputational risk presented by employees misusing social media (Johnston, 2015). Although governance and accountability have been described as "untidy" (Walsh and Conway, 2011) there is

an absolute need for an organisation to have a social media policy. The policy needs to balance against allowing innovation via empowerment. This can prove difficult within an organisation such as the MPS where the structures within are hierarchical (Mergel, 2012).

To ensure governance whilst empowering innovation, a policy review may be beneficial which provides a balance between guidance and creativity.

Recommendation 3.

Training for all staff

Accompanying the policy review, bespoke training could be provided to officers affording them additional skills, maximising personally acquired relevant skills and/or experience underpinned by the Code of Ethics.

Police training is essential to both the implementation and assisting with any cultural change (Birzer, 2003). Over recent years, there has been a real change in the concept of police training with an emphasis placed on professionalism, academic research and new delivery methods (Jaschke and Neidhart, 2007). It is accepted however, that when individuals partake in initial training, they are re-socialised (Conti and Nolan III, 2005), which could hinder any free flow thinking. The issue of creative thought is essential and may be able to be overcome by ensuring that a solid foundation of rationale behind the importance of using social media as an engagement tool. Procedural justice is essential to increasing confidence (Mazerolle *et al*, 2013) although currently there is not a large emphasis placed on this concept which would afford greater opportunities and understanding to officers. This dovetails into social media training and it underpins the "why" whilst instilling the Code of Ethics but allows creativity to run concurrently.

A review of the current training to ensure that whilst values and codes of ethics are adhered to, staff are aware of our "why" and empowered to be creative.

Recommendation 4.

The use of different social media platforms

As mentioned, social media use within an organisational context has redefined communication (Langlois and Elmer, 2013). However, it could be argued that policing is different from the vast majority of organisations. A real positive aspect of police use of social media is that it opens communication with hard-to-hear groups of the community. It would be detrimental to use any

computer coding or artificial messaging due to it removing a personal touch which the public expects.

Perrin (2015) notes that there are different demographics of society who use social media and for several different reasons; and indeed, when designing any applications or strategies this needs to be a consideration (Amichai-Hamburger and Ben-Artzi, 2003). Currently, the MPS predominately uses Twitter as its online platform of choice. It could be more beneficial to have a multi-pronged use of social media to reach out to various segments of the community. Further research could be conducted to gauge the top three most popular platforms in conjunction with engagement with local communities to identify their needs.

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Appendix

Table and Chart Appendix

Table:

1. Total number of tweets from all BCUS Sept 2018-March 2019
2. Total number of knife tweets from all BCUS Sept 2018-March 2019
3. Total number of assault tweets from all BCUS Sept 2018-March 2019
4. Total number of violence tweets from all BCUS Sept 2018-March 2019
5. Total number of drugs tweets from all BCUS Sept 2018-March 2019
6. Total number of assault tweets from all BCUS Sept 2018-March 2019
7. Total number of picture tweets from all BCUS Sept 2018-March 2019
8. Total number of tweets from all BCUS Sept 2018-March 2019
9. Total number of Twitter retweets from all BCUS Sept 2018-March 2019
10. Total number of followers overview Sept 2018-March 2019
11. Total number of Twitter followers and average populations
12. In depth Twitter data for Newham compared to local population
13. Total MPS DMC data from all accounts

Charts developed by author:

1. Chart of tweets mentioning knife crime
2. Chart of tweets mentioning arrest
3. Chart of tweets mentioning violence
4. Chart of tweets mentioning drugs
5. Chart of tweets mentioning assault police
6. Chart of tweets mentioning picture
7. Chart of total overview comparison
8. Chart of total number of tweets
9. Chart of Population Vs Twitter Followers
10. Chart of Population (Newham) vs Twitter Retweets
11. Total MPS DMC data for all accounts

Stop and Search Chart

1. Metropolitan Police (2019). *Met Police Stats and Data*. Available at:

   https://www.met.police.uk/sd/stats-and-data/met/stop-and-search-dashboard/ (Accessed:

   11 August 2019).

2. Home Office (2018) *Police powers and procedures, England and Wales, year ending 31*

   March 2018. Statistical Bulletin 24/18: Home Office. Print.

Stop and Search Table

1. Home Office (2018) *Police powers and procedures, England and Wales, year ending 31 March 2018*. Statistical Bulletin 24/18: Home Office. Print.

Appendix – Interview Administration

1. Ethics form
2. Consent form
3. Interview Questions

<table>
<tr><td>For Research Office Use ONLY:

Checklist No:

Date Received:</td></tr>
</table>

Canterbury Christ Church University

PROPORTIONATE ETHICAL REVIEW FORM

ETHICS REVIEW CHECKLIST

Your application __must__ comprise the following four documents (please tick the boxes below to indicate that each section is complete):

Ethics Review Checklist	✓
Consent Material(s)	✓
Participant Information Material(s)	✓
Risk Assessment Form **(NB. This __MUST__ be signed by your Head of Department/School)**	✓

Please attach copies of any documents to be used in the study: **(NB: These must be attached where they form part of your methodology)**

Relevant permission letter(s)/email(s)	✓
Questionnaire	☐
Introductory letter(s)	☐
Data Collection Instruments	☐
Interview Questions	☐
Focus Group Guidelines	☐

Other (please give details):

Forms submitted to the Metropolitan Police Service (MPS) :-

1. Research protocol Document.
2. Initial email authorization from CI Matthew Casey granting permission to access data.

ETHICS REVIEW CHECKLIST - PROPORTIONATE ETHICAL REVIEW

Sections A and B of this form **must** be completed for **every** research or knowledge exchange project that involves human or animal[1] participants, or the processing of data not in the public domain. These sections serve as a toolkit that will identify whether a full application for ethics approval needs to be submitted.

If the toolkit shows that there is **no need for a full ethical review**, Sections D, E and F should be completed in full and the checklist emailed to red.resgov@canterbury.ac.uk as described in Section C.

If the toolkit shows that **a full application is required**, this checklist should be set aside and an *Application for Faculty Research Ethics Panel Approval Form* - or an appropriate external application form - should be completed and submitted. **There is no need to complete both documents.**

IMPORTANT

Before completing this form, please refer to Ethics Policy for Research Involving Human Participants and the Code of Practice for the Use of Sentient Animals in Research and Teaching on the University Research website.

Please note that it is your responsibility in the conduct of your study to follow the policies and procedures set out in the University's Research Ethics website, and any relevant academic or professional guidelines. This includes providing appropriate information sheets and consent Materials, and ensuring confidentiality in the storage and use of data. Any significant change in the question, design or conduct over the course of the study should be notified to the **Faculty and/or other Research Ethics Panel** that received your original proposal. Depending on the nature of the changes, a new application for ethics approval may be required.

The principal researcher/project leader (or, where the principal researcher/project leader is a student, their supervisor) is responsible for exercising appropriate professional judgement in this review.

N.B. This checklist must be completed, reviewed, any actions taken and approved before potential participants are approached to take part in any research project.

Type of Project - please tick as appropriate			
Research	✓	**Knowledge Exchange**	☐

Section A: Applicant Details

A1. Name of applicant:	Paul Stubbs

A2. Status (please tick):	Postgraduate Student ✓	Staff Member ☐
A3. Faculty/Department & School	Law, Criminal Justice & Policing	
A4. Email address:	P.stubbs341@canterbury.ac.uk	
A5. Contact address:	North Holmes Road, Canterbury, Kent CT1 1QU	
A6. Telephone number		

[1]Sentient animals, generally all vertebrates and certain invertebrates such as cephalopods and crustaceans

Section B: Ethics Checklist

Please answer each question by choosing 'YES' or 'NO' in the appropriate box. Consider each response carefully:

		Yes	No
1	Does the study involve participants who are particularly vulnerable or unable to give informed consent, or in unequal relationships? (N.B. The list of vulnerable groups is extensive, please consider the answer to this question carefully. If your own staff or students are participants within your research the answer to this question is 'Yes')	☐	✔
2	Will the study require the co-operation of a gatekeeper for initial access to any vulnerable groups or individuals to be recruited?	☐	✔
3	Will it be necessary for participants to take part in the study without usual informed consent procedures having been implemented in advance? (including but not restricted to; covert observation, certain ethnographic studies, involve the capturing of data from social media sources)	☐	✔
4	Will the study use deliberate deception? (N.B. This does not include randomly assigning participants to groups in an experimental design)	☐	✔
5	Will the study involve discussion of, or collection of information on, topics of a sensitive nature personal to the participants? (including but not restricted to sexual activity, drug use)	☐	✔
6	Are drugs, placebos or other substances (including but not restricted to food substances, vitamins) to be administered to human or animal participants?	☐	✔
7	Does the study involve invasive or intrusive procedures such as blood taking or muscle biopsy from human or animal participants?	☐	✔
8	Is physiological stress, pain, or more than mild physical discomfort to humans or animals, beyond the risks encountered in normal, life likely to result from the study?	☐	✔

9	Could the study induce psychological stress or anxiety or cause harm or negative consequences in humans (including the researcher) or animals beyond the risks encountered in normal life?	☐	✓
10	Will the study involve interaction with animals? (N.B. If you are simply observing them - e.g. in a zoo or in their natural habitat - without having any contact at all, you can answer "No")	☐	✓
11	Will the study involve prolonged or repetitive testing?	☐	✓
12	Will financial inducements (other than reasonable expenses and compensation for time) be offered to participants?	☐	✓
13	Is the study a survey or activity that involves University-wide recruitment or a representative sample of students from Canterbury Christ Church University? (N.B. The Student Survey Unit and the Student Communications Unit should be notified of plans for any extensive student surveys (i.e. research with 100 CCCU students or more))	☐	✓
14	Will the study involve participants who may lack capacity to consent or are at risk of losing capacity to consent as defined by the Mental Capacity Act 2005?	☐	✓
15	Will the study involve recruitment of participants (excluding staff) through the NHS?	☐	✓
16	Will the study involve participants (Children or Adults) who are currently users of social services including those in care settings who are funded by social services or staff of social services departments?		✓

NEXT: Please assess outcomes and actions by referring to Section C ➲

Section C: How to Proceed

Responses to Section B	Next steps
C1. 'NO' to all questions in Section B	• Complete Sections D–F of this form, including attachments as appropriate, and email it to red.resgov@canterbury.ac.uk**.** • Once your application is assessed, and any follow up action taken, if it is given approval you will receive a letter confirming compliance with University Research Governance procedures. **No research can be undertaken until this letter is issued**. • *Master's students should retain copies of the form and letter; the letter should be bound into their research report or dissertation. Work that is submitted without this document will be returned un-assessed.*
C2. If you have answered **'YES'** to *any* of the questions in Section B, you will need to describe more fully how you plan to deal with the ethical issues raised by your project. This does not mean that you cannot do the study, only that your proposal will need to be approved by a Research Ethics Panel**. Depending upon which questions you answered 'YES' to, you should proceed as below:**	
a) '**YES**' to any of *questions 1 – 12 ONLY* (i.e. not questions 13,14 or 15)	• **DO NOT complete this form**. • Submit an application to your Faculty Ethics Panel (FEP) using your Faculty's version of the **Application for Faculty Research Ethics Panel Approval Form**. This should be submitted to your faculty as directed on the form.
b) '**YES**' to *question 13*	• You have two options: (i) If you answered '**YES**' to *question 13 ONLY* you must send copies of this form (including attachments) to the **Student Survey Unit** and the **Student Communications Unit**. Subject to their agreement you may then proceed as at C1 above. (ii) If you answered '**YES**' to *question 13 PLUS any other of questions 1 – 12*, you must proceed as at C2(b)(i) above and then submit an application to your Faculty Ethics Panel (FEP) as at C2(a).
c) '**YES**' to *questions 14 and 15*	• You **DO NOT** need to submit an application to your Faculty Ethics Panel (FEP). • *INSTEAD*, Please use the HRA decision making tool and proceed according to the instructions given. • Applications must be signed by the relevant faculty Director of Research or other nominated signatory prior to submission. • A satisfactory peer review must be completed. • Once approval is given, you must send a copy to the relevant FEP.
d) **'Yes'** to question 16	• If your study involves users of social services or social services staff you may need to undertake different processes: • If your study involves carers of people receiving NHS care or treatment please follow the HRA decision making tool and process outlined in c) above • If your study involves local social services staff or service users who are children or adults you should complete an application for full internal approval and also contact the relevant Research and Governance manager of the local authority or authorities involved for management approval to attach to your application. • If your study involves more than three local authority children's social services sites you will need to apply to the Association of Directors of Children's Social Services for approval • If your study involves four or more adult social services sites you will need to apply to the Association of Directors of Adult Social Service for approval.

Section D: Project Details

D1. Project title:	"Does the Metropolitan Polices' use of social media assist with increasing confidence in the use of stop and search as a tactic" (Working title)
D2. Start date of fieldwork	As soon as authority is granted.
D3. End date of fieldwork	01/10/2019
D4. Project summary *(This should be written in plain English avoiding overly academic language and acronyms)*	I am conducting research to increase knowledge regarding the Metropolitan Police's use of social media as a method of increasing transparency and improving public confidence. The focus will be on both practitioners (MPS officers) and other key members of the community groups that regularly consult with police regarding stop and search. The aim of this research is to increase accountability and confidence in the police service concerning the legitimate use of stop and search. Stop and search is a contentious issue with ability to alienate communities. Recently, the police have used various social media platforms to engage with the community. I was fortunate enough to complete my dissertation (BSc) around stop and search. There is a significant amount of literature on this subject specifically around disproportionately however I identified there was a lack of information and literature regarding the use of social media. There is limited information regarding the actual police use of social media, which is predominately circa 2011. Within the Metropolitan Police Service (MPS) there is an increasing drive for evidence based policing and as a result I have been fortunate enough to receive fifty percent funding from the MPS which again highlights the drive for police forces to invest in academic research.

The aim is to identify evidence of best practise, which may be practically implemented within the MPS to continue to increase engagement with the communities.

The thesis will : -

• Examine the current MPS practice regarding use of social media.

• Examine police views on the use of social media within the organisation

• Use quantifiable data provided by the MPS looking at a six month use of stop and search relating tweets

• Explore the opinions and perspective from communities members involved in police groups regarding stop and search.

This research aims to utilise data from publicly available sources from the national statistics, journals, and media articles.

I am a serving police officer within the MPS currently posted to North East BCU. I have received permission from my line manager and the corporate development team to access MPS data for this research purpose as this thesis is part funded by the organisation.

There will be a mixed methods approach to this research, comprising of:-

➢ **Social Media Data**: As a serving police officer, I have permission by the MPS to analyse the social media data. The data will be analysed with the intention of identifying themes, which will then be used as a foundation for further investigation by means of qualitative interviews.

The mixed method research approach uses both quantitative and qualitative data sets with a view of overcoming the disadvantages of using a single method type.

➢ **Interviews**: The questions for the semi - structured interviews will be determined by the analysis underpinned by the themes which are both pre-determined and that have holistically grown.
➢ Transcripts of interviews will be articulated and then analyzed using NVivo.

	The data gained from both the interviews and social media use data will be securely recorded on the CCCU server. I will ensure it will be password protected. Prior to the interviews taking place a full consent form will be completed ensuring the potential participant will know what is expected of them and what the interview will consist of.

Section E: Data protection

The *General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR)* applies to the processing of personal data across the EU. It builds on the Data Protection Act (DPA) 1998, which has been replaced by the DPA 2018. The GDPR introduces stringent requirements for protecting data and much greater accountability. It gives individuals more control over their personal data.

E1. Personal data	Will Personal Identifiable Information (also defined as personal data) be collected and/or processed?
	YES – Processed data
	If you are in doubt, please refer to the guidance - General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR))

- If you answered 'YES' to the question above please complete the rest of this section providing as much detail as possible using the guidance questions. *This should be written in plain English avoiding overly academic language and acronyms. It must contain as much information as possible on how your research will comply with the GDPR.*
- If you answered 'NO' to the question above and having read the guidance are sure that no personal data will be collected or processed please move on to section F.

E2. Data collection	This research is GDPR compliant. The author has sought specific permission from the MPS to use the data, which has been provided.
	The data provided by the MPS is owned by the organization and they have the autonomy to share the information with the researcher.
	The MPS data provided will be stored on the secure CCCU server. Any handwritten working notes will be scanned, saved as a PDF file and again stored on the CCCU server. The handwritten notes will then be shredded. The data gained by the author's research will be stored securely on the researcher's CCCU server account also and only shared with the student's supervisor and assessor for a meaningful and lawful purpose. The data will be password protected.
	The interview will be recorded electronically and stored on my laptop and will be password protected. My laptop has the appropriate virus and internet security software. No interview data will be stored on a MPS network or computer.
	Permission
	There will no surprises with regards to this research. A formal written request by means of an email will be sent to all participants therefore providing a clear and transparent audit trail.
	The request will highlight the objective of the research and be specific with what is required form the participant.
	Permission will be sought from all organisations involved however this research is delivering some key themes with regards to police transparency and engagement with the community therefore no reputational risk is anticipated.

	A consent form will be signed by each participant ensuring that they are fully aware of the research process and storage of data. **Anonymity and Confidentiality** This area underpins all the research and the importance of both anonymity and confidentiality cannot be underestimated. No persons being interview will be identified. The line of questioning will be specifically related to the subject title and no other questions will be asked. Explicit consent will be requested from the data subjects. All the relevant information will be given to ensure that the subjects are able to make an informed decision.
E3. Subject access requests	All parties involved with the research will be informed how the information gleaned will be processed and held by the researcher. The data will be stored separately from any other documentation. Information will be given to explain how permission can be withdrawn at any time. All participants will be able to withdraw their consent at any stage up until the submission of the thesis. The process of how to achieve this will be explained both verbally and in writing prior to any questioning will take place. The actual process will be that an individual will email their request. The request will be responded to informing the participant that their data has been destroyed and will not be used.
E4. Data access & sharing	The primary researcher and his supervisor purely for the purpose of oversight. This is not an international project and the data will not be shared outside of the UK.
E5. Participant recruitment, privacy & confidentiality	Explicit consent will be sought from the data subjects. Individuals will be informed how their data will be processed and importantly how it will be stored. The individuals will be informed that their data will not be shared and the process of how to request the removal of their data fully explained both verbally and in writing. The Personal data will only be accessed by the primary researcher. The researcher's supervisor and examiner will also have access if there is a legitimate purpose. All data will be stored electronically on the CCCU server and any writing notes will be scanned and stored electronically. All paperwork will be shredded. No information will be shared. Any communications will be sent via a secure email. The two main identified risks are : The physical loss of data by the researcher The loss of data electronically via an unsecure email system

E6. Data quality	The data set provided by the MPS is already known and does not contain any, dates of birth or addresses. There is simply no need to request this information from any participants either as it is irrelevant to this research. The data required will be the minimum needed which is : Name (although a pseudonym will be issued) Whether or not they are in the MPS
E7. Data storage	The data will be stored remotely on the CCCU secure network. I have been informed that the network is suitable for the purpose by the IT zone on the 28/05/2019. If for any reason I need to store data on a USB drive I am in possession of a fully encrypted stick, which requires an 8 digit pin code and is compliant with government standards. The data will be stored on CCCU systems The data will be stored on CCCU will be kept until the thesis has been accepted and marked therefore allowing the researcher to know that the data is no longer needed. Upon this confirmation, all the data possessed will be destroyed.

Section F1: For Students Only

F1. Module name and number:	MSc by Research in Policing 2018-19
F2. Course:	MSc by Research in Policing (PRHMSPOLICE)
F3. Name of Supervisor(s) or module Leader:	Jane Owens
F4. Email address of Supervisor(s) or Module leader:	Jane.owens@canterbury.ac.uk

Section F2: For Supervisors

Please ensure that this form has been completed correctly and in full. It will delay the ethical approval process if the form is incorrect, incomplete or has not been proofread.

Please tick the appropriate boxes below. This application should not be submitted until all boxes are ticked:

The student has read the relevant documentation relating to the University's Research Governance, available on the University web pages at: https://cccu.canterbury.ac.uk/research-and-enterprise-development-centre/research-governance-and-ethics/research-governance-and-ethics.aspx	✓
Both myself and the student have read the relevant documentation relating to Data Protection and the GDPR, available on the University web pages at https://cccu.canterbury.ac.uk/governance-and-legal-services/governance-and-legal-services.aspx and I can confirm that this project fully complies.	✓
The chosen topic merits further investigation	✓
The student has the skills to carry out the project	✓
I can confirm that the participant information sheet is completed in full and is appropriate	✓
I have reviewed the procedures for participant recruitment and obtaining informed consent and can confirm that they are appropriate	✓
If a Disclosure & Barring Service (DBS) check is required, this has been carried out	✓

> Comments from supervisor:
>
> The student is ready and prepared to start the work. He fully understands the Ethics requirements.

Section G: Declaration

- I certify that the information in this form is accurate to the best of my knowledge and belief and I take full responsibility for it.

- I certify that a risk assessment for this study has been carried out in compliance with the University's Health and Safety policy and has been approved and signed by the relevant Head of School/Department.

- I certify that my project proposal and methodology has been subject to '*peer review*' commensurate with the level of that research. For students this will be carried out by the supervisor and for staff by an appropriately qualified person independent of the research proposed.

- I certify that any required Disclosure & Barring Service (DBS) check has been carried out.

- I undertake to carry out this project under the terms specified in the Canterbury Christ Church University Research Governance Handbook.

- I undertake to inform the relevant Faculty Ethics Panel and Red.resgov@canterbury.ac.uk of any significant change in the question, design or conduct of the research over the course of the project. I understand that such changes may require a new application for ethics approval.

- I undertake to inform the **Contracts & Compliance Manager** at Red.resgov@canterbury.ac.uk in the **Research and Enterprise Integrity and Development Office** when the proposed study has been completed.

- I have read and understood the relevant University documentation relating to Data Protection and the GDPR and I am aware of my legal responsibility to comply with the terms of the GDPR and appropriate University policies and guidelines relating to the security and confidentiality of participant or other personal data.

I understand that project records/data may be subject to inspection for audit purposes if required in future and that project records should be kept securely for five years or other specified period.

- I understand that the personal data about me contained in this application will be held by the **Research and Enterprise Integrity and Development Office** and **the relevant Faculty** and that this will be managed according to the principles established in the GDPR and appropriate University policies.

As the Principal Investigator for this study, I confirm that this application has been shared with all other members of the study team	

Principal Investigator	Supervisor or module leader (as appropriate)

Name: Paul Stubbs	Name: Jane Owens
Date: 28/05/2019	Date: 19th June 2019

Section H: Submission

This completed form along with all relevant documents should be sent as an attachment to a covering email, to Red.resgov@canterbury.ac.uk.

Please allow at least 4 weeks from the point that a completed submission is sent to the relevant Ethics Chair to receive an outcome.

N.B. YOU MUST include copies of the Participant Information materials and Consent Materials that you will be using in your study. Model versions on which to base these are appended below for your convenience – please note that if you choose to create your own forms then you must ensure that all relevant confidentiality and data protection information is included. If any required information is omitted your application will be returned to you for further action.

Copies of any data gathering tools such as questionnaires or focus group guidelines, and a COMPLETED & SIGNED HEALTH & SAFETY RISK ASSESSMENT FORM must be submitted. Guidance on completing your H&S Risk Assessment can be found here.

CONSENT FORM

Title of Project: "Does the Police use of social media assist with increasing community confidence in the use of stop and search as a tactic" (Working title)

Name of Researcher: Paul Stubbs

Contact details:

Address: School of Law and Criminal Justice.

Canterbury Christ Church University, North Holmes Road, Canterbury, Kent CT1 1QU

Tel:

Email:

Please initial box

1. I confirm that I have read and understand the information sheet for the above study and have had the opportunity to ask questions.

2. I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time, without giving any reason.

3. I understand that any personal information that I provide to the researchers will be kept strictly confidential.

4.   I confirm that I am happy to be audio recorded.

5.   I agree to take part in the above study.

Name of Participant: Date: Signature:

Researcher: Date: Signature:

_____   _____   _____

Copies: 1 for participant

                1 for researcher

"Does the Police use of social media assist with increasing community confidence in the use of stop and search as a tactic" (Working title)

PARTICIPANT INFORMATION SHEET

A research study is being conducted at Canterbury Christ Church University (CCCU) by Paul Stubbs at the School of Law, Criminal Justice & Computing as part of his MSc in Applied Police Practice

Background

The purpose of this research is to increase knowledge regarding the Metropolitan Police's use of social media as a method of increasing transparency and improving public confidence.

The focus will be on both practitioners (MPS officers) and other key members of the community groups that regularly consult with police regarding stop and search.

The aim of this research is to increase accountability and confidence in the police service concerning the legitimate use of stop and search. Stop and search is a contentious issue with ability to alienate communities. Recently, the police have used various social media platforms to engage with the community.

What will you be required to do?

Participants in this study will be interviewed on their experiences and views of stop and search and the use of social media within the MPS.

To participate in this research you must:

1.   Be a serving police officer within the Metropolitan Police Service (MPS).

2.   Be involved in stop and search as a stakeholder within the MPS.

Procedures

You will be interviewed once by the researcher between July 2019 and September 2019. This interview will consist of a series of questions to obtain your views and experiences regarding the MPS use of Stop and search and social media. The interview will be conducted face to face, in person at a mutually agreed location. The interview will be audio recorded.

Feedback

There will be no specific individual feedback regarding the interviews. The results gleaned will be published via the thesis upon its submission and approval.

Confidentiality and Data Protection

On the legal basis of consent all data and personal information will be stored securely within CCCU systems in accordance with the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) and the University's own data protection policies. No unrelated or unnecessary personal data will be collected or stored.

The following categories of personal data will be collected: name and whether or not they work within the MPS. It is important to highlight that the names gathered at interview stage will be given pseudonyms thus ensuring anonymity.

The personal data can only be accessed by Paul Stubbs (researcher) and upon request, it can be seen by their supervisor and examiner, but will not be given to the MPS or given to any other person. The data will not be transferred outside of the European Economic Area (EEA).

After completion of the study, all data will be destroyed after approval of the thesis.

Dissemination of results

The MSc thesis will be published in the CCCU library.

Deciding whether to participate

If you have any questions or concerns please do not hesitate to contact me. Should you decide to participate, you will be free to

1.   Withdraw consent at any time without having to give a reason.

2.   Request to see all your personal data held in association with this project.

3.   Request that the processing of your personal data is restricted

4.   Request that your personal data is erased and no longer used for processing.

The purpose of this research is to explore the experiences and views regarding the MPS use of stop and search including the use of social media. This research is part funded by the MPS. The thesis will be submitted to the MPS so that it may be considered in any future decision making. No participants details will be disclosed.

For the sake of transparency the researcher must declare that he is a serving police officer and if in the course of interviewing he is made aware of specific information relating to: A) an urgent welfare need where significant harm may be caused if no action is taken. B) The commission of a criminal offence. C) Disclosure of disciplinary offence that would considered gross misconduct. He has a duty to report this, as per the Policing code of ethics, which can be found at:

http://www.college.police.uk/What-we-do/Ethics/Documents/Code_of_Ethics.pdf

Process for withdrawing consent

You are free to withdraw consent at any time without having to give a reason. To do this send an email to

Any questions?

Interview Questions:

- Please tell me about your experience of stop and search within the MPS?
- What are your thoughts around stop and search?
- Do you think there is a difference in how stop and searches are conducted depending on where geographically they are carried out e.g., city vs Home Counties?
- Do you regularly use social media?
- Are you a follower of any corporate MPS social media accounts?
- Do you think the MPS effectively use the MPS corporate accounts in relation to stop and search?
- How would you use the MPS accounts to engage with the community regarding stop and search ?
- Do pictures of knives/weapons recovered posted on social media have a positive or negative impact on the community?
- Is there anything else you would like to clarify or add?