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# **Skin Coloured Targets**

**An examination of the effects of the use of targets in the Police, in 'Black, Minority and Ethnic' (BME) candidate selection and recruitment.**

By

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for the degree of MSc by Research**

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The author has, whilst being registered for the Masters award, been a registered candidate for a PGDip award at Warwick Business School. The content of this work was independent and unconnected.

The material in this dissertation has been researched in isolation as result of interviews in both the Metropolitan Police and Lancashire Constabulary. It has not been used in any other submission for an academic award.

This dissertation is submitted only as a result of the officers who were open enough to express how they truly felt about the issues contained herein. It was only through their sincere trust, that the material was collected. I would also like to offer my deepest thanks to my family – in particular my wife; who as a very busy lady herself has supported me throughout this testing process. I hope the work which follows does their support justice.

This dissertation is submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for the award of Master of Science by Research in Policing at Canterbury Christ Church University.

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## **Abstract**

This research aimed to examine the effects of the use of Targets in the Policing context, for the purposes of selecting and recruiting Black, Minority and Ethnic candidates (BME). From previous evidence within the field of research, the use of targets has been proven to impact negatively upon workplace motivation and create a selection of unintended consequences, yet there was no located research that aimed to understand their use within the recruitment of BME officers within the Police.

The research adopted a qualitative approach to investigation and interviews with 17 frontline officers were carried out. The aim of the interviews was to collect rich data relating to their personal experience of the use of targets, and their subsequent effect in the workplace. The participants were asked two open-ended questions that sought to evaluate their feelings towards the use of targets, and their impact upon the wider workforce.

The research found a selection of common themes that appeared throughout many of the interviews, including disengagement, mistrust of organisational process, the disadvantaging of those meant to benefit from the targets, and a lack of organisational communication. These were persistent, and without delving into underlying sociological causes, they illustrate issues with the perceived effects of management intervention in recruitment and selection.

The key implications for police organisations are in relation to the greater understanding of the processes that they choose to implement. Although numerical targets may be seen to direct activity towards a numerical goal, the real effects on frontline workers can be far more sinister and ultimately, do more harm than good.

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## Chapter 1 – Introduction

This research seeks to understand the effects of the use of targets in BME recruitment. The initial scope when first conceived, was to examine the effects within recruitment only, yet as the interviews progressed, it was felt by the interviewees, that their effect was much broader – throughout promotion and lateral development too. This was embraced and the broader scope was encouraged, as it provided a wider picture of perceptions on targets and their use. Targets have been an intrinsic part of Policing for almost two decades and are still being used today to develop the service in varying areas. New Public Management was an era of measurement and figure based management – what effect has this had within this complex and controversial area?

The paper begins by discussing the research approach and the political environment that has encouraged this study. Procedural and Organisational Justice will be discussed as a motivator for this research within the context of the newly published Leadership Review and the political environment. Chapter 2 contains the literature review for the area of Diversity within policing, with a historical and contemporary synopsis of Procedural and Organisational Justice study both within and without policing. This is followed by a discussion of the methodological approach utilised in Chapter 3, with an outline of the findings and interpretation in Chapter 4. The study is concluded by a Chapter discussing the conclusions gleaned from the research and what they may mean to the future of the service.



## **Research Approach**

This research was undertaken utilising phenomenological study, using the experiences and perceptions of the interviewees to shape the findings into themes and common areas. This detailed information will help us understand better the use of targets in this area. To the participants their experience represents their truth; a world view that influences their daily thoughts and actions. Gathering this rich data will enable greater understanding of the policing organisation and the people that work within it, in turn allowing for an improved insight into the management and leadership of those officers. It will also aspire to inform on a number of possible recommendations for the future.

## **Political Environment**

Following the instigation of New Public Management techniques in the police, the service has seen the development and subsequent entrenchment of performance management frameworks (Guilfoyle, 2013). Perhaps the most famous of these is the Compstat system (Mastrofski, et al., 2004), along with the use of Zero Tolerance policing and Broken Windows theory (Burke, 1998; Grabosky, 1999; Punch, 2007). Without dwelling on these as the only examples of performance management frameworks of note – as there are many others – the cultural fall out of these systems is now becoming prevalent. Police legitimacy in the US is under scrutiny, as official reports into Ferguson (DOJ, 2015) draw stark conclusions about the use of target and performance based deployments.

The Compstat system was adopted by the Met in the UK, with centrally held government targets dictating the pace and the direction of UK policing. The effect of

these targets has been discussed at length over recent years, with most prominence being given to the Jay Report (2014) on the Rotherham Child Sex Exploitation scandal where thefts from vehicles and domestic burglaries were given precedence over repeated serious offences against vulnerable children.

New Public Management techniques have not been exclusive to the Police. They have affected the whole of the UK public service provision. The Mid Staffordshire enquiry (Francis Report, 2013) into issues within the NHS identified significant amounts of dysfunctional behaviour that persisted around numerical targets (Bevan & Hood, 2006,2006,2004). Local authorities must still provide social support using hugely depleted budgets, and there have been reports of targets being used in areas such as 'benefit sanction' interviews through the department of work and pensions. (Guardian, 2013) Indeed, Long (2003 p.642) points out that New Public Management techniques conflict directly with the increasing emphasis on ethicability and Human Rights now being discussed in the policing environment.

The legacy of the use of these targets is still in evidence, with a recent review having been commissioned by the Home Secretary into continuing use of targets within a policing environment (Home Office, 2015). Police Culture has often been criticised for its inability to change, (Skolnick, 2008; Chan, 1996; Germann, 1971) and 'Compstat culture,' has leaked pervasively into diversity recruitment. This study aims to uncover what NPM techniques are doing within this critical area of policing.

## The Leadership Review

In addition to the political pressure around the removal of targets within the policing context, the recent publication of the National Leadership Review (College of Policing, 2015) has added impetus to the rate of change within the police leadership environment. As a researcher, I was working on the Review whilst conducting my interviews and subsequent analysis. Themes around leadership styles and staff engagement became prevalent early on in the research during the interviews; significant interdependence was discovered and reinforced – as discussed in the findings.

This study will be distributed to the Review Team to form evidence for the recommendations as they become imminent. The most pertinent were:

**Recommendation 3:** Embed the values articulated in the principles from the Code of Ethics in all local and national selection processes.

**Recommendation 6:** Create a new model of leadership and management training and development which is accessible to all within policing.

These recommendations will form the basic structure of the operational report that will be compiled from the results of this study in order to influence some relevant change within policing in England and Wales.

## Theoretical Foundation

“A theoretical framework is a frame of reference that is a basis for observations, definitions of concepts, research designs, interpretations, and generalizations, much as the frame that rests on a foundation defines the overall design of a house.” (LoBiondo-Wood & Haber, 1998, p. 141)

The analysis of the content of this study required an established theory base. This theory would provide the structure for critical thought with regards to target use in recruitment and selection. When considering the options for theory use many alternatives were examined, including Psychological Contract Theory (Rousseau, (1989), Principal and Agency Theory (Rees, 1985), and Organisational Justice Theory (Greenberg, 1987). Organisational Justice provided the most appropriate framework to fit the use of targets within process, because of the inclusion of specific process based theory: Procedural Justice (Thibault, et al., 1975). As the main content of this study focused on the perceptions of the frontline on a specific area of process execution, an established Organisational Justice framework based on over thirty years of empirical study provided a more than adequate frame of reference.

Organisational Justice itself is a relatively simple theoretical framework; the fairness of procedure and practice (both human and with regards to systemic process) used in transactional exchanges must be perceived as fair to remain legitimate.

Procedural Justice in particular is a sub-area of Organisational Justice, and as such they are interdependent frameworks (Roberts & Herrington, 2013).

Organisational Justice as an overarching theory encompasses not just the physical utilisation of procedure and practice, but also the wider context within which they exist. It is comprised of four elements, Procedural Justice, Distributive Justice,

Informational Justice and Interpersonal justice, as defined during a Meta study of the research conducted by Colquitt (2001):

Distributive Justice – This is the distribution of outcomes in the workplace. Eg. Terms and Conditions.

Informational Justice – This relates to the availability of information with regards to decision making within the workplace.

Interpersonal Justice – This is with regards to whether people within the workforce are dealt with in a respectful and dignified way.

Procedural Justice – This relates solely to the utilisation of process and procedure and the perceived fairness thereof (Colquitt, 2001).

Of these four, Procedural Justice sits most broadly with recruitment and selection, as they themselves are HR 'processes'. The other three elements will however have some influence, and shall be discussed more widely during the results section. The literature which follows therefore includes not just Procedural Justice in isolation, but also includes some of the previously discussed wider Organisational elements into the framework for evaluation (Blader and Tyler, 2003).

This is an 'inwardly facing' study utilising Organisational Justice theory (Roberts & Herrington, 2013). The study focuses on what occurs within the organisation with regards to 'staff attitudes, staff retention, workplace relations, productivity and performance' (p. 115), as a result of internal procedure and justice based decision making. External Organisational Justice studies have been conducted in the policing context, yet the scale of such a study would be too wide in terms of my capability. This does not preclude the examined issues having an external effect, they simply haven't been the focus of this study.

The sub-domain of Procedural Justice theory proposes that the construction and execution of the process utilised is as important as the outcome itself (Thibault et al. 1975). There have been numerous studies to reinforce this theory, namely Folger et al. (1998), Lind et al. (1988), Tyler et al. (2000), and Tyler et al. (1997). Several criteria are also discussed by commentators, most notably Leventhal (1980), whose 6 'rules' are referred to frequently, these being: consistency, bias suppression, accuracy, correctability, representativeness and ethicality. Although often referred to, there is little empirical basis for them, and contemporary scholars prefer Thibault et al. (1975) as the primary model for analysis (Cropanzano & Greenberg, 1997; Lind & Tyler, 1988).

Blader & Tyler (2003) propose a further model of procedural justice evaluation in the form of a four component model. These components are:

1. Evaluation of formal rules and policies that govern formal decision making in a group.
2. Evaluations of formal rules and policies that influence how group members are treated.
3. Evaluations of how particular group authorities make decisions (informal decision making).
4. Evaluations of how particular group authorities treat group members (informal quality of treatment) (Blader et al. 2003 pp.749).

The first two stages were defined around the four organisational justice criteria discussed previously, but the latter two address concerns raised by Bies (1990) and Bies & Moag (1986). They essentially assist with creating a model for measuring not only what is 'in' the rules, but how/if they are applied and to whom. This is an

important distinction, and one which bears note in the current context as the use of rules are likely to be considered 'legal' simply because of the context of the study. These four components provide a theoretical model that may be used to split the utilisation of process into manageable components for analysis. This then allows the concept of fairness within the use of process to be systematically examined. Using this framework of analysis, it may be possible to draw distinction between rules that may be independently considered to be 'fair' in the strictest sense (without context), and the way that they are subsequently perceived by those that are subject to them. This method offers a wider perspective through examination of context, erring towards a social construction of process (Gergen, 2009).

There are several processes currently used by Constabularies that may be referred to as 'procedure' for the purposes of discussion. These include 'positive action' in the form of assistance to get into the police for BME candidates, specialist talent management schemes aiming to promote BME candidates, and community engagement methods in BME communities used to enhance awareness and generate interest in a police career. Although all three are worthy of debate in this context, a particular focus on 'positive action' and the use of target quotas has been chosen as the focus due to the current usage of this method in such high volume. How does the notion of Procedural Justice fit with such a method; does the implication of rules for the 'greater good' of representation produce unseen consequences that invalidate that perceived good?

This study therefore aims to utilise Organisational Justice theory, with a particular focus on Procedural Justice, as a framework for greater understanding and to provide structure to the results analysis. Government has ruled on the legality of the

rules within the context of policing, but how these rules are used and what effect they have on the workforce is currently a subject of little research. Elements of 1) and 2) in Blader's model are considered to be 'fair,' it is only through depth of understanding that we can begin to analyse the subsequent effects of Elements 3) and 4).

3. Evaluations of how particular group authorities make decisions (informal decision making).
4. Evaluations of how particular group authorities treat group members (informal quality of treatment) (Blader et al. 2003 pp.749).

### **Aims, Objectives and Research Questions**

The broad aim of the research is to gain greater understanding around the effects of target use within BME recruitment and selection, upon officers working in a frontline role.

The sample was restricted to 'frontline' as they are the ones that have the greatest contact with the public and for the purposes of Procedural Justice therefore, may pass on those effects to the public in the greatest quantity.

To maintain a broad research questions that befits the phenomenological approach as per Cresswell (2009):

How does the use of targets in the recruitment and selection of BME affect the perceptions of frontline police officers?

Two questions were used to address this research question when interviewing participants. These were:



1) How do you feel about the use of targets in recruitment and selection of BME candidates?

2) How do you think their use affects the rest of the workforce?

The construction and wording of these questions will be discussed further in the Methodology section.

## Chapter 2 – Literature Review

The literature on diversity within the Police is eclectic, not least because of the size of the subject at hand. There has been a tendency to simply 'badge up' diversity as something that can be achieved, almost a target, yet this frustrates discussion around the subject and ignores significant complexity. The following discussion thus sets out a framework to discuss this complexity, utilising historical context to set the scene, and Organisational Justice as the framework with which to analyse it.

### **Context**

Before delving into individual sub-nodes, the context of the interviews requires some discussion. Politically, the Met are under significant public pressure to change the proportion of representation within its ranks. This has been characterised by a 20/20/20 vision, where three areas of performance are subject to targets that involve 20% alterations. (Met Police, 2014). This target has been set by MOPAC (Mayor's Office for Police and Crime) and as such contains significant amounts of political influence. The 20% increase in public confidence is underpinned by a very heavy drive for diversity in recruitment. There are significant jumps in logic present, the most prevalent being the assumption that a greater proportion of diverse recruits will automatically result in higher confidence. This was discussed earlier in Chapter 2. The frontline have been exposed to many tangible elements of this drive including targeted advertising all over London, the London centric recruitment, and the most recent being the imposition of a second language as a pre-requisite for selection.

These were mentioned regularly throughout the Met interviews and have clearly influenced the officers' views on the use of targets.

In Lancashire, a recent recruitment intake utilised a phone call selection system for application packs. A 'window' was opened, during which candidates received an application pack if they got through to a call handler. This created full day backlogs of internal staff sat by phones for the entire day, some with their phones on constant redial. Many did not get through and missed the first recruitment in several years. A number of recruitment packs had been retained however for BME candidates, and this was made public within the Constabulary over the internal forums. Many candidates believed the process to be wholly unfair. The interviews took place six months after this event, and as such this was a popular frame of reference throughout.

This context may have influenced the perceptions of the participants in both sites during interview. Analysis therefore took place with the aim of disregarding the personal experience, and instead focusing on the perception of those that witnessed these events. Common themes did present in those perceptions, which allowed the data to be viewed as a whole, rather than as two distinct data sets.

## **History**

The deluge of discussion around the importance of diversity in UK policing began after the Second World War, most notable in commentary on the 1958 Notting Hill disturbances. Hiro (1973 pp.55), Hall (1978 pp.23), Gilroy (1982 pp.143) and Fryer (1984 pp.391) provide critique on the style on the style of policing used and the

discussions centre predominantly upon the police failing to address repeated attacks by 'teddy boys' on citizens of that community. The inaction to combat the indigenous population pursuing severe attacks was complimented by almost 'overt police brutality' against the non-indigenous population (Deakin 1970 pp.244). It is of note that this literature came into being over ten years after the fact, as retrospective studies began to identify the issues that led up to such unrest. This two-pronged failure of inaction and non-engagement created a solid footing for what was to come in the succeeding decades.

The 1958 riots led a commissioned report into the ability of the Police to communicate and work within diverse communities by the Parliamentary Select Committee on Race Relations and Immigration. (House of Commons Select Committee on Race Relations and Immigration, 1972). The report's main thrust behind its many recommendations was that further education of immigrants in the role of the police in British society would solve many of the issues identified. It is of note that the fault is ascribed mainly to the lack of education of West Indian/Afro-Caribbean migrants, rather than the inability of the current Police to interact with subjects who were simply different. Inspector of Constabulary, Dear (1972 pp.149), begins to expand on these recommendations, suggesting that the fault is two-fold, adding in the requirement for further training for Officers on understanding migrant communities. This is reinforced by the finding:

"...coloured immigrants are no more involved in crime than others; nor are they generally more concerned in violence, prostitution and drugs. The West Indian crime rate is much the same as that of the indigenous population. The Asian crime rate is very much lower" House of Commons (1972).

Which is in stark contrast to perceptions that were evidenced at that time:

“In the 1950s, long before most British people had any contact with black people, surveys of public attitudes demonstrated widespread perceptions of black people as inherently inferior to Europeans and inclined towards crime and deviance” Bowling (2007).

It is fruitless to speculate upon the causality of such police practice/community understanding, as other scholars quite rightly point to societal determiners including deprivation, lack of skills, lack of capital and a generally poor standard of living for migrants (Wilkinson & Pickett (2009), Wilkinson et al. (2010), Holdaway (1998 pg.331)). Lambert et al. (1970) also illuminates the fact that immigration resulted in a general displacement of crime in inner-city areas, rather than a rise in such. The crime levels in socially deprived areas remained, the population committing that crime changed accordingly. This has been supported by later studies by Benyon & Solomos (1987), and Jenkins et al. (1989), and more recently Potter et al. (2005), Modood et al., (1997) and Salisbury et al. (2004). It is likely that there is a heady melting pot of relevant cause that lies in both behaviour and societal structure that mixes in varying degree in varying locations.

This was compounded by a general trend to begin to specialise within the Police.

The 1972 report identified the need to begin working on community engagement. In an effort to set up some sort of dialogue, Forces began to set up units for liaison.

Holdaway (1998) describes this phenomenon:

*“...the police policy of specialisation created, and to a considerable extent still creates, a situation where problems of race relations are understood as the*

province of particular officers who possess the professional skills required to *deal with them.*' (pp. 336)

This is the 'othering' of minority liaison, as it consciously removes it from the 'day-to-day' functions of policing. It ascribes it some importance as there is a role that is created for it, but that one person becomes the face of the force; they are not involved in frontline policing by default. This means that policies on stop and search, routine patrol routes, and other policies that may be racist by their very execution, are removed from the communication process. The Institution for Race Relations described this process as:

*"...this means that police accountability to the Black community is relegated to and institutionalised in a particular officer, thereby absolving the rest of the division from the type of "identification" considered so essential for policing the general population"* (Institute of Race Relations, 1978 pp.67).

Despite the potential for this to be seen as divisive by minority communities, this practice still persists in many forces to this day.

Following race based riots in Brixton, Toxteth, Salford and several other major cities in 1981, Lord Scarman was tasked with examining the relationship between the communities and the police. There is much literature to be discussed around the Scarman report (1981), so a thematic approach will be undertaken in its analysis.

The Scarman Report is the first report that dwells upon social exclusion/disadvantage as the main precursor to the disorder. It is still strongly complimentary of senior police officers and Cain et al. (1982 pp.94) describe elements of the report as 'exonerat[ing] the police as an institution from responsibility for the antagonism which all agree existed.'

There is some progress however, Scarman (1981) does accept that incidents of misconduct did occur, but does so whilst mentioning the fact that the officers were 'young, inexperienced, and frightened,' or 'junior.' (Para. 43, 4.97) Explaining away such behaviour utilising a lack of experience tacitly accepts the existence of misconduct in the newer recruits, but also notes that those officers who are not inexperienced acted with lawfulness and integrity. Cain et al. (1982) then acknowledges that Police are legally exempt from harassment, and therefore lawfulness cannot be used to qualify divisive practice, such as persistent, targeted stop and search. McBarnet (1981) also supports this view, pointing out that utilising the fact that behaviour is legal as a justification bypasses the problem of persistently ethnocentric searching.

There is also mention of a concept by Cain et al. (1982 pp.96) with relation to Scarman that still rears its head today in contemporary commentary. 'Rotten Apple' theory espouses that the problems with community/police relations lay squarely at the feet of a select few, those also co-identified with being 'young, inexperienced and frightened.' This in turn leads to solutions around recruitment, training, and development; situated at the gateway to the profession (Oakley, 1993). It does not deal with the overall profession and therefore neglects what could be argued to be the main precursor for the Macpherson Report; Institutional Racism.

Despite the inability of Scarman to apportion blame to the Police, much good did come of the report, including its positive influence on Human Rights (Kirby, 2006), and its use as a point of recent reference for the formulation of the Police and Criminal Evidence Act 1984. Of note however, despite reference to the fact that recruitment of minorities was something that would help the Police, there was no mention of how this was to occur, or the reason behind this being so poor in the past.

(Joyce, 2006) This was accompanied by specific recommendations with regards to Stop and Search that appeared robust, but actually had little practical effect – if any at all (Bowland et al. 2003).

There was a steady input from academia around the efficacy of Scarman, with much focus upon the culture of the Police and the barriers that it posed to change. As there had been a request in the Scarman report around extra recruitment of ethnic minorities the police responded accordingly with the imposition of targets for recruitment. This choice was influenced by the trend accompanying much of Police management but this will be discussed later. Cultural commentary from Holdaway (1997), Fielding (1988) and Crank (1998) made explicit reference to the ignorance surrounding the policies created to address race relations programs.

“Until advocates of police change recognise the importance of culture, they will continue to be as surprised as they have been for the past 100 years at the profound limitations of reform efforts to yield real and enduring changes” (Crank, 1997, p. 7).

Shortly after the horrific murder of Stephen Lawrence, the Macpherson Report (1999) was commissioned. Macpherson was a widely publicised report, and the first to really acknowledge fault on the behalf of the police. Macpherson first used the term ‘Institutional Racism,’ in relation to the processes that were used to deal with the case itself, and the communication around it. This was a step away from the support that Scarman had shown towards the police and in places the criticism was stark. Previous support for the police and similar institutions was beginning to wane:

“That is a new definition of institutional racism, which I accept – and so does *the Commissioner. The inquiry’s assessment is clear and sensible. In my*



view, any long-established, white-dominated organisation is liable to have procedures, practices and a culture that tend to exclude or to disadvantage non-white people” Jack Straw: Hansard (1999).

This commentary unfortunately lost its credibility as the term was oft used, but never fully explained to rank and file, resulting in an understanding that the report was labelling them as individually racist (Souhami, 2007). This misunderstood attack was perceived badly and officers retreated from the discussions around diversity, which subsequently became defined by, ‘buzz words,’ ‘tick-boxes’ and a ‘lack [of] coherence’ (McLaughlin, 2007 pp.34). This was accompanied by compulsory training programs on diversity, which increased in frequency and intensity following the airing of ‘The Secret Policeman’ in 2003 (BBC, 2003).

The period of ‘Post-Macpherson’ has seen copious contemporary study from writers such as Solomos (1999), Bourne (2001), Holdaway & O’Neill (2006), and Souhami (2007, 2011, 2014). There is significant plaudit for the brave usage of the term ‘Institutional Racism,’ yet considerable critique is also present. The term itself is conceptual, and many of the mechanisms which may themselves be racist were not identified or indeed directly discussed (Jasper 2011). Waddington (1999) states very clearly that the focus should not just be on the fact that it exists, but also on “how and why policing acquires its racism”. Lea (2003) also comments on this, defining the term as ‘ambiguous’. This was reinforced by a lack of empirical research in this area and an attempt to transform existing empirical research in areas such as Stop and Search, straight into Institutional Racism (Holdaway et al. 2006).

Examining the Scarman and Macpherson report utilising an overarching perspective indicates that the Scarman enquiry identified the external issues, yet failed to

allocate sufficient responsibility internally. Macpherson then attributed a large proportion of fault to the Police, yet failed to properly define it. This combination of uncertain factors has led to an inability for Forces to deliver the changes suggested, and properly address the failings that ultimately led to serious flaws in a prominent murder trial. Commentary on this failing persists today (Souhami 2014).

The need for Diversity in terms of change has now been defined in its historical context. The methods used to deliver this change will now be discussed, with their relative efficacy examined using the previously discussed Procedural Justice framework.

### **Procedural Justice in Policing**

Research on Procedural Justice within policing is still developing. Johnston (2006) sets the scene with this quote from the Home Office (2003) 'Our direction of travel is clear – towards an engaged, responsive, accountable, truly representative local police service . . .' (p.2 italics added). This was accompanied by a target (Home Office, 1999) that all forces in UK be representative of their current population by 2009. The definition is tacit in that forces must reach the target provided by recruiting from BME communities, in order to hold a force that holds the same proportion of BME officers, as it in turn serves. Johnston (2006) notes the gargantuan problem highlighted in the MPS's journey to reach this target, citing a jump from 4.9% in 2002, to a projected 25% in 2009.

In the PCSO centric study by Johnston (2006), he cites a recruitment target of 25% for ethnic minorities during the recruitment window, and mentions the actual recruitment of BME candidates being higher than the target by 10%. This was considered a success, and positive action in the form of BME recruitment quotas had procedurally delivered the desired outcome. Johnston also discusses however, a number of unintended consequences such as high disciplinary interventions post recruitment – at one point reaching 25% of all recruited BME PCSO's. He also makes note of an inability for the MPS to provide sufficient cultural training and support, leading to disengagement with the service and a host of problems with cultural integration.

Johnston (2006) also includes some quotes from staff members involved in the recruitment. These included:

“Yes, I think early on there was some pressure . . . *Nobody has ever said ‘we are going to lower standards here’*. *What happens is that people sort of internalise the assumption, so they do what they think the system wants them to do.*” (Member, PCSO project team pp.396)

Utilising procedural justice theory, Blader and Tyler's model (2003) indicates that the first two areas of justice are present, in that the recruitment rules are legal and legitimate. The second pair concerning application of those rules however, contains clear breaches. Due to the complex nature of these breaches, it is possible that feelings of fairness in the community, other recruits, current employees, and service users may be negatively affected. In his conclusion, Johnston makes conspicuous

note of the cultural capacity for change being more important for legitimacy, than the oft used quotas for recruitment.

This is only a single study appertaining to the MPS, but if the assumptions made during this – and many others that followed – recruitment are based on the needs designed by the Home Office from the Scarman and Macpherson reports, then there are large leaps in logic evident.

1. That increased BME recruitment as a whole is an effective tool to address both institutional, overt and covert racism in the Force.
2. That increased BME recruitment as a whole is desired by the communities in which they serve.
3. That increased BME recruitment as a whole is an effective tool to address issues with a closed/resistant police culture.

Unsurprisingly, there is limited previous literature on these assumptions within the UK Policing landscape. There are however, some slightly older studies from the US that do begin to discuss these issues.

The assumptions above were detailed by Regoli & Jerome in America in 1975:

“The assumption is that black police are better able to recognise barriers between the police and minority groups and to understand the need to reduce *them.*” (pp.413)

With regards to these assumptions, Bannon & Wilt (1973) conducted a qualitative, uncontrolled study and came to the conclusion that black police are better able to

establish rapport in a black community. Beard (1977) then found in a subsequent study that for black officers, serving the community ranked as the highest motivator in joining the Police. Kelly and Farber (1974) conducted a more in depth analysis, and they found that the race of the officer attending was the single most important factor in distinguishing a responsive officer from a non-responsive officer within ethnic minority based neighbourhoods. These studies do indicate that being 'representative' may be an important factor for a police force, however they only deal with the first half of Regoli and Jerome's assumption as detailed above. A responsive, communicative, and motivated officer may be excellent at recognising the barriers that exist, but do they also understand the need to reduce them?

There are some limitations to the studies above. Two out of the three referenced had no control group, and all were done in a different country with a different generation of both police and communities. America also does not operate under a model of consent and therefore caution must be observed when drawing parallels. The studies also happened in isolation over specific time periods, so although an officer may be motivated and responsive when they first join the service, how long does this last and are they affected by the predominant white culture? Despite these concerns, it would however be remiss to ignore that there may be some relevance to the effect of BME officers working in their own communities.

Following the above studies, Decker & Smith (1980) conducted a study on the recruitment of black officers into a mainly white police culture in America. The aim of the study was to show a positive correlation in public satisfaction between higher rates of black officer recruitment, and subsequent higher satisfaction rates with police within those areas that were predominantly black in population. The analysis showed no positive correlation. Mast (1970) speculates on this prior to the study

taking place, stating that black officers may exist in a continued state of dual loyalty. One area of loyalty lays with their background and their community, but another relates to the law, the police values, and their colleagues. When inside the police force Mast postulates that the latter will become stronger, ultimately reducing any efficacy gained through black officer recruitment.

There are much wider studies on police legitimacy that encompass pre-conceived ideas and the power of police contact. Skogan (2006) found that negative experiences with police were much more 'powerful' in forming opinions on the fairness of police actions. He also discusses that the 'starting blocks' with regards to fairness are in different places depending upon which socio-economic class, race and community that you are from. This is supported by several other studies by Weitzer & Tuch (1999), Brown & Benedict (2002), Sampson and Jeglum-Bartusch (1998) and Correia (2000). These all indicate that negativity bias exists in some areas of the general public. They also allude to a much more complex relationship with the public than that which is often distilled into two words; usually 'confidence and trust.' This is reinforced by Innes (2004), whose work on Reassurance Policing came to the conclusion that 'localised' procedural justice is absolutely central to gaining and sustaining trust.

More recent literature from Bradford, Jackson & Stanko (2009), Jackson & Bradford (2010), and Bradford (2011) reinforce the above conclusions of complexity, and center around the issue of fairness. The studies prove a link between feelings of fairness from the public and procedural justice, indicating that the contact of value between the police and the public relies more upon the quality of the interaction and its fairness from their perspective, than it does on the gender/race/ethnicity of the officer in question. Bradford (2014) also raises some interesting areas of study, in

which he hypothesises that differing levels of marginality within a community, may affect the emphasis that they place upon police activity being fair or otherwise. This is a reinforcement of the earlier conclusion around the complexity of the police/community interaction and differing 'starting blocks.' It may be the case that ethnic minority recruitment may be of differing import depending upon the marginality of the affected community.

From a procedural justice perspective the above relates to mainly external changes perceived by the community. The conclusion that can be drawn from the above is that there is very little contemporary literature that relates specifically to BME recruitment and its positive effect, and almost nothing from the UK. The data is limited and the scope of the studies available are relatively narrow. In short, the external assumptions detailed earlier are not borne out by sufficient evidence to suggest efficacy. There is also very little specific investigation into whether BME communities prefer positive action to other recruitment policies, or as to whether BME communities actually wish to be represented within the Police. These are specific areas of study and may provide great insight into their perceptions of police related procedural justice considerations. What is clear, is that perceptions of fairness in the interaction and the quality of the communication matter a great deal in the area of public confidence, and as such they are possibly a far greater tool with which to deal with issues of confidence within marginalised communities.

In addition to the external legitimacy, positive action initiatives and quota based recruitment may have a severe effect upon internal procedural justice based legitimacy. This is a relatively new area of study, but recent evidence suggests (Bradford et al. 2013, Bradford & Quinton 2014) that internal organisational legitimacy is a strong pre-cursor to confident self-legitimacy. Tankebe (2010) reports

similar findings in Ghana, suggesting that 'organisational commitment' of officers was strongly predicted by the quality of their treatment by supervisors and their relationships with colleagues. This suggests that a move away from legitimacy in the eye of internal procedures, may result in a drop in commitment from officers on the frontline. This in turn may have an effect upon legitimacy in the eyes of the public, and therefore, if positive action and recruitment quotas are viewed as intrinsically unfair as a means to address 'representation' issues, they may be doing far more to harm community relations than they do to assist them.

In conclusion, there is a plethora of research into the problem of a lack of diversity in the police, reinforced through a number of high profile inquiries. Through this need, assumptions have been made about how to address these problems. This is jumping to solution design without a clear definition of what is the root cause of the problem. Grint (2010) describes this through the lens of Wicked Problems, suggesting that simple solutions - often the use of process/procedure – are often misapplied to complicated problems. Significant collective assumptions are necessary in order to have formed the basis for a number of numerically driven solutions around recruitment. These may have harmed the legitimacy of the police both internally and externally. There are significant research gaps around the use of quota driven initiatives in this area, and certainly within the area of procedural justice. Research indicates that the issue is far more complex than is perceived, and simple solutions may not do the diversity agenda justice in the short or long term.



## Chapter 3 - Methodology

### Philosophy

Johnson and Clark (2006) note that during business or organisational based research, it is important to be aware of the philosophical commitments that are made via the choosing of research strategy. It can have a significant effect upon not only what research is conducted, but where the understanding is that represents its aim. The reason for this awareness sits not with the fact that it is philosophically informed research, more that it provides an anchor from which to reflect upon the subsequent choices made in relation to the alternatives.

Saunders et al. (2009) note that this informed choice of philosophy should not be used to distinguish between which research method is 'better,' (p.108) more that they are 'better' for indicating different things. It is therefore important that when considering the outcomes of this research, appropriate choices are made in order to gain that understanding or knowledge.

It is difficult for me in my current position as a Police employee, to take anything other than an epistemologically biased view of the research. My interpretation of policing knowledge is significantly affected by my experience of working within the policing environment. This particular interpretation of the knowledge gained through the research is unavoidable, as my prior experience in the police cannot be erased. I can however be aware of this bias, and maintain an element of personal critical thought throughout the analysis.

The existence of the targets involved during the recruitment of BME candidates can be considered 'facts,' in that they can be researched independently and then comparisons can be drawn etc. which could be said to form an element of objective

reality. It is impossible however, for me to then take a truly objective view of such targets, as - as stated previously - I have been within the environment utilising them for almost twelve years. Despite me wishing to take an objective view, my unconscious constructed reality will influence the interpretation of my results. It is also the case that I do not believe that targets exist independently in and of themselves. To take a Tayloristic (Waring, 1994) approach and interpret targets as a method through which to generate simple motivation to achieve, fails to take into account the context and social actors within the application of such a method. In simple terms, the number used as a 'target' does not generate sufficient meaning through which to glean complex social dynamic.

For these reasons, positivism as an approach is difficult, as is realism. I cannot be truly objective as lead researcher, and I am also interpreting the results not only in the existing framework of police based interaction, but as a police officer too. As is my reality socially constructed, so will the framework through which I interpret and gather the results. I shall also make an important assumption, that the degree of effect upon the subjects of the research will also be similarly subjective, and as such to extrapolate universal rules would be a poor use of over-generalisation. Embracing this concept instead of entering into an internally conflicting methodology leads me to the natural conclusion of interpretivism in the first instance, with a possible directional change – and therefore a pragmatic approach – following initial data collection. This could take the form of a quantitative based method to interpret the reach of the findings.

Having established this, it was important to investigate my personal values, and generate a methodology that supported my intrinsic drive. New Public Management had created a distillation of meaning and targets have been researched in terms of

performance management for many years through the work of Deming (2000), Seddon (2008) and contemporarily through Guilfoyle (2013). This distillation had been evidenced, as had the perverse outcomes that also occurred as a by-product. Having experienced these perverse outcomes, my values of fairness had been compromised, and this feeling of injustice drives the research behind this project. I acknowledge this drive completely, but as I have a healthy need for quality and depth of information in the workplace, as do I during the conducting of this research. If I am to identify perverse outcomes with relation to the use of targets in ethnic minority recruitment, it would be hypocritical of me to wholly rely on partial or skewed data. It is this partial data that has produced the targets, and as I believe that human behaviour is far more complex than a red number on a page; the research methodology must reflect this from an axiological perspective.

There is an element of aspiring to emancipation in my research. This places this study firmly in the area of critical study (Jupp et al., 2000). Having seen the effect of the removal of targets in areas such as crime recording, it was a logical step for me to suspect that perverse consequences would exist in the area of recruitment. To generate knowledge and then some understanding would be the aim of the research, yet remaining cognisant of this aspiration to emancipate was a priority when conducting the interviews. I did improve in this respect, as there was data that I wished to expose in the interviews, and how quickly that data was realised depended almost entirely upon the understanding from the participant. This manifested itself in the sharing of the emancipatory drive for the research.

This was part of an iterative process in terms of the sharing of my research philosophy with my participants. My first interview was over 30 minutes, and the disclosure of the most useful data (in an emancipatory sense) happened when the

interview was interrupted and the tape recorder was turned off. It was clear that a taboo was present. I then discussed why the research was happening in detail, along with my standpoint – generating knowledge about what targets do in a wider context, and re-emphasised that the Federation was funding the research. At this point the participant then disclosed the data whilst being recorded, in a far less guarded sense. I found that the more time I spent discussing the research philosophy with the participants prior to the interview, the greater the willingness to engage in disclosing usable data. Indeed, 30 minute interviews were reduced to under 10 minutes by the end of process. I was aware that the risk of me guiding the interviewee to data that I wish to collect got larger as my experiential learning grew within this area, so the questions were always delivered in an open fashion, and the answers from other participants were never discussed.

I am aware of the influence of priming (Friederici et al., 1999) in a semantic and syntactic sense and this meant that discussing the philosophy was difficult. If I were to indicate a leaning in the findings during the discussion, this could 'prime' some answers from the participant. Luckily, despite this awareness, the participant often quickly became the informant. From an observational perspective, it appeared to represent a 'dam bursting' in terms of release. Several participants made very revealing comments after the interview, such as, 'I feel better for having said that,' (Interviewee 1) or, 'We don't talk about this stuff because everyone is scared to.' (Interviewee 11) These were important and I noted them as the participants left the interviews. In a way, it felt like an achievement to be involved in research that provided a voice to feelings that had clearly been suppressed in the workplace. This felt increasingly sympathetic to my emancipatory research philosophy and strengthened my passion around the subject as themes began to emerge.

On reflection, this finding may actually be important for future research, as researching the frontline voice in this arena required a particular authorising environment. Increased transparency discussing motive and funding, plus constant reiteration of anonymity, allowed the participants to speak. This would be a very interesting area of study, as the voice of the frontline is clearly in need of emancipation. Where does the control come from and who exerts it in this respect? This may have increasing relevance in the 'how' and 'why' discussions around the Macpherson report. Is that report's legacy a culture of controlled silence through the hugely stigmatising effect of the term: 'institutional racism'?

### **Procedural Justice**

The use of a Procedural Justice framework within the context of this research does not imply the implication of a universal rule, in that Procedural Justice does not immediately imply a direct or indirect correlation in police legitimacy through the application or mis-application of a single internal rule in the workplace. It is instead based upon critical relativism. The participants in the research have been discussing their truths and experiences relative to their social and organisational position, and I will be taking a critical stance relative to similar experiences and truths. It is very difficult to suggest that senior officers as a general rule accept the ontology of targets as an absolute truth and posit that they are unaware of perverse consequences, because those perspectives are un-researched and un-evidenced. There is however a question relating to the strength or existence of this particular ontology within police hierarchies, as the use of targets persist. They have been in place for many years due to New Public Management techniques and there are little signs of them

abating. Approaching this research without establishing this ontology allows reflection upon the generation of the truth, and may suggest that differing perceptions or layers of such a 'truth' may exist in the police. Maintaining and acknowledging my position as a researcher seeking knowledge to establish the existence of, or the effects of such a relative differential in ontology, is the starting point in the design of my methodology.

Utilising the Procedural Justice framework also allows me to apply a previously researched theory that is currently in development within the policing context. The literature discussed in my literature review established the theory as it stands and the studies that have recently been utilised within policing. These suggest that there will be a link between the perception of fair use of procedure within the police, and the subsequent behaviour or perceptions of police officers. Whether this link will be supported by the research was unknown at the time of research design. 'Fairness' is a concept that will be investigated through collection of meaningful data. The use of this particular model is however poignant, as the utilisation of targets on the behalf of the Metropolitan Police generates particular procedure. This procedure is what I am hoping to explore, as the assumption that it exists in and of itself as a standalone entity is to assume that the notion of 'justice' is absent in its application. It is therefore possible that not only will utilisation of Procedural Justice as a framework allow a structured theoretical model through which to analyse the data, it may also serve as a form of hypothesis in itself. If no notion of justice is inherent within the data, it may serve to disprove the existence of Procedural Justice as a theory within the area of BME recruitment.

This research cannot be approached in a totally deductive sense, in that the application of the procedural justice framework is not being tested as to its legitimacy

in an order to deduce applicability. In an effort to generate some theory within the bounds of diversity related ontology, it will provide a solid framework for discussion. An inductive approach will be pursued, which may in turn allow some generation of theory in this area, which may or may not conflict with Procedural Justice. The existence of this conflict is not deductive in that it disproves Procedural Justice Theory, it instead uses Procedural Justice as a vehicle with which to postulate further hypotheses in this area. 'Jumping' to a deductive test would assume the relevance of the theory in this area, and that is, as of yet, untested (Gladwell, 2010; Yom, 2014).

As a final note, it is hoped that the utilisation of a previous theoretical model will allow a reduction in and temperance of my epistemological influence. An evidenced link between procedure and feelings of justice in previous cases informs on the possibility of a link in this case. It is important that I as a researcher acknowledge this previous knowledge, and utilise it to indicate towards pertinent questions during data gathering. As a result, I am hoping that the end result will be more balanced and allow for greater rigour of analysis.

## **Method**

Having established a research paradigm, it was important to generate a methodology that supported it, yet provided that balance previously discussed. It would have been very easy to allow my personal drive and influence to wholly generate the questions and therefore influence the answers with regards to any kind of interviewing, so the previously discussed method of temperance was necessary. It was also necessary to seek the subjective meanings behind the use of recruitment

targets and seek the reality that underpinned their use, away from their physical use. This again is based in an assumption that the effects of the use of targets in the Learning & Development/Recruitment Units, are not the sum and total of the effects upon the police as a whole. The research seeks the wider impact of such targets, and it is therefore necessary to develop a method that seeks this wider impact.

Initially using a survey to identify meaning may cause generalisations to be made in the search for understanding, (Saunders et al. 2009) and as such the methods chosen must reflect the complex nature of such a sociological interaction.

“Whilst number depends on meaning, it is not always the case that meaning is dependent on number” (Dey 2003 p. 28).

Whilst the perception of Procedural Justice remains ‘elastic’ or subjective depending on the individual, it remains difficult to extract meaning in a quantifiable way (Dey, 2003) Robson (2002). states that qualitative research methods allow the researcher to explore the subjects in as real a manner as is possible, deriving ‘thick’ meaning from the data upon analysis. (Box 13.1) I therefore believed that an initial method of qualitative data collation would assist with generating that thicker meaning.

Whilst considering the design of my research I explored the use of action research. I decided against using this method due to the three stage method usually utilised during its application (Lewin, 1958). The first stage includes preliminary diagnosis and data gathering. (pg. 201) This research could be considered as the beginning stage of exploring an area suitable for further research or action, and therefore the inductive approach may feed into a transformative stage at a later date. Currently, I am not in a position to deliver any ‘unfreezing,’ and as such this project essentially



discusses the further exploration of the status quo, rather than what may happen as transformative steps are taken.

Whilst considering varying methods of qualitative research, I noted that there may be issues with gaining the information that I sought after a number of test discussions that I ran in my workplace. It was clear that asking staff what they thought of BME recruitment quotas would immediately generate a 'corporate' response. This was interesting, as I utilised my team who I believe I have a solid trust based relationship with, yet they were initially very unwilling to discuss the way that they felt about the targets. It took several questions, and some reassurances that I was just seeking understanding before they opened up to discuss the matter properly. I also ran informal test discussions on groups of two and three respondents as recommended by Kvale (2008). The results were interesting, as the rank of the groups varied the results of the discussion.

On test group one, two officers of equal rank began the discussion guardedly, but one finally stated that he hated them and believed that they lowered standards for recruitment. After this was said, it acted almost as permission for the second officer to audibly sigh with relief and immediately agree. The conversation then became much more open and both were able to freely discuss their feelings.

On test group two, there were two officers and a Sergeant present. It was clear that the Police Constables were worried about having the conversation in front of the Sergeant, and it wasn't until the Sergeant walked away that the PC's then began to discuss the issue more openly in hushed tones.

I derived two conclusions from this test:

- 1) The presence of others can give permission or place heavy boundaries in the way of real communication with regards to the subject matter.
- 2) The officers who will be interviewed clearly believe that the subject is – in some way – organisationally taboo.

This was an indication that justified mention in the results section, but I was confident that this same ‘taboo’ reaction would be displayed during the interviews themselves. I wanted to make the bridging of this ‘taboo’ as easy as possible and as such the use of a focus group introduced boundaries with regards to the giving of permission and the breaking of the ‘taboo.’ I reflected on this, as the change in group dynamic may uncover greater understanding of the cultural effect upon behaviour from a rank based perspective, but considered this to be beyond the remit of the research question.

To avoid issues with permission and rank influence, I chose a semi-structured interview as the first method of research. An unstructured interview may result in greater amounts of data with more sifting necessary through an inability to ‘steer’ the interviewee (Wilkinson et al. 2003 p. 45). Structured interviews were disregarded as they often do not yield a depth of data (Saunders et al. 2009). I also chose to use an Open-Ended Interview where each interview was comprised of the same questions, but with open answers (Gall, et al. 2007, Turner, 2010). This is a method which assists with reduction of interviewer bias (Gall et al., 2007), but I retained the ability to interject in order to encourage or – if necessary – break the taboo during interview. This was a difficult decision, as ‘breaking the taboo’ was not something that I could plan for. Each interview was very different; the threshold for gaining honesty around the ‘taboo’ varied greatly. As a researcher, this is a point of note for analysis, as where and how the ‘honesty’ gained around the subject is delivered will

represent a significant point of interest during analysis. (As referred to previously in the Research Philosophy section.)

The interview design was pragmatic, shifting between participant and informant based interviewing (Robson, 2002; Ghauri and Gronhaug, 2005). I chose to utilise a question as the instigator of the interview to better direct the participant, but then allow the participant to become the informant. In other words, although my initial question set the scene for the interview, the participant then informed the direction of subsequent questions (Saunders et al. 2009). Because there was a 'taboo' present, the shift between the two styles of interviewing required conscious effort on my part as interviewer; the aim was always to re-direct the informant towards being open about how they really feel. Schober & Conrad (1997 & 2000) also strongly indicated that greater flexibility on the part of the interviewer can increase the richness of the data provided.

There were time constraints on the research so I aimed to initially conduct 45 minute interviews. This ended up depending on the interviewee however, as the switch to informant based interviewing resulted in much longer or shorter interviews. I utilised the planning model from Wilkinson et al. (2003 p. 44) to draft and conduct my interviews. The 45 minutes was a guide and simply allowed me to plan my research schedule. Holding to an arbitrary numerical target would be contrary to the principles of the project and also significantly curtail or prolong the interviews unnecessarily. In practice, the interviews all lasted less than 45 minutes, with some lasting under 10 minutes due to a lack of participant knowledge on the subject matter. The booked slots then condensed, and in the future I may be loath to run schedules at all.

It was also important that as the interviewer I did not press for revealing the 'true' feelings of the participant and go 'hunting' for a 'taboo' that may not exist. This made the interview a sensitive process, and empathy was used in order to gauge whether there was discomfort or reticence on the part of the participant. Although the 'real' data that lies behind this reticence is that of most value, from an ethical standpoint, any coercion or pressure on my part rendered it invalid. I found this element of my research incredibly difficult. I had three interviews in the first ten where officers disclosed information after the recorder was turned off. I noted this as best I could, but officers were clearly uncomfortable with their feelings around the subject matter. Unfortunately, this meant that I really wished to press for answers during the interviews as I knew they may be there. I kept having to stop myself pushing and may as a result have become overly sensitive about my intrusiveness.

The questions chosen to form the interview were:

“How do you feel about the use of the use of recruitment targets for the purposes of diversity recruitment in the police?”

“What are the effects of these targets on the workforce?”

Because the questions were open, they did allow for follow up questions (Cresswell et al., 2007). These will be utilised by myself to probe for depth or return to the subject of the question should the interviewee divert away from it. This was as close to constructing the interview as a 'conversation' as possible (Kvale, 2006) This has also been referred to as a 'Standardised Open Ended Interview.' (Gall et al., 2003) I chose only two, because I wanted to discuss the feelings behind the use of targets for the purposes of establishing whether the participants believe them to be 'just.' Having established this, the next question was an attempt to uncover the effects of

this belief, and how they see them within the workplace. Should areas of interest arise during these answers, I wanted to utilise the conversational principles as much as possible to encourage depth in the answer of the participant.

The decision around the inclusion of the word 'feel' in the first question was conscious, as I believed this may be an important determiner in establishing feelings of justice. Demeanour and body language was also recorded via note-taking during the interviews, as the interviews themselves were recorded on audio. The 'why' around the connection between the breach of procedural justice was not be a subject of these interviews, as the focus is on establishing that the breach exists and how it manifests itself.

A number of demographic details were taken as part of the interview process. These were age, gender, length of service, and current role. Names and locations were omitted to preserve anonymity. I chose to utilise only PC's in the study to narrow the sampling field. Further investigation in terms of differing perceptions at differing ranks may be an identified area of study. If there was an element of 'taboo' around the subject, establishing personal identity as part of the process may result in a lack of depth in the data. It also assists in developing trust between participant and interviewer, (Cohen et al., 2007) this may be important if the disclosures are viewed to carry risk to the participant. All interview participants were given a number to allow me to differentiate between them during transcription and results analysis.

Following data collection, the interviews were transcribed and coded using the software package Nvivo. The data was approached utilising a framework analysis (Cresswell, 2003, 2007) and coded into themes or codes with consistent phrases,

ideas, or expressions (Kvale, 2007). These nodes are to be used in the generation of survey questions.

I was conscious during the examination of the data, of the same limitations that were present throughout the formulation of my philosophy. During the sifting of the information it is possible that themes that I did not consider relevant could be filtered out unconsciously. This limitation will be discussed further in the results and ensuing analysis.

## **Sampling**

The environment of the interview varied according to convenience. Dropping in at police stations at varying times allowed me to select neutral office spaces that had a closable door and were suitably bland in décor. Sampling is very difficult due to the nature of policing, and as such a cross section of available participants was also drawn on the basis of convenience. Officers work variable shift patterns that run on 24 hours rotation. They are also beholden to the radio, so booking any appointments is very difficult. To address this, I asked permission from the supervising officer at the station that I attended for permission to approach the on duty officers as they used the station. Every officer was therefore a serving frontline member of staff and this sampling frame was chosen because of its demographic significance and the percentage of their time spent interacting with the public. 91% of serving officers are currently in frontline positions (Home Office, 2015), and it was important that I address this as it is likely during times of austerity that this proportion will be maintained or even grow.

I noted that my existing rank and status as a serving officer made a large difference in terms of access, and many interviews took place within the 'inner sanctum' of police stations, in annexes of busy parade rooms. The sampling units were therefore frontline stations engaged in the day to day delivery of uniform response policing. I am very lucky as a researcher to have access in this way and my previous experiences and current allowed rapport to build before the interview started. This has been shown to be a determiner in generating candid accounts from participants (Curry, 2009)

In terms of significance, I set myself an arbitrary target of twenty qualitative interviews. It was not my intention to generate total generalizability (Bachmann & Schutt, 2003) from qualitative methodology. The interviews were there to develop themes around which to direct further research and offer insight. The cross-generalizability (Bachmann & Schutt, 2003) of the research results will be limited to that of uniform frontline officers. There have been noted differences in the culture between uniform roles and non-uniform roles (Cockcroft, 2012) so to assume generalizability throughout police culture as a whole would be presumptuous. The target of twenty interviews was without evidence base. Guest et al. (2006) has conducted a meta-study in this area and found consistent findings that indicate saturation is reached within 12 interviews. Within this study, I reached 17 interviews in total before I was satisfied that each new interview reinforced already existing themes. This decision correlates with the work of Francis et al. (2010), but the uniform, formulaic method was not utilised as discussed in that study. The decision to stop any further interviews came from my intuition as a researcher, having noted the same themes during conducting the final 3 interviews. This was very much a

practical decision and influencing factors included time, access, current data observed through conducted interviews, and a 'feeling' that I had reached saturation point.

Initially there was a consideration to triangulate the data with the use of a quantitative survey, yet the time constraints and the amount of data created during transcription necessitated a far greater period of analysis than first expected. Whilst conducting the research as a full time police officer, the ability to properly do such a survey justice was beyond my capability. It is hoped that this research will be utilised as a base for further quantitative research in this area following this project's submission. It is possible that my influence as an interviewer and police officer has informed upon the qualitative interview process, so the development of a survey may act as a means of check and balance. Utilising the collected data – and that of the literature review – may offer a balanced framework upon which to base this further research.

## **Transcription**

The interviews were transcribed verbatim by the researcher. A simple dictation device was used to record the interviews, and then played back to enable transcription on a tabled Word template. The same template was used for all transcriptions. A transcription is only one kind of interpretation of the interview (Arksey, 1999), as carrying data such as non-verbal communication, inflection and pauses are removed. During the interviews I did take notes, but to use them as the primary means of record would be to allow a far greater proportion of researcher bias. I considered the use of objective transcribers, (Curry, 2006) but upon weighing



this against the benefits of the insight gained during transcription (and the relative cost), I chose to utilise my own time to record the data (Braun and Clarke, 2006). This proved a valuable process, as I began to identify themes in the answers as I transcribed, and kept a set of notes on emerging themes as I recorded the data. (Taylor and Ussher, 2001) These early themes also proved to be the dominant themes during quantitative analysis of the data. Verbatim transcriptions also allow for deeper analysis with some quantitative analysis via frequency and theme distribution analysis.

### **Analytical Approach**

I chose to use a thematic analysis model (Braun and Clarke, 2006) to examine the transcribed data. This is an approach used regularly in qualitative analysis as it is relatively free from theory and provides the researcher a wide range of options. This may also be considered a weakness however, as my unconscious bias as a researcher may impinge during the identification and filtration of themes. (Antaki et al, 2002, in Braun and Clarke, 2006) As the research methodology discussed above makes explicit, this is a critical analysis and as such, no matter the quantitative mitigation in the data, the search for meaning will center upon the emancipation of knowledge from my perspective as a researcher.

Assessment of the themes and sub-themes will essentially be a subjective exercise and are open to interpretivist bias. The number of mentions the themes receive and the number of participants discussing them will also be of note, as this offers some bias mitigation. Although some lesser discussed themes offer great insight, the

prevalence of common themes indicates a common perceptual truth and therefore may add a relative strength to the findings (Braun and Clarke, 2006).

Specialist software was used in the form of Nvivo. This is recognised as an increasingly important tool for qualitative research (Curry, 2009) and allowed the research to progress naturally from a high level thematic analysis, to a detailed, in-depth critical analysis. Significant statements for the themes were collated and can be found in Appendix 1.

### **Ethical Issues**

Participants were made fully aware of the research they were participating in prior to any interview commencing. The long pre-amble that ensured a broken taboo made sure that full disclosure had taken place and all were aware that they would remain completely anonymous throughout (no names were recorded at any point – to the point that the consent form was signed with ‘Interviewee 1’ etc.). Maintaining the protection of the participants was paramount to receiving full disclosure, so it was important that my ability to ‘re-trace’ them if necessary was also mitigated.

The consent form was of a standard issue template provided through the academic institution, in line with established ethical practice. A copy of this form has been included within the appendix.

The questions for the interviews were designed to allow the participants free reign in their discussion of the subject. It was therefore possible that I may encounter emotive subjects that could possibly cause upset to the participants. Having experienced it on a prior research project, I was prepared to deal with this, but the

primary emotions were anger and frustration, rather than sadness or hurt. These were captured during the note taking in order to provide a more complete picture.

### **Security of Data**

The electronic recordings were stored upon a dictation device that has now been wiped. The recordings were transferred onto my personal computer, and they are kept in the same folder as my original transcriptions. This data will be deleted 6 months after my final mark. I am the only person with access to my personal computer and it is security enabled and password protected. The data will not be shared.

# Chapter 4 – Results and Interpretation

## Overview

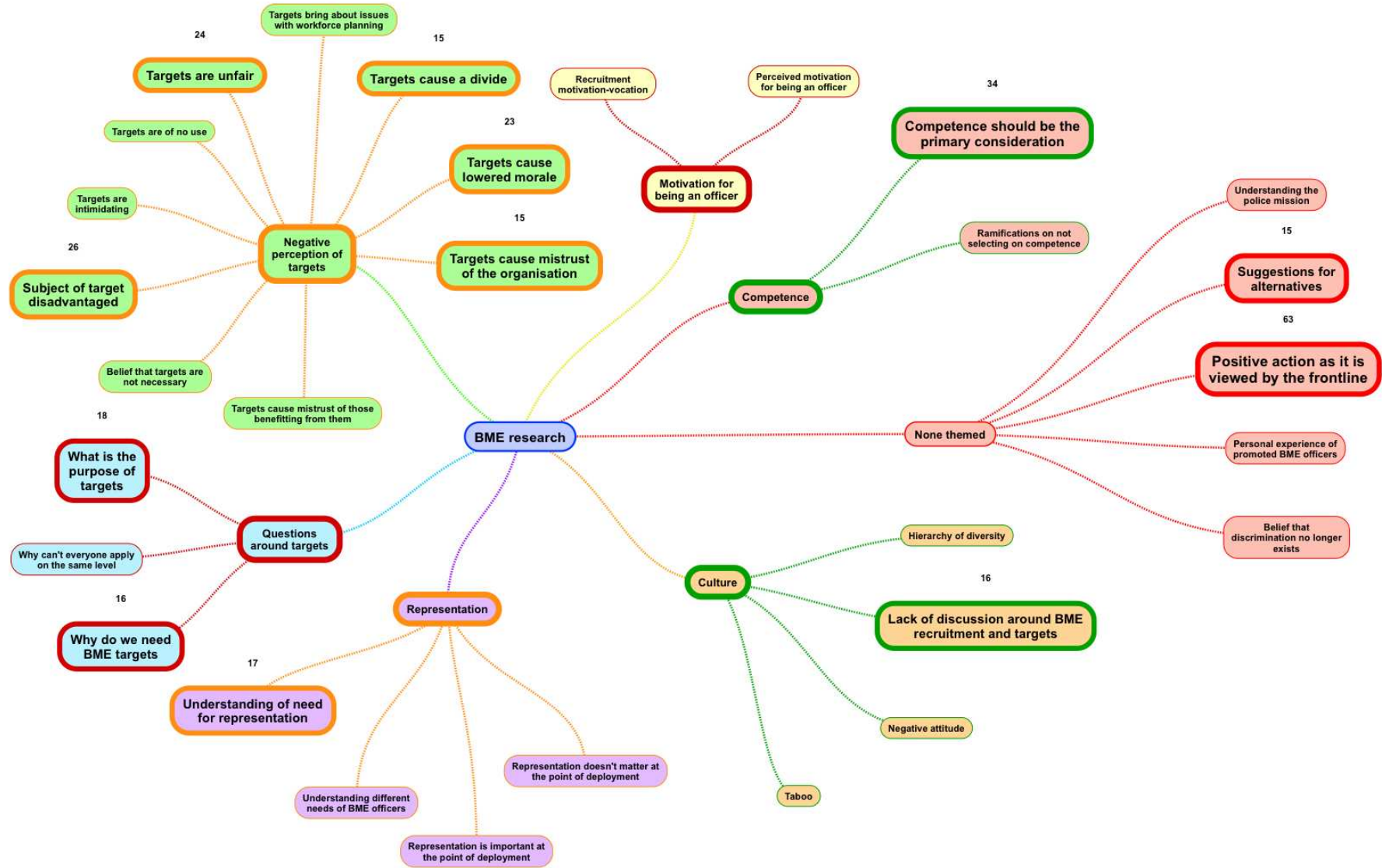
During the initial coding of the data, several strong themes emerged, with sub themes within them. Mapping these themes against the research aims at first instance was avoided to allow the themes to shape themselves as the analysis progressed. The final themes which emerged were

as follows:

- Negative perceptions of targets and their use
- Questions asked by the frontline that remain unanswered
- Representation within the workforce
- Motivation for recruitment or selection
- Competence
- Culture

These main themes were created from the 'nodes' identified through analysis, with Nvivo providing an electronic route to map them. The high level themes contain 25 sub-groups within these themes, with a 5 separate larger groups that didn't fit into the main themes at all. A table was considered to represent this graphically, but the aesthetic was poor and didn't capture the connections discovered. A MindMap package (SimpleMinds+) was instead utilised to create an improved representation.

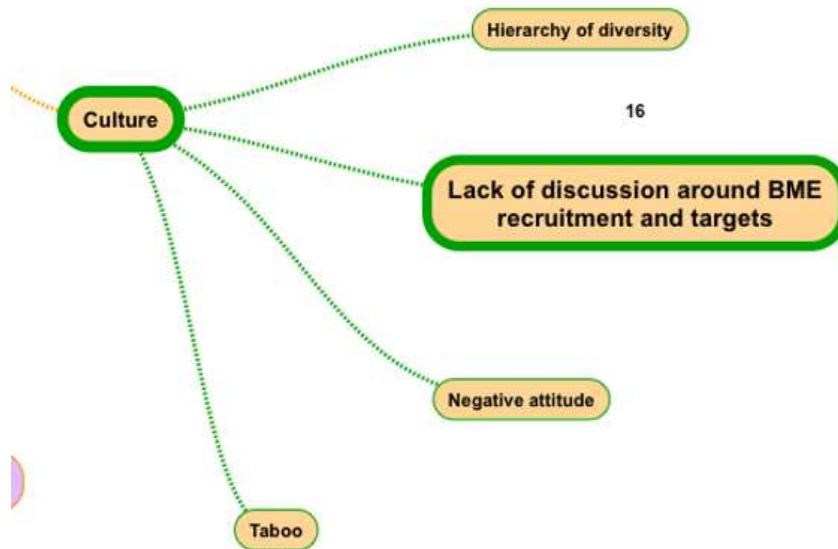
Fig 1.



In total there were 17 interviews, lasting almost ten hours, split via seven officers in Lancashire and ten officers in the Met. Although there were initial expectations of a difference in content, the themes were very similar and spread evenly throughout all the interviews. Two of the officers were BME themselves, and eight were female within the total sample. This is representative of the current policing population, but the numbers were not intentional and were generated through convenience. As gender was not a specific issue, it will not form a detailed part of the analysis, but the selection and recruitment practices relating to gender do feature throughout and as they offer a comparator they will be included.

In Fig.1, the graphic has been altered to display increased frequency and the main sub-nodes within the main nodes. There are numbers above the higher frequency nodes showing the number of coded instances during the interviews, with a bold border to illustrate the highlighting. As each area is discussed, portions of the MindMap will be used for graphical depictions of frequency.

## Culture



When compiling this node, recent and more established literature on culture informed the sub-group classification. These being:

- Taboo
- Lack of discussion around BME recruitment and targets
- Hierarchy of diversity
- Negative attitude/cynicism

These sub-groups collated behaviours or observations from the interviews that were particular to evidenced police culture. There has been much written upon culture within policing. Loftus, (2007, 2008, 2009, 2010) Crank (2014) and Cockcroft (2009, 2012) provide contemporary outlooks in their recent publications, with previous seminal works provided by Waddington, (1999) Chan, (1996) Holdaway, (1983, 1989) Paoline, (2003) and Reiner (2010). These works discuss smaller elements of culture, such as the difference in behaviours and assumptions between silo departments such as detectives and response officers, through to the wider ramifications of cultural values and change thereof.

When cross referencing the above sub-groups with the 'core' characteristics as defined by Reiner (2000, Chapter 3) the 'Taboo' and 'Hierarchy of Diversity' characteristics clearly displaying elements of 'suspicion', (supported by Skolnick, 2008) with the 'Negative Attitude' sub-group defined through 'cynicism and pessimism.' The 'Lack of Communication' around the issue has been repeatedly evidenced in enduring organisational change related studies (Chan, 1996; Germann, 1971; Skogan, 2008) where standard forms of change are essentially reinforced by an attitude of 'Here is a new way to do it. Do it.' This is a cultural component of Command and Control Leadership (Grint, 2010), and reinforces the divide between those officers in Management positions, and those upon the Frontline (Reuss-Ianni, 1982).

In terms of frequency, the most discussed sub-group was the lack of discussion around the BME representation issue and the recruitment of BME officers, appearing sixteen times within the interviews themselves four participants discussing it. Within surrounding and accompanying passages it accounted for relatively high percentages of time discussed for some participants. Significant statements in this area included:

"I think it's a difficult one because it's been something which has been highly politicised. It's highly sensitive. And it makes it quite a difficult subject matter I think, for people to broach." Interviewee 11.

"You feel more uncomfortable with the subject matter because it is so emphasised." Interviewee 11.

"...more importantly, it makes people reluctant to openly discuss it, because it seems so taboo, because people are sceptical of the reasons." Interviewee 11.

"I mean we are in an interview situation now where it is all anonymous, and that's great. Ordinarily people wouldn't talk about this to hierarchy, and they certainly wouldn't mention it to you about it existing – if it does." Interviewee 13.



“...it makes it awkward to talk about the whole thing in the first place. You feel... I’m stuttering because I feel like I’m treading on toes that I shouldn’t be, just by talking about it in the first place – maybe it’s just me, maybe I’m a bit of a... I don’t like to upset people...” Interviewee 16

These comments indicate there’s an unwillingness to discuss the matter at all, with specific reference to hierarchy in one comment. This directly correlates to the previously mentioned ‘suspicious’ nature of the culture, as it insinuates that there are some negative consequences for even discussing the issue openly. Interestingly, the consequences of discussing it was seen within a particularly negative light by Interviewee 17:

“It’s the easy factor, if you want to get done by DPS, be homophobic or racist, and they will jump on you. Whereas, probably a couple of years ago that wouldn’t have happened at all.”

The taboo therefore resonates due to a fear of sanction for even discussing the issue in the first place, with participants evidencing significant discomfort. It is interesting that being critical within this area has been conflated with being ‘homophobic or racist,’ suggesting that speaking about BME recruitment within the workplace carries a perceived risk of being hugely misunderstood.

With regards to Procedural Justice Theory, how does this offer value? The relevance of not being able to even speak about the use of procedure clearly has ramifications, should it be seen to be illegitimate. The inability to challenge and discuss the subject matter due to fear of sanction, reinforced by the notion of disciplined hierarchy may build distrust into the procedure from the point of generation. This would generate a useful hypothesis, in that the existence of a cultural ability to challenge may have a

direct and perceived effect upon legitimacy, no matter what the content of the rules themselves. With regards to the previously discussed framework (Blader & Tyler 2003), this raises interesting questions around not just the content of the rules and the way they are implemented, but also suggests that there may be an issue with the level of redress available to staff during their use. This could be seen as the inverse of 'Informational Justice' as a concept (Colquitt, 2001). It suggests that it not only matters how much information is provided by the organisation (which is discussed later in the results) but also within the policing environment, the inability to discuss or challenge politically charged issues also affects perceived legitimacy.

This evidence of taboo feeds into and supports the other cultural sub-group of 'lack of discussion,' around the subject of BME officers. This was a high frequency group, with 16 mentions, from 10 participants. Significant statements within this area included:

"And I think that's where the message has got lost. And it hasn't ever been clearly explained, at any stage. At no point would you have a senior manager sit down with a team and say, right well, there's an application coming up, there's some poor feeling, or someone has said this, I've heard some rumour about this... I just want to let you all know, this is the script and this is the rules that we play to. Because the police is a rumour mill, and something will be said on the top corridor, and by the time it comes down to us the story's completely different. Completely irrational. It makes no sense. And that then leads to that ill feeling that goes on. There's no clear line. [of communication]" Interviewee 10

"Communication is the whole problem...If you want to wear that responsibility feel free. But, at least, turn around and say, there's been a little confusion over this, or we want to explain the bit where we are going as a force. And that is the thing. Whenever big changes come, big talks don't. That's the problem. I think that's the issue." Interviewee 10.

"They couldn't be open and honest to that level I don't think. It would cause too many problems. The way it is now, where people just expect that's what's happening is bad enough.' Interviewee 13

These statements relate directly to senior management discussing the issue with the frontline. Interviewee 10 makes it very clear that they believe that the problems arising from the perceptions around this subject arise from a lack of understanding, with Interviewee 13 stating that they do not even believe it is possible for Senior Management to discuss the issue because of the controversy surrounding it. These were accompanied by questions from the interviewees that illustrate this lack of understanding which will be discussed as part of the 'Questions' sub-group.

This taboo feeds the inability to challenge as discussed above, and there is direct reference above to the senior management being perceived to be unable to discuss this issue. This results in a direct lack of 'informational justice' (Colquitt, 2001) around decision making. This essentially breaches the latter two conditions of Blader & Tyler's (2003) model, indicating a resulting lack of legitimacy.

Together with the 'taboo' and lack of communication about the need for and use of targets within the BME context, three interviewees discussed the matter of an existing hierarchy within the field of diversity. Interviewee 11 encapsulated this with the insight:

"It's so vast, that we seem to be concentrating on something that is a personal decision – why someone has chosen a career – with, we are looking for you. And I think that is excluding... it's exclusionary. It's kind of excluding, or it seems to be demonising other areas that are equally as important."

This is supported by other comments asking questions around why people who are gay, or people who are Jewish aren't subject to targets, yet those who have differing coloured skin are? This illustrates a lack of understanding as to why the targets are there, but more importantly alludes to why the subjects of the targets – are the

subject of the targets? This may present as a particular kind of cognitive dissonance, which would not sit well with a traditionally culturally suspicious audience. The theme of increased diversity being pushed organisationally and politically, may clash strongly with a particular 'type' of diversity receiving preference. This is discussed by Interviewee 13:

“It doesn't make sense to me. You can't force a particular group of people to join the job. They either want to do it, or not, and I don't see why we should be going out there and actively targeting, and at the same time ignoring other groups.”

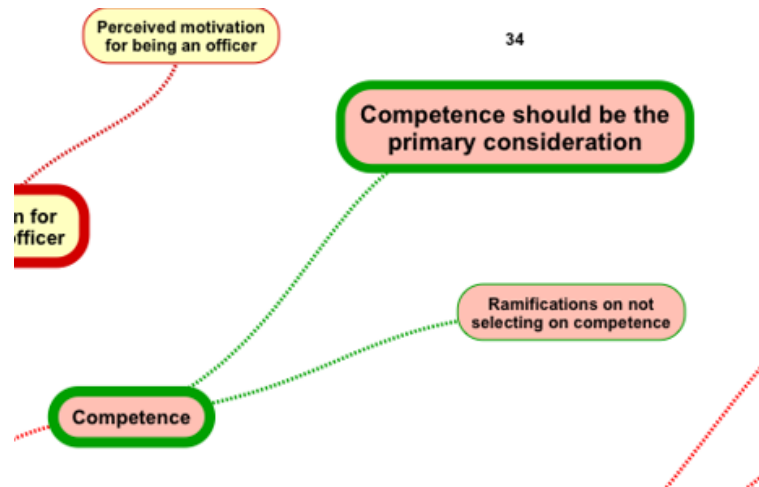
This indicates dissonance, with a lack of understanding, underpinning issues with 'Distributive Justice.' (Colquitt, 2001) The fundamental question being asked by the officers, is why particular areas of difference are more importance than others? Why should isolated areas of diversity receive a higher distribution of effort in terms of recruitment and selection, than others?

To summarise the area of culture as discussed by the interviewees, there emerges a number of strong themes that support the previous literature and research in this area, but suggest others also. It is fair to say that there is a negative perception of BME targets underpinned by a perceived inability to discuss their existence, or their need for existence. There are also a number of questions raised, to which there is no organisational answer, leaving significant space for rumour and conjecture amongst the workforce. Drawing connections between the negativity and cynicism and the lack of communication; the resultant communication vacuum is likely to be filled by that negativity and cynicism that already exists, with no counter information available to officers and staff to refute it.

The other issue discussed is that of a cultural hierarchy of diversity, with no provided reason as to why this hierarchy exists. This hierarchy is visible to the workforce, and the resultant confusion around it suggests a further vacuum that need to be filled with sound reasoning. If this particular area of the results were to be speculated upon, it suggests that the rank and file hold suspicion as to the motives of BME targets as they can see the dissonance within organisational action and communication. This lack of surety may breed organisational distrust, evidenced by the negative attitude to be discussed in coming nodes.

Interviewed Officers believe that the 'Informational,' 'Distributive' and 'Procedural' justice is not present within the cultural application of recruitment and selection procedure with regards to BME officers. The product of this will be discussed in other identified groups within the results.

## Competence



This group was compiled from a clearly recurring theme throughout the coding, surrounding the ability to be competent at the role for which the recruitment and selection is aiming to fill. It was split into two sub-nodes:

- **Competence should be the primary consideration.**
- **Ramifications on not selecting on competence.**

That competence should be the primary consideration was a very strong node, with 11 out of the 17 participants discussing it 34 times. This indicates a well held belief amongst participants that few facets outside competence, matter. Some indicative comments were:

“You should take the strongest applicants.” Interviewee 10.

“If you are suitable for the role, then you’d like to think, you’ll get the role. Or at least that you will be considered for it. And if you don’t get it, it’s not because you are a woman, or because you are black, or because you practice a different faith – you’re catholic. It’s irrelevant. It should be irrelevant.” Interviewee 11

“However, it still comes down to the best people for the job. If a white male/female are possibly not getting to be police officer in the Met or nationwide because they are not from an ethnic minority – that’s wrong. As simple as. It has to be the best person for the job, rather than making the face fit...” Interviewee 12

“But I don’t understand why – like has been said before – an officer is there to do a role, it shouldn’t matter what colour they are, what sex they are, what orientation sexually they are. As long as they can perform that role to the required standard or better, it should be irrelevant what their make-up is. We should be looking at the quality of the person, not any other issue regarding their sex, their race or any of that. It should be, or the main part should be, can they do the role to the right standard or above.” Interviewee 13

This was one of the most definitive groups in terms of language. There is a very solid belief that Competence should form the basis for any selection into role. Difference of the person performing that role should take a second place if there is someone more competent applying in the same process. As these views are unsolicited, it suggests that there is a belief that this doesn’t happen, and the actual priority has become difference for selectors, instead of competence. From a Public Value perspective (Moore, 1995) this raises important questions. If the frontline officers believe that elements of selected difference take precedence over the ability to do the job to a required standard, where has this belief originated?

This particular observation is to be discussed during the analysis of experience of positive action within the workplace.

This concern about Public Value was raised in the ‘Ramifications’ sub-group. Only three discussed this directly. Interviewee 1 stated that the results of promotion meant a great deal, and selecting the right leader was key in crisis based public order situations.

“...if you start doubting that [their leadership], then it’s not a great working mentality. You should be following a leader – through thick and thin – you know. And if you start doubting that you might be on the back foot. It might take you that extra second to react in public order situations, safety issues, and that could lead to potentially serious consequences. Just having that split second sort of doubt, that extra split second to make a decision, you are doubting what you are being led into. It could go horribly wrong, not just for you, but for the people around you.”

Reinforced by Interviewee 2:

“This job, the decisions and the things we do affect people’s lives massively. And if you are just filling a role, because we think we need to, but the person isn’t capable of doing it, then the knock on effect is massive.”

This was not elicited during the interviews, it was willingly provided by the participants. This is a question that in retrospect, should have been probed in other participants. It is indicative of the importance that the frontline place on leadership, as both comments were in direct relation to the promotion of BME candidates. However, this does indicate that it exists as an issue and that there may be others who believe that BME candidates have been promoted because they are BME, rather than because they have perceived competence within role. This again links with the experience of the frontline in relation to the use of positive action by the organisation.

This raises further questions with regards to Procedural and Organisational Justice.

The officers believe and discuss two possibilities:

- 1) The procedures used consciously do not select for competence.
- 2) The procedures used unconsciously do not select for competence.

Either of these possibilities result in illegitimacy, and ultimately breaches in the process around the implication of fairness in selection. Breaches result in varying levels of disengagement as according to the circumstances, but the situation discussed above suggests that due to the dangerous environment, which houses considerable risk, the need for trust and legitimacy in these processes is immensely important.

In a complex twist, the situation given above discusses an example of officers functioning within a Public Order environment, where quick decisions and Command

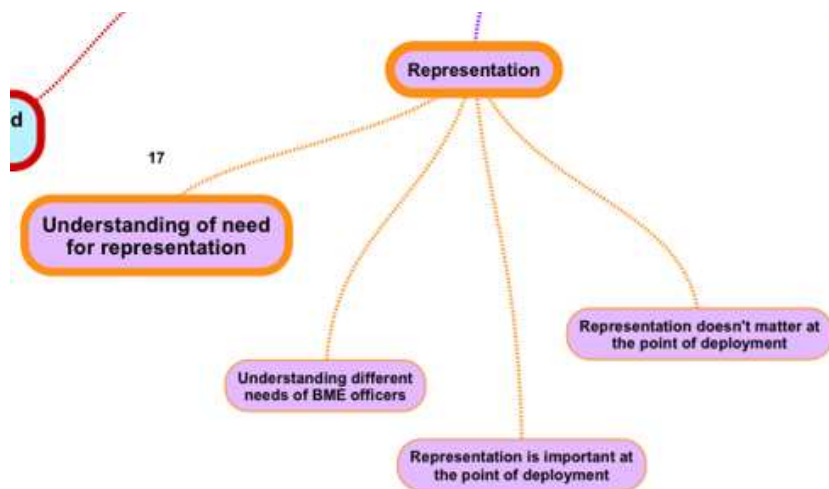


leadership (Grint, 2005;2010) are intrinsic to operational credibility. Grint postulates that Officers are 'addicted to command' (2010) and place a very high cultural value on activity that actually forms a very small percentage of time in the workplace. It is interesting that the above example was given as a direct measurement of 'competency,' and it may suggest that the issue may be two-fold.

- 1) Current cultural understanding around 'competency' is skewed towards an ability to command in public order situations, and this informs on the perception of Procedural Justice during selection.
- 2) The organisation is selecting candidates that do not fit into the accepted 'model' of what a competent leader is expected to be, and as such a breach in expectation is evidenced - conflated with Informational Justice issues discussed above this creates a set of circumstances ripe for misunderstanding.

If either of these circumstances is true, the administration of such processes requires very careful and nuanced management. If they are accompanied by significant officer engagement issues and communication voids, their effect may be exponentially magnified into perceived breaches by the workforce.

## Representation



Representation was split into four sub-groups, these being:

- **Understanding of need for representation**
- **Understanding different needs of BME officers**
- **Representation doesn't matter at the point of deployment**
- **Representation is important at the point of deployment**

Understanding of need for Representation was the strongest sub-group in this set, with 17 references throughout the interviews from 10 participants. This was unsolicited again and volunteered during interview. There were some bold statements in this area, indicating an acceptance of the current narrative around representation:

“Obviously, you have got to be more reflective of the communities that you serve.” Interviewee 7

“...it brings in other expertise, other experiences, other knowledges, which works in your key individual networks and your local communities. Also, it broadens our minds.” Interviewee 3

“...the police force should represent the population it serves, the communities...And I think, yeah, damn right I welcome it.” Interviewee 3

“I appreciate at the same time, obviously there are other areas where we have larger populations of ethnic minorities which make policing easier if you’ve got someone from that.” Interviewee 2

“There does need to be sort of emphasis on improving the representation of BME in various different roles.” Interviewee 14.

These were not the only examples in this group, but they were the most direct. They don’t indicate any ambiguity, as if the issue itself is fully accepted on the frontline. They are also accepting of the narrative that dominates in this area that greater numbers are the accepted method of addressing lower representation – as discussed at length by the Met in current public interactions and recruitment campaigns. In no small irony, the motivation around increased representation is often espoused as a way to change attitudes (as discussed in the literature review), yet those who are believed to be the target of this change are those indicating a clear acceptance of the issue of representation.

As this is a strongly represented theme, it indicates that attaching legitimacy to the aim of BME recruitment is unnecessary. Questions then arise with regards to the rest of the results however, as there is clearly an issue amongst participants with the methods utilised to achieve this aim.

This is an excellent example for the use of Blader & Tyler’s model (2003). The aim of the rules themselves is seen to be legitimate by the workforce. The comments discussed elsewhere in this chapter indicate that breaches are taking place. This suggests that it is the ‘application’ of the rules and process, and not the process itself, which causes a breach to take place. In which case, the second two defining rules play a large role in defining causality:

- a) Evaluations of how particular group authorities make decisions (informal decision making).
- b) Evaluations of how particular group authorities treat group members (informal quality of treatment). (Blader et al. 2003 pp.749)

If causality does indeed rest within the 'how', it suggests that the major issues with regards to issues of breaches of justice in the police workplace may actually lie within leadership style and custom and practice.

The other sub-groups in this area were poorly represented in terms of volume. Representation at the point of deployment was both accepted and disputed by participants, indicating no strongly held views amongst the sample set. In terms of volume, it is superseded by the much stronger understanding of the need for representation as a whole.

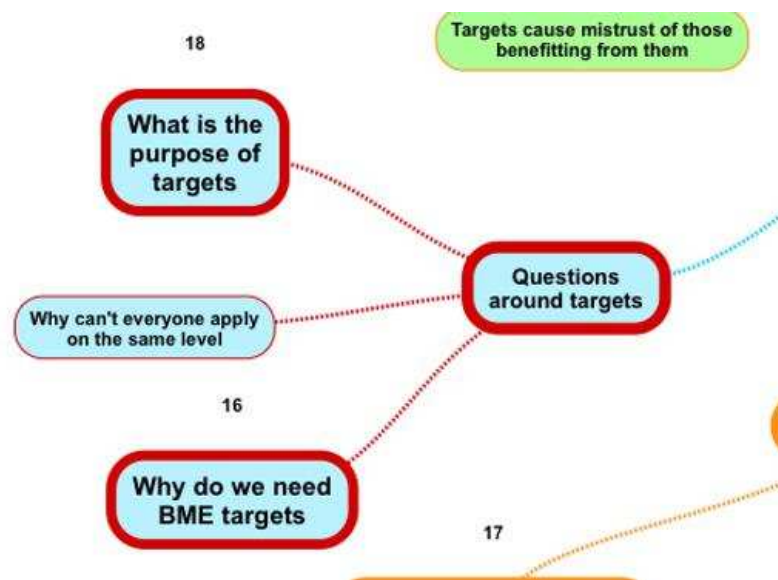
Understanding of the differing requirements for BME officers was also a poorly represented sub-group, with three participants indicating a general acceptance of difference. This information in this node was juxtaposed with discussion around competence, with Interviewee 1 paraphrasing this theme:

“I can understand there’s obviously some issues round things like religious things and prayer time and things like that in all different kinds of religions. Their needs have to be met so there’s obviously going to be some differences...but basically, we are all doing the same job, we are all working for the queen...”

The results in this area were relatively clear. From the surface level, the aim of representation is seen as legitimate by the frontline. This may link to the discussion around Macpherson (1999) discussed earlier, where the alleged racism is institutional rather than individual.

Although the organisational understanding of the need for representation is centred around increasing the amount of BME officers - and this may be a false understanding relative to the term (Decker & Smith 1980) – this is a shared understanding, indicating legitimacy of aim with regards to the model proposed by Blader and Tyler (2003). This will be discussed further in the Discussion section.

## Questions around BME Targets



Initially during analysis, the collection of questions asked by the participants appeared to indicate a lack of information about why targets were used during recruitment and selection processes. This grew as transcription continued, resulting in three particular sub-groups with strong representation amongst the sample set.

The group, 'What is the purpose of targets?' was the strongest group within this set, comprising of 18 references from 9 participants. There was significant cross-use between this group and, 'Why do we need BME targets,' as the content of each was often ambiguous. This second group gathered 16 references from 9 participants.

Significant statements within this area include:

"With regards to recruiting ethnic minorities, why do we need targets to do that?" Interviewee 1

"Why do we have to target certain people?" Interviewee 1

"Is it political? Is it something that we are trying to make ourselves look more attractive because it's a figure that has been put there by the Conservative Party, or whomever? The Home Office? Why are we doing it?" Interviewee 11

"People are starting to be dubious about... why are we pushing this? Continuously. And trying to engineer a workforce?" Interviewee 11

"[in reference to targets]... But, I just don't understand why..." Interviewee 13

These very specific questions about the need for targets were also reinforced by more generalised questions about levels of the unknown around recruitment:

“I don’t know what the recruitment figures are, and I don’t know how many people from BME backgrounds apply, so I don’t know how much of a pool we are playing with.” Interviewee 2

“[in reference to targets] I wouldn’t even know what they were to be honest.” Interviewee 5

“The job’s open, we don’t discriminate against anyone, so why is there not an open playing field?” Interviewee 8

The results here indicate a lack of knowledge in this area, both specifically and generally. There were two exceptions to this general theme from Interviewee 3, and Interviewee 6. Interviewee 3 showed a high level of understanding around the need for increased representation:

“...we sometimes just live in our own little world, and just go down our own path don’t we? And more often than not, our paths will widen and our knowledge will widen, not because we have gone looking for this information, but because it has presented itself in a certain way. We’ve then chosen to delve into that knowledge...”

This comment was in reference to going searching for information about improving diversity within his own business, which he conducts as a business interest outside of the police environment. His interview was enlightened by an appreciation for negative capability, but there was continual emphasis on the fact that he had pursued this learning personally, having received none of it from within the organisation.

Interviewee 6 stated that their understanding of targets had come from “an input from the Diversity Unit.” It was within the context of Neighbourhood policing and devolved the responsibility of locating possible BME candidates for the police to

Neighbourhood Officers. Interviewee 6 described this input as, “In one ear and out the other because it is not part of what I consider as my police role.” This indicated a strong sense of current role, and the fact that BME recruitment did not feature within it. This was juxtaposed by:

“I can see where those higher up are coming from in terms of, you know, we do have diverse communities around the county, but it’s not everywhere, it’s not like that. But for me, if people want to join the police, they will want to join the police.”

This links with other recorded groups about police recruitment motivation, but it also shows a strong indication that frontline officers, even with additional understanding, do not see workforce development as a part of their role. Interviewee 3 had pursued that extra information as an addition to his job as a police officer in order to further a ‘separate’ job interest, reinforcing that a sense of police role may not currently encompass the recruitment of different candidates into the workforce. Paradoxically, frontline officers are the ‘standard bearers’ of the organisation, and with a readily identifiable issue with representation evidenced, their footprint provides the largest level of exposure available to the organisation.

The previous quote was an exception, but it offers an interesting insight and could be of value in terms of future research in this area. There may be a perceived link with the ‘exaggerated sense of mission’ discussed in the Cultural groups previously.

There is an indication in the above example that the organisation is trying to bring about further understanding in this area by recruiting frontline officers to assist with BME recruitment. This was perceived as a direct challenge to their perceived role. This was not explored further in the interview, but again the ‘how’ in the second part



of Blader & Tyler's (2003) model has failed to result in perceived legitimacy of the tactics/changes needed.

The strongest theme within this group lies within the Organisational Justice area of 'Informational Justice.' (Colquitt, 2001) Despite efforts to address the lack of information, there is a general lack of understanding around the use of 'targets', and without understanding, frontline officers have only conjecture open to them to generate meaning. This is further underpinned by the other previously discussed groups of Culture, Representation and Competence. Although the aim of Representation is seen as legitimate, the perceived notion of 'Competence', reinforced by the aspects of Culture evidenced, cause the informational void to be filled with conjecture based on suspicion. 'Targets' are misunderstood, and their perceived need is not evidenced within the policing environment.

## Negative Perception of Targets



This theme was the largest group as a whole, holding 10 sub-groups. Due to the volume of discussion around this issue, tighter sub-groups were defined, the difference in some cases being single words. The largest groups identified from the data was that the ‘Subject of the target was disadvantaged,’ with 26 references from 10 participants.

This was a strong sub-group, with particular representation from women and BME candidates within the sample. Significant statements include:

“I think it does make it potentially embarrassing if you are a black colleague.” Interviewee 11

“I’ve certainly know a black colleague – well, many of them – but one guy that I know, he’s quite embarrassed by the whole emphasis, especially if they get promoted. It adds this kind of added... you know... “No, I actually got this on my own merit... I’m not a statistic.” Interviewee 11

“You know, the people that now get these roles – even though you don’t know these people, you might not have as much respect for them in the future. Because you think, have they got there on their own merits, or is it to do with their ethnicity, or their sex?” Interviewee 13

“If it’s someone you don’t know at all, I guess you always build a perception of a person as soon as you meet someone. And I guess, with people, just say it was an ethnic minority officer, straight away you think, well, can I trust this person? Have they got their on their own merits, or because of their BME background? Do they know the job as well as the next person would? Or is it someone who has just been shoe-horned into a role to make the figures look better? So there’s a bit of trust thing going on there.” Interviewee 13

There are many similar references to these, indicating trust issues with the systems and processes, but also the subject of those systems and processes. The process itself in the last quote is described as ‘shoe-horn’ utilised in order ‘to make the figures look better.’ This again indicates a level of dissonance from the organisation, as the staff understand and value the need for diversity, yet there is a belief present that this is not about diversity, and more about the ‘figures’ for diversity.

This is a supplanting of purpose; the original purpose is to raise the profile of diversity within the force, yet the replaced purpose appears to be understood as raising the figures representing diversity. This is a switch in depth, with numbers overtaking the narrative. This switch is visible to the frontline, as evidenced by the strength of the sub-groups. This pursuit of figures is an enduring facet of New Public Management, (contemporary studies: Deming 2000, Seddon 2008, Guilfoyle 2013), and has been interpreted by some as a strong indication of ‘a self-serving movement designed to promote the career interests of an elite group of ‘new managerialists.’ (Dunleavy, 1991 pp. 9)

This imposition of NPM, and the identification thereof by the frontline may be due to the wider political context expressed earlier, and this issue could be described as a ‘hot’ issue (Dunleavy, 1991), welcoming increased policy change and intervention within the NPM context. This imposition of visible politics into policing isn’t received

in a positive light according to the content of this collection of themes and sub-groups.

The highest frequency sub-group was supported by several other strong sub-groups, including 'Targets are unfair,' 'Targets cause a divide,' and 'Targets cause lowered morale.' 'Targets are unfair' was another high frequency group with 24 references from 8 participants. These references were direct:

"But, I think, it could be seen as unfair." Interviewee 1

"I've been in the job 10 years. I feel that I was probably... I have, I have been held back due to targets that have been pushed upon us. So I feel quite strongly that my career has been affected directly by them." Interviewee 13

"It almost makes you feel as though you're – how can I put it – not thought of, but you're overlooked for these roles and position through no fault of your own. Which is technically the reason that they're targeting BME officers, because they've been overlooked. It's almost as if – hold on – someone's been overlooked because of their colour, but now that table's been turned. And it doesn't make sense to me. It does make me feel bitter about it." Interviewee 13

"It does feel as if the deck is unfairly stacked sometimes." Interviewee 14

"I think it's totally unfair." Interviewee 15

"Just that, it's an uneven playing ground." Interviewee 2

Unfairness is a strong indicator with regards to Procedural Justice, as it has ramifications upon trust and legitimacy. This sub-group compliments and offers some explanation for the disadvantaging of the subject of the target, as if the process is viewed as unfair, credibility and competence becomes an almost automatic question once the process has run its course. This will be examined further in the Analysis section.

The effects on morale are predictable in light of these previous sub-groups.

"I think it brings morale down in situations like that. Definitely. Especially with people who are trying to progress themselves." Interviewee 1

“I think people feel a little bit demoralised. I think it makes the subject matter... what’s the word for it, it adds tension or pressure surrounding things like – well specifically – racism.” Interviewee 11

“Morale, obviously, is affected.” Interviewee 13

“...it will cause friction, it will make people think, well hold on... that’s not right. It shouldn’t be going on, why am I being overlooked? If that is the sole reason. And morale will just plummet.” Interviewee 13

“You’re going to have some annoyed staff.” Interviewee 2

“It will be demoralising.” Interviewee 2

These quotes directly attribute lowered morale to the use of targets in recruitment and selection. This is as a result of a perceived breach of justice via their use. There is – again – conjecture around why they exist, with questions like, ‘Why am I being overlooked?’ This illustrates a further problem firmly centred around ‘Informational Justice (Colquitt, 2001) as failure within recruitment and selection processes is not properly evidenced to the candidate.<sup>1</sup> The mention of being ‘held back’ again above, indicates a strong perception of unfairness in the utilised process, which is fed by a feeling of mistrust.

That the intended beneficiaries receive a negative product of the process is an unintended consequence, yet one which strongly undermines the use of targets. This has been replicated in other areas of policing where rises in detections, were resulted by rises in ‘no-crimes’ (PASC, 2013) and victims received a huge uplift in the quality of investigation where it was believed a detection was possible. This left far more vulnerable victims without the intense support that they needed, because

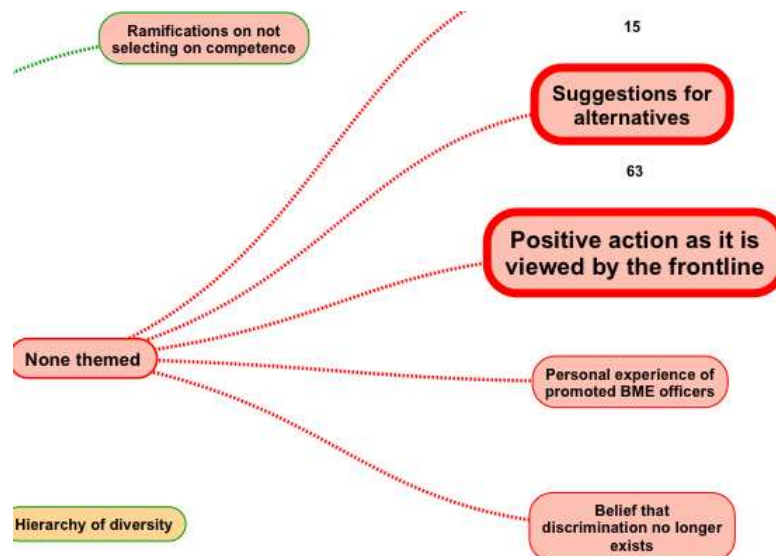
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<sup>1</sup> This has been a very prominent personal experience of mine within policing. When I have been subject to a failed process the feedback has always been unsatisfactory – from a personal perception perspective. I have been told that my answers were indicative of a higher rank and therefore invalid at the lower ranks, I have also been told, ‘It’s just not your time,’ and ‘I don’t know you well enough.’ These examples of feedback are not related to competence or performance within the process, and as such led to personal perceived justice related breaches.

essentially the criminals had done a 'better job' of the burglary. This targeted behaviour is a characteristic discussed by Guilfoyle (2015), defined by unintended consequences that display as a direct opposite of the intended outcome. It was also evidenced previously in the literature review via the study of PCSO recruitment in the Met (Moore, 2006). In that example, the quality of recruits was supplanted by the need to hit targeted numbers, the casualty being perceived justice in the process.

To sum up this area of the research, it is clearly evidenced that the frontline officers believe that use of targets in selection and recruitment is institutionally unfair. It saps morale, holds competent officers back, results in feelings of exclusion, and causes organisational mistrust. What the results do not inform on, is the ability to counter these feelings via the other discussed themes. A continuing theme of 'lack of information' around the 'why' is emerging across many sub-groups however, and a larger push around communication and purpose may begin to address specific issues identified by the related identified results.

## Positive Action as it is Viewed by the Frontline



This is the strongest group, as many of the participants had direct experience of what they believed to be the effect of positive action upon the frontline. These experiences ranged from the tangible exclusion of them from a process due to its use, to direct contact with those that have been the subject of the process.

There was a strong theme of dissatisfaction with positive action. This was reinforced by the 'Competence', the 'Questions around Diversity Targets,' and the multiple nodes around 'Fairness and Morale.' Yet this dissatisfaction is tempered by the existence of the 'Representation' group where officers voiced the need for more diversity within the force. If officers understand why diversity is needed, why do the methods to reach that aim receive such a negative reception from the frontline?

## Direct Experience of 'poor' recruitment

There are some clear examples within this group of breaches of perceived trust in the organisation, which when conjoined with a lack of information and possible exclusion from the process, presents a fertile set of circumstances for damaging rumour to develop.

“So, it’s really, really unfair. But then, the person that it happened to – on a personal note – are lovely. On a professional note, perhaps not the best person for the job.” Interviewee 1

“And from knowing them as people, and as officers, in my opinion they are fairly poor. There’s no enthusiasm, they don’t have a work ethic, no dynamism, they are just not really the sort of ‘go get em’ you know, dynamic, sort of officers that I would prefer to work alongside. And it’s almost a turn up, that the people you don’t think are going to get the job, because they – in my opinion – are fairly poor police officers, get the job, the people that you – who sometimes – are non-white officers, and the white officers don’t get the job. They are so much better prepared, so much better police officers, and again, it’s just got sort of like, you’ve got to ask yourself why is that happening.” Interview 12

“Yes. They were on a fast track promotion, or that’s what was told to me. He was a lovely chap, but he had no legal knowledge whatsoever. He clearly hadn’t done the job before. Clearly couldn’t do the job. That was 3 or 4 years ago. It was difficult to communicate the job, because you were talking to somebody who was ultimately a civilian, who was on the fast track. And I couldn’t see his policing skills. Which was difficult.” Interviewee 3

The interpretation of what is happening in these quotes above is complex. All three posit direct experience of what they believe to be positive action, yet state that the result of that intervention was negative. The process produced a result that was not in keeping with their expectation of what comprised the ‘best person’ for the job, yet the notion of competence is contextual. The BME officers referred to above are described as ‘lovely’ by Interviewee 1 and 3, whereas Interviewee 12 describes a lack of dynamism and enthusiasm. That the candidate is described as having pleasant character, but lacking the skills necessary, is an important indicator of



where the officers expect solid leadership skills to lie: skills and knowledge. This was discussed at length in the recent Leadership Review by the College of Policing (2015), where transactional training featured heavily as a precursor for advancement, yet the ability to develop and deal with people utilising soft skills was notably absent and certainly not an ‘essential’ trait.

Having worked on the Leadership Review, there was extensive discussion around the interpretation of ‘good leadership’, as it is could be seen as highly contextual. If – as Grint suggests (2010) – Police are ‘addicted’ to the use of ‘Command’ behaviours in leadership, the cultural capital that lies in such behaviours will be high. This may suggest that for any leader to be perceived as ‘effective’, they must be able to function at a high level of competence during ‘Command’ situations. Unsurprisingly, the examples given above around ‘lack of knowledge’ (what do you know?) and enthusiasm and dynamism ally themselves to fast decision making, traditionally a bedfellow of ‘Crisis’ problem solving (Grint, 2005). This particular area is also reinforced by the comments of Interviewee 12 in the Ramifications of not Selecting in Competence sub-group:

“...it might take you that extra second to react in public order situations, safety issues, and that could lead to – potentially – serious consequences. Just having that split second sort of doubt, that extra split second to make a decision, you are doubting what you are being led into. It could go horrible wrong. Not just for you but for the people around you.” Interviewee 12

Here again, ramifications are discussed within the area of competence in ‘Crisis’ based situations, suggesting a cultural affinity between ‘Crisis’ and ‘Leadership.’

This area of debate directly affects the cultural perception of those BME candidates that are subject to positive action, and as such also collocates with Procedural Justice. If the perceptions of those in control of leadership and recruitment have changed their notion of what constitutes a leader or an officer, have the frontline

followed suit? Is it possible that the frontline 'addiction' to crisis and problem solving persists despite acceptance in the higher echelons of a desired future leadership/recruitment shift?

The existence of this 'break' in the expectations of Management and those of the frontline is not a new concept (Reuss Ianni, 1983). Yet, it poses a significant problem in the context of Procedural Justice. If the objectives of Management and the Frontline are incongruent, will the results of most processes be viewed as inherently 'in breach?'

This discussion is conjecture as the ability to discern the objectives of the recruiters/selectors and compare them with those of the frontline is only available through implication. This would be an area worthy of intense study, but the results here only portray the expectations of the frontline. What is evidenced strongly, is that the successful and intended recipients of promotion and selection as viewed by the Frontline, do not meet their expectations. This suggests that the process lacks legitimacy, generating mistrust and cynicism – as evidenced by earlier previous groups. It is clear, that the physical experiences of positive action do little to suggest that fair Representation is being achieved within the current perceived norms of the frontline.

### **Reverse Racism**

This was another highly evidenced area within the 'Perceived Experience of Positive Action'. There was a belief that the use of current process in this area was in direct opposition to thing which it was trying to combat.

“You’d feel judged wouldn’t you? Really? I think. On my background. On my morals and religious beliefs. Compared to somebody else’s. And at the end of the day, does it really matter?” Interviewee 1

“There’s lots of special measures going on for that person, why’s that not happening for me when I’ve worked my backside off. I’m not getting anywhere. They are not as competent and are being led through, led the way.” Interviewee 1

“Just because you are helping someone get past one stage, doesn’t mean that they are gonna then be the strongest applicant. I find it very odd, that within an organisation that were drummed and drummed into institutional racism and this, that and the other, it’s quite blatant that people turn round and say, hang on, his face fits. Well, hang on a minute, you’re talking about – and that’ll be a comment about a BME member of staff – that to me is what we are educating about institutional racism, and then you’re showing that because that’s what it puts back into us.” Interviewee 10

“In ten years I have probably applied for about 4 or 5 jobs. Which I know – I mean I can’t say it outright – I feel like BME officers, I know have got those jobs over myself or above other white males. Probably because of the fact of their skin colour. It does grate on you a bit. You can’t deny that.” Interviewee 13

“But, I’ve done this with no help, but then someone else from a BME background can come in, and they will get walked through the stages, and then... I’m not saying, I couldn’t fully say what they get help with, if that makes sense... but... is it right? You could argue not. It just goes back to not mattering who you are or where you’re from, what walk of life...” Interviewee 2

There are several other references utilising just as strong language to describe a general feeling of unfairness through the use of positive action. With regards to the concept of positive action within policing this evidences a distinct lack of knowledge as to why it is used and what it aims to achieve. Without this knowledge, the fairness of the process appears lacking. Steel & Lovrich (1987) discuss this concept as the ‘equality trade-off’, where some scholars argue in the favour of positive action as a means of evening up an uneven landscape, (Krislov, 1974; Kranz, 1978) and others take the view of the quoted officers above (Glazer, 1975; Gross, 1978). This debate has continued into contemporary study, with many organisational studies indicating a rise in organisational performance when there are higher levels of diversity in the workplace (Erhardt, et al. 2003; Von Bergen, et al. 2005; Campbell, et al. 2008).

If it is accepted that this research is transferable into the policing environment, it suggests that higher levels of Public Value (Moore, 1995) will be achieved with a more representative force, in terms of gender and minority representation. This provides a strong incentive for diversification, along with the developed media based narrative previously discussed. It is fair to suggest that managers wish to pursue increased diversity, and as such positive action intervention is an evidenced method of achieving this.

These discussed reasons however, are absent in the Frontline discussion during interview – except in the case of Interviewee 3, who states that he has pursued extra learning to enhance his understanding of his role. This learning was external and internally motivated. It has not been recognised by the organisation.

Without extra understanding, the Frontline currently show a high degree of hostility towards positive action, as they view that the very methods that are being targeted for neutralisation (nepotistic selection etc.) are now being utilised in the same way against them. This belief may be erroneous, as the premise behind positive action is that it accepts there is intrinsic unfairness and bias within procedure, and seeks to eradicate only that bias and unfairness. Kalev, et al. (2006) study the efficacy of positive action initiatives within the US, and have found that delegating the ownership of increasing diversity in the workplace to managers gave far more results in terms of changing the make-up of corporate boards. This is the typical approach within Constabularies (Holdaway, 2006) and can often be cited as a type of ‘tokenisation.’ What it doesn’t tell us however, is although the perceived diversity of those boards changed, how ‘fair’ and ‘legitimate’ were the methods used?

The above discussion centers mainly on a difference in understanding between Management and the Frontline. Management are clearly implementing positive

action as they believe it is both necessary and proportionate in order to reach the aim of a more diverse service. The Frontline question both the necessity and the proportionality of the methods used, resulting in a perceived breach of Informational/Interactional Justice, but clearly a bigger breach in Distributive Justice. (Colquitt, 2001) They believe that the extra focus on BME recruitment/progression puts them at a disadvantage, with lack of equality of support providing the main impetus for these feelings. The viewpoints sit within a dichotomy, and neither side is seeking, or feels able to address it.

## Chapter 5 - Discussion

From the themes that have been presented, there are very clear perceived breaches of the four components of Organisational Justice at varying stages of the process.

The overall presented perception was one of unfairness, coupled with a subsequent drop in morale. It is clear that there are clear gaps in understanding on both the frontline, and in the management of procedure. This is an area for further study, but there are differing assumptions evident from the outset.

Officers do not understand why targets are necessary with regards to BME recruitment/selection. The 'why' is absent, with no visible effort on the part of the organisation to address this information gap. This then manifests itself in the frontline failing to believe that targets are necessary with regards to BME recruitment. This is a direct example of an informational gap, being filled by manifestations of the cultural facets of cynicism and suspicion (Loftus, 2007;2008;2010).

Officers on the frontline do however believe that representation is important for the police to function properly. This evidences a link between the 'aims' or 'objectives' of management, and those of the frontline.

Evidence strongly indicates that officers do feel lowered morale due to the execution of process and procedure in the area of targeted BME recruitment and selection.

This may be due to the similarly evidenced feelings of unfairness around target based process. This reported link between the use of targets and lowered morale has been recently evidenced in the Performance Management Review conducted by the Superintendent's Association (2015). Within this recent report, similar feelings of unfairness persist amongst target based performance cultures.

Finally, frontline officers strongly feel that there is an undermining of competence during the execution of process and procedure in the area of BME targets. This manifests itself in 'pre-loaded' lower confidence in BME candidates, resulting in a 'prove yourself' period that is absent in other promotion processes.

Whatever the surrounding environment and level of current understanding around the complex needs of diversity within the current policing landscape, it is also clear that current knowledge/understanding levels of the frontline leads to perceived breaches of Procedural Justice in particular. It is unclear whether the perceived breaches occur due to a difference in the internal understanding of need/expectation, or whether the external environment is shaping differing expectations of both management and the frontline.

In terms of the Blader and Tyler (2003) model:

1. Evaluation of formal rules and policies that govern formal decision making in a group.
2. Evaluations of formal rules and policies that influence how group members are treated.
3. Evaluations of how particular group authorities make decisions (informal decision making).
4. Evaluations of how particular group authorities treat group members (informal quality of treatment) (Blader et al. 2003 pp.749).

1) Formal rules and policies that govern formal decision making in a group

It is clear from the results that the formal rules and policies that govern decision making within BME representation are actually an unknown quantity to the frontline. There has been little communication, and the both the need for them and their function is understood via rumour and conjecture. This is also a direct breach of Informational Justice (Colquitt, 2001).

2) Formal rules and policies that influence how group members are treated

The rules within this area are seen as unfair. Officers on the frontline believe the subjects of those rules are disadvantaged, and that the extra services provided in the form of positive action violate the principles that they are designed to uphold. Even though this may be a misconception, this exists and can be perceived as a breach of Distributive Justice. (Colquitt, 2001)

3) Evaluations of how particular group authorities make decisions informally

The lack of information with regards to this is stark. The subject is almost taboo and the current frontline has had no education on how/why particular decisions in this area are made. The perception is one of distrust, reinforced by what is believed to be recruitment and selection for the purposes of ticking boxes, instead of selecting the right person for the job. This violates Procedural Justice specifically (Blader, et al. 2003) as the process of recruitment and selection is without legitimacy. It is also a further breach of Informational Justice, (Colquitt, 2001) as no individual conversations take place upon de-selection.



#### 4) Informal quality of treatment for participants

Due to the reinforced taboo with the threat of sanction attached to it, the process is without challenge within the workplace. There is a management monopoly on its design and execution, and officers involved are without a perceived voice. This again has an effect upon procedural legitimacy. In addition, Interactional Justice (Colquitt, 2001) is also strongly affected, through implied disciplinary sanction a poorly perceived system is allowed to continue.

The final picture is one of a system that is perceived to be failing by the frontline, which negatively affects the very staff it is designed to attract and support. There is little understanding as to why it exists, and there is no perceived avenue of challenge for it to be questioned by those who are affected most by its application. In a worrying twist, its current application designs in mistrust of those subject to the supposed benefits. This shows that there is cognitive dissonance in effect at management levels, as although they may believe they are doing the right thing, they are frustrating the very problem that they are trying to solve, despite holding the same aims as that of the frontline.

### **Interdependence**

Many of the groups identified were interdependent, and the links between them yielded continuing themes. These themes suggest 'high impact areas' which the organisation may seek to address in order to add legitimacy to the process.

The central and most frequent groups in the results show relatively high levels of interdependency. The Cultural issues defined, interlink with the general theme of a lack of 'Informational Justice', detailed by a distinct lack of the 'why' around the use of BME targets. This 'why' issue was pervasive and crossed several boundaries, ranging from, 'Why do we need targets?' through to 'Why am I being overlooked?' and 'Why is there not an open playing field?' The proliferation of questions throughout the results, requesting further information on 'purpose,' indicate a lack of understanding around the 'vision' of diversity in the police. Indeed, a lot of the references in the interviews cited the media as the officer's source of information, which in turn allows a cynical perspective to develop.<sup>2</sup> There is little/no rebuttal forthcoming from senior management, and as such 'culture' fills the information gap. This informational justice issue's frequency and tacit reference within the all of the groups identified, suggest that it is one of the most pervasive issues throughout the recruitment and selection process. This indicates a general failing within the system, compounded by the existence of targets that raise more questions from the workforce than they answer. In addition to the unintended consequences of the target's use such as a perceived lack of competence, there are questions about why diversity is important and why particular groups received positive action over others. The collection of groups and sub-groups all indicate a greater disconnect in terms of corporate information, and reinforce the tangible separation between the frontline and those involved in management decision making.

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<sup>2</sup> This is a phenomenon witnessed during the recent discussion in the social media landscape over the Educational Qualification Framework (College Of Policing, 2015). Many officers view the introduction of an educational framework as a personal slight upon their ability to perform as a police officer without qualifications. This has resulted in heated exchanges on social media.

## Tackling the information gap

Recent research indicates that there are two methods of leadership that correlate to identified behaviours within an existing informational justice context. Charles et al., (2003) discuss the changed methods of delivering informational justice relative to the 'maturity' of your organisation's leadership and culture:

“...if the job or assignment involves psychologically immature or inexperienced workers, then the manager should adopt a highly task orientated approach and be very direct and decisive...a transactional leader, with a restricted decision style, who focuses on the structural elements of justice, should be the most effective manager.” (p. 1011)

This is based on existing leadership theory (Hackman & Oldham, (1975) (1976); Hersey & Blanchard, (1969)). This theory is dated, but it posits a connection between the style of leadership needed within the environment and the method of delivery of informational justice. This connection is important, as this research indicates a plethora of perceived breaches of organisational justice within the frontline; is it possible that there have been shifts within the maturity of the policing employees, rendering the current delivery methods ineffective?

This theory is supported by generational research with regards to shifting attitudes and expectations. Ng, et al., (2010) suggest that expectations of what the work environment delivers has shifted significantly with the recruitment of the millennial generation (born post 1979). This is reinforced by several other studies (Carter, (2008); De Hauw, et al. (2010); Myers, Et al., (2010)) who together posit that Millennial expectations of communication – both method and content – has shifted dramatically.

The findings above with regards to perceived breach may actually be a symptom of a structural and generational problem that fails to address shifting expectations with a

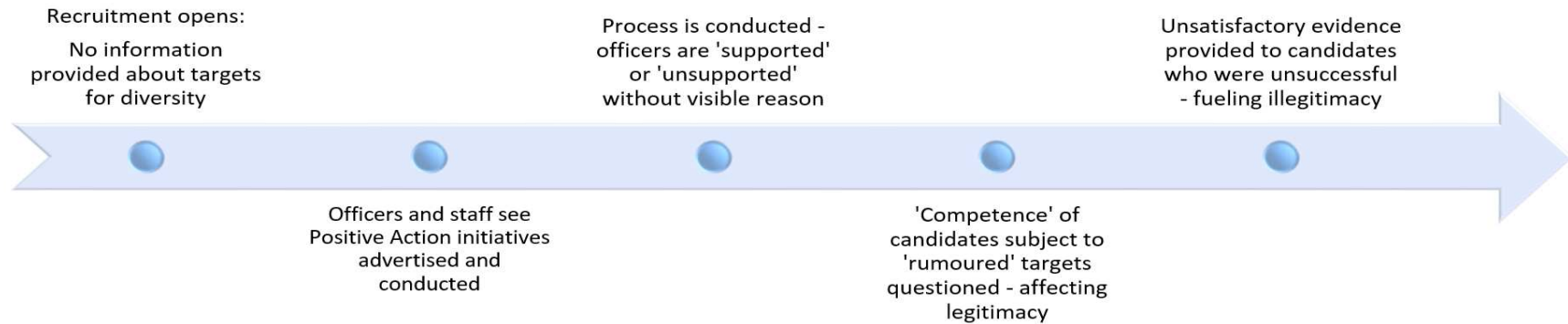
mixed generational workforce. Henchey (2005) discusses exactly this, predicting that by 2020 the majority of officers will be from the Millennial generation, and that shifting demographics will require shifting policy and workplace practices. A recent qualitative study in the US identified 11 traits of interest for the Millennial police officer, these being:

- (a) general excitement, thrill and variety of police work,
- (b) serve the community and help people,
- (c) interact with people as a team
- (d) legacy career – previous family member in policing,
- (e) pay and benefits,
- (f) opportunities for lateral job movement,
- (g) recognition for work and praise,
- (h) respect for input, new ideas and ways,
- (i) best technology and equipment available,
- (j) micromanaging and poor supervision,
- (k) leadership development for sergeants
- (l) negative police culture
- (m) increased vertical communication.” (Delung, 2015)

The findings from this study correlate with several in the above list, and may indicate that a shifting workforce in terms of demographic is rendering many of the ‘typical’ methods of working ineffective. This will be exacerbated by two structural facets of the police career, these being the previous 30 year tenure (now a 38+ year tenure), and the required linear progression through the rank structure. With very little exception (very low levels of Direct Entry Insp & Supt), the pathway to senior leadership requires many years served. Despite a hugely growing millennial representation within the workforce, the percentage of millennial leaders will be almost non-existent. This suggests a very adaptive ‘baby boomer’ leadership cadre is necessary to truly adapt to the changing requirements of internal decision making in order to address rapidly shifting expectations.

With regards to where the information gap manifests itself within the process, it can be charted from the start through to the finish. The steps are detailed in the following diagram:

Fig. 2.



Recruitment Opens	Positive Action	Internal/External Support	Competence questioned	Feedback mechanism
Node: Questions around BME Targets node	Node: Officer experience of positive action	Node: Targets are unfair Targets cause lowered morale	Node: Competence should be the primary consideration	Node: Officer experience of positive action/Competence should be the primary consideration
<b>Breach of Organisational Justice area</b>				
Informational Justice	Distributive Justice	Distributive Justice	Procedural Justice Informational Justice	Interactional Justice Informational Justice

All of the above steps are detailed in the evidence previously discussed, and they apply to both external recruitment into the service, and internal promotion/selection. Due to the multiple entry options for policing, many potential officers are already within the service, applying from PCSO and Staff positions. Their experience of these issues will be subject to direct experience of the current culture and the internal information vacuum. The one exception to this rule are true external candidates, who may feel less affected by the breaches due to their lack of organisational context. This is however untested, and following the stronger influence generated by negative experiences with the police (Skogan, 2006), it is possible that similar breaches exist outside of the service and may be doing serious reputational damage within communities.

With regards to shifting millennial expectation the vertical communication is absent, as is the inability to feed in ideas. There is clearly a limiting factor on development and lateral opportunity manifested via the use of perceived use of targets, violating several ingrained generational perceptions.

It is possible to explore how these 'information gaps' and limiting factors can be filled by exploring the perceived issues raised within the nodes. Some solutions were suggested by interviewees that directly correlate with closing the information gaps identified via the research:

“...if it was a bit more open and honest, as in, if ten people go for a job, and they literally give out everybody's result, and the scoring as it were, and it all came down to the fact that, OK, this person scored more than me in certain aspects, that they check – and it's nothing to do with BME – then you would think, OK well that's fine. I can understand why you don't get those figures, but it's not as honest and open as other things we do in the job, or you wouldn't have this perception from the BME side.” Interviewee 13

“You know, because at the end of the day, ideally, you give everybody an equal, an equal chance and maybe if they just anonymised the application

process completely that would be a way to do it. Then it's completely fair. Because you're not saying that you are targeting this, and everybody will get through on merit." Interviewee 7

"And we've said it all along, I don't know why you are not just a number when you apply. And that is so the force only gets to know your number, until the final stages. That way, there's no discrimination, because you are only a number. They don't know your sex, or your race or... It seems the fairest way and we have been saying it for years." Interviewee 8

"To me, the best course of action, would be for somebody applying for a job – if this was at all possible, and I don't think it would be – is application form without any names on it, any ethnic background, any age and almost an interview where your voice is distorted. So that the interviewers wouldn't see you. And it would just be interesting to see what you would get then." Interviewee 9

These comments all further indicate a belief that selection is unfair, but several advocate an anonymization of the process itself to remove perceived bias. This is a trend discussed within other diversity based literature in the US, and suggests that process 'sanitisation' seeks to remove the perceived issues generated by legacy based practices (Aslund, et al., 2012).



<b>Recruitment Opens</b>	<b>Positive Action</b>	<b>Internal/External Support</b>	<b>Competence questioned</b>	<b>Feedback mechanism</b>
Node: Questions around BME Targets node	Node: Officer experience of positive action	Node: Targets are unfair Targets cause lowered morale	Node: Competence should be the primary consideration	Node: Officer experience of positive action/Competence should be the primary consideration
<b>Breach of Organisational Justice area</b>				
Informational Justice	Distributive Justice	Distributive Justice	Procedural Justice Informational Justice	Interactional Justice Informational Justice
<b>Possible Solutions</b>				
Involve frontline officers in the design of positive action Publish the full Positive Action program Open out the Positive Action Program to be inclusive Include education on diversity in the training syllabus Management briefings delivered internally	If distributed assistance is to be unequal, the understanding behind that must be fully understood and expressed The distribution must be fully visible and the decision making behind it made available Consult with BME officers about whether there is subject support for initiatives Anonymised process to build confidence	If targets are to be used, their basis in evidence and reason for their existence is to be published and shared If there is evidence that they 'work' without adverse unintended consequences, then this must be made available and shared	The selection criteria for recruitment/ selection/ promotion is to be co-designed and shared. Involve the frontline in their leadership requirements and co-produce the process If Management wish to move away from Skills/Command as selection criteria, this must be communicated clearly with rationale.	Feedback from the process for candidates must be authentic and provide detail about de-selection. The subject matter should be regularly broached by management with open feedback sessions available to officers The taboo needs to be publicly broken, threat of sanction stifles dialogue, and therefore understanding.

**Fig. 3**

These suggestions are based on bringing current practices into line with a changing workforce, together with a collected challenge of the cultural norms identified. They are without an evidence base, as these methods are not utilised within the UK at this time (evidenced via the Leadership Review (College of Policing, 2015)). They do however present several suggestions that are based on the issues/gaps identified by this research coupled with the observations of several of the Interviewees. These observations are also supported by evidence currently being collated in other industries.

## **Research Limitations and Further Study**

There are several areas of further research identified by this research that may prove insightful and add value to the discussed findings.

### **Non BME Promotion and selection**

The current positive action climate within constabularies has been evidenced to create a feeling of mistrust in those that are supposedly subject to the benefits of its use. What the current study does not show however, is the relative mistrust when compared with those outside the positive action programs. Whilst conducting this research I had many conversations with police officers about the general area of promotion procedure and outcome, culminating in open workshop which lasted 6 hours. The workshop discussed the current expectations and climate around promotions and selection within Lancashire Constabulary (July, 2015). Many of the issues that have been discussed within this dissertation were raised by the members, however the severity of mistrust, and in particular the timing of it was slightly different.

Without the existence of Positive Action, the level of mistrust around the process was still high, the report from the session is included in the Appendix (Appendix 1). It was manifested in extreme distrust in senior management and a complete lack of confidence in the promotion processes. The main difference between the outcomes of this session, and the research contained herein is the 'pre-loading' of mistrust in a specific way. A very important question surrounding this research is what does the application of positive action actually do? The answer to this question would require

a study of promotion and selection, with a comparative study that assesses the same questions with the existence of positive action within the process.

A short comparison identifies the same issues of a lack of Informational Justice, and a severe lack of Procedural Justice. In short, it is possible that the senior leadership and decision making is so removed from the frontline, that the established promotion procedures are broken in the first instance, with positive action simply serving to add further fuel to an already burning fire. It is therefore possible, that a promotion/selection environment that exists within a positive and supportive culture may find the application of positive action more than palatable. Unfortunately, the sampling areas of Lancashire Constabulary and the Met provided accounts of an internal, cultural environment that was not conducive to positive action; causing instead, unwelcome toxicity.

In terms of scale, BME promotions are very rare, and it is possible that positive action provides a reason for mistrust around competence, when mistrust around competence is also prevalent elsewhere. Within non-BME promotion, it is possible that poor competence promotions exist, but as there are far more comparatively they are buried within the larger numbers. This may suggest that positive action as an intervention is linked with causality of mistrust and lowered morale because poor overall practice in promotion is exacerbated by labelling theory (Farrington, et al. 1978). This would be further exacerbated by the existence of targets, which only serve to elevate the negative status of BME candidates further.

The causality of labelling in this way could be tested within a controlled environment where support is offered to all candidates and no identified positive action takes

place. It is difficult to gauge efficacy as these initiatives have been in place for many years and are deeply ingrained within the established culture. It would be possible however, to remove labelling from all candidates within the police environment through changes in HR policy, allowing the removal of titles which carry stigma. This is an 'inclusion' based approach (Moncrieff & Eyben, 2013) and requires piloted application utilising the established theory base.

### **Possible Ramifications**

Although this study has identified the perceived results of target use, the ramifications of such results have not been specifically explored. The previous studies of Tankebe, (2010) Bradford, et al., (2013) and Bradford & Quinton (2014) suggest that internal negative experiences may manifest themselves in changes in behaviour on the frontline. This suggestion implies that an external effect generated within interactions with the BME community may be very damaging. Utilising procedure perceived as 'reverse racism' within force may be generating behaviour externally that manifests itself in actions which damage race relations. Although speculative at best, this suggestion of a link between perceived internal practice, and subsequent altered external practice presents a picture mired in risk. Assessing causality within this area would be complex, but ultimately may uncover some of the persisting causes of external racial profiling. It is possible that overt labelling and separation, linked with unfairness with regards to BME colleagues, may result in those same characteristics being displayed during the execution of external process.

## **Triangulation and cross discipline research**

Utilising the cultural research of Loftus (2008; 2009; 2010) discussed earlier within the 'Culture' node, it is possible to speculate that the enduring issues with police culture may be universal (within reason) within UK forces. Within this study scalability issues do exist in terms of generalisation ability utilising such a small sample base. It would be useful for triangulation to quantify the issues across a number of Constabularies using a different methodology. This would provide an improved depiction of both severity and scale. At present the ability to extrapolate service-wide implications is severely limited.

It would also be interesting to pursue triangulation with current UK, police based generational expectation data. There is little, and this study didn't focus on the generational aspects of the participants. Many of the interviewed officers were within their first ten years of service, and therefore highly likely to have been from the Millennial generation. Tighter use of demographic data would have assisted in drawing more solid conclusions within this area, and also informed on the interplay between organisational justice and changing expectation. This would have been especially informed by the interview of senior officers as the difference in expectations could be clearly evidenced. There is a difference in understanding, as the questions raised by the frontline are expected to have already been answered by the decision makers, but that rationale and reasoning is absent and inaccessible. Rectifying this missing link may enable a two-way conduit of information, in turn addressing some of the generational differences.

## **Causality or correlation?**

The widely cited sub-groups of morale and distrust may again be representative of other cultural issues prevalent from within the service. It is therefore possible to glean from these results that positive action initiatives simply contribute to an existing schema inherent within the frontline. Understanding the depth of this schema is important; especially with regards to trust levels of BME leaders. Although unpalatable, applying doses of critical thinking to the presumption of lower competence to BME candidates, it is possible that underlying racism does exist in officers. Poor application of targets and process is allowing a conduit through which this racism is realised in the operational environment. As homophobia and racism are established cultural traits that have been previously evidenced (Loftus, 2009; 2010) it is possible that inadequate communication and poor internal process have allowed these underlying traits to continue.

This would be difficult to evidence, as racism study within police forces is non-existent. It is highly possible this research has not been conducted because of the possible political ramifications, and also because if officers discovered that they were being assessed for racist tendencies the fallout internally would likely be severe.

Accompanying research evidence on stop and search (Bowling & Phillips, 2007) suggests racial profiling is in evidence due to the disproportionality of BME based stop/searches. There are a number of highlighted areas within the UK where a black male is 6 times more likely to be stopped and searched than a similarly aged white male (EHRC, 2010). These stats are falling, but a change in the law has been introduced to improve accountability as the issue has been prominent since the Macpherson Report. Although the perceived issues with positive action may exist as

a result of many breaches of organisational justice identified through this research, it would be negligent to suggest that causality has been proven.

It is possible that the breaches discussed within this research amount to a complex, interdependent relationship between an embedded suspicion or racism on the part of the established dominant demographic, and that of the desired 'other' of a changed workforce. It is possible that positive action – as poorly as it has been implemented – acts as a direct challenge to an established hegemonic control exerted by legacy reinforced, white, male, working class dominance utilising ethno-centrism (Waldinger, 1993).

Only further targeted and specific research within this area will help to discern between causality and correlation.



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# Appendix

## Promotion/selection workshop 22-07-15

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### General comments

The workshop was relatively poorly attended with approx 20 throughout the day. I received about 26 definite attendances, and another 4 email submissions from those that couldn't attend. It was discussed on the day that this could have been due to lack of advertisement on my part, as I had only used Buzz and Yammer to get the word out. I accept this and agree that a Lancon email and intranet posting may have added to it, I struggle here slightly as I'm posted out of force, so I may need some support to get this working properly.

Everyone confirmed that there was a general feeling that ACPO and the lower ranks have a real meeting of the minds in terms of where the constabulary is headed. Attendees conveyed a high level of distrust of those ranks in between however, and alluded to the performance years being responsible for this amongst general but well supported feelings of nepotism, favouritism and cronyism. The discussion around these things was persistent, mainly fed by a lack of communication about why postings/decisions were being made and a real lack of CPD support and development. As middle ranks (upper DMT/SMT) have control over selection there was discussion that external influence may be a really good option in the short term. There was also huge support for centralised process. As trust builds, the centralisation or external assistance may not be necessary.

HR was constantly supported throughout the entire day, and everyone agreed that those trained in recruitment and selection, should have a far greater influence. Having a HR person present at the point of interview was seen as necessary, but many expressed that they would rather have HR in charge of talent scouting and development, instead of more senior police officers. As a general comment, this essentially is a request for HR to take a more transformational role and not a transactional one. This shows that a) staff don't trust just officers to identify talent, b) they would rather the process be far more removed from tradition than it currently is.

There were comments made repeatedly about consistency, transparency, and lots of communication. Switching the content of the assessment exercises was seen as a good thing to prevent answers being passed between previous candidates etc., but the structure itself was seen to be really important to communicate to candidates. Communicating the new structure clearly will mitigate the bonus some candidates get from networking in the process as it stands. As an example, a centralised workshop on how to get the structure of application form answers right was felt to be very important, as this gap is usually filled by 'who you know.'

**Application** – after much discussion the agreement was that currently this process is seen as almost worthless. It is gamed mercilessly and the ‘backing’ for these to go in can be skewed. Going forward, to rectify this process and remove networking, it was thought that this process should be totally open for anyone to put an application in, which should be comprised of competence and values based questions. This would have to be accompanied by anonymity. There is complete mistrust of this stage and everyone saw it as an exercise in networking from the minute the applications opened. Those able to get support and backing early on, would clearly have a hugely unfair advantage over others. This could run under exam conditions, as it doesn’t matter how we open the process, those with app form experience may end up writing application answers for others. This represents a significant risk. There was solid discussion around if writing applications is a weakness, then it is on the onus of the applicant to improve in this area. Allowing the option to have others write examples for you was seen as a serious problem.

Communications around this was a continuing issue, and it was thought that an open session explaining the process and how to get better on structuring answers etc. would be a good way for everyone to get the benefit of support (instead of it being available to only a select few).

## **Stage 2**

This was a really interesting discussion. The current method of selection is like a set of hurdles, so if your hydra assessment is weak, you don't make it through to the interview (despite the fact that you may interview far better than the candidates who got through hydra). This plays to particular strengths and encourages omnicompetence over looking at strength based selection.

It was thought that a collective assessment was better, comprised of exercises similar to those used in professional selection, where the candidates were seen over several exercises and then an overall picture is used. This also allows extra feedback to be given at the point of failure, so candidates can see where they failed and why. It was thought that the spread of exercises needed to cover a range of leadership styles to make sure that it wasn't exclusive, and this was reinforced by views that there was a clear command and management bias, with leadership taking a clear back step. If there were to be a hydra exercise, it needs to take into account that others not in a uniform context should have the same opportunity to pass it. It was thought by most present that there should be a minimum acceptable standard across all the exercises.

Overall, it was thought that the last process – although it had issues at point of selection in division – was a really clear step forward, and that building on it was a good idea.

## **HPDS Exercises (as an example)**

**Group paper feed (hydra style)**

**Face to face issue (dealing with a staff issue)**

**Oral briefing (timed presentation)**

**Interview**

It was discussed that there would be cost associated with a process like this, but that this would be worth the expenditure as the assessments would be few and far between and the future leadership is too valuable not to invest in properly.

**Frequency**

The old methods of larger boards with an unknown destination for boarded officers was thought to be out of date. It also creates uncertainty, and allows for goal posts to be set at differing levels. There was large support for regular, smaller processes for different roles as they come up. This allows for difference to be promoted in naturally, as each role will have different needs. Larger processes may still be used, but officers would really prefer to know the roles they are applying for. Role specific profiles with set skills would also help to create career pathways and mapping across the constabulary.

Officers would know what was needed for a particular supervisory role, and would plan the collection of certain skills and experience in order to reach it. This really assists with round peg-round hole promotion, ensuring that specialist and advanced practitioners are developed in line with the current recommendations of the National Leadership Review. You wouldn't put an accountant in IT, so why do the police (as a whole) insist on putting people where their skills don't fit?

**360 and similar mechanisms**

This was discussed heavily, and 360, reverse referencing and similar methods were all thought to create flaws for promotion. It was also thought that they could be both manipulated and create a false impression of any particular candidate. It was also thought that laissez faire leaders would receive automatic support from those underneath them as they were allowed to work to the standards they wish. This was twinned with a concern for a lack of authentic conversations for candidates, who could avoid difficult issues with their teams in order to curry favour.

This was instead moved into discussions around who could sit on the assessment panels.

### **Interview panels**

Senior officers were thought to be important in these, and their presence could be maintained, but with mitigation. The panel could be comprised of:

Lay member (PCC or member of the public)

Senior Officer

HR rep

PC (how they could be selected was not discussed)

This would mean that the senior officer would be in the minority, and that other influencers would have some clear control within the process. The PC was included to allow them some say in who made it through to be their leaders (this is an alternative to the 360 process).

### **Temping**

This discussion was too short but it was the one with most contrasting views. There were open discussions about the use of tenures (6 month stints etc.) with opinions falling on both sides of the fence. It was agreed that any post over 28 days should however be subject to a process – even if the process was only application form and interview (with a representative panel). This discussion will continue on Yammer and Buzz in the hope that some improvement can be reached.

It was also mentioned that the current processes where particular staff had been temping for many years was really damaging, as any process starts everyone on the same level playing field with no consideration for experience or skills gained. This is a side effect of running a process that removes bias, and the organisation must take some responsibility for allowing the lengthy temporary promotions and offer significant support for the future to these candidates, who have received good support for their placements, but could see this position removed should they not be successful in the process. This raises significant wellbeing issues. The room was divided on this point, as some thought that the experience should provide some advantage – even resulting in management appointment, whilst others clearly wished for strong removal of bias no matter the previous acting/temping experience. No matter the decision in this area, it is clear that wellbeing will be an

issue on either side of the fence and good communication/support is essential to create any sort of confidence in the process.

### **Going forward**

This record has been circulated to attendees and feedback was received that it is an accurate representation of what was said. Further comments were made with some amendments requested. It was also requested that more such days were organised with better publicity, in the hope that greater representation during the scrutiny of a proposed model may bring about a better final result.

Discussions will continue via email and Yammer in the meantime, with an update on the Buzz thread. I will liaise with Snr. Mgt. in the meantime and provide updates to those who attended and everyone else via email/Yammer/Buzz.