Revealed Trust in Police*

Anna Bindler† Kyra Hanemaaijer‡ Randi Hjalmarsson§

Last update: September 23, 2026

Abstract

Trust is a key ingredient for effective institutions but is inherently difficult to observe. We conceptually and empirically show that trust can be revealed through an individual's willingness to entrust institutions with sensitive personal information. Using more than three million police stops in England and Wales, we operationalize this idea by measuring whether subjects decline to self-report ethnicity to officers. Ethnicity disclosure strongly tracks independent survey measures of trust in police across time, geography, demographic groups, and dimensions of trust. The high-frequency and local variation in our new measure of trust in police allows us to study how it responds to information shocks about officer misconduct. We find that the 2021 kidnapping, rape, and murder of Sarah Everard by an off-duty London Metropolitan police officer immediately reduced ethnicity disclosure (by 2.4%) in London, with little evidence of large spillovers elsewhere. There is an even larger decline following news of severe misconduct by another officer from the same unit, while subsequent investigations and reports had little effect.

JEL Codes: K42, H41, D83
Keywords: trust in police, stop and search, police misconduct, ethnicity

*__Acknowledgments:__ We thank Elisa Jácome, Andreea Mitrut, Emily Owens, Giovanni Mastrobuoni, Mitch Downey, Ulrika Ahrsjö, Imran Rasul and seminar and conference participants at the University of Gothenburg, Dresden University of Technology, Jönköping University, LMU Munich, the Annual Conference of the German Law and Economics Association, and the Workshop on the Economics of Crime for Junior Scholars for their helpful comments and discussions. We are grateful for European Union funding: ERC, Police-Prisons-Firms, 101093345. Views and opinions expressed are however those of the authors only and do not necessarily reflect those of the European Union or the European Research Council. Neither the European Union nor the granting authority can be held responsible for them. We would like to thank Elin Solfeldt for her excellent research assistance. All remaining errors are our own.

†DIW Berlin, University of Potsdam and Berlin School of Economics. Email: abindler@diw.de.
‡University of Gothenburg. Email: kyra.hanemaaijer@economics.gu.se
§University of Gothenburg. Email: randi.hjalmarsson@economics.gu.se

1 Introduction

Trust in government and public institutions is critical to effective governance, policy implementation, and the political feasibility of reforms.[1] Because institutional trust is inherently difficult to measure and observe, most empirical work relies on survey questions asking individuals to state how much trust or confidence they have in particular institutions (Carlsson et al., 2024).[2] These surveys are often too infrequent, geographically coarse, or costly to learn about how trust responds to sudden shocks or geographically local institutional changes. We propose a new approach to study institutional trust using a high-frequency, geographically granular real-world behavior that can be observed in administrative records: individuals can reveal their trust in an institution through their willingness to entrust it with sensitive personal information.

We apply this behavior-based approach to study trust in police in England and Wales, an institution in which trust is both substantively important and a highly salient contemporary policy issue. The effectiveness of the police depends not only on, for instance, police force size and officer characteristics, but also on the public's *trust in police*.[3] Trust in police can affect whether victims and witnesses report crimes and whether individuals cooperate with police requests or orders. Consequently, deteriorating trust can reduce crime reporting and clearance rates, which can in turn increase crime (Becker, 1968; Gonçalves et al., 2026). According to surveys, trust in police is declining in both the United States and in the United Kingdom, the context of our study, where parliament identified it as an emerging policy issue in 2023/2024.[4]

To implement our new approach, we create a high-frequency index of trust in police that is based on an individual's willingness to self-report ethnicity during police stops in England and Wales. Many legal frameworks (e.g., EU and UK GDPR) treat ethnicity as a sensitive personal data category given the risks associated with misuse, including discrimination, profiling, and stigmatization.[5] Ethnic minorities in recent UK surveys report high rates of experiencing discrimination both in formal education and employment settings and by the police: this is especially true for those who identify as Black Caribbean, Roma, and Gypsy/Traveller (a White-subcategory on the UK Census) (Ellingworth et al., 2023). We thus interpret the individual's disclosure of ethnicity (in a social and institutional context where discrimination may be expected) as 'revealed trust in police' to safeguard these data and to use them only for the stated purposes of

[1] See, e.g., Besley and Dray (2024) and references therein. This question is not only of academic interest, but has also entered policy discussions. See, e.g., OECD (2017).

[2] A growing literature also measures trust in incentivized experiments; see for instance Carlsson et al. (2024) and Penczynski and Santana (2024).

[3] Owens and Ba (2021) and Chalfin and McCrary (2017) survey the literature on the effects of police.

[4] Confidence in U.S. police peaked at 64% in 2004 and reached a low of 43% in 2023 (Brenan, 2024). See also UK Parliament notes from April 2023 and October 2024 (last accessed: September 08, 2026).

[5] Other characteristics, e.g., gender or age, do not have the same legal status.

monitoring equality. Importantly, our interpretation does not require distrust to be the only reason individuals decline to report ethnicity. Rather, it requires that, holding other disclosure determinants fixed, the willingness to report is increasing in trust in police—a relationship we formalize in Section 3 and validate empirically in Section 4.

Underlying our trust index are about 1,500 police stop and search incidents per day (one per minute) across England and Wales. As described in Section 2, police officers can stop and search individuals either on reasonable suspicion of carrying contraband or, with supervisor approval, without such grounds (Section 60 searches). A distinctive feature of the English and Welsh context—and central to our trust measure—is the collection of self-reported ethnicity during each stop. The institutional setting is particularly appropriate for studying trust because policing in England and Wales is explicitly and historically grounded in the principle of policing by consent.

Section 3 presents our data and measure of trust in police. We use a simple conceptual framework to derive the relationship between trust in police and the willingness to self-report ethnicity. We then draw on more than three million stops from October 2015 to April 2024 across 31 police force areas of England and Wales. More than half of these stops occur in London. Most notably, the data include two measures of ethnicity – self-reported and officer perceived. Though all subjects must be asked by the officer to self-report ethnicity, all can decline to respond: over the full sample period, 21% and 11% of subjects stopped in London and non-London jurisdictions, respectively, decline.

For descriptive and cross-validation purposes, we aggregate the data across all stops in a given time period or geography to construct a high-frequency trust index. Two patterns stand out. First, willingness to self-report ethnicity substantially declined both inside and outside of London from 2016 to 2024; the decline is much steeper in London, where the share self-reporting ethnicity decreased from around 90% to 69%. Taking our new index at face value thus suggests declining trust in police. Second, there is considerable geographic variation in self-reporting, both locally across London boroughs and nationally across police force areas.

Section 4 cross-validates our new measure against survey based measures of trust in the Crime Survey of England and Wales (CSEW), the London Mayor's Office for Policing and Crime (MOPAC) Public Attitudes Survey, and the YouGov trust tracker. Our trust index tracks both temporal and geographic variation and is positively associated with multiple dimensions of trust, including effectiveness, fairness, and confidence. Furthermore, these relationships are seen across demographic groups (including non-minorities) and populations defined by victimization and police contact (including victims and those not stopped by the police).[6] Finally, our new index appears more closely aligned with

[6]Though this speaks to the generalizability of our stop and search based measure to the broader population, trust in police among our sample is especially relevant to the police's ability to clear crimes, given a significant overlap between stop and search and victim populations. Victimization rates are approximately twice as high among stopped than non-stopped individuals in the MOPAC survey data. Relat-

survey based measures of trust in police than institutional trust more generally.

The high-frequency and granular nature of our trust in police measure allows us to study in Section 5 the dynamics of how officer misconduct shocks affect trust in police. We focus on one of the largest and reasonably unexpected UK policing scandals: the kidnapping, rape, and murder of Sarah Everard by off-duty Metropolitan Police officer Wayne Couzens in March 2021. We conduct pre-post analyses (in the spirit of a regression discontinuity in time analysis) separately for London and non-London police forces using a baseline 6-month event window around the date that the public first became aware an officer was arrested for murder. We find an immediate and statistically significant decrease in self-reported ethnicity disclosure in London of 1.8 percentage points (2.4% relative to the mean); estimates outside London are smaller and generally insignificant. The London effect is robust to alternative trend specifications, narrow event windows, detailed subject and stop characteristic controls, and present across demographic groups and London neighborhoods. Oaxaca-Blinder decompositions further demonstrate that compositional changes in stops do not drive, and if anything attenuate, the results.

Following the above-described arrest of officer Couzens, a number of subsequent and related events received substantial media attention. Most prominently, officer Couzens received a life sentence in October 2021 and (in the same week) officer David Carrick, from the same London Met unit, was arrested on multiple rape charges. We find that this cluster of events, which provided the public new information about potentially systemic rather than isolated officer misconduct at the London Met, decreased ethnicity disclosure by an additional 4% relative to the mean. In contrast, we do not find detectable short-term effects associated with the release of reports and parliamentary investigations, which did not necessarily provide new information.

Our paper contributes to a growing economics and criminology literature (surveyed in Appendix A) that studies the determinants of trust in police. While much of the existing research relies on survey-based measures of trust, a recent strand of papers instead proxies for trust with crime reporting and 911 calls (Ang et al., 2025; Brantingham et al., 2022; Cohen et al., 2019; Desmond et al., 2016; Jácome, 2022; Mikdash and Zaiour, 2024). Because crime reporting is not just a function of trust but also crimes committed, it can be hard to disentangle the effects of factors on trust from their effects on crime. One way to do this is to condition reporting on an objective measure of crime, such as technology detected gunshots (Ang et al., 2025; Mikdash and Zaiour, 2024). Such approaches cannot be applied, however, in jurisdictions — including most outside the U.S. — without detection technologies and/or high gunshot prevalence.

The determinants of trust in police literature finds higher levels of trust among those

edly, Facchetti et al. (2026) show that the population with justice-system experience is large—witnessing crime is twice as prevalent as victimization—and that such experiences are negatively associated with confidence in the police and justice institutions.

who perceive their neighborhoods to be orderly (Bradford et al., 2018; Meeusen et al., 2024) or for those with high quality police interactions (Bradford et al., 2009; Myhill and Bradford, 2011). Recent studies find that crime reporting decreases after exposure to police violence, e.g., the murder of George Floyd (Ang et al., 2025) or police shootings more generally (Ang and Tebes, 2024; Mikdash and Zaiour, 2024). The treatment of minorities and perceptions of discrimination also appear related to trust (Czymara and Mitchell, 2023; Gonçalves et al., 2026; Jácome, 2022; Meeusen et al., 2024), with larger effects of police violence in minority neighborhoods (Desmond et al., 2016; Nägel and Lutter, 2021).

Our first contribution to this literature is the introduction of a novel non-survey-based measure of trust in police. In contrast to crime-reporting-based measures, our measure uses an individual's willingness to report sensitive information and does not necessitate conditioning on an underlying objective measure of crime. It can be constructed at a high frequency, across police forces in England and Wales, and geographically granular neighborhoods within forces, thereby eventually enabling real-time analyses of the determinants and (local) dynamics of trust in police. The need for new and better approaches to assess trust and confidence in police, and especially the effects of community specific operations, has even been highlighted in a recent London Met evaluation of a pilot program that sent officers specially trained in how to conduct fair and respectful stop and search encounters to selected high crime neighborhoods (Sutherland et al., 2025).[7]

Moreover, our measure connects to a young literature on the endogenous disclosure of racial and ethnic identity. Existing work shows that individuals may alter or conceal their reported identity in response to the incentives associated with discrimination (Dahis et al., 2019; Mitrut et al., 2025). Related work emphasizes that self-reported identity can differ systematically from that perceived by others in the labor (Sant'Anna et al., 2026) or credit (Dobre and Witzen, 2023) market contexts, while experimental evidence studies the consequences of concealing identity (e.g., caste in India (Chakraborty et al., 2026)). Rather than studying *which* identity an individual reports, we study *whether* they are willing to disclose sensitive identity information at all, and use that decision as a measure of revealed trust in the requesting institution.

While we study this disclosure decision in the policing context, our approach is potentially generalizable beyond policing. Parallel measures can be created wherever institutions request the voluntary disclosure of sensitive information and individuals decide whether to entrust them with it. This may include hospitals (intake forms), schools and universities, employers or government agencies more broadly. Such sensitive information is typically collected to monitor inequality. Non-response is increasingly acknowledged as problematic for monitoring purposes (Dembosky et al., 2019; Scobie et al., 2021) and

[7]The authors conclude that, at the local community level, "...in terms of measuring changes in trust and confidence as a result of the pilot, this was not possible using existing survey data".

treated as a missing data and imputation problem in the empirical literature (Albright and Gamboa-Arbelaez, 2026). To date, researchers have not exploited non-response to systematically study institutional trust in the way we propose with our new measure.

Our second contribution to the trust in police literature is to use our measure to study the effects of new information about officer misconduct. In particular, we show that off-duty officer misconduct decreases trust in police. Whereas the existing literature has primarily studied on-duty use of force and especially the killing of George Floyd (e.g., Ang et al. (2025); Brantingham et al. (2022)), off-duty officer misconduct potentially informs the public about the type of individuals hired as police and the quality of the screening process during recruitment. Our paper also contributes to the limited research on how information affects trust in police.[8] Specifically, our results suggest that news about officer misconduct (with related investigations and media coverage) decreases trust when it reveals new information. It is the high-frequency nature of our trust in police measure that allows us to distinguish responses to successive information shocks (misconduct event(s), investigations and legal consequences for the officers), which would typically fall within the same survey wave. Thus, in addition to providing a stand-alone contribution to the police misconduct and trust in police literature, our application also provides a proof of concept for our novel high-frequency measure of revealed trust and how it can be applied to research questions beyond policing.[9]

More broadly, our paper contributes to the political economy literature on the formation and persistence of trust in institutions. Whereas much of this literature treats trust as slow-moving, shaped by historical experiences (Becker et al., 2016; Giuliano and Nunn, 2021; Nunn and Wantchekon, 2011) or cumulative lifetime exposure to macroeconomic conditions (Besley et al., 2026), our high-frequency measure allows us to study the short-run dynamics of institutional trust and updating in response to new information. We thus provide a new approach to measuring trust in one of the key institutions underlying state capacity.[10]

[8]For instance, Blair et al. (2021) found that community policing initiatives, which include information campaigns, did not affect trust in police or crime reporting while Hohl et al. (2010) found positive effects of a newsletter. Rackstraw (2025) studies information gained via exposure to reality television shows. Braccioli et al. (2025) show how crime narratives can impact institutional trust and perceptions. Moreno-Medina et al. (2025) study how narratives the language used by the media to describe police killings affect attitudes towards the police.

[9]For instance, a hospital intake form based measure could be used to study the effect of high-profile hospital misconduct shocks (e.g., public disclosure of confidential patient information) on trust in healthcare institutions.

[10]More broadly, the political economy literature studies the interplay between trust and institutions, public policy, and government effectiveness (Besley and Dray, 2024).

2 Institutional Background

This section provides institutional details on policing, including stop and search procedures, in England and Wales. We also discuss how our definition of 'trust in police' is grounded in the model of policing by consent.

2.1 Police in the United Kingdom Today

Currently, there are 45 local police forces in the United Kingdom: 39 in England, 4 in Wales, the Police Service of Northern Ireland, and Police Scotland. For a full list, see Appendix B.[11] Given differences in stop and search powers and data availability, our analyses focus on England and Wales. Each police force in England and Wales has a designated catchment area (which does not correspond one to one with county borders). The chief constable of each force is responsible for all operational decisions while an elected police and crime commissioner (PCC) oversees the annual budget and a five-year crime and policing plan.[12] This elected politician is the Mayor in a handful of jurisdictions, including London where he heads the Mayor's Office for Policing and Crime (MOPAC).[13]

2.2 Stop and Search in England and Wales

Individuals can be stopped and questioned by the police at any time. However, in certain situations, they can be *stopped and searched* for contraband. Stop and search dates to the Vagrancy Act of 1824 and the creation of 'sus laws' that allowed officers to search anyone suspected of being "disorderly" or a "rogue and vagabond", without any reasonable suspicion threshold. Following an investigation into their excessive and discriminatory application, the sus laws were repealed in the 1981 Criminal Attempts Act.

The Police and Criminal Evidence Act (PACE) of 1984 codified the need for reasonable suspicion. Today, searches can be conducted if officers have reasonable grounds to suspect the presence of contraband (i.e., drugs, weapons, stolen property, or something to use to commit a crime). Introduced in 1994, however, section 60 searches can occur *without* such grounds, but rather if the officer suspects serious violence could occur, a weapon has been used, or someone is in a specific location. During any search, officers must inform the subject of: the officer's name and station, the search target (e.g., drugs), reason, and legal justification, and their entitlement to a record of the search.[14]

[11] There are also three national special police forces (the British Transport Police, Civil Nuclear Constabulary, and Ministry of Defence Police).

[12] Introduced in 2012, PCCs are meant to work with the police to reduce crime and help restore trust. See `https://www.police.uk/pu/policing-in-the-uk/police-crime-commissioners/` (last accessed: September 01, 2026).

[13] See `https://commonslibrary.parliament.uk/research-briefings/sn06104/` (last accessed: September 01, 2026)

[14] See `https://www.gov.uk/police-powers-to-stop-and-search-your-rights` for a discussion of subject rights (last accessed: September 08, 2026). Stop legislations include the: Police and Criminal Evidence Act of 1984 (section 1), Misuse of Drugs Act 1971 (section 23), and Criminal Justice and Public

Officers are also trained to collect information during a search. Officers must ask the subject to verbally report their gender, age, and self-defined ethnicity. The officer records this in a form (in London, for instance, Metropolitan Police Form 5090) where (in the case of the Met) officers are instructed to say with regards to ethnicity: "We ask people about their ethnicity so that the fair treatment of different ethnic groups can be monitored (internally and independently) to improve the service we provide. Please look at this chart and tell me how you describe your ethnic identity." The chart lists between 16 and 19 (depending on the year) ethnic subcategories that correspond to the ethnicity classifications by the Office for National Statistics Census ethnicity and Home Office guidance, and which are grouped into five broad ethnic categories (White, Black, Mixed, Asian, Other).[15] Though subjects are not explicitly given non-report as an option, subjects can decline to report ethnicity and are not in any way officially penalized if they do. In these cases, officers indicate "not stated" in the records.[16] Officers must also report their own perception of the subject's ethnicity if the subject declines to self-report or reports an ethnicity different than the officer perceives.[17]

Stop and search increased throughout the 2000s, peaking at about 1.5 million stops in 2008/09. Renewed concerns about its excessive and disparate use led to the Best Use of Stop and Search (*BUSS*) scheme in 2014, which aimed to reduce section 60 searches and better monitor ethnic disparities. Stop numbers decreased until 2019, but then increased again due to the government's "Beating Crime Plan," which de-emphasized compliance with the BUSS guidelines (and completely lifted them in May 2022).

2.3 Definition of Trust in Police

Trust is central to the model of policing by consent, which originated with Sir Robert Peel's 1829 formation of the London Metropolitan Police.[18] The Home Office defines policing by consent with Peel's Nine Principles of Policing, many of which emphasize the public's trust and approval of the police.[19] Based on Peel's principles, presented in

Order Act of 1994 (section 60).

[15]See PACE Code A 2023 (last accessed: September 01, 2026).

[16]See section 4.3a and Note 18 of the PACE Code A 2023. Some jurisdictions, such as the Nottinghamshire Police, explicitly point out that there is no legal obligation to provide the officer with this information (last accessed: September 01, 2026). To the extent that this leads to heterogeneity across police forces, we will later include police force fixed effects in the regressions.

[17]The recording of self-defined subject ethnicity in England and Wales primarily originates from a parliamentary investigation into accusations that the London Metropolitan Police was corrupt, incompetent and racist following the 1993 race-based London murder of Stephen Lawrence by a gang of White youths (none of whom were convicted until almost 20 years later). The 1999 *MacPherson Report* criticized the London Met for institutionally racist practices and *recommended that officers record, monitor and analyze the (self-defined) racial and ethnic demographics of all police stops and searches*. Official Home Office guidance on the recording of self-defined ethnicity was issued in 2002.

[18]See Bindler and Hjalmarsson (2021) for an evaluation of the creation of the London Met, which finds that it led to a reduction in violent crimes.

[19]See `https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/policing-by-consent/definition-of-policing-by-consent` (last accessed: September 08, 2026).

Appendix A, we characterize an individual who trusts the police as someone who: (i) approves of the police's existence, actions and behavior, (ii) is willing to cooperate with the police, (iii) believes the police to be impartial, courteous and friendly, non-corrupt, and law abiding, and (iv) believes the police effectively prevent crime and maintain order.

A recent literature review (Hanway and Hambly, 2023) conducted on behalf of the UK Home Office highlights that there is no single accepted definition of trust in police, and that trust and confidence are often used interchangeably. However, the concepts of legitimacy and procedural justice tend to be common themes across definitions, and are reflected in our definition as well.[20] 'Trust in police' is thus a broad concept, with many potential underlying components. Surveys aimed at eliciting perceptions of the police thus ask multiple questions corresponding to these various dimensions.

3 A New Measure of Revealed Trust in Police

This section develops our new measure of revealed trust in police. We start with a simple conceptual framework to fix ideas and provide the intuition for our empirical approach. We then describe the stop and search data and our new measure of trust in police, and illustrate the temporal and geographical variation in our new high-frequency index.

3.1 Conceptual Framework: Self-Reported Ethnicity and Trust in Police

To formalize the intuition underlying our proposed measure of trust, we provide a simple framework of how an individual decides to disclose sensitive information.[21]

In this framework, an individual i asked to self-report their ethnicity during a stop by the police has to decide whether to report or refuse to disclose this potentially sensitive information. Let SR_i denote the outcome of this decision: $SR_i = 1$ if the i chooses to self-report and $SR_i = 0$ if not. The benefits of self-reporting, $B_i(SR) \geq 0$, capture, for instance, a preference for cooperating or perceived improvements in policing associated with the monitoring of inequality. We assume that there are two types of potential costs of self-reporting: One, $C_i(SR) \geq 0$, is a general privacy or disclosure cost. The other, $D_i(SR) \geq 0$, captures the costs associated with the misuse of the shared information (e.g., via discrimination, profiling, or inappropriate use or sharing). The expected costs of disclosure depend on both the amount of harm, $D_i(SR)$, and an individual's belief about the likelihood that information will be misused, $\pi_i \in [0, 1]$. We model this belief as function of the individual's trust in police, i.e. $\pi_i(T_i)$.

In this framework, an individual decides to self-report their ethnicity if the net benefit,

[20] Tyler (2006) defines legitimacy as the perception that authorities and institutions are just or fair and appropriate. Jackson and Bradford (2019) characterize procedural justice as treating people with respect and dignity and making fair, transparent, and accountable decisions.

[21] This framework is inspired by models of victims' decisions to report (e.g., Jácome (2022)) and can be generalized to institutional contexts other than police stops.

$U(SR_i = 1) - U(SR_i = 0)$, is positive. We can thus write the probability of self-reporting ethnicity as:

$$\mathbb{P}\{SR_i = 1\} = \mathbb{P}\{U(SR_i = 1) - U(SR_i = 0) \geq 0\}$$

Normalizing the cost and benefit of self-reporting to zero when individual i refuses to report (such that $B_i(0) = C_i(0) = D_i(0) = 0$) reduces this expression to:[22]

$$\begin{aligned} \mathbb{P}\{SR_i = 1\} &= \mathbb{P}\{U(SR_i = 1) \geq 0\} \\ &= \mathbb{P}\{B_i(1) - C_i(1) - \pi_i(T_i) \cdot D_i(1) \geq 0\} \end{aligned} \tag{1}$$

This means that the probability of self-reporting ethnicity increases in its utility, $U(SR_i = 1)$. If beliefs about misusing information decrease in trust in police, i.e. $\pi_i'(T_i) < 0$, it follows that increases in trust increase the utility and thus the likelihood of self-reporting ethnicity:

$$\frac{\partial U(SR_i = 1)}{\partial T_{it}} = -\pi_i'(T_i) \cdot D_i > 0 \tag{2}$$

This relation allows us to build an empirical measure that proxies for trust in police with information on whether individuals are willing to self-report their ethnicity. In our framework, the self-reporting of ethnicity depends on multiple factors that could vary across individuals, including their preferences for privacy and/or cooperating with police and the perceived costs of disclosure. Holding these factors fixed, lower trust increases the belief that harm will occur and reduces the probability of self-reporting. Thus, self-reporting is a function of trust, though not a deterministic function. Our empirical measure developed next should thus be interpreted as an index that moves with underlying trust (rather than a direct measure of trust itself).[23]

3.2 Data and Sample

We next take these conceptual considerations to the data and construct our new measure of revealed trust in police. Publicly available stop and search data for each police force include both self-defined and officer-defined ethnicity for each stop and search incident.[24] The data also contain information on the type (person only, vehicle only, person and vehicle), date, time and location of search, the subject's gender and age range, the legislation on which the stop is based, the object and outcome of search, whether the outcome is linked to an object, and removal of more than outer clothing. For about 85% of London-based stops after 2015, we can identify the borough of the stop; London is divided into 32

[22] This normalization is consistent with there being no legal penalty of refusing to self-report ethnicity.

[23] For this to be true, we do not need to rule out that other factors (B_i, C_i, D_i) move with or against changes in trust in police, though we make this simplification in the framework.

[24] These data are on the UK open data portal on crime and policing: `https://data.police.uk`.

local government areas (boroughs) and the City of London. Appendix B provides details on the sample selection (Appendix Table B1), data periods available for each force (Appendix Table B2), and data cleaning to harmonize variables across jurisdictions and/or over time (Appendix Tables B3 - B6).

The most central variable to our analysis is self-defined ethnicity. As described in the Data Appendix and noted above, there are 17 ethnic subcategories observed in the data at the beginning of our sample. One of these subcategories is to "Not State" one's ethnicity. The subcategories are relatively detailed; for example, within the category of Asian, individuals can choose Pakistani, Indian, Chinese, Bangladeshi, or Any other Asian background. In 2017, two additional subcategories were added — White-Gypsy or Irish Traveller and Other Ethnic Group - Arab. Thus, in the context of the UK, there are also individuals broadly classified as White who may fear discrimination on the basis of their ethnicity, such as the Irish Traveller minority for whom there is evidence of being one of the most discriminated groups in the UK, including by the police.

As seen in Appendix Table B1, the raw data include 4,332,281 stops from January 2015 to December 2024 for 43 forces. To ensure that temporal patterns are not confounded by changing sample compositions, we restrict our analysis to forces with data available between October 2015 and April 2024.[25] We also exclude vehicle only searches and stops with missing information on self-reported ethnicity, the search outcome, and the underlying legislation. The analysis sample consists of 3,067,880 stops by 31 forces from October 2015 to April 2024. Listed in Appendix Table B2, the included forces are geographically dispersed across the country. The London Met is included, while Greater Manchester, Thames Valley, and Merseyside are among the larger excluded forces.

3.3 Stop and Search Trends and Characteristics

As described in Section 2.2, the use of stop and search has fluctuated substantially over time. For our sample of 31 jurisdictions, Figure 1 shows that the monthly number of stops in 2016 hovered at a low of around 10,000 for London (solid red line) and non-London forces (dashed blue line). Stop numbers started to increase throughout England and Wales, and especially in London, in late 2018. Stops spiked in April/May 2020 due to an increased visibility of persons and vehicles traveling against regulations during the first national COVID lockdown. Stops in London subsequently started to trend down while those outside of London stayed fairly stable and even trended up.

More than half of the stops in our sample period occurred in London.[26] Columns (1) and (2) of Table 1 displays summary statistics for subject and stop characteristics for London and non-London forces, respectively. Stopped individuals are disproportionately

[25] 480,623 stops are excluded in the early months of 2015 and later months of 2024 while 354,239 stops are excluded from omitting unbalanced jurisdictions.

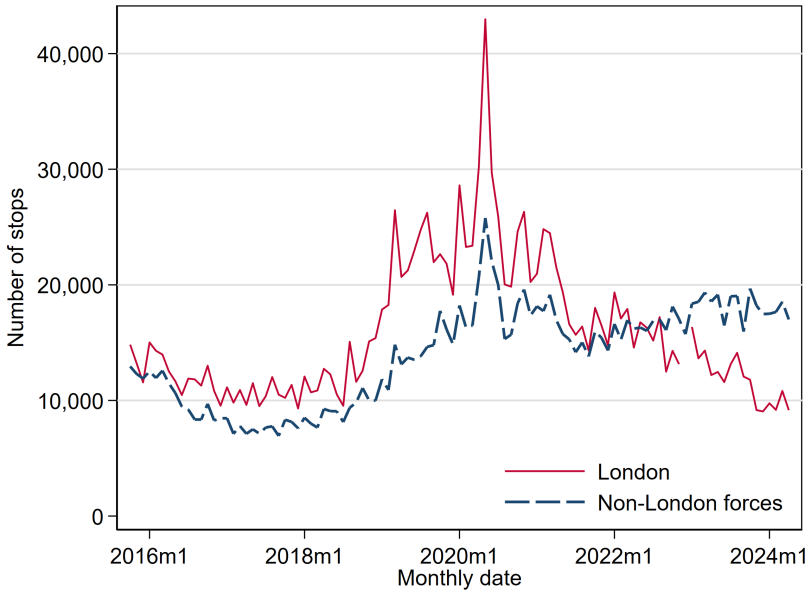
[26] 99% (1%) of London stops are conducted by the London Metropolitan Police (City of London) force.

Table 1: Summary statistics of stop and subject characteristics

	London	Non-London	London		Non-London	
	All	All	Stated	Not	Stated	Not
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
Gender						
Male	0.924	0.806	0.923	0.929	0.801	0.844
Female	0.073	0.108	0.075	0.067	0.109	0.101
Other	0.002	0.002	0.002	0.004	0.002	0.006
Missing	0.000	0.085	0.000	0.000	0.089	0.049
Age						
Below 18	0.169	0.187	0.174	0.150	0.187	0.182
18-24	0.334	0.290	0.349	0.279	0.292	0.273
25-34	0.216	0.210	0.225	0.186	0.213	0.193
Over 34	0.174	0.205	0.180	0.151	0.208	0.181
Missing	0.107	0.108	0.072	0.234	0.099	0.171
Officer-reported ethnicity						
White	0.400	0.777	0.429	0.292	0.800	0.580
Black	0.389	0.088	0.369	0.465	0.079	0.166
Asian	0.165	0.106	0.167	0.160	0.100	0.156
Mixed/Other	0.045	0.026	0.035	0.081	0.019	0.084
Self-reported ethnicity						
Not stated	0.213	0.112	0.000	1.000	0.000	1.000
White	0.325	0.694	0.413	0.000	0.782	0.000
Black	0.266	0.067	0.338	0.000	0.076	0.000
Asian	0.131	0.086	0.167	0.000	0.097	0.000
Mixed/Other	0.064	0.040	0.082	0.000	0.045	0.000
Stop characteristics						
Person & vehicle search	0.231	0.179	0.242	0.192	0.181	0.165
Hit	0.269	0.281	0.291	0.184	0.287	0.237
Stop reason						
Drugs and substances	0.615	0.607	0.629	0.562	0.610	0.582
Weapons	0.029	0.022	0.027	0.035	0.022	0.020
General Police Powers	0.357	0.371	0.344	0.403	0.367	0.397
Border and security	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000
Other/non-criminal	0.000	0.001	0.000	0.000	0.001	0.001
Observations	1,631,250	1,390,867	1,283,359	347,891	1,234,893	155,974

NOTE. The table reports mean subject and stop characteristics in the main estimation sample. Column (1) reports means for stops in London; column (2) reports means for stops by all other police forces in England and Wales. Columns (3) and (4) restrict the London sample to stops in which the subject did and did not self-report their ethnicity, respectively. Columns (5) and (6) make the same split for the other police forces. SOURCE. Authors' calculations based on stop and search data available from data.police.uk.

Figure 1: Stop & search over time



NOTE. The figure shows the monthly number of stops in our analysis sample for police forces in London (solid red line) and other police forces in England and Wales (dashed blue line). SOURCE. Authors' calculations based on stop and search data available from data.police.uk.

male. In London, where gender is almost never missing from the data, 92% of subjects are male. For non-London stops, subjects are reported to be male in 81% of stops, while gender is missing in 8.5% of stops. Stopped individuals are disproportionately young, with just 17% (21%) older than 34 for London (non-London) stops; 11% of stops in both the London and non-London samples are missing age. Officer reported ethnicity is White for 40% of the London stop sample and 78% of the non-London sample.[27] About 23% and 18% of stops are of a person and vehicle in our London and non-London samples, respectively. Search justifications and hit rates are similar in both samples. Around 61% of searches are justified under drugs and substances legislation while more than 35% use General Police Powers for reasonable grounds. About 27% of searches result in a 'hit' in which the object of the search was found.

3.4 Defining the New Measure of Trust in Police

To develop our new measure of trust in police, we first categorize subjects' self-reported ethnicity responses as White, Black, Asian, Mixed/Other, and Declines to Self-Report. As seen in Table 1, declining to self-report ethnicity is more common in London (21%) than non-London (11%). In London, 33% of stopped subjects report their ethnicity as White, 27% as Black, 13% as Asian, and 6% as Mixed/Other. The corresponding non-London statistics are 69% (White), 7% (Black), 9% (Asian), and 4% (Mixed/Other).

[27]In the 2021 census, approximately 54% of London residents identify broadly as White, including 37% as White British and the remainder White Other or White Irish. The corresponding statistics for England and Wales are 82%, including 74% White British (Office for National Statistics, 2022).

The demographic distribution of stopped subjects depends on which ethnicity measure (self or officer reported) is used. These differences can in principle arise from two sources. The first is directly measurable — the fact that 21% of subjects in London and 11% in other areas decline to self-report. In general, ethnicity is considered a *sensitive personal data category*, which requires careful protection, because its misuse can lead to discrimination or harm. Individuals may thus be less willing to self-report ethnicity if they do not trust the authorities to adequately protect these data, to only use it for benign purposes (e.g., monitoring ethnic gaps), and to not discriminate on the basis of their response (see above). The second potential source is mismatch between the categories for subjects that do self-report and what the officers perceive (and report). Such mismatch can arise as a result of: (i) subjects strategically reporting their ethnicity different from the officer's perceived ethnicity (e.g., in anticipation of discrimination) rather than declining to report, (ii) officers strategically reporting inaccurate perceptions in order to, for instance, manipulate statistics (Luh, 2023)), (iii) poor measurement of ethnicity by police or other justice agencies (Finlay et al., 2024), or (iv) true mismatch (e.g., because ethnic identity is subjective and a fluid concept). Such 'mismatch' occurs in 7.8% of stops with self-reported ethnicity. Given, however, that we cannot disentangle the first channel (i.e., subject strategic behavior) from the other potential underlying channels, we create our new index of trust in police based only on whether the subjects decline to report their ethnicity.

To measure individual 'trust' in police, we create a binary variable, SR, that equals one if the subject i is willing to self-report their ethnicity (i.e., the subject did not choose "Not stated" but one of the ethnicity categories). Consistent with our conceptual framework in Section 3.1, we interpret a value of one as the subject revealing sufficient trust in the police to disclose their ethnicity — or, equivalently, to entrust the police with this sensitive personal information:

$$SR_i = \mathbb{1}[\texttt{self-reported ethnicity} \neq \texttt{`Not stated'}] \tag{3}$$

Based on our conceptual framework, we will use this variable as a new (stop-level) measure of trust in police in our subsequent officer misconduct application. We first, however, create our high-frequency index, HFI, which we use for descriptive and validation purposes. Specifically, we aggregate the stop-level measure across all stops in a given time period t and/or geography j by finding the share of stops with self-reported ethnicity, $\overline{SR}_{tj}$:

$$HFI \equiv \overline{SR}_{tj} = \frac{1}{n_{tj}} \sum_{i=1}^{n_{tj}} SR_i \quad \text{for } t = 1, ..., T \text{ and } j = 1, ..., J \tag{4}$$

This high-frequency index can be created for any temporal dimension (i.e., t can be

daily, weekly, monthly, or yearly) or geography (i.e., j can be national, police force area, London versus non-London, or borough within London). Separate trust in police indices can also be created for different demographic groups.

Variation in the new measure. Figure 2 visualizes the temporal and geographic variation in our proposed measure of trust in police. Panel A plots the monthly share of stops with self-reported ethnicity over time in London and non-London police forces (i.e., t = month; j = London, Non-London). In early 2016, self-reporting rates of ethnicity were over 90% in both jurisdictions. A decline appears to begin in the months leading up to 2018. In London, this decline accelerates and persists until 2024. Outside London, there is a decrease in 2018 but then a fairly stable reporting rate until another decrease in early 2022. The monthly share self-reporting ethnicity decreases inside of London from 89.7% at the beginning of the sample period to 68.8% at the end, and somewhat less outside of London from 92.7% to 85.5%. Given the variation in the number of stops seen in Figure 1, this downward trend does not appear to be a mechanical artifact of stop numbers. Appendix Figures C1 and C2 show that downward trends in our measure of trust are seen across officer-reported minority status and subject gender, as well as when alternatively looking at the combined share of reporting and non-mismatch.

Panels B and C of Figure 2 map the share of stops with self-reported ethnicity for each borough of London and police force in England and Wales, respectively, over the entire sample period (i.e., t = all years; j = borough or police force). Considerable variation is seen in self-reporting rates both across forces and across boroughs within London.

Interpretation. If our proposed index of trust — share of stop and search subjects willing to self-report ethnicity — is valid, then the above descriptive statistics suggest a substantial decline in trust in police since 2018 throughout England and Wales and especially in London. Our measure rests on the premise that non-response can be due to insufficient trust in the police. Such reluctance may reflect fears of discrimination, concerns about how the information will be used, negative experiences with and information about the police, or distrust of authorities in general.[28] We formally test this central premise — that reporting co-moves with trust in police — in Section 4. Descriptive evidence is already supportive: Columns (3) - (6) of Table 1 show that officer-perceived White subjects are substantially over-represented among those who report ethnicity while officer-perceived Black subjects are substantially over-represented among those who do not. This pattern is consistent with survey evidence of lower trust in police among minorities.

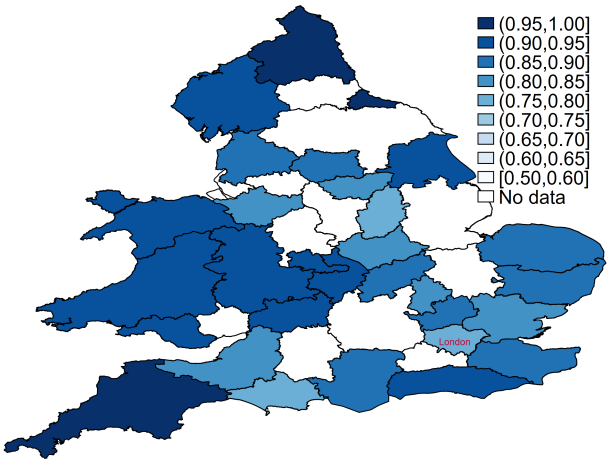
[28]Individuals who decline to report ethnicity to the police may also decline in other settings. Evidence of individuals concealing or passing on potentially discriminated against racial/ethnic identities has been seen e.g., in the context of loans (García and Darity, 2022) and Romanian censuses (Mitrut et al., 2025).

Figure 2: Variation in the share of stops with self-reported ethnicity

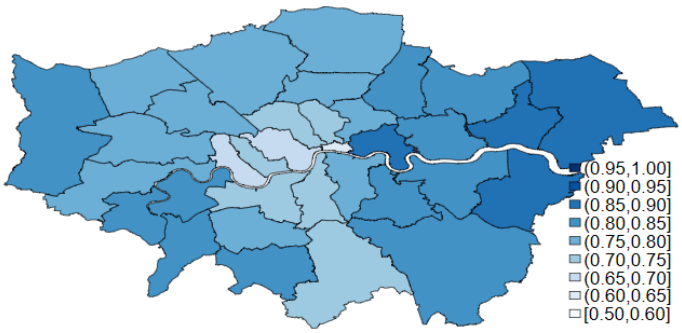
Panel A: Trend in London and other police forces



Panel B: England and Wales (2016–2023)



Panel C: London (2016–2023)



NOTE. Panel A shows the monthly share of stops with the subject self-reporting ethnicity over time for London (red solid line) and other police forces in England and Wales (dashed blue line) in the analysis sample. Panels B and C illustrate the average share of stops in our analysis sample with self-reported ethnicity for police force areas in England and Wales (Panel B) and boroughs in London (Panel C) in 2016–2023. Darker (lighter) shaded areas indicate higher (lower) self-reporting rates. SOURCE. Authors' calculations based on stop and search data available from data.police.uk.

Insufficient trust, however, is not the only reason individuals may decline to report and the decline in self-reporting rates may not *only* be due to declines in trust. As we highlighted in our conceptual framework in Section 3.1, we do not rule out that other factors could have changed, too. Further, it is theoretically possible that individuals may not identify with any of the offered ethnic categories. This, however, seems unlikely to be quantitatively important in our context: in the 2021 Census of England and Wales, more than 98% of the population identified with one of the detailed ethnic sub-categories listed rather than 'Other'. Time pressures or language barriers may also discourage reporting.

A final concern is that apparent non-reporting instead reflects incomplete data collection by officers or other data quality problems. Table 1 therefore examines missingness in gender and age, which are also self-reported. Because age and gender do not have a 'Not Stated' category, missing data could be due both to willingness to report but also officer asking/recording behaviors or other administrative data processing issues. The descriptive patterns do not support a simple explanation that non-reporting of ethnicity is driven by general data collection or reporting failures. Specifically, gender is never missing in London, irrespective of whether ethnicity was reported. In the non-London sample, gender is, if anything, less likely to be missing among ethnicity non-reporters than reporters (5% vs. 9%)—the opposite of what an officer-driven recording failure would predict. Age, by contrast, is more likely to be missing among ethnicity non-reporters in both London and non-London. Subsequent analyses control for missing gender and age to absorb variation in not stating self-reported ethnicity that could be associated with broader (officer-driven) data quality issues.

4 Cross-Validation of the New Measure of Trust in Police

Does our new measure of trust — based on self-reported ethnicity in stop and search records — truly capture and co-move with trust in police? This section cross-validates our measure against multiple established *survey-based* measures, which have previously been used to learn about trust in police. We show that our new measure: (i) shares both temporal and geographic variation with existing survey measures, (ii) is positively associated with multiple dimensions of trust, including confidence, fairness, and perceived effectiveness, (iii) exhibits these relationships across demographic groups and populations defined by victimization and police contact, and (iv) appears more closely aligned with trust in police than trust in institutions more generally.

4.1 Survey Data on Trust in Police

Our validation exercises use data from different sources: the Crime Survey of England and Wales (CSEW), the London MOPAC Public Attitude Survey, and YouGov surveys. For each survey, we classify survey questions into three underlying dimensions of trust —

trust and confidence, fairness and respect, and effectiveness and performance. All survey questions are listed in Appendix Table D1.

Crime Survey for England and Wales. We use a sample of 226,649 respondents in the 2015 to 2024 CSEW survey rounds; the CSEW was not conducted in 2020 and 2021 due to COVID.[29] There are seven trust in police related questions consistently available across surveys, which we use to generate a general survey-based measure of trust in police, $SurveyIND$, that is comparable to our new high-frequency index. Specifically, we create a dichotomized variable for each question equal to one if a respondent agrees or strongly agrees with the statement.[30] We then define the general index as the average over all dichotomized variables; this index thus ranges between zero and one and measures the share of statements with which the respondent agrees. We repeat these steps to create survey-based sub-indices for each category of survey questions: trust/confidence, fairness/respect, and effectiveness/performance.

Appendix Table D2 presents summary statistics for the CSEW sample: 67% of respondents trust the police using the general index and 68% and 73% using the trust/confidence and fairness/respect subindices but only 59% for the effectiveness index. We also see that the CSEW sample, which is designed to be nationally representative, is markedly less male, older and less minority than the stop and search sample.

MOPAC Public Attitude Survey. The MOPAC (Mayor's Office for Policing and Crime) conducts a Public Attitude Survey in the 32 boroughs under the jurisdiction of the London Metropolitan Police. Using MOPAC survey data from 2016 (when we observe London stop and search boroughs) to 2022 on six trust in police related questions, we again create a general survey-based index of trust and separate subindices. As seen in Column (3) of Appendix Table D2, the MOPAC respondent sample (n=89,301) is 45% male, 72% over 34, and 65% White. The general index has a value of 72% and, as was the case nationally, there are higher values for trust (76%) and fairness (74%) than effectiveness (59%).

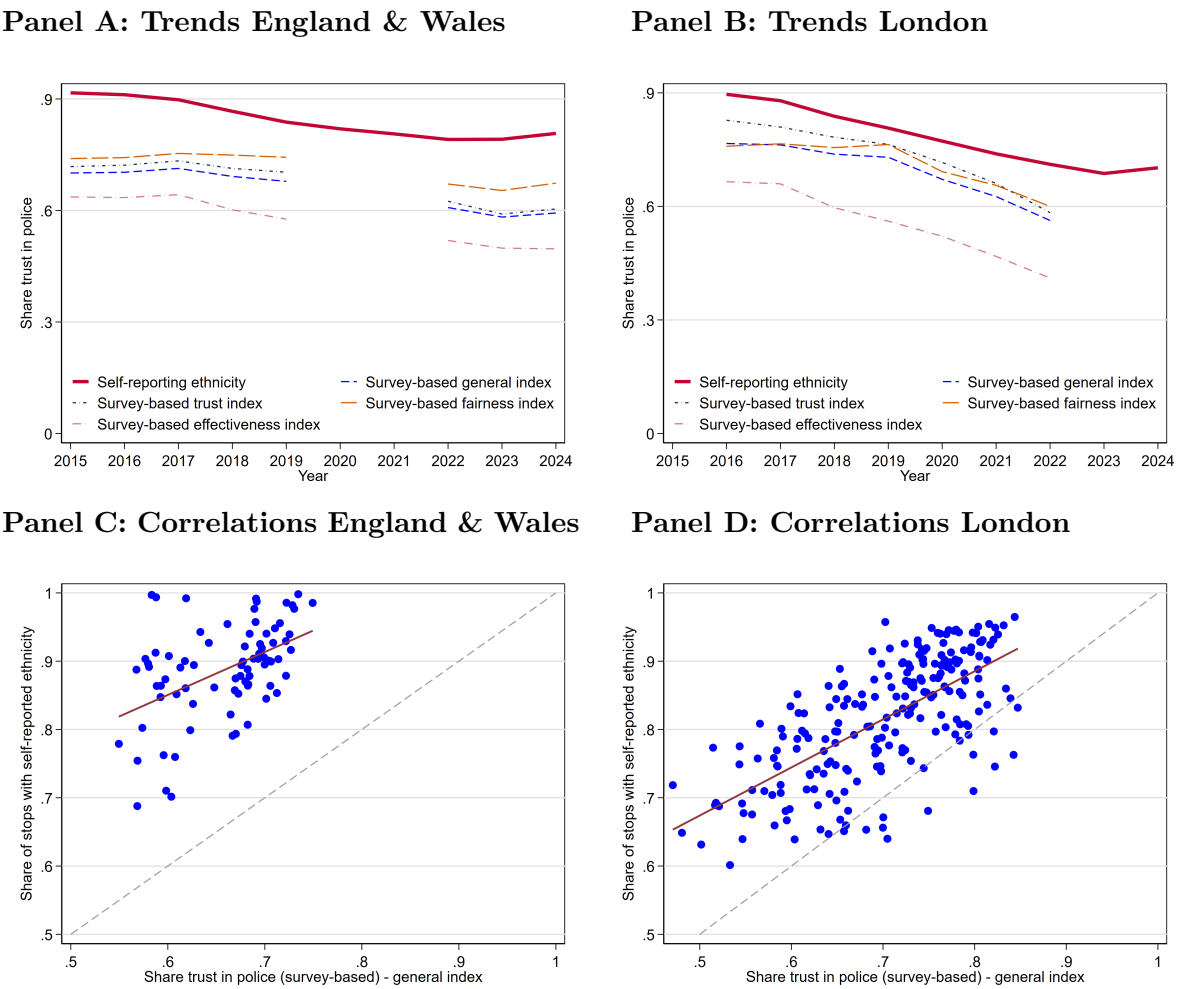
YouGov Survey. From 2003 to 2024, YouGov's trust tracker has polled Britons about how much they trust a variety of institutions (e.g., local police, courts, family doctors, MPs, trade union leaders) to tell the truth. We extract the share responding that they have a 'great deal' or 'fair amount' of trust in each institution from published statistics.[31]

[29] Access to these data files can be obtained through UK Data Service.

[30] We code "Refused" and "Don't know" as zero; the results are robust to coding them as missing.

[31] We extract the statistics from figures published in YouGov (2024).

Figure 3: High-frequency and survey-based trust in police measures



NOTE. Panels A and B show trends in the high-frequency and survey-based trust measures for England and Wales and London, respectively. The red solid line is the annual share of stops with self-reported ethnicity in our analysis sample; the other lines are survey-based trust indices (general, trust, fairness, effectiveness, as labeled). Panels C and D plot the same high-frequency measure (y-axis) against the survey-based general trust index (x-axis), with each dot a GOR-year (Panel C) or London borough-year (Panel D). Red lines are fitted linear regressions; the dashed gray line is the 45-degree line. SOURCE. Authors' calculations based on stop and search data available from data.police.uk, the Crime Survey of England and Wales (Panel A and C), and London MOPAC Public Attitudes Survey (Panel B and D).

4.2 Trends and Raw Correlations

Our new high-frequency measure of trust is strongly related to established, survey-based trust measures. Specifically, Panels A and B of Figure 3 show that both the general survey-based trust index (blue dashed line) and our new trust index (solid red line) display a downward trend. This trend appears to kick in after 2017 and is steeper in London (Panel B) than in England and Wales (Panel A). Similar patterns are seen for each of the survey-based subindices — trust, fairness, and effectiveness.

We then collapse both data sets to the region by year level and plot our new trust index against the survey-based general index (Panels C and D of Figure 3). Each dot

corresponds to a single year and governmental office region (GOR) of England and Wales in Panel C and borough in Panel D, respectively. There is a strongly positive relationship between our new measure of trust in police and traditional survey-based measures.

4.3 Regression Analysis for Cross-Validation

Since individuals stopped by the police (the sample for our index) are not demographically representative of the general population or population of survey respondents and trust varies across population sub-groups (e.g., minorities trust police less than non-minorities), we proceed to cross-validation tests that compare demographically similar groups (e.g., young, White, males in the borough of Camden). Specifically, we collapse both the stop and search data and the survey data into observational cells defined by: gender, ethnicity (White, Black, Asian, Other), age (younger/older than 34), region (borough in London and GOR in England and Wales), and year. We drop cells with less than ten survey respondents but, given small samples, show the results are robust to relaxing this restriction.[32]

Using the collapsed data, we estimate the below regression. The dependent variable is the high frequency index, HFI_{jtage}, for each cell, defined by region j, year t, age a, gender g, and ethnicity e. The independent variable of interest, $SurveyIND_{jtage}$, is one of the four indices (general, trust/confidence, fairness/respect, effectiveness):

$$HFI_{jtage} = \beta_0 + \beta_1 SurveyIND_{jtage} + \alpha_t + \gamma_j + X_{jtage}\delta + \epsilon_{jtage} \tag{5}$$

β_1 captures the correlation between the survey-based measures and our new measure of trust; $\beta_1 > 0$ indicates that self-reporting of ethnicity is increasing in survey-measured trust, as predicted by our conceptual framework. Beyond the raw correlation, we assess the robustness of this relationship by including year fixed effects, α_t, and region fixed effects, γ_j. Year fixed effects absorb common national (or London-wide) trends, such as a simultaneous decline over time in both survey-based trust and ethnicity self-reporting, while region fixed effects absorb persistent unobserved geographic differences in baseline trust perceptions, policing practices, or reporting behavior. With both sets of fixed effects, the association cannot be solely driven by common trends over time or persistent differences across areas. Finally, we control for time-varying stop composition using average stop characteristics X_{jtage} (legislative basis and stop outcomes); Appendix Table D3 also presents results with gender by age by ethnicity group fixed effects. Standard errors are heteroskedasticity-robust.[33]

[32]This restriction excludes 25.3% of CSEW cells and 48.2% of London MOPAC cells; all excluded cells are for non-Whites, who comprise a small share of survey respondents.

[33]For England and Wales, the natural clustering dimension is the GOR level, but with only ten regions there are too few clusters for reliable clustered standard errors. As a robustness check, we report results with clustered standard errors in Appendix Table D4.

Table 2: Regression-based cross-validation of the new measure of trust

	England & Wales				London			
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)
	Panel A: Y = HFI, X = General Index (Survey)							
Survey-based trust	0.277*** (0.064)	0.264*** (0.082)	0.230*** (0.081)	0.239*** (0.083)	0.350*** (0.026)	0.189*** (0.029)	0.138*** (0.034)	0.128*** (0.033)
Baseline mean	0.831	0.831	0.831	0.831	0.859	0.859	0.859	0.859
Adjusted R^2	0.021	0.030	0.169	0.172	0.094	0.164	0.308	0.323
	Panel B: Y = HFI, X = Trust Index (Survey)							
Survey-based trust	0.208*** (0.059)	0.188*** (0.073)	0.189*** (0.072)	0.193*** (0.072)	0.295*** (0.024)	0.118*** (0.031)	0.099*** (0.032)	0.090*** (0.032)
Baseline mean	0.831	0.831	0.831	0.831	0.859	0.859	0.859	0.859
Adjusted R^2	0.014	0.024	0.167	0.170	0.075	0.152	0.305	0.320
	Panel C: Y = HFI, X = Fairness Index (Survey)							
Survey-based trust	0.273*** (0.061)	0.263*** (0.071)	0.215*** (0.070)	0.222*** (0.071)	0.293*** (0.025)	0.180*** (0.024)	0.103*** (0.027)	0.098*** (0.027)
Baseline mean	0.831	0.831	0.831	0.831	0.859	0.859	0.859	0.859
Adjusted R^2	0.024	0.034	0.171	0.174	0.077	0.168	0.306	0.321
	Panel D: Y = HFI, X = Effectiveness Index (Survey)							
Survey-based trust	0.216*** (0.056)	0.180** (0.072)	0.125* (0.069)	0.137* (0.071)	0.220*** (0.018)	0.084*** (0.022)	0.094*** (0.025)	0.086*** (0.024)
Baseline mean	0.831	0.831	0.831	0.831	0.859	0.859	0.859	0.859
Adjusted R^2	0.017	0.024	0.162	0.166	0.069	0.151	0.307	0.322
Stop Controls	No	No	No	Yes	No	No	No	Yes
Year FEs	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes
Region FEs	No	No	Yes	Yes	No	No	Yes	Yes
Observations	925	925	925	925	1623	1623	1623	1623

NOTE. The table shows regression results corresponding to Equation (5), with columns (1)-(4) for England and Wales and columns (5)-(8) for London. Specifications are indicated at the bottom of the table. Stop controls are reason for stop and stop outcome. The independent variable is a general survey-based trust index (Panel A), a specific survey-based trust/confidence index (Panel B), a specific survey-based fairness index (Panel C) and a specific survey-based effectiveness/performance index (Panel D). Standard errors (in parentheses) are heteroskedasticity-robust. *** $p < 0.01$, ** $p < 0.05$, * $p < 0.1$.
SOURCE. Authors' calculations based on stop and search data available from data.police.uk, the Crime Survey of England and Wales, and London MOPAC Public Attitudes Survey.

Table 2 presents the results for England and Wales in columns (1)-(4) and London in columns (5)-(8). Panel A shows a significant positive relationship between the general survey-based index and our new high-frequency trust measure. In England and Wales, a 10 percentage point (pp) increase in survey-based trust is associated with a 2.8pp increase in the self-reporting share in the raw specification and a 2.4pp increase with the full set of controls. The relationship is thus relatively stable across specifications. In London, a 10pp increase in survey-based general trust is associated with a 3.5pp increase in the

self-reporting share in the raw specification.[34] The coefficient decreases notably with the inclusion of year fixed effects, but remains relatively stable when adding borough fixed effects and stop characteristics. With the full set of controls, a 10pp increase in survey-based trust in London is associated with a 1.3pp increase in self-reporting. Panels B-D show similar patterns for each sub-index: the share self-reporting ethnicity increases in each underlying dimension (trust, fairness, and effectiveness). The magnitudes are broadly similar across dimensions, although the relationship with perceived effectiveness is weaker in England and Wales. Thus, the positive association is not specific to a particular survey index or conceptual dimension of trust.

How should one interpret the regression results in terms of magnitudes? The point estimates suggest a significant positive relationship between the two measures, but not a one-to-one transmission of changes in survey-measured trust to our measure of trust. This is to be expected: First, our conceptual framework highlights that self-reporting ethnicity is increasing in underlying trust in police, but factors other than trust may affect the disclosure decision. This suggests that a benchmark magnitude of one (corresponding to a one-to-one transmission) is not plausible: One would indeed expect point estimates smaller than one (but larger than zero). Second, several features of our data are likely to weaken the observed relationship between the two measures. For instance, in the England and Wales analyses, GORs are imperfect geographic units since missing police force areas in the stop and search data imply GOR level aggregations do not cover exactly the same areas in the stop and search and survey data. More generally, demographic and geographic characteristics are measured somewhat differently across the two data sources.[35] Finally, sampling error in the survey-based measures, which contain relatively small numbers of respondents per cell, would tend to attenuate the estimated coefficients towards zero. Such measurement error may attenuate the estimated correlations (and R^2).

Appendix Figures D1 and D2 show that the cross-validation results are not driven by any specific London borough or region of England and Wales and that they are robust to: (i) creating the general survey index using continuous rather than dichotomized responses, (ii) treating survey responses of "Refused"/"Don't know" as missing, (iii) treating missing self-reported ethnicity in the stop and search data as zeros, and (iv) relaxing the minimum cell-size restriction from ten observations to five and one. Appendix Table D5 shows that our results are very similar — if anything, the relationships are somewhat stronger —

[34]Respondents to the MOPAC survey also have the option to refuse to self-report their ethnicity. In 2021 and 2022—the most recent survey waves—3.2% refused. This allows us to compare, within respondents, a revealed and stated (general trust index) measure of trust: stated trust is higher among those who self-report (0.623) than among those who refuse (0.504), consistent with our interpretation of self-reporting as reflecting trust.

[35]Measurement error can arise from multiple sources: (i) Geography (GOR or borough) is based on the location of the stop in the police data but location of residence in the survey data, an issue that may be more relevant in London, (ii) ethnicity for all stopped individuals is based on officer perceptions while ethnicity classification is self-reported in the survey, and (iii) age and gender based bins in the stop and search data can only be created for those without missing data.

when we weight the regressions by number of stops in a cell given low stop numbers in cells for certain groups (e.g., Asians and women).

4.4 Cross-Validation for Minorities, Victims, and Non-Stopped Individuals

Our new measure is based on the willingness to self-report ethnicity during police stops. To interpret this as a general measure of trust in police, a remaining question is whether this is a good proxy of trust for non-minorities (for whom self-reporting ethnicity may be less sensitive) and people not stopped by the police (given evidence that police interactions are correlated with trust (Bradford et al., 2009; Myhill and Bradford, 2011)).

We first ask whether the relationship between self-reporting and survey-based trust is confined to officer-perceived minority subjects, for whom ethnicity may be particularly sensitive. Appendix Figure D3 presents the raw correlation between the new high-frequency and the general survey indices for each demographic subgroup defined by gender, age, and officer-reported ethnicity (Asian, Black, and White). In London, there is a significant positive relationship for all groups except Asians. In England and Wales, coefficients are also positive for most demographic groups, although confidence intervals are substantially wider and two Black subgroups have coefficients close to zero. Importantly, in both samples, the relationship is strong among subjects perceived by officers as White, suggesting that the predictive content of self-reporting is not limited to racial and ethnic minorities. These findings are supported by validation regression results reported in Appendix Table D3, which shows that the self-reporting share is increasing in survey-based trust even when estimating very demanding regressions that condition on demographic group fixed effects.

Second, we ask whether our new index also tracks trust among crime victims and individuals who have not been stopped by the police. We conduct these cross-validations by recreating the survey-based trust measures for victim subsamples in both the CSEW and MOPAC surveys and for stopped versus non-stopped respondents in the MOPAC survey.[36] We present the results of re-estimating the cross-validation regression using these alternative subsamples in Appendix Figure D2. The coefficients for victim subsamples are positive and relatively large, albeit substantially less precise.[37] In London, we also see positive coefficients for both stopped and non-stopped respondent samples, although the non-stopped coefficient does not quite reach statistical significance at the 5% level.[38] Taken together, these results suggest that our stop-based index tracks trust not only among those with direct police-stop experience, but also among broader populations.[39]

[36]Summary statistics for the victimization and stopped by the police survey samples are in Appendix Table D2. Appendix Figure D4 shows similar trends in trust for these subsamples as the full sample.

[37]Smaller victim samples imply more dropped cells: 44.5% for CSEW and 71.8% for MOPAC.

[38]Row (10) of Panel B in Appendix Figure D2 shows that less than half of the difference in estimates between our main specification and stopped subsample can be explained by the selection of cells, rather than who is in the cells.

[39]In terms of our conceptual framework in Section 3.1, this can be interpreted as capturing the

4.5 Trust in Other Institutions

Does our new measure capture trust in police specifically or in other public institutions more generally? Appendix Figure D5 presents statistics from the YouGov survey trust tracker from 2015 to 2024. The two solid red lines, which show our new trust measure (solid circle markers) and YouGov trust in local police (solid triangles), display similar downward trends, thereby validating our measure against a third external survey (though with a catchment area of all of Great Britain). In contrast, trust in other institutions follows different trajectories: trust in courts and trade unions increases after 2021, while trust in teachers, MPs, and doctors declines less continuously or steeply than observed for police. These diverging patterns suggest that our proposed measure is more closely aligned with trust in police than with institutional trust more generally.

A similar conclusion emerges from the MOPAC survey, which asked non-police trust questions during COVID. Trust in media, central government, and the NHS dropped sharply in 2021 and rebounded in 2022, which contrasts the persistent decline for police. Cross-validation regressions in Appendix Table D6 show that our index based on self-reporting ethnicity increases with trust in all four institutions when looking at the raw relationship, consistent with some common variation in institutional trust. Once year and borough fixed effects are included, however, the relationships with central government and media disappear, while the relationship with trust in police and trust in the NHS (during COVID) remains positive and significant. These results again suggest that our index is more closely related to trust in police than to institutional trust in general, though it may not capture police-specific trust exclusively.

5 Police Misconduct and Trust in Police

Having defined and cross-validated our new measure of trust in the previous section, we now use it to study the impact of officer misconduct on trust in police. Our conceptual framework in Section 3.1 highlighted that a shock to trust in police transmits to the propensity to disclose sensitive information through the (subjective) belief that such information might be misused. Based on this notion, we can use an individual's willingness to disclose ethnicity to quantify the loss in trust when shocks to trust in police occur. Paralleling the insights of the social capital literature, multiple factors at the individual, community or institutional levels can influence (and shock) trust in police.[40] This section studies police misconduct as one such factor that may negatively impact trust in police. Specifically, we evaluate the effect of the murder of Sarah Everard by Officer Couzens

(average) potential decision to self-report ethnicity in the counterfactual situation of being stopped by the police.

[40]See, for instance, Coleman (1988); Durante et al. (2024); Glaeser et al. (2002); Neira et al. (2008); Portela et al. (2013); Putnam (2000) for the social capital literature.

(and subsequent related events), which stands out as a major and very severe case of police misconduct.

5.1 The Murder of Sarah Everard

A 33-year-old woman, Sarah Everard, was kidnapped in the evening of March 3, 2021, while walking home from Clapham Common, a South London neighborhood. Wayne Couzens, an officer in an elite Metropolitan Police unit (the Parliamentary and Diplomatic Protection Command) was arrested on March 9 on suspicion of kidnapping Everard (by showing his warrant card and putting her in handcuffs while he was off-duty). After the discovery of Sarah Everard's body on March 10, Couzens was re-arrested for murder and charged with kidnapping, rape, and murder on March 12. Couzens pled guilty to kidnapping and rape on June 8, 2021, and to murder on July 9, 2021, and was sentenced to life in prison on September 30, 2021.

News of Couzens' arrest marked the beginning of an elevated news period about severe police misconduct towards women. Immediately after Couzens was sentenced, a woman reported a date rape by Officer Carrick of the same elite unit as Couzens. Carrick was arrested on October 2, 2021, pled guilty in December 2022 to 49 charges (including 24 counts of rape), and was sentenced to life in prison in February 2023.

The London Met subsequently requested an independent investigation into its culture and behavioral standards, which was initiated in February 2022. The findings of the resulting *Casey Report* were released preliminarily in October 2022 and the final version in March 2023. The report presents the London Met as having wide-ranging problems in: management, accountability and transparency, discrimination, leadership, community policing and relations, and attention to violence against women and children.

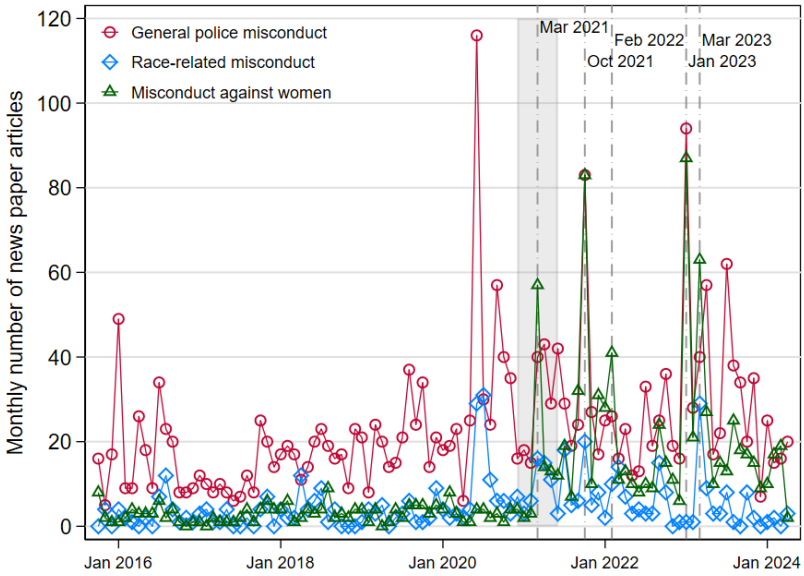
5.2 Media Coverage of Police Misconduct

We first establish that this case of severe police misconduct constituted an information shock by studying its media coverage. Such an information shock is necessary for the killing of Sarah Everard to plausibly transmit to changes in trust and beliefs about misuse of sensitive information. Panel A of Figure 4 plots the number of monthly newspaper articles in the UK during our sample period on police misconduct in general (red circles), race-related misconduct (blue diamonds), and misconduct against women (green triangles).[41] There are four key takeaways. First, police misconduct was regularly covered by the media over the last ten years. Second, for the first half of the sample period, most coverage is about misconduct in general and not specific to race or gender. Third, newspaper coverage of misconduct is sharply higher in some months than others; this increased coverage typically corresponds to new misconduct events and the release of high profile

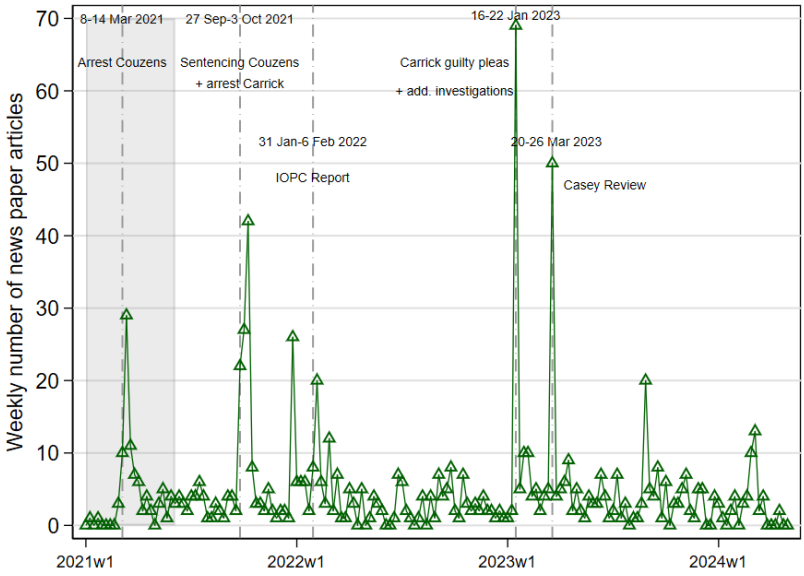
[41] See Appendix B and Appendix Table B7 for detailed information on the underlying data.

Figure 4: UK newspaper articles on police misconduct

Panel A: Monthly number of newspaper articles by type of misconduct



Panel B: Weekly number of newspaper articles on misconduct against women



NOTE. Panel A shows the monthly number of UK newspaper articles covering general police misconduct (red circles), race-related police misconduct (blue diamonds), and police misconduct against women (green triangles). Panel B presents the weekly number of newspaper articles on police misconduct against women. The shaded gray area in panel B highlights the analysis period used in Section 5.3 and 5.5. The vertical dashed lines mark spikes in newspaper coverage associated with events connected to the Sarah Everard murder. SOURCE. Authors' calculations based on Nexis Uni data. See Appendix B.

reports about police misconduct. Fourth, the largest shocks in media coverage (both in absolute levels and relative to news in earlier months) are for misconduct towards women. Underlying this is the murder of Sarah Everard in March 2021 as one of the largest and most unexpected scandals in the history of the London Metropolitan Police.

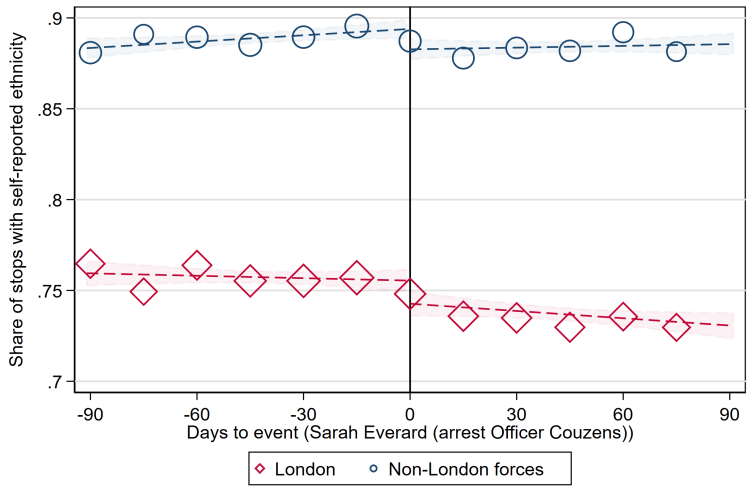
Panel B of Figure 4 presents the weekly (instead of monthly) number of newspaper articles on severe police misconduct against women, which included "Sarah Everard" as one of the possible search terms. The focal 6-month event window for our later analysis is shaded in gray. There is a substantial spike in coverage in the week of the event (March 8-14, corresponding to the first dashed vertical line). Police misconduct specific to women was not in the media in the pre-event window; it remains in the news for three post-event months but at relatively low levels. The intense media coverage surrounding the event provides evidence that the public was (and is) likely aware of the case. The public is also likely aware of subsequent related events, which were covered in the media with an intensity similar to (or larger than) the initial shock. Vertical lines demarcate the weeks with the next four largest waves of media coverage. During the period of September 27 to October 3, 2021, officer Couzens was sentenced and officer Carrick arrested. Between January 31 and February 6, 2022, an Independent Office for Police Conduct (IOPC) report (label Operation Hotton) on misogyny was released and Metropolitan Police Commissioner Cressida Dick resigned. From January 16-22, 2023, additional charges against Carrick were announced as well as investigations by the Met into 1,000 officers. Finally, the week of March 20-26, 2023 included the release of the Casey Report.[42]

5.3 Descriptive Analysis

We begin with descriptive analyses for the 6-month (183 day) window between December 8, 2020 and June 9, 2021. This relatively short period helps isolate the effect of Everard's murder from other nearby events; subsequent analyses further restrict the bandwidth. We plot how our measure of trust in police — i.e., the share of stops with self-reported ethnicity — changes in the pre- and post-event (gray) window. Figure 5 presents binned scatter plots for London (red diamonds) and non-London (blue circles) forces, binning stops in 15-day intervals around March 10, 2021 (i.e., the day of the discovery and arrest). Dashed lines correspond to pre- and post-event fitted linear trends. In London, trust in police is fairly stable prior to the arrest of Officer Couzens. Trust is much lower right after the event; the share of individuals in London reporting their ethnicity falls from 75.7% in the pre-period to an average of 73.4% in the post-period and does not recover. Given the national and even international media coverage, it is plausible that trust in police is affected in jurisdictions outside London. Self-reported ethnicity outside of London was if anything trending up before the event, with a mean self-reporting rate of 88.9%. Though self-reported ethnicity decreases after the Sarah Everard murder, this decrease is smaller than in London, especially relative to the higher baseline levels of trust.

[42]The media spike in the week starting December 27, 2021 reflects the December 31 year review. Media coverage does not increase much with the June and July 2021 officer Couzens guilty pleas.

Figure 5: Trust in police and the Sarah Everard murder



NOTE. The figure presents a binned scatter plot, with 15-day bins, for the share of stops with self-reported ethnicity in London and non-London forces in the six months around the Sarah Everard murder. Marker size is proportional to the number of stops per bin; total stops in the first period are 9,860 for London and 8,981 for non-London forces. The vertical line corresponds to March 10, 2021, when the arrest of Officer Couzens was first covered in the media. The dashed lines correspond to fitted linear trends. Shaded areas indicate 95% confidence intervals. SOURCE. Authors' calculations based on stop and search data available from data.police.uk.

5.4 Identification and Estimation

To more formally estimate the size and assess the statistical significance of the reduction in trust after the Sarah Everard murder and to move towards a more causal interpretation, we evaluate the extent to which such a change can be driven by correlated unobservables. Intuitively, we estimate a pre-post analysis but control for high-frequency trends. This is in the style of a regression discontinuity in time (RDiT) analysis where the running variable is the date. Though there is no exogenous cutoff as in a regression discontinuity design (RDD), the "cutoff" here is the event, the timing of which can reasonably be assumed to be exogenous. That is, we define a dichotomous variable equal to one on or after March 10, 2021 – the first date that the arrest of a police officer for murder was in the news. To quantify the impact on trust, net of observables, we estimate the following equation separately for police forces in and outside of London using the sample of stops in the 6-month window around the arrest of Officer Couzens:

$$SR_{isjt} = \beta_0 + \beta_1 Post_t + \beta_2 t + \beta_3 (t \times Post_t) + X'_{isjt}\delta + \alpha_d + \gamma_j + \epsilon_{isjt} \tag{6}$$

where SR_{isjt} is a binary variable that takes a value of 1 if subject i stopped in stop s in location j (London borough or police force area) on date t is willing to self-report their ethnicity.[43] Our coefficient of interest is β_1, which captures the discontinuous change in

[43]We cannot observe whether the same individual is stopped at multiple stops or if multiple individuals are stopped at the same stop.

trust right after Officer Couzens was arrested for murder. We account for pre-existing trends in trust by including a linear time trend t that is allowed to differ after the event through the interaction $t \times Post_t$.

For β_1 to capture the causal effect of the Sarah Everard murder on trust in police, we ultimately have to make two identifying assumptions. First, we have to assume that the timing of the murder was exogenous to trust in police, i.e., the news were unexpected (at least in terms of the timing). Given the context described above, this seems a reasonable assumption. Second, we have to assume that there are no remaining unobservables that change discontinuously at the time of the murder and that may confound our estimates. Controlling for time trends alone does not allow us to rule out that nothing else changes contemporaneously with the murder of Sarah Everard that is also correlated with trust.

Specifically, one may be concerned that police officers themselves react to this shock and change where they police, when they police (e.g., night or day), the intensity of policing, and/or whom they stop. Though such behavioral changes remain unobserved, one may expect officers to behave in a more respectful and cautious manner, i.e., to encourage trust, following news about the extreme misconduct of a fellow officer.[44] Civilians – especially those who distrust the police – might also change their behavior to minimize their chances of police interactions; for instance, they may decide not to go out (at all or at night) or change their mode of transportation (e.g., taxi instead of walking). Thus, officer and/or civilian responses can potentially change the composition (the relative share) of stopped individuals, but it is likely that these unobservable officer and civilian behaviors work against the patterns we observe and, if anything, attenuate our findings.

Though officer and civilian behavioral changes cannot be directly observed, we can assess the extent to which the observable stop characteristics change — namely, the number of stops, subject characteristics (gender, age, officer reported ethnicity) and stop characteristics (person-only stop, stop reason, night-time (10PM-6AM) stop, hit rate). Appendix Figure E1 presents binned scatter plots for the number of daily stops (inside and outside London) overall and by stop characteristics (gender, age, officer-reported ethnicity, hit or miss). Both inside and outside of London, the number of daily stops increases until the event, and then appears to drop and trend down. This is true overall and across stop characteristics, with what appears to be larger drops for men, young persons, and minority groups. Columns (1) and (2) of Appendix Table E1 show that the overall number of daily stops decreases by 2.3 (about 10% relative to the mean) in London, and by 5.1 (about 22% relative to the mean) outside of London, respectively, when regressing the number of daily stops (at the borough by day or force by day level) on a post-event indicator, differential pre-post time trends, and borough or force, hour of day and day of week fixed effects.

[44] Cho et al. (ming) for instance show that officers temporarily reduce low level arrest activity following the on duty deaths of a fellow officer.

These changes in stop numbers translate into slight observable compositional changes. Appendix Figure E2 presents the same binned scatter plots as before but for the respective share of stops, while Columns (1) and (2) of Appendix Table E2 present the corresponding regression results, adjusting for differential time trends and time and geography fixed effects. While there are few significant changes in stop composition outside of London, significant changes are seen within London, especially when it comes to demographics. The level changes highlighted above (e.g., larger drops in the number of men stopped) affect the composition such that the share of women stopped is relatively higher and the shares younger than 35 and (officer-reported) minorities are lower. Given that the number of *all* stop types decreased, these compositional changes are driven by relatively smaller declines in the respective groups (in other words, the female share increases because there was a greater decrease in the number of male than female stops).

We emphasize here that these (smaller) compositional changes are unlikely to be confounding our results: Officer-reported minorities show substantially lower levels of trust, while the age and gender gaps in trust are not as large.[45] As such, with a relatively lower representation of these groups in the sample, one would expect average trust in police to increase. This counteracts the observed patterns and, if anything, leads to an underestimation of the (negative) impact on trust of the event that we find in the data. Nevertheless, the compositional changes highlight the potential importance of controlling for observable and, to the extent possible, unobservable compositional changes. Our specification thus controls for a vector of observable stop and subject characteristics (X'_{ist}), time fixed effects (for day of week and hour of day) α_d, and borough (London) or police force (outside London) fixed effects γ_j. These fixed effects capture unobserved heterogeneity that may be correlated with trust. Day of week fixed effects, for instance, could capture unobservable differences in who is stopped across days of the week, and especially weekends versus weekdays, due to variation in employment behaviors, commuter patterns, and criminal activity. Hour of day fixed effects could capture unobservable differences, for instance, in the characteristics of people on the streets, how officers behave, and the circumstances surrounding a stop. Standard errors are heteroskedasticity-robust for the London sample, where almost all stops are by a single police force (the London Met), and clustered at the police force area outside London, where stops are made by multiple police forces.[46] Finally, to further control for potential unobservables, we present specifications that: (i) allow for nonlinear trends, (ii) allow for geography (borough or force area) specific time trends, and (iii) restrict the sample to just two weeks on either side of the event. In addition, we conduct Oaxaca-Blinder decomposition analyses to further gauge the extent to which compositional changes play a role.

[45] Appendix Figure C1 shows the share of stops with self-reported ethnicity over time by (officer-reported) ethnicity and gender.

[46] We show the robustness of these results to alternative standard errors.

Table 3: The impact of the murder of Sarah Everard on trust in police

Sample	(1) All	(2) All	(3) All	(4) All	(5) All	(6) All	(7) 14-day bw	(8) 14-day bw
	Panel A: London (Y: self-reporting ethnicity (1/0))							
Post	-0.020***	-0.013***	-0.013***	-0.020***	-0.020***	-0.018***	-0.010*	-0.014**
	(0.002)	(0.005)	(0.005)	(0.005)	(0.005)	(0.005)	(0.006)	(0.006)
Baseline mean	0.757	0.757	0.757	0.757	0.757	0.757	0.757	0.757
Observations	130,791	130,791	130,791	116,930	116,930	116,930	24,241	21,693
	Panel B: Non-London forces (Y: self-reporting ethnicity (1/0))							
Post	-0.005	-0.011	-0.011	-0.010	-0.010	-0.008	-0.008	-0.007
	(0.005)	(0.008)	(0.008)	(0.007)	(0.007)	(0.006)	(0.005)	(0.006)
Baseline mean	0.889	0.889	0.889	0.889	0.889	0.889	0.889	0.889
Observations	102,377	102,377	102,377	102,377	102,377	102,377	18,137	18,137
Time trend	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No
Differential trend	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No
Region FEs	No	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes
Time FEs	No	No	No	No	Yes	Yes	No	Yes
Controls	No	No	No	No	No	Yes	No	Yes

NOTE. The table presents regression results corresponding to Equation (6), estimated separately for London (Panel A) and non-London forces (Panel B) using stops in the six-month window around the arrest of Officer Couzens on March 10, 2021. The dependent variable is a binary indicator equal to one if the subject self-reports their ethnicity during a stop. Specifications are indicated at the bottom of the table. Time fixed effects include both hour of day and day of week fixed effects. Controls are subject characteristics (gender, age, and officer-reported ethnicity) and stop characteristics (indicator for person-only search, stop reason). The differential trend allows the linear time trend to differ before and after the event. The ±14-day bandwidth (bw) specification restricts the sample to stops within 14 days of the event. The baseline mean refers to the share of stops with self-reported ethnicity in the three months prior to the Sarah Everard murder. Standard errors (in parentheses) are heteroskedasticity-robust for Panel A and clustered at police force level for Panel B. *** $p < 0.01$, ** $p < 0.05$, * $p < 0.1$. SOURCE. Authors' calculations based on stop and search data available from data.police.uk.

5.5 Results: Severe Officer Misconduct and Trust in Police

Main results. Table 3 presents the results of estimating equation (6) for the 130,791 London stops (Panel A) and 102,377 non-London stops (Panel B) in our 6-month window. Column (1) shows that in London, there was a two percentage point (pp) raw reduction in trust in police as measured by the propensity to self-report ethnicity. Over and above the linear trends (columns (2) and (3)), there is still a 1.3pp decrease in trust. Borough and time fixed effects in columns (4) and (5) bring the effect size back to 2pp.[47] With controls for observable characteristics in column (6), the effect is 1.8pp. We use this fully

[47]Including borough fixed effects drops about 14,000 observations missing borough information. This sample reduction does not drive the change in coefficient. Restricting the sample alone changes the coefficient from -0.013 to -0.015, whereas adding fixed effects further reduces it to -0.020.

Table 4: Oaxaca-Blinder decomposition

	Estimate	95% CI
Raw difference	−0.020	
Event effect ($\hat{\beta}_1$)	−0.018	[−0.027, −0.009]
Composition effect (pre-coefficient, post composition)	0.004	
Coefficient effect (post-coefficient, pre composition)	−0.010	

NOTE. The table reports the results from a Oaxaca-Blinder decomposition of the change in self-reporting ethnicity in London after the Sarah Everard Murder. We estimate Equation 6—excluding the *Post* indicator and interaction term $t \times Post$— separately on pre- and post-event observations, and use each period's estimated coefficients to predict counterfactual means for the other period's stop composition. The composition effect applies pre-event coefficients to post-event stops; the coefficient effect applies post-event coefficients to pre-event stops. The event effect ($\hat{\beta}_1$) is estimated using the baseline specification (6) (corresponding to Column (6), Panel A of Table 3), with 95% confidence intervals based on heteroskedasticity-robust standard errors. SOURCE. Authors' calculations based on stop and search data available from data.police.uk.

saturated specification as the baseline for subsequent heterogeneity analyses.

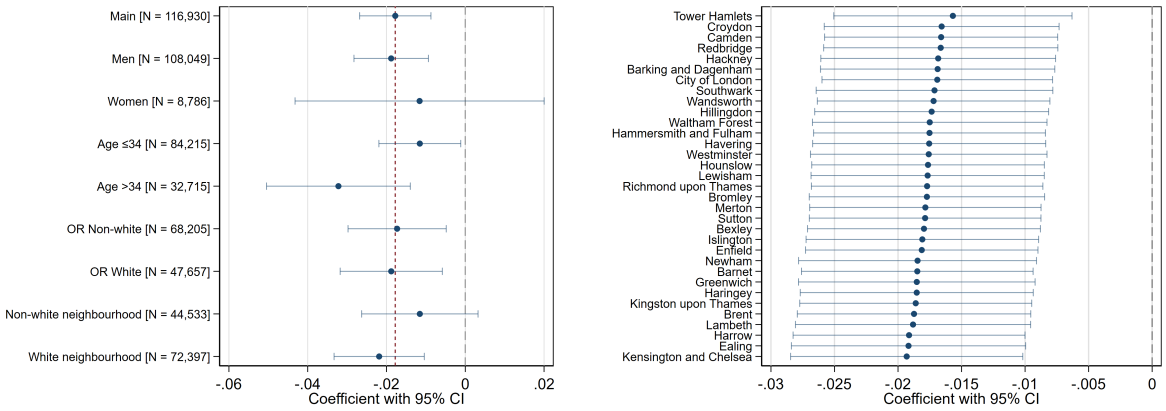
Columns (7) and (8) show that the results are robust to using a 14-day bandwidth (less than 25,000 stops) with or without controls. All London estimates are significant and, with controls for trends, magnitudes lie between 1.3pp and 2.0pp. Relative to the mean, the willingness to self-report ethnicity decreased by 1.7 - 2.6%. Outside of London, we observe a reduction in ethnicity disclosure of 0.8 - 1.1pp (with controls for trends). The estimates are, however, not significant and smaller than in London in relative terms (given higher baseline levels of trust in police outside of London). Columns (1) to (4) of Appendix Table E3 show that the results are robust to controlling for a second-order polynomial in time or borough specific time trends, excluding a donut of two weeks around the focal date (one on each side), and coding missing self-reported ethnicity as zeroes rather than missing. Appendix Table E4 shows the underlying dynamics, allowing for different coefficients in each post-period month: In London, ethnicity disclosure (revealed trust) does not appear to recover (people do not forget) over the course of the three months; to the contrary, effects are significantly larger in the second month than the first. Outside of London, there is no significant impact even in the very short term.[48]

Taking into account the compositional differences in stops following the news of the Sarah Everard murder (see above), we complement our regression analyses with an Oaxaca-Blinder decomposition (in time). This allows us to assess the extent to which our results reflect a change in trust versus a change in the composition of stops. Table 4 shows the results. The raw difference simply reflects the difference in average trust before and after the murder, and the estimated effect of -0.018 refers to our baseline specification.

[48]Column (5) of Appendix Table E3 shows that using heteroskedasticity-robust standard errors instead of clustered standard errors yields a significant drop in trust for non-London forces. The London results are not sensitive to the choice of standard errors.

Figure 6: Heterogeneous impact of the Sarah Everard murder (London)

Panel A: Subject/area characteristics **Panel B: Leave-one-out (boroughs)**



NOTE. The figure presents heterogeneity analyses for the effect of the Sarah Everard murder on trust in police in London. Panel A shows point estimates and 95% confidence intervals from the baseline specification (column (6) of Table 3) estimated separately by demographic group — gender, age, and officer-reported ethnicity — and by the ethnic composition of the neighborhood of the stop, distinguishing non-White from White neighborhoods, where non-White neighborhoods are defined as those in which less than 50% of the population identifies as White. The red dashed line indicates the baseline estimate for the full sample. Panel B presents a leave-one-borough-out analysis and shows estimates with 95% confidence intervals excluding a single London borough at a time, using the same baseline specification. SOURCE. Authors' calculations based on stop and search data from data.police.uk, and census data from ons.gov.uk.

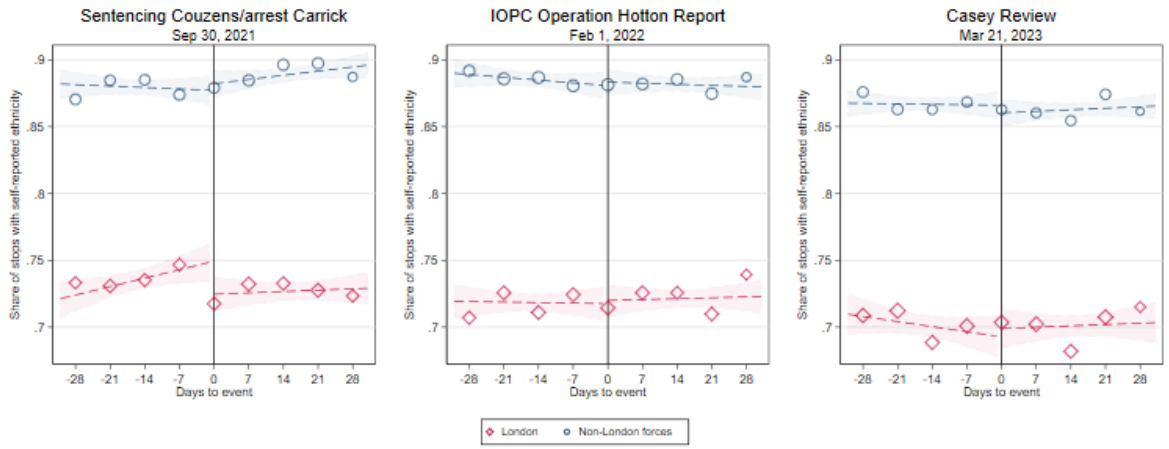
The composition effect—i.e., what would have happened to trust if individual trust had remained unchanged but the composition of stops has shifted as observed—is positive. This underlines our arguments from above: the fact that stops after the Sarah Everard murder involve fewer males, young and minority individuals—groups with lower baseline levels of trust—would *increase* measured trust in police (by 0.004).[49] Thus, our baseline estimate can be interpreted as a lower bound (in absolute values) of the impact on trust.

Heterogeneity: Demographics and neighborhood. Next, we consider whether the decrease in trust is driven by selected sub-groups for whom the shock may be particularly salient or for whom baseline levels of trust in police (e.g., minorities) were already relatively low. This is based on the notion that the event signaled severe misconduct in the ranks of the police, not only for those who share a socio-demographic identity with the victim. Panel A of Figure 6 presents the results of re-estimating our baseline specification (column (6) of Table 3) separately across subject demographics (gender, age, officer reported ethnicity) and neighborhoods we classify as non-White versus White.[50] Similar reductions in trust are seen across most sub-samples, though estimates for females are

[49]The coefficient effect, in contrast, is negative at -0.010, confirming that individual trust did change after the event: even holding stop composition fixed, individuals became less likely to self-report ethnicity.

[50]We define a neighborhood as non-White if less than 50% of the population has a White ethnicity, based on the UK 2011 Census.

Figure 7: Subsequent events and trust in police



NOTE. The figures present binned scatter plots, with 7-day bins, for the share of stops with self-reported ethnicity for London and non-London forces in the two months around three subsequent events (related to the initial shock of the Sarah Everard murder and arrest of Officer Couzens in March 2021). The left figure shows the period around the sentencing of Officer Couzens and the arrest of Officer Carrick (September 30, 2021). The center figure shows the period around the release of the IOPC Operation Hotton report (February 1, 2022). The right figure shows the period around the release of the Casey Review (March 21, 2023). In each figure, the vertical line corresponds to the respective event date, and the dashed lines correspond to fitted linear trends. Shaded areas indicate 95% confidence intervals. SOURCE. Authors' calculations based on stop and search data from data.police.uk.

imprecise (due to the small numbers stopped) and that for subjects older than 34 is somewhat larger. The lack of a gender gap in the effect is perhaps surprising given that the victim of the officer misconduct was female. We cannot from these analyses rule out that the Sarah Everard case had larger effects on women not stopped by the police. However, we provide statistics below from a Yougov survey that also suggests large effects on both men and women. Finally, the leave-one-borough out analysis in Panel B shows that no single borough drives the results, including those (Lambeth, Wandsworth, Southwark) that may be perceived to be linked to the crime location.

Subsequent officer misconduct information shocks. As described above, after the arrest of officer Couzens for the murder of Sarah Everard, police misconduct towards females remained in the news. We next assess the extent to which three subsequent high media events also affect trust in police. The effect of each event on trust may depend on two key factors. First, one may primarily expect trust in police to react to media coverage that provides *new information*. Second, it depends on the content of the new information. Trust may increase in response to news that the police, criminal justice system, and/or parliament are holding the offending officers responsible for their crimes or trying to rid the force of similar 'bad apples'. Trust may further decrease upon news that there are more bad apples or insufficient responses by the London Met. To the extent that news can simultaneously be both bad and good, trust can even stay stable.

Specifically, we focus on the life sentence of officer Couzens and arrest of officer Carrick (September 30 - October 2, 2021), the IOPC release of the Operation Hotton report on February 1, 2022, and the Casey report release on March 21, 2023.[51] We use a 2-month window (1 month on either side of each event) to ensure that the news coverage is not overlapping. For both London (red diamonds) and non-London (blue circles) forces, Figure 7 shows binned scatter plots around the events. A sharp (and sizable) decrease in trust is seen in London immediately after the sentencing of officer Couzens and arrest of officer Carrick. Trust in police remained steady at these new low levels with the release of the IOPC Operation Hotton Report or the Casey Review. In contrast, none of these subsequent events are followed by a change in trust outside of London.

Turning to regression-adjusted results based on pre-post estimations, Table 5 shows that the decrease in trust in London associated with the life sentence of officer Couzens and arrest of officer Carrick is statistically significant at 3pp or 4.1% relative to the mean (columns (3) and (4)).[52] Moreover, this is over and above the 1.3pp reduction in trust after the Sarah Everard murder (column (1)), which implies already lower pre-event levels in trust for the subsequent events. Appendix Figure E3 presents the results separately across subject demographics and neighborhoods. Similar reductions in trust following the life sentence of officer Couzens and arrest of officer Carrick are seen across most subsamples. We again do not find a gender gap: the point estimate for men mirrors the main effect, but the estimate for women, based on a much smaller subsample (N = 2,428), is too imprecisely estimated to draw conclusions from.

Why is the effect of the second event (sentencing of one officer and arrest of second officer) larger than the initial effect of Sarah Everard's murder? One potential explanation is that there was more media coverage (with two news items) than with the arrest of officer Couzens: media coverage peaked higher and remained elevated for three weeks following (see Figure 4). Another potential reason is that there is a new information shock — namely that officer Couzens is not a lone bad apple. Additionally, the life-sentence of officer Couzens may have also provided new information about the severity of the case. In contrast, the IOPC report and Casey Review may not have impacted trust because they simply reminded the public about old information they already had.

[51] We exclude a fourth high media event in January 2023 – officer Carrick's guilty pleas and the announcement of investigations into more than 1,000 Met officers – given missing London stop data in the immediate pre-event weeks. This is reflected in the lower number of London stops seen for one month in Figure 1.

[52] Columns (3) to (5) of Appendix Table E1 show that the number of stops in London did not change significantly after any of the subsequent events. However, Appendix Table E2 shows that the *composition* changed in the same direction as after the initial shock: relatively fewer men and fewer minorities were stopped. The same arguments as above hold: This likely leads to an underestimation of the negative impacts on trust.

Table 5: The murder of Sarah Everard and subsequent events in London

	Subsequent shocks							
	Mar 10, 2021 Arrest Couzens		**Sep 30, 2021** Sentencing Couzens & arrest Carrick		**Feb 1, 2022** IOPC Report		**Mar 21, 2023** Casey Review	
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)
Post	-0.013*	-0.011	-0.028***	-0.030***	0.001	-0.001	0.001	0.001
	(0.008)	(0.008)	(0.010)	(0.010)	(0.009)	(0.009)	(0.011)	(0.011)
Baseline mean	0.754	0.754	0.735	0.735	0.718	0.718	0.702	0.702
Observations	45,876	45,876	29,829	29,829	34,791	34,791	24,845	24,845
Time trend	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Differential time trend	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Borough FEs	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Time FEs	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes
Stop/subject char.	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes

NOTE. The table presents regression results corresponding to Equation (6), estimated for London using a two-month window around four events: the arrest of Officer Couzens (March 10, 2021), the sentencing of Officer Couzens and arrest of Officer Carrick (September 30, 2021), the release of the IOPC Operation Hotton report (February 1, 2022), and the release of the Casey Review (March 21, 2023). The dependent variable is a binary indicator equal to one if the subject self-reports their ethnicity during a stop. Specifications are indicated at the bottom of the table. Subject characteristics: gender, age, and officer-reported ethnicity. Stop characteristics: indicator for person-only search, stop reason. The differential trend allows the linear time trend to differ before and after the event. The baseline mean refers to the share of stops with self-reported ethnicity in the month prior to each respective event. Standard errors (in parentheses) are heteroskedasticity-robust. SOURCE. Authors' calculations based on stop and search data from data.police.uk.

External validity. How do our findings compare with the existing evidence on the effects of the Sarah Everard murder on trust in police? Given that the Crime Survey for England and Wales was suspended in 2021 due to COVID-19, a formal survey-based analysis of the Sarah Everard murder (with pre and post-periods) is not possible. But, the End Violence Against Women Coalition (EVAW) commissioned a YouGov survey about how the murder affected trust. YouGov surveyed 1,699 adults in Great Britain on October 27-28, i.e., after both the sentencing of officer Couzens for Everard's murder and arrest of officer Carrick on rape charges. Of the respondents, 43% reported that trust in police decreased (a little or a lot) since the details of the murder were made public. Large decreases are seen for men (40%) and women (47%) and across age groups (End Violence Against Women Coalition, 2021). Herbert et al. (2025) study this question by analyzing social media posts (n=107), and conclude that some viewed the incident as a "bad apple" while most showed distrust of the police as a whole.

Compared to this survey and qualitative evidence, our new high frequency measure allows us to quantify whether the effects on trust are large enough to be revealed in changing behavior (through changes in self-reporting ethnicity) as well as to study the dynamics (i.e., effects seen right after the first shock and again after the second), which

the timing of the YouGov survey cannot differentiate.

6 Conclusion

Researchers and policy-makers alike are aware that trust is a central ingredient to well-functioning and effective social and political institutions. Though there are many global (e.g., Gallup World Poll, World Values Survey), national (e.g., Crime Survey of England and Wales), and even local trust trackers (e.g., MOPAC Public Attitudes Survey), these surveys are rarely frequent enough or based on samples large enough to allow for analyses of the short-term and local dynamics of how trust is determined.

This paper focuses on furthering our understanding of the determinants of trust in police, whose success at deterring crime, catching criminals, and maintaining order depends on the cooperation of the communities they serve. The extent to which an individual trusts the police, for instance, can affect whether they are willing to report a crime, serve as a witness, or cooperate with police instructions when asked. In this way, individuals can reveal their trust in police through their behaviors. We take advantage of one such behavior — the willingness to self-report sensitive personal data (ethnicity) when stopped by the police in England and Wales — to create a novel high-frequency and geographically granular measure of revealed trust in police. Extensive cross-validation exercises show that our new measure tracks multiple external survey-based measures and dimensions of trust in police across time, geography, and population subgroups. We then use our new measure to study the impact of high-profile London Metropolitan police officer misconduct on trust in police.

We find a significant reduction in trust of about 2% relative to the mean in the weeks immediately following the news of the kidnapping, rape, and murder of Sarah Everard by an off-duty London Met officer. These effects are seen across London and demographic groups defined by gender, age, and (officer-reported) ethnicity, but there is minimal evidence of spill-over effects to forces beyond London. A second information shock — namely an officer from the same unit being charged with rape — led to an even larger reduction in trust, consistent with people updating their perceptions that the problems at the Met were not limited to a single bad apple but were more systemic. Given that willingness to disclose ethnicity in London declined by 20 percentage points over our sample period, we find that the murder of Sarah Everard and subsequent related events account for about one-fifth of this decline.

The non-survey-based measure of trust in police developed in this paper opens the door to further research. More broadly, our approach suggests that voluntary disclosure of sensitive personal information can itself provide a revealed measure of institutional trust. Similar behavior-based measures could be constructed in other settings in which individuals are asked to entrust institutions with sensitive information, as well as from

other forms of voluntary cooperation with police. Moreover, as seen in our paper, the almost real-time nature of such measures provides an important complement to traditional survey-based measures: it allows researchers to study the local and short-term dynamics of trust, including how trust responds to institutional actions and information shocks.

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Appendix

A Institutional Background and Literature on Trust in Police

Peel's Nine Principles of Policing

The exact text of Peel's principles are below:

1. To prevent crime and disorder, as an alternative to their repression by military force and severity of legal punishment.

2. To recognise always that the power of the police to fulfill their functions and duties is dependent on public approval of their existence, actions and behaviour and on their ability to secure and maintain public respect.

3. To recognise always that to secure and maintain the respect and approval of the public means also the securing of the willing co-operation of the public in the task of securing observance of laws.

4. To recognise always that the extent to which the co-operation of the public can be secured diminishes proportionately the necessity of the use of physical force and compulsion for achieving police objectives.

5. To seek and preserve public favour, not by pandering to public opinion; but by constantly demonstrating absolutely impartial service to law, in complete independence of policy, and without regard to the justice or injustice of the substance of individual laws, by ready offering of individual service and friendship to all members of the public without regard to their wealth or social standing, by ready exercise of courtesy and friendly good humour; and by ready offering of individual sacrifice in protecting and preserving life.

6. To use physical force only when the exercise of persuasion, advice and warning is found to be insufficient to obtain public co-operation to an extent necessary to secure observance of law or to restore order, and to use only the minimum degree of physical force which is necessary on any particular occasion for achieving a police objective.

7. To maintain at all times a relationship with the public that gives reality to the historic tradition that the police are the public and that the public are the police, the police being only members of the public who are paid to give full time attention to duties which are incumbent on every citizen in the interests of community welfare and existence.

8. To recognise always the need for strict adherence to police-executive functions, and to refrain from even seeming to usurp the powers of the judiciary of avenging individuals or the State, and of authoritatively judging guilt and punishing the guilty.

9. To recognise always that the test of police efficiency is the absence of crime and disorder, and not the visible evidence of police action in dealing with them.

Literature survey: Factors that potentially impact trust in police

Reference	Country and data	Trust-related factor	Finding
Nägel and Lutter (2021)	France, European Social Survey, 2016–2017	Police misconduct; treatment of minorities; media	Respondents surveyed after a high-profile case of police misconduct (brutal abuse of a young Black man, leading to riots) report lower trust in police than those surveyed before; effects are especially large for respondents with migrant background but do not vary with reported media consumption.
Mikdash and Zaiour (2024)	US (Minneapolis): 911 calls 2009–2019	Police violence	Disentangles crime effects from reporting effects using 911 calls and Shotspotter data on location of shootings. Finds police shootings increase gun related violence by 5-6% but decreases shots reported by 1-2%, implying a 6-7% reduction in crime reports.
Desmond et al. (2016)	USA (Milwaukee): 911 calls 2004–2010	Police violence; treatment of minorities; media	911 calls for service substantially decreased following media accounts of police beating an unarmed Black man in Milwaukee; effects largest in neighborhoods with a high Black population.
Cohen et al. (2019)	USA (Los Angeles): 911 and 311 calls 2010–2017	Police violence	911 and 311 calls for service do not change following officer-involved shootings, including fatal shootings.

Reference	Country and data	Trust-related factor	Finding
Brantingham et al. (2022)	USA (New York and Los Angeles): calls for police service 2019–2021	Police violence	There were no large observable changes in calls for service following the police killing of George Floyd; notes that calls for service are an imperfect measure because they capture both crime rates and cooperation/reporting.
Ang et al. (2025)	USA: 911 call data and National Crime Victimization Survey, 2020	Police violence	Crime reporting (daily 911 call ratio to gunshots and non-reporting in survey) decreased after George Floyd's murder.
Ang and Tebes (2024)	USA (Los Angeles): voter registration and participation 2002–2010	Police violence; media coverage	Police killings increase civic engagement in affected neighborhoods; media coverage increases effect sizes. Effects are only seen for minorities in these neighborhoods.
Myhill and Bradford (2011)	England, interview/survey, 2003–2005, 2008–2009	Nature and quality of police interactions	Unsatisfactory contacts with the police after victimization are associated with lower confidence in police.

Reference	Country and data	Trust-related factor	Finding
Bradford et al. (2009)	UK, London, Metropolitan Police Public Attitudes Survey (2005–2006)	Nature and quality of police interactions; community policing	Individuals who interact with the police—in self- or police-initiated interactions—have less favorable views about police effectiveness, especially if contact was unsatisfactory or they felt police did not take the matter seriously. Awareness of the police (visibility and knowledge of activities) is associated with more positive views.
Röder and Mühlau (2012)	European Social Survey, 2002–2008	Perceptions of discrimination	Immigrants who report belonging to an ethnic minority or perceive discrimination report lower trust in criminal justice institutions.
Nanes (2020)	Israel: survey 2008–2014; 2016	Religious/ethnic inclusivity of police force	Perceptions of how religiously and ethnically inclusive the police are related to respondents' willingness to report crimes.
Jácome (2022)	US (Dallas): crime incident reporting 2014–2016	Treatment of minorities	Crime reporting by Hispanics increased in neighborhoods and periods where an immigration enforcement program (targeting criminals) was introduced.

Reference	Country and data	Trust-related factor	Finding
Gonçalves et al. (2026)	US: National Crime Victimization Survey	Treatment of minorities	Conditional on victimization, exposure to the Secure Communities program – an immigration enforcement program targeting criminals – decreased crime reporting for Hispanics. Similar effects are not seen for non-Hispanics who are exposed. Moreover, Hispanic victimization increases, some of which is directly caused by the lower reporting rates.
Czymara and Mitchell (2023)	European Social Survey; 2005–2019	Treatment of minorities; perceived discrimination	Trust in police is related to immigration status, time since immigration, differences in rule of law between origin and destination countries, and perceived discrimination in the migration country.
Meeusen et al. (2024)	Netherlands, survey	Perceived neighborhood disorder; perceived discrimination	Perceptions of discrimination (especially) and neighborhood disorder are related to trust in police for Dutch citizens of Moroccan and Turkish origin.
Bradford et al. (2018)	Northern Ireland; interviews in 2014	Perceived neighborhood disorder	Trust in police varies with neighborhood characteristics (diversity, perceived disorder, deprivation) and individual characteristics (e.g. gender, age).
Sindall and Sturgis (2013)	British Crime Survey, 2006–2008	Police size and visibility	Force size and visibility are associated with higher confidence in police.

Reference	Country and data	Trust-related factor	Finding
Rackstraw (2025)	US arrest data, Gallup Survey, author conducted Prolific survey experiment	Information and Inflated Perceptions (Copaganda)	Studies the effect of Reality TV shows (Live PD) following local officers. Difference-in-difference strategy finds that police camera presence leads officers to make more arrests, especially for drug crimes, but does not improve clearance rates, use of force, or crime rates. The distorted portrayal (viewers only observe arrests) increases confidence in police and perceptions of police productivity.
Hohl et al. (2010)	London, England, 2008 Safer Neighborhood Survey	Community policing; information	Areas treated with a newsletter about what the police are doing in a neighborhood show improved perceptions of police.
Blair et al. (2021)	Citizen and officer surveys: Brazil, Colombia, Liberia, Philippines, Uganda, Pakistan	Community policing	Community policing interventions (visibility via patrols, community meetings, hotlines) evaluated in field experiments did not significantly affect survey responses about trust in police or crime reporting.
Simon et al. (2025)	Officer misconduct data and Public Surveys: Germany	Monitoring: Identification badges on riot gear	Introducing identification badges decreased officer misconduct. Suggestive evidence of increase in trust in police.

B Data Appendix

Police data on stops and searches

Data on stops and searches conducted by police forces in England and Wales are available from December 2014 to January 2025.[53] These data are part of the UK open crime and policing database, which is publicly accessible via data.police.uk. We obtain stop and search data on police forces in England and Wales from February 2022 to December 2024 directly from data.police.uk and from January 2015 to January 2022 from the archive of the same website.[54] We obtain police force boundaries from data.police.uk.

Stop and search data is not consistently available over time for all police forces. We restrict our sample to the police forces that have consistent stop and search data available between October 2015 and April 2024. We exclude stops and searches of vehicles only, and stops and searches with missing information on self-reported ethnicity, the outcome of the search or the legal basis of the search. We exclude police forces that do not have balanced data available that meet those requirements. Table B1 shows the sample size for the sample selection criteria and Table B2 lists the data availability by police force. Our main sample, after the additional data quality requirements, consists of 31 police forces. Police forces that are excluded from our sample are: Cambridgeshire, Derbyshire, Durham, Greater Manchester, Gwent, Lincolnshire, Merseyside, North Yorkshire, Staffordshire, Surrey, Thames Valley and Wiltshire.

[53] Date of writing: March 20, 2025.

[54] Date of download: March 20, 2025. Archived data files are organized into three-year batches (e.g., the dataset for December 2024 includes monthly data from January 2022 to December 2024). For each month, we use the most recent dataset available, for example, data for January 2022 is taken from the latest batch, covering January 2022 to December 2024.

Table B1: Sample selection

Sample selection	Number of stops & searches
Original sample Jan 2015-Dec 2024	4,332,281
Original sample Oct 2015-Apr 2024	3,851,658
Balanced sample Oct 2015-Apr 2024	3,497,419
Excl. vehicle search only	3,409,011
Excl. SR ethnicity missing	3,324,728
Excl. outcome search missing	3,272,431
Excl. legislation search missing	3,152,113
Excl. police forces with no good data quality full panel	3,067,880

NOTE. The table lists the sample restrictions and remaining number of observations at each step. SOURCE. Authors' calculations based on stop and search data from data.police.uk.

Table B2: Stop and search data availability by police force

Police force	Data availability	Balanced sample	Main sample
Avon and Somerset	Oct 2015–Dec 2024	Yes	Yes
Bedfordshire	Apr 2015–Dec 2024	Yes	Yes
Cambridgeshire	Aug 2015–Dec 2024	Yes	No
Cheshire	Apr 2015–Dec 2024	Yes	Yes
City of London	Mar 2015–Oct 2024	Yes	Yes
Cleveland	Jan 2014–Dec 2024	Yes	Yes
Cumbria	Apr 2015–Dec 2024	Yes	Yes
Derbyshire	Apr 2015–Sep 2017	No	No
Devon and Cornwall	Apr 2015–Dec 2024	Yes	Yes
Dorset	Jan 2014–Dec 2024	Yes	Yes
Durham	Apr 2015–Dec 2024	Yes	No
Dyfed-Powys	Jan 2014–Dec 2024	Yes	Yes
Essex	Apr 2015–Dec 2024	Yes	Yes
Gloucestershire	Apr 2015–Dec 2024	Yes	Yes
Greater Manchester	Jan 2015–Jun 2019	No	No
Gwent	Jan 2015–Mar 2016, Aug 2016–Jul 2019, Sep 2019–Sep 2020	No	No
Hampshire	Jan 2014–Dec 2024	Yes	Yes
Hertfordshire	Mar 2015–Dec 2024	Yes	Yes
Humberside	Mar 2015–Dec 2024	Yes	Yes
Kent	Apr 2015–Dec 2024	Yes	Yes
Lancashire	Apr 2015–Dec 2024	Yes	Yes
Leicestershire	Jan 2014–Dec 2024	Yes	Yes
Lincolnshire	Jan 2014–Dec 2024	Yes	No
Merseyside	Mar 2015–Dec 2024	No	No
Metropolitan Police	Apr 2015–Aug 2024	Yes	Yes
Norfolk	Jan 2014–Dec 2024	Yes	Yes
Northamptonshire	Feb 2015–Dec 2024	Yes	Yes
North Wales	Jan 2014–Dec 2024	Yes	Yes
North Yorkshire	Jan 2015–Nov 2020	No	No
Nottinghamshire	Jan 2014–Dec 2024	Yes	Yes
South Wales	Apr 2015–Dec 2024	Yes	Yes
Staffordshire	Jan 2014–Dec 2024	Yes	No
Suffolk	Jan 2014–Dec 2024	Yes	Yes
Surrey	Jan 2014–Dec 2024	Yes	No
Sussex	Mar 2015–Nov 2023	Yes	Yes
Thames Valley	Apr 2015–Dec 2024	Yes	No
Warwickshire	Jan 2014–Dec 2024	Yes	Yes
West Mercia	Jan 2014–Dec 2024	Yes	Yes
West Midlands	Jan 2014–Dec 2024	Yes	Yes
West Yorkshire	Jan 2014–Dec 2024	Yes	Yes
Wiltshire	Jan 2014–May 2023	No	No

NOTE. Availability of stop and search data by police force between January 2014 and December 2024. The column "Balanced sample" indicates whether police forces have stop and search data available between October 2015 and April 2024. The column "Main sample" indicates which police forces have data available in those months that consistently meet the additional data quality requirements. SOURCE. Authors' calculations based on stop and search data from data.police.uk.

Harmonization of variables

Table B3 provides an overview of the variables available in the stop and search dataset. The categorization of the outcome variable has evolved over time. In 2014-2015, there were 8 categories, which increased to 13 in 2016 and then to 16 in 2017-2018. From 2019-2025, the number of categories reduced to 7. Table B4 summarizes the harmonization of the 16 categories into 7. We create a binary outcome variable, "no further action", which takes the value of 0 if the stop and search results in an arrest, summons, or out-of-court disposal, and 1 if it results in no further action. We also create a binary variable, "hit", which takes value 0 if nothing was found during the stop and search and 1 otherwise.[55] We also create a dummy variable which takes value 1 only if the hit is specifically linked to the object searched.

The self-reported ethnicity variable has also changed over time. In 2014-2016, there were 17 categories, which increased to 36 in 2017 and decreased to 19 in 2018-2025. Many of these categories differ slightly in wording. Table B5 details how we harmonize these ethnicity categories into 17 standardized groups. Two new categories were introduced after 2017, as used in the 2011 census.[56] We group the ethnicity category "White - Gypsy or Irish Traveller" with "White - Any other White background" and "Other ethnic group – Arab" with "Other ethnic group - Any other ethnic group". Additionally, we create a dummy variable that takes the value 1 if the subject did not want to report their ethnicity. Subsequently, we aggregate these 17 ethnicity categories into 6 groups: Asian, Black, White, Mixed, Other, and Not (Stated). The first 5 groups correspond with the officer-reported variable; but the category "Not (Stated)" is not available for officers.

We also create a dummy variable for both officer-reported and self-reported ethnicity that takes the value 1 if the ethnicity reported is non-White (Black, Asian, Mixed, Other, Not) and 0 if the ethnicity reported is White. We create an ethnicity mismatch dummy variable which equals one if there is a mismatch in whether the officer and subject report White or non-White ethnicity. Additionally, we create another ethnicity mismatch dummy variable which equals one if the ethnicity group does not match (e.g. officer says Black, while self-reported ethnicity is Asian).

We also aggregate the 21 legal powers used for stops and searches to 5 broader categories: drugs and substances, weapons, general police powers, border and security, and other/non-criminal. This is summarized in Table B6.

[55]The variables overlap a lot, but not completely. If further action is taken, the stop and search had to be a hit and if the stop and search is a miss, no action is taken. However, sometimes a stop and search is a hit but does not lead to further action (e.g. Suspected psychoactive substances seized - No further action).

[56]The changes are summarized in this notification of change on self defined ethnicity from the Government of the UK, which was approved on March 1, 2018.

Table B3: Description of variables in stop and search data

Variable	Description
Type	Person and/or vehicle search
Date	Year, month, day, time
Part of a policing operation	Boolean (true/false/null)
Policing operation	Name
Latitude	Latitude
Longitude	Longitude
Gender	Male/female/other
Age range	Age groups: missing, under 10, 10-17, 18-24, 25-34, over 34
Self-defined ethnicity	14 groups
Officer-defined ethnicity	5 groups
Legislation	Power used for stop and search (e.g., Misuse of Drugs Act 1971 (Sec. 23))
Object of search	Reason for stop and search (e.g., controlled drugs, offensive weapons)
Outcome	Result of the stop (e.g. no further action or arrest)
Outcome linked to object	Boolean (true/false/null)
Removal of more than outer clothing	Boolean (true/false/null)

NOTE. This table lists the available variables with an explanation. SOURCE. Authors' descriptions of stop and search data available on data.police.uk.

Table B4: Harmonization of stop and search outcome categories

Original outcome	Mapped outcome
A no further action disposal	No further action
Article found - Detailed outcome unavailable	No further action
Nothing found - no further action	No further action
Suspected psychoactive substances seized	No further action
Caution (simple or conditional)	Caution/drugs possession warning
Offender given drugs possession warning	Caution/drugs possession warning
Khat or Cannabis warning	Khat or cannabis warning
Community resolution	Community/local resolution
Local resolution	Community/local resolution
Arrest	Arrest
Suspect arrested	Arrest
Summons / charged by post	Summons
Suspect summonsed to court	Summons
Offender cautioned	No further action
Offender given penalty notice	Penalty notice
Penalty Notice for Disorder	Penalty notice

NOTE. Mapping summary of stop and search outcome categories to harmonize all 16 categories (varying over time) to 7 outcomes. SOURCE. Authors' harmonization of stop and search data available on data.police.uk.

Table B5: Harmonization of ethnicity categories

Ethnicity category	Years	Mapped ethnicity	Aggregated ethnicity
Asian or Asian British - Any other Asian ethnic background (A9)	2014-2017	Asian/Asian British - Any other Asian background	Asian
Asian/Asian British - Any other Asian background	2017-2025	Asian/Asian British - Any other Asian background	Asian
Asian or Asian British - Bangladeshi (A3)	2014-2017	Asian/Asian British - Bangladeshi	Asian
Asian/Asian British - Bangladeshi	2017-2025	Asian/Asian British - Bangladeshi	Asian
Asian or Asian British - Chinese (A7)	2014-2017	Asian/Asian British - Chinese	Asian
Asian/Asian British - Chinese	2017-2025	Asian/Asian British - Chinese	Asian
Asian or Asian British - Indian (A1)	2014-2017	Asian/Asian British - Indian	Asian
Asian/Asian British - Indian	2017-2025	Asian/Asian British - Indian	Asian
Asian or Asian British - Pakistani (A2)	2014-2017	Asian/Asian British - Pakistani	Asian
Asian/Asian British - Pakistani	2017-2025	Asian/Asian British - Pakistani	Asian
Black or Black British - African (B2)	2014-2017	Black/African/Caribbean/Black British - African	Black
Black/African/Caribbean/Black British - African	2017-2025	Black/African/Caribbean/Black British - African	Black
Black or Black British - Any other Black ethnic background (B9)	2014-2017	Black/African/Caribbean/Black British - Any other Black/African/Caribbean background	Black
Black/African/Caribbean/Black British - Any other Black/African/Caribbean background	2017-2025	Black/African/Caribbean/Black British - Any other Black/African/Caribbean background	Black
Black or Black British - Caribbean (B1)	2014-2017	Black/African/Caribbean/Black British - Caribbean	Black
Black/African/Caribbean/Black British - Caribbean	2017-2025	Black/African/Caribbean/Black British - Caribbean	Black

Ethnicity category	Years	Mapped ethnicity	Aggregated ethnicity
Chinese or other ethnic group - Any other ethnic group (O9)	2014-2017	Other ethnic group - Any other ethnic group	Other
Chinese or other ethnic group - Chinese (O1)	2014-2017	Asian/Asian British - Chinese	Asian
Mixed - Any other Mixed ethnic background (M9)	2014-2017	Mixed/Multiple ethnic groups - Any other background	Mixed
Mixed/Multiple ethnic groups - Any other Mixed/Multiple ethnic background	2017-2025	Mixed/Multiple ethnic groups - Any other Mixed/Multiple ethnic background	Mixed
Mixed - White and Asian (M3)	2014-2017	Mixed/Multiple ethnic groups - White and Asian	Mixed
Mixed/Multiple ethnic groups - White and Asian	2017-2025	Mixed/Multiple ethnic groups - White and Asian	Mixed
Mixed - White and Black African (M2)	2014-2017	Mixed/Multiple ethnic groups - White and Black African	Mixed
Mixed/Multiple ethnic groups - White and Black African	2017-2025	Mixed/Multiple ethnic groups - White and Black African	Mixed
Mixed - White and Black Caribbean (M1)	2014-2017	Mixed/Multiple ethnic groups - White and Black Caribbean	Mixed
Mixed/Multiple ethnic groups - White and Black Caribbean	2017-2025	Mixed/Multiple ethnic groups - White and Black Caribbean	Mixed
Not Stated (NS)	2014-2017	Other ethnic group - Not stated	Not
Other ethnic group - Any other ethnic group	2017-2025	Other ethnic group - Any other ethnic group	Other
Other ethnic group - Arab	2017-2025	Other ethnic group - Any other ethnic group	Other
Other ethnic group - Not stated	2017-2025	Other ethnic group - Not stated	Not
White - Any other White background	2017-2025	White - Any other White ethnic background	White
White - Any other White ethnic background (W9)	2014-2017	White - Any other White background	White

Ethnicity category	Years	Mapped ethnicity	Aggregated ethnicity
White - English/Welsh/Scottish/Northern Irish/British	2017-2025	White - English/Welsh/Scottish/Northern Irish background	White
White - Gypsy or Irish Traveller	2017-2025	White - Any other White background	White
White - Irish	2017-2025	White - Irish	White
White - White British (W1)	2014-2017	White - English/Welsh/Scottish/Northern Irish background	White
White - White Irish (W2)	2014-2017	White - Irish	White

NOTE. All ethnicity categories used in the raw data and their harmonization into 17 categories, as well as their aggregation. SOURCE. Authors' harmonization of stop and search data available from data.police.uk.

Table B6: Aggregation of legislation categories

Original category	Aggregated category
Misuse of Drugs Act 1971 (section 23)	Drugs & Substances
Psychoactive Substances Act 2016 (s36(2))	Drugs & Substances
Psychoactive Substances Act 2016 (s37(2))	Drugs & Substances
Psychoactive Substances Act 2016 (s38(2))	Drugs & Substances
Criminal Justice Act 1988 (section 139B)	Weapons
Criminal Justice and Public Order Act 1994 (section 60)	Weapons
Crossbows Act 1987 (section 4)	Weapons
Firearms Act 1968 (section 47)	Weapons
Police and Criminal Evidence Act 1984 (section 1)	General Police Powers
Police and Criminal Evidence Act 1984 (section 6)	General Police Powers
Aviation Security Act 1982 (section 27(1))	Border & Security
Customs and Excise Management Act 1979 (section 163)	Border & Security
Conservation of Seals Act 1970 (section 4)	Other/Non-criminal
Deer Act 1991 (section 12)	Other/Non-criminal
Environmental Protection Act 1990 (section 34B)	Other/Non-criminal
Hunting Act 2004 (section 8)	Other/Non-criminal
Poaching Prevention Act 1862 (section 2)	Other/Non-criminal
Protection of Badgers Act 1992 (section 11)	Other/Non-criminal
Public Stores Act 1875 (section 6)	Other/Non-criminal
Sporting Events Act 1985 (section 7)	Other/Non-criminal
Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (section 19)	Other/Non-criminal

NOTE. Mapping summary of stop and search legal powers to 5 broader categories. SOURCE. Authors' aggregation of stop and search data available from data.police.uk.

Nexis Uni Data

We collected the data on news articles from Nexis Uni. Table B7 shows the different search terms and combinations for the different series. We limited our search to news paper articles published between 2012–2024 in UK newspapers. We downloaded the metadata of all articles corresponding to these criteria and created a daily panel dataset with the number of articles and the number of words that contained our search terms.

Table B7: Search terms for newspaper coverage of police misconduct

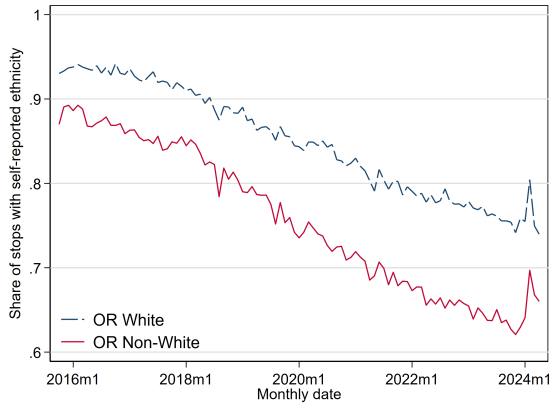
Category	Search string
General police misconduct	police OR "the Met" OR Metropolitan AND (misconduct* OR "abuse of power" OR "excessive force" OR "police brutality" OR "death in custody" OR "unlawful killing" OR "IOPC investigation") (("disciplinary" OR "misconduct") AND (officer OR constable OR detective) AND ("Independent Office for Police Conduct" OR IOPC OR IPCC OR "Independent Police Complaints Commission" OR HMICFRS))
Misconduct against women	(police OR "the Met" OR Metropolitan OR MPS) W/5 ("sexual misconduct" OR rape OR "on-duty sex" OR "domestic abuse by officer" OR "sexual assault" OR misogyn* OR "violence against women and girls" OR VAWG) AND (misconduct OR "Independent Office for Police Conduct" OR IOPC OR IPCC OR "Independent Police Complaints Commission" OR HMICFRS OR "disciplinary hearing") "Sarah Everard" OR "Wayne Couzens" OR "David Carrick" OR "predatory policing" AND (misconduct OR investigation OR inquiry) police AND (officer OR constable) AND ("WhatsApp messages" OR "explicit photos" OR "inappropriate relationship" OR "misconduct") AND (female OR woman OR girl OR women) AND NOT ((female OR woman OR women OR girl) W/5 (juror OR jury))
Race-related misconduct	"stop and search" AND (racis* OR "racial profiling" OR disproportionality OR "adultification" OR "ethnic disparity") (("Child Q" OR "Dalian Atkinson" OR "Stephen Lawrence" OR "Mark Duggan") AND (police OR officer OR PC) AND (inquiry OR "IOPC" OR "misconduct")) ("police officer" OR police OR constable OR "Met Police" OR "Metropolitan Police") AND ("strip search" OR "stop and search" OR detention OR misconduct) W/sent (Black OR Asian OR minority OR BAME OR BME OR "Gypsy Roma Traveller") AND (racis* OR discriminat* OR "racial profiling" OR disproportionalit* OR adultification)

NOTE. Description of used search terms in Nexis Uni and police misconduct categories. SOURCE. Authors' search terms used in Nexis Uni data.

C Supplemental Figures and Tables: A New Measure of Trust

Figure C1: Share of stops with self-reported ethnicity — by subgroups

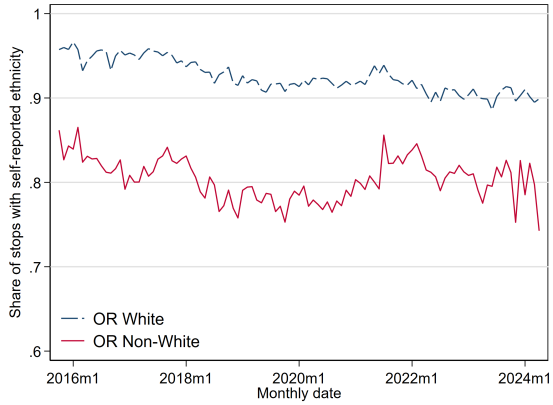
Panel A: Officer-reported ethnicity, London



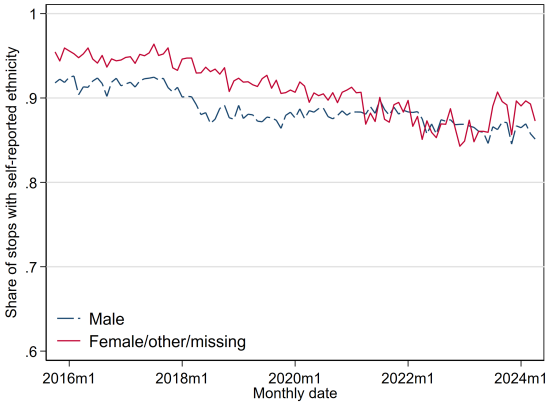
Panel B: Gender, London



Panel C: Officer-reported ethnicity, non-London forces



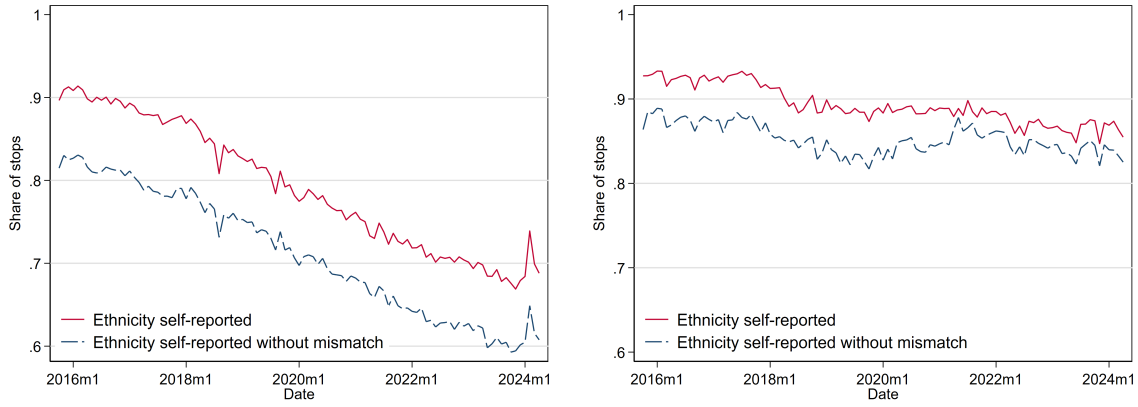
Panel D: Gender, non-London forces



NOTE. The figure shows the monthly share of stops with self-reported ethnicity over time, separately by officer-reported ethnicity in London (Panel A) and for other police forces in England and Wales (Panel B), and by gender in London (Panel C) and other police forces (Panel D). Red solid lines (blue dashed lines) indicate stops where the officer reported White (non-White). SOURCE. Authors' calculations based on stop and search data available from data.police.uk.

Figure C2: Share of stops with self-reported ethnicity and without mismatch

Panel A: London **Panel B: Non-London forces**

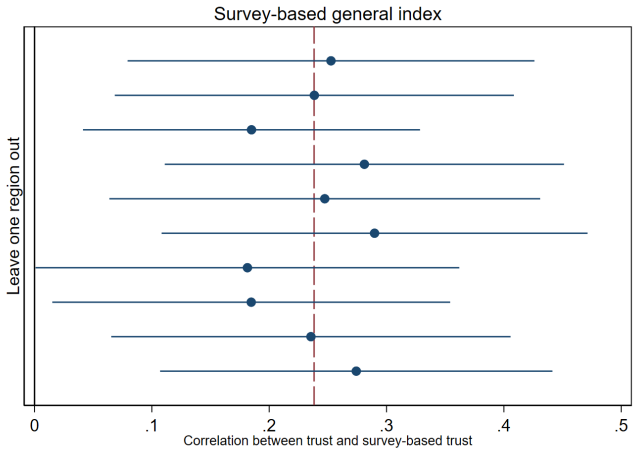


NOTE. The figure shows the monthly share of stops in which the subject self-reported their ethnicity (red line) and the share of stops in which the subject self-reported their ethnicity *and* the self-reported and officer-reported ethnicity match (dashed blue line), for London (Panel A) and other police forces in England and Wales (Panel B). SOURCE. Authors' calculations based on stop and search data available from data.police.uk.

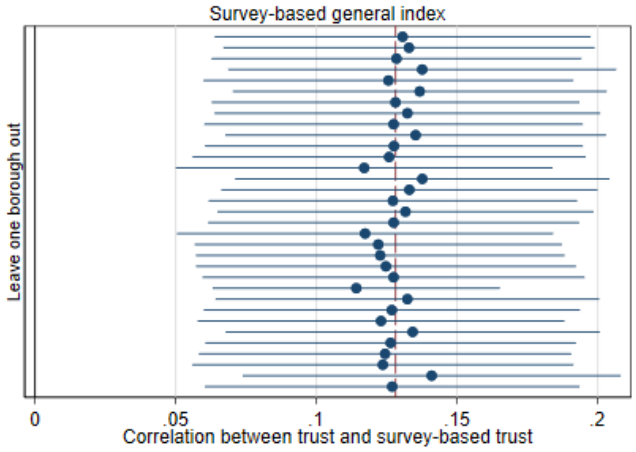
D Supplemental Figures and Tables: Cross-validation

Figure D1: Robustness of cross-validation: leave-one-out estimates

Panel A: Leave-one-region out, England and Wales (CSEW)



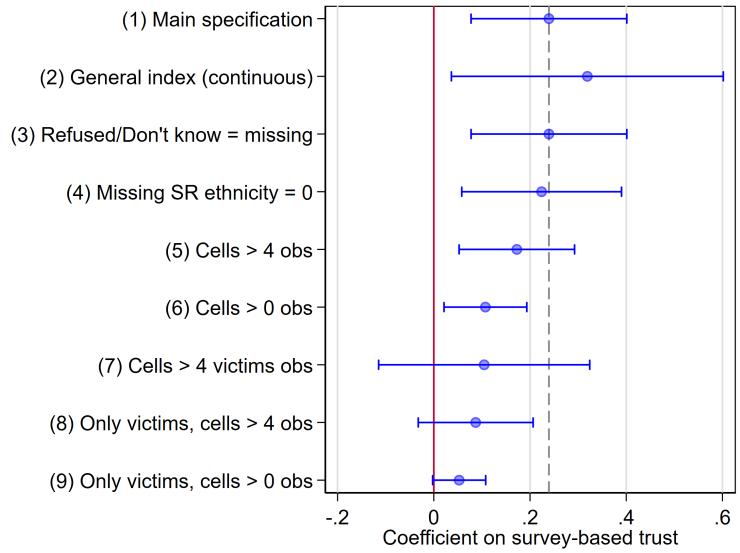
Panel B: Leave-one-borough out, London (MOPAC Survey)



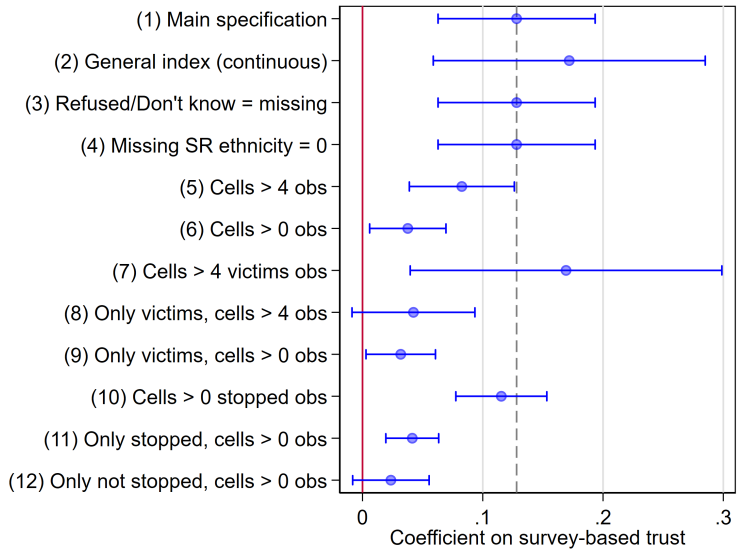
NOTE. The figure reports leave-one-out estimates (point estimate and 95% confidence interval) for the cross-validation of our new trust measure (Equation (5)). Panel A sequentially excludes one Government Office Region (GOR) from the England and Wales sample; Panel B sequentially excludes one London borough. Dashed red lines mark the baseline estimate using the full sample. SOURCE. Authors' calculations based on stop and search data from data.police.uk, the Crime Survey for England and Wales, and the London MOPAC Public Attitudes Survey.

Figure D2: Robustness of cross-validation: alternative specifications

Panel A: Alternative specifications, England and Wales (CSEW)



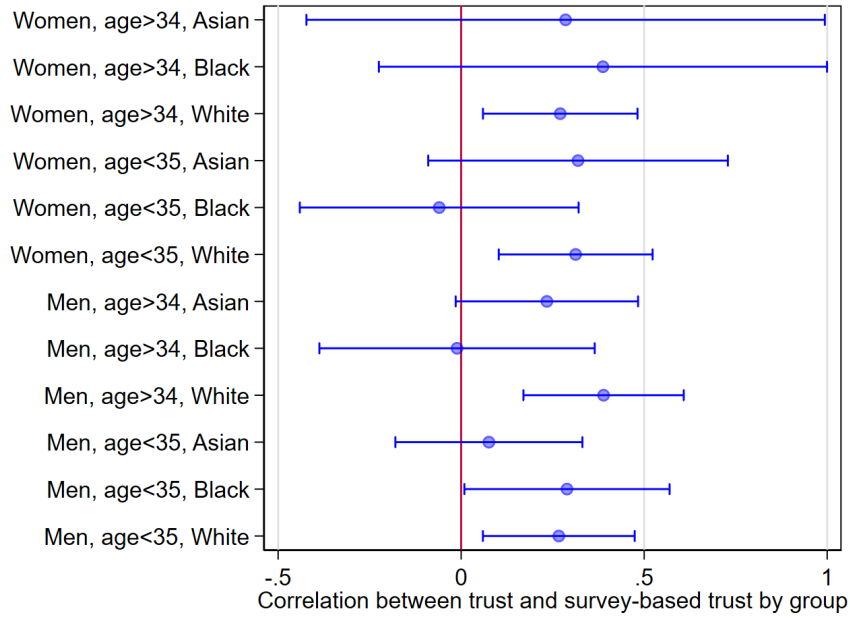
Panel B: Alternative specifications, London (MOPAC Survey)



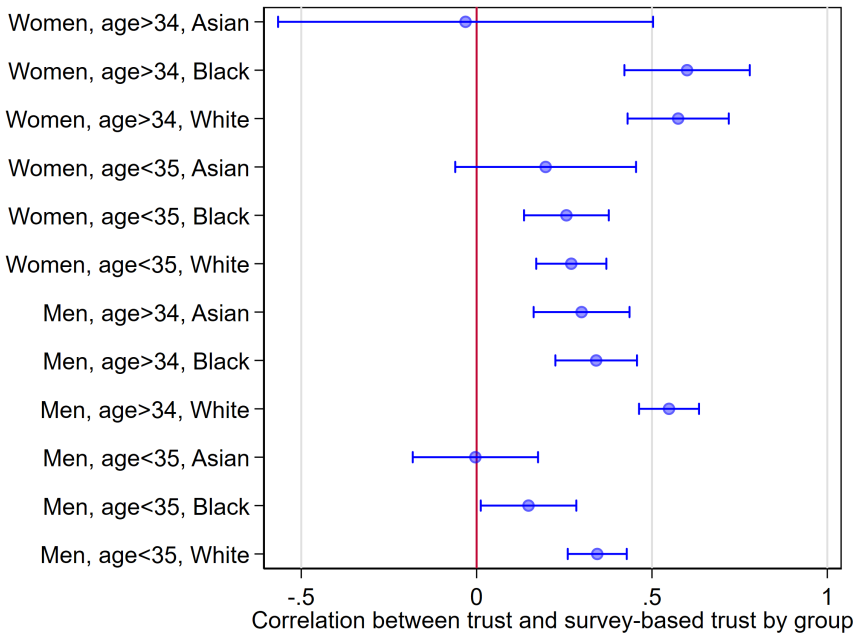
NOTE. The figure reports estimates (point estimate and 95% confidence interval) under alternative specifications, as a sensitivity check for the cross-validation of our new trust measure (Equation (5)), for England and Wales (Panel A) and London (Panel B). The dashed line marks the main specification (row 1, Columns 4 and 8 of Table 2). Row (2) replaces the dichotomized trust index with its normalized continuous mean; row (3) treats "Refused/Don't know" as missing rather than zero, and row (4) treats missing self-reported ethnicity as zero rather than missing. Rows (5)–(6) lower the minimum cell size from the baseline of 10 observations to 5 and to 1, respectively. Rows (7)–(9) restrict the sample used to construct the trust index to victimized respondents, requiring cells with at least 4 such respondents (row 7) or applying the two cell-size thresholds above (rows 8–9). In Panel B only, row (10) requires cells with at least 1 respondent stopped by police, and rows (11)–(12) further restrict the sample to respondents who were, or were not, stopped, respectively. Standard errors are heteroskedasticity-robust. SOURCE. Authors' calculations based on stop and search data from data.police.uk, the Crime Survey for England and Wales, and the London MOPAC Public Attitudes Survey.

Figure D3: Heterogeneity results for cross-validation by demographic sample

Panel A: England and Wales (CSEW)



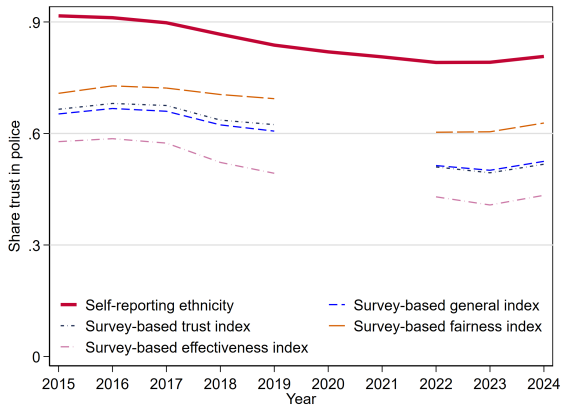
Panel B: London (MOPAC Survey)



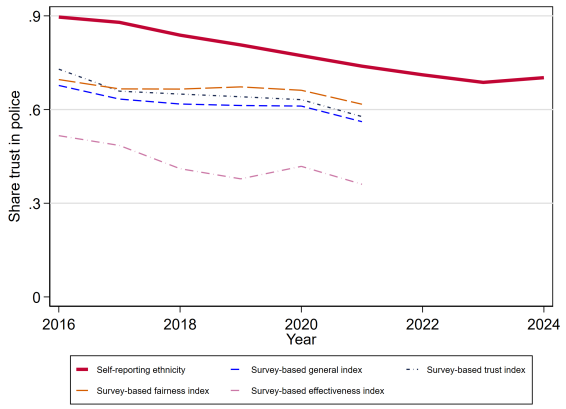
NOTE. The figure presents regression results (point estimate and 95% confidence interval) corresponding to Equation (5) excluding fixed effects and control variables for England and Wales (Panel A) and London (Panel B), estimated separately for demographic subgroups defined by the intersection of gender (men/women), age (below or above 35), and officer-reported ethnicity (Asian, Black, White). Each row corresponds to a distinct demographic subgroup. Standard errors are clustered at the GOR level in Panel A and heteroskedasticity-robust in Panel B. SOURCE. Authors' calculations based on stop and search data available from data.police.uk, the Crime Survey of England and Wales (Panel A) and London MOPAC Public Attitudes Survey (Panel B).

Figure D4: New measure and survey-based measure of trust in police over time, for victims and stopped respondents

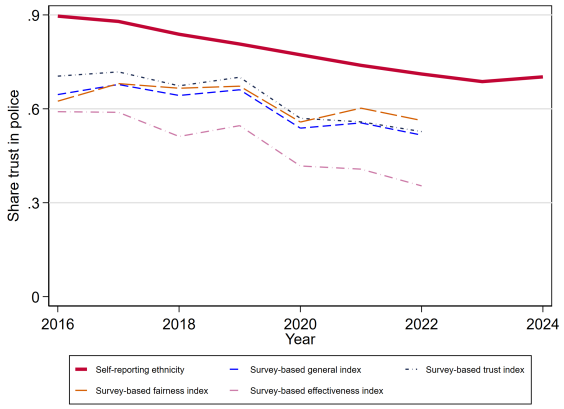
Panel A: England and Wales (CSEW) - victims



Panel B: London (MOPAC Survey) - victims

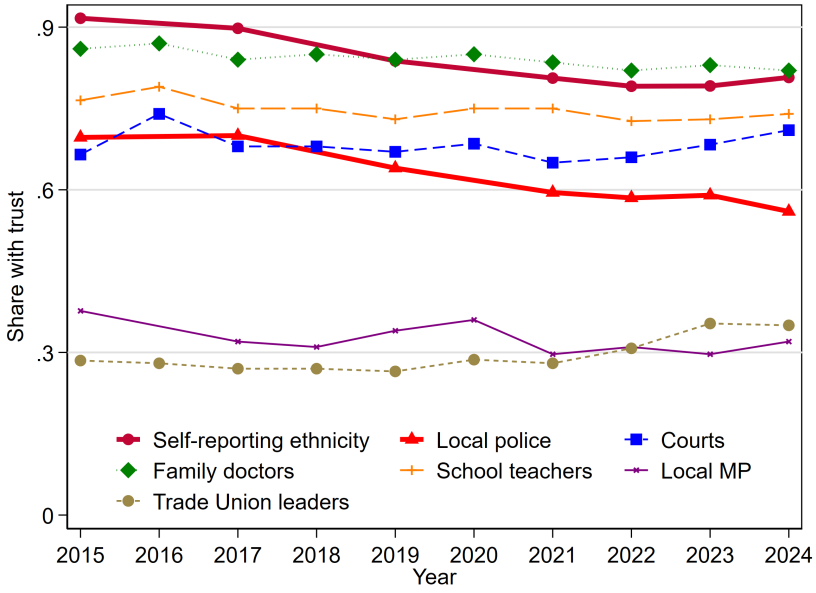


Panel C: London (MOPAC Survey) - stopped



NOTE. The figure shows the annual average share of stops in the analysis sample with self-reported ethnicity (red solid line) against the survey-based trust indices for England and Wales (Panel A) and London (Panels B and C). Panels A and B restrict the sample of survey respondents to those who report having been victimized, while Panel C restricts the sample to respondents who report having been stopped by the police. The general trust index (blue dashes) represents an average across all dimensions, with separate indices capturing trust (blue dash-dot), fairness (yellow dashes), and effectiveness (pink dash-dot) specifically. SOURCE. Authors' calculations based on stop and search data available from data.police.uk, the Crime Survey of England and Wales (Panel A), and London MOPAC Public Attitudes Survey (Panel B).

Figure D5: Cross-validation — trust in police and trust in other institutions



NOTE. The figure shows the annual average share of stops in England and Wales with self-reported ethnicity (dark red dot) and the annual share of survey-based trust in the local police (red triangle), courts (blue square), family doctors (green diamond), school teachers (yellow dash), local MP (pink cross), and trade union leaders (dark yellow circle) in the UK. SOURCE. Authors' calculations based on stop and search data available from data.police.uk and statistics published by YouGov's trust tracker.

Table D1: Survey questions

Survey	Survey question	Classification
CSEW	The police in this area can be relied on to be there when you need them.	Trust/Confidence
CSEW	The police in this area can be trusted.	Trust/Confidence
CSEW	Taking everything into account I have confidence in the police in this area.	Trust/Confidence
CSEW	They (the police in this area) would treat you with respect if you had contact with them for any reason.	Fairness/Respect
CSEW	The police in this area treat everyone fairly regardless of who they are.	Fairness/Respect
CSEW	Taking everything into account, how good a job do you think the police in this area are doing?	Effectiveness/Performance
CSEW	They (the police in this area) understand the issues that affect this community.	Effectiveness/Performance
MOPAC Survey	The police in this area can be relied on to be there when you need them.	Trust/Confidence
MOPAC Survey	The Metropolitan Police Service is an organisation that I can trust.	Trust/Confidence
MOPAC Survey	The police in this area would treat you with respect if you had contact with them for any reason.	Fairness/Respect
MOPAC Survey	The police in this area would treat everyone fairly regardless of identity.	Fairness/Respect
MOPAC Survey	How confident are you that the Police in this area use their stop and search powers fairly?	Fairness/Respect
MOPAC Survey	Taking everything into account, how good a job do you think the police in this area are doing?	Effectiveness/Performance
MOPAC Survey	Central Government is an organisation that I can trust.	Trust in central government
MOPAC Survey	Media companies are organisations I can trust.	Trust in media
MOPAC Survey	The National Health Service (NHS) is an organisation that I can trust.	Trust in NHS
YouGov Survey	How much do you trust the local police to tell the truth?	Trust in local police
YouGov Survey	How much do you trust courts to tell the truth?	Trust in courts
YouGov Survey	How much do you trust family doctors to tell the truth?	Trust in family doctors
YouGov Survey	How much do you trust school teachers to tell the truth?	Trust in school teachers
YouGov Survey	How much do you trust the local MP to tell the truth?	Trust in local MP
YouGov Survey	How much do you trust Trade Union leaders to tell the truth?	Trust in Trade Union leaders

NOTE. The table lists the survey questions used to measure trust in police and other institutions, by survey, and their classification into sub-indices. SOURCE. Crime Survey of England and Wales, London's MOPAC Public Attitudes Survey, and YouGov Survey.

Table D2: Summary statistics of Crime Survey and MOPAC's Survey

	CSEW		MOPAC Survey (London)			
	All	Victims	All	Victims	Stopped	Not stopped
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
Gender = male	0.46	0.45	0.45	0.45	0.70	0.44
	(0.50)	(0.50)	(0.50)	(0.50)	(0.46)	(0.50)
Gender = female	0.54	0.55	0.55	0.55	0.30	0.56
	(0.50)	(0.50)	(0.50)	(0.50)	(0.46)	(0.50)
Gender = other	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
	(0.00)	(0.00)	(0.02)	(0.03)	(0.04)	(0.02)
Gender = missing	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
	(0.00)	(0.00)	(0.03)	(0.02)	(0.02)	(0.03)
Age = below 25	0.06	0.09	0.09	0.08	0.10	0.09
	(0.24)	(0.29)	(0.29)	(0.27)	(0.30)	(0.29)
Age = 25-34	0.14	0.19	0.19	0.21	0.21	0.19
	(0.35)	(0.39)	(0.39)	(0.41)	(0.41)	(0.39)
Age = over 34	0.79	0.72	0.72	0.71	0.68	0.72
	(0.41)	(0.45)	(0.45)	(0.45)	(0.47)	(0.45)
Age = missing	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
	(0.00)	(0.00)	(0.05)	(0.04)	(0.03)	(0.05)
Ethnicity = White	0.88	0.87	0.65	0.66	0.59	0.65
	(0.32)	(0.34)	(0.48)	(0.48)	(0.49)	(0.48)
Ethnicity = Black	0.03	0.03	0.12	0.10	0.16	0.11
	(0.17)	(0.18)	(0.32)	(0.30)	(0.36)	(0.32)
Ethnicity = Asian	0.06	0.07	0.16	0.15	0.15	0.16
	(0.24)	(0.25)	(0.36)	(0.35)	(0.36)	(0.36)
Ethnicity = Mixed/Other	0.02	0.03	0.06	0.07	0.08	0.06
	(0.14)	(0.17)	(0.24)	(0.26)	(0.27)	(0.24)
Ethnicity = missing	0.00	0.00	0.02	0.02	0.03	0.02
	(0.04)	(0.05)	(0.14)	(0.15)	(0.16)	(0.13)
London	0.11	0.13	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00
	(0.32)	(0.34)	(0.00)	(0.00)	(0.00)	(0.00)
General index	0.67	0.62	0.72	0.63	0.61	0.73
	(0.32)	(0.34)	(0.28)	(0.31)	(0.33)	(0.28)
Trust index	0.68	0.62	0.76	0.66	0.63	0.77
	(0.37)	(0.40)	(0.34)	(0.39)	(0.40)	(0.34)
Fairness index	0.73	0.70	0.74	0.67	0.63	0.75
	(0.36)	(0.37)	(0.31)	(0.34)	(0.36)	(0.31)
Effectiveness index	0.59	0.53	0.59	0.45	0.48	0.60
	(0.40)	(0.41)	(0.49)	(0.50)	(0.50)	(0.49)
Observations	226,649	36,043	89,301	10,546	5,320	80,742

NOTE. The table shows the mean and standard deviation (in parentheses) for respondent characteristics of all CSEW respondents in England and Wales (column (1)) and all victimized CSEW respondents (column (2)), all MOPAC Survey respondents in London (column (3)), and victimized (column (4)), stopped (column (5)) and not stopped (column (6)) MOPAC respondents. The number of respondents by sample is shown at the bottom. SOURCE. Authors' calculations based on data from the Crime Survey of England and Wales and London MOPAC Public Attitudes Survey.

Table D3: Regression-based cross-validation - additional controls

	England & Wales				London			
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)
	Panel A: Y = HFI, X = General Index (Survey)							
Survey-based trust	0.277***	0.212***	0.238***	0.132	0.350***	0.358***	0.368***	0.085**
	(0.064)	(0.059)	(0.055)	(0.080)	(0.026)	(0.028)	(0.030)	(0.037)
Baseline mean	0.831	0.831	0.831	0.831	0.859	0.859	0.859	0.859
Adjusted R^2	0.021	0.333	0.434	0.340	0.094	0.163	0.304	0.243
	Panel B: Y = HFI, X = Trust Index (Survey)							
Survey-based trust	0.208***	0.183***	0.223***	0.116*	0.295***	0.284***	0.304***	0.007
	(0.059)	(0.055)	(0.052)	(0.070)	(0.024)	(0.026)	(0.025)	(0.037)
Baseline mean	0.831	0.831	0.831	0.831	0.859	0.859	0.859	0.859
Adjusted R^2	0.014	0.331	0.434	0.340	0.075	0.144	0.297	0.241
	Panel C: Y = HFI, X = Fairness Index (Survey)							
Survey-based trust	0.273***	0.139**	0.154***	0.070	0.293***	0.318***	0.285***	0.114***
	(0.061)	(0.060)	(0.056)	(0.072)	(0.025)	(0.029)	(0.031)	(0.032)
Baseline mean	0.831	0.831	0.831	0.831	0.859	0.859	0.859	0.859
Adjusted R^2	0.024	0.327	0.427	0.337	0.077	0.151	0.277	0.246
	Panel D: Y = HFI, X = Effectiveness Index (Survey)							
Survey-based trust	0.216***	0.184***	0.185***	0.105	0.220***	0.199***	0.243***	0.024
	(0.056)	(0.050)	(0.046)	(0.066)	(0.018)	(0.019)	(0.020)	(0.023)
Baseline mean	0.831	0.831	0.831	0.831	0.859	0.859	0.859	0.859
Adjusted R^2	0.017	0.333	0.432	0.339	0.069	0.139	0.301	0.241
Gender × Age × Ethnicity	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes
Region FEs	No	No	Yes	No	No	No	Yes	No
Year FEs	No	No	No	Yes	No	No	No	Yes
Observations	925	925	925	925	1623	1623	1623	1623

NOTE. The table shows regression results corresponding to Equation (5), with columns (1)-(4) for England and Wales and columns (5)-(8) for London. Specifications are indicated at the bottom of the table. Gender × Age × Ethnicity denotes controls for the full interaction of gender, age (older or younger than 34) and (officer-reported) ethnicity. The independent variable is a general survey-based trust index (Panel A), a specific survey-based trust/confidence index (Panel B), a specific survey-based fairness index (Panel C) and a specific survey-based effectiveness/performance index (Panel D). Standard errors (in parentheses) are heteroskedasticity-robust. *** $p < 0.01$, ** $p < 0.05$, * $p < 0.1$. SOURCE. Authors' calculations based on stop and search data available from data.police.uk, the Crime Survey of England and Wales (columns (1)-(4)), and London MOPAC Public Attitudes Survey (columns (5)-(8)).

Table D4: Regression-based cross-validation - alternative standard errors

	England & Wales				London			
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)
	Panel A: Y = HFI, X = General Index (Survey)							
Survey-based trust	0.277*	0.264	0.230*	0.239*	0.350***	0.189***	0.138***	0.128***
	(0.129)	(0.145)	(0.114)	(0.110)	(0.033)	(0.043)	(0.034)	(0.033)
Baseline mean	0.831	0.831	0.831	0.831	0.859	0.859	0.859	0.859
Adjusted R^2	0.021	0.030	0.169	0.173	0.094	0.164	0.308	0.323
	Panel B: Y = HFI, X = Trust Index (Survey)							
Survey-based trust	0.208	0.188	0.189*	0.193**	0.295***	0.118***	0.099***	0.090***
	(0.119)	(0.115)	(0.086)	(0.081)	(0.024)	(0.033)	(0.031)	(0.032)
Baseline mean	0.831	0.831	0.831	0.831	0.859	0.859	0.859	0.859
Adjusted R^2	0.014	0.024	0.167	0.171	0.075	0.152	0.305	0.320
	Panel C: Y = HFI, X = Fairness Index (Survey)							
Survey-based trust	0.273**	0.263*	0.215*	0.222**	0.293***	0.180***	0.103***	0.098***
	(0.110)	(0.122)	(0.098)	(0.092)	(0.034)	(0.037)	(0.025)	(0.023)
Baseline mean	0.831	0.831	0.831	0.831	0.859	0.859	0.859	0.859
Adjusted R^2	0.024	0.034	0.171	0.175	0.077	0.168	0.306	0.321
	Panel D: Y = HFI, X = Effectiveness Index (Survey)							
Survey-based trust	0.216*	0.180	0.125	0.137	0.220***	0.084**	0.094**	0.086**
	(0.100)	(0.116)	(0.095)	(0.098)	(0.026)	(0.038)	(0.036)	(0.035)
Baseline mean	0.831	0.831	0.831	0.831	0.859	0.859	0.859	0.859
Adjusted R^2	0.017	0.024	0.162	0.166	0.069	0.151	0.307	0.322
Stop Controls	No	No	No	Yes	No	No	No	Yes
Year FEs	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes
Region FEs	No	No	Yes	Yes	No	No	Yes	Yes
Observations	925	925	925	925	1623	1623	1623	1623

NOTE. The table shows regression results corresponding to Equation (5), with columns (1)-(4) for England and Wales and columns (5)-(8) for London. Specifications are indicated at the bottom of the table. Stop controls are reason for stop and stop outcome. The independent variable is a general survey-based trust index (Panel A), a specific survey-based trust/confidence index (Panel B), a specific survey-based fairness index (Panel C) and a specific survey-based effectiveness/performance index (Panel D). Standard errors (in parentheses) are clustered at GOR level for England and Wales and at borough level for London. *** $p < 0.01$, ** $p < 0.05$, * $p < 0.1$. SOURCE. Authors' calculations based on stop and search data available from data.police.uk, the Crime Survey of England and Wales (columns (1)-(4)), and London MOPAC Public Attitudes Survey (columns (5)-(8)).

Table D5: Regression-based cross-validation - weighted regressions

	England & Wales				London			
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)
	Panel A: Y = HFI, X = General Index (Survey)							
Survey-based trust	0.557***	0.502***	0.352***	0.382***	0.295***	0.183***	0.108***	0.098***
	(0.085)	(0.094)	(0.082)	(0.072)	(0.036)	(0.034)	(0.020)	(0.018)
Baseline mean	0.831	0.831	0.831	0.831	0.859	0.859	0.859	0.859
Adjusted R^2	0.273	0.327	0.574	0.660	0.206	0.356	0.757	0.775
	Panel B: Y = HFI, X = Trust Index (Survey)							
Survey-based trust	0.460***	0.397***	0.312***	0.347***	0.262***	0.145***	0.099***	0.093***
	(0.084)	(0.088)	(0.068)	(0.053)	(0.027)	(0.028)	(0.016)	(0.015)
Baseline mean	0.831	0.831	0.831	0.831	0.859	0.859	0.859	0.859
Adjusted R^2	0.226	0.295	0.575	0.662	0.188	0.337	0.758	0.776
	Panel C: Y = HFI, X = Fairness Index (Survey)							
Survey-based trust	0.555***	0.505***	0.339***	0.355***	0.258***	0.184***	0.086***	0.080***
	(0.082)	(0.074)	(0.070)	(0.060)	(0.034)	(0.030)	(0.017)	(0.015)
Baseline mean	0.831	0.831	0.831	0.831	0.859	0.859	0.859	0.859
Adjusted R^2	0.295	0.377	0.583	0.668	0.185	0.378	0.754	0.773
	Panel D: Y = HFI, X = Effectiveness Index (Survey)							
Survey-based trust	0.505***	0.405***	0.236***	0.203**	0.139***	0.027	0.038***	0.032***
	(0.092)	(0.102)	(0.087)	(0.083)	(0.022)	(0.023)	(0.013)	(0.012)
Baseline mean	0.831	0.831	0.831	0.831	0.859	0.859	0.859	0.859
Adjusted R^2	0.227	0.265	0.536	0.623	0.083	0.294	0.745	0.765
Stop Controls	No	No	No	Yes	No	No	No	Yes
Year FEs	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes
Region FEs	No	No	Yes	Yes	No	No	Yes	Yes
Observations	925	925	925	925	1623	1623	1623	1623

NOTE. The table shows regression results corresponding to Equation (5), with columns (1)-(4) for England and Wales and columns (5)-(8) for London, weighted by number of stops in cell. Specifications are indicated at the bottom of the table. Stop controls are reason for stop and stop outcome. The independent variable is a general survey-based trust index (Panel A), a specific survey-based trust/confidence index (Panel B), a specific survey-based fairness index (Panel C) and a specific survey-based effectiveness/performance index (Panel D). Standard errors (in parentheses) are heteroskedasticity-robust. *** $p < 0.01$, ** $p < 0.05$, * $p < 0.1$. SOURCE. Authors' calculations based on stop and search data available from data.police.uk, the Crime Survey of England and Wales (columns (1)-(4)), and London MOPAC Public Attitudes Survey (columns (5)-(8)).

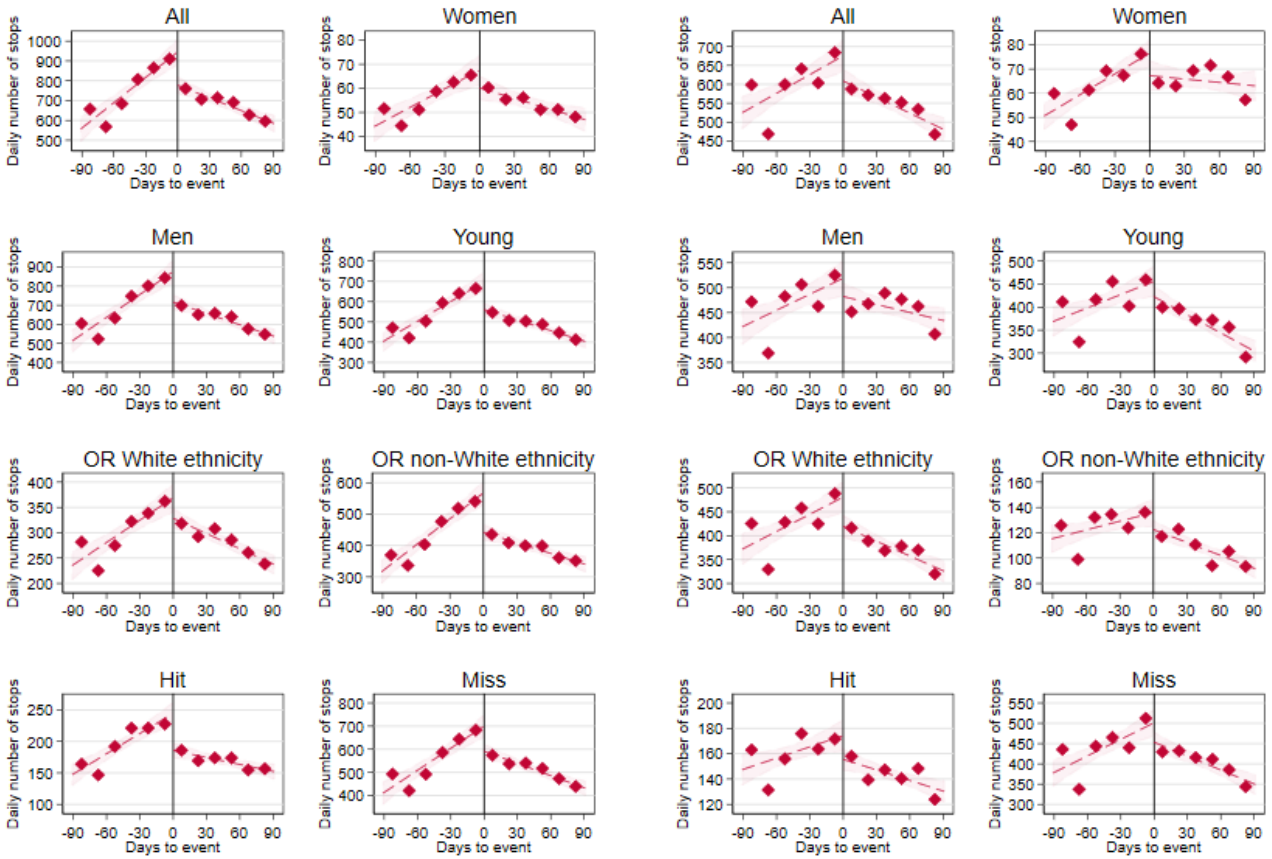
Table D6: Correlation with trust in other institutions in London

	Y = Trust (self-reported ethnicity)			
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
	Panel A: X = Trust in police (general index)			
Survey-based trust	0.218***	0.201***	0.130***	0.122***
	(0.037)	(0.038)	(0.039)	(0.039)
	Panel B: X = Trust in central government			
Survey-based trust	0.071***	0.048	0.006	0.008
	(0.019)	(0.044)	(0.037)	(0.029)
	Panel C: X = Trust in media			
Survey-based trust	0.067*	-0.010	-0.014	-0.036
	(0.036)	(0.062)	(0.050)	(0.041)
	Panel D: X = Trust in NHS			
Survey-based trust	0.048***	0.155**	0.116*	0.083**
	(0.012)	(0.070)	(0.060)	(0.041)
Stop Controls	No	No	No	Yes
Year FEs	No	Yes	Yes	Yes
Borough FEs	No	No	Yes	Yes
Observations	576	576	576	576

NOTE. The table shows regression results corresponding to Equation (5). Specifications are indicated at the bottom of the table. Stop controls are reason for stop and stop outcome. The independent variable is a general survey-based trust in police index (Panel A), trust in central government (Panel B), trust in media (Panel C) and trust in NHS (Panel D). The dependent variable is the new measure of trust. Standard errors (in parentheses) are heteroskedasticity-robust. *** $p < 0.01$, ** $p < 0.05$, * $p < 0.1$.
SOURCE. Authors' calculations based on stop and search data available from data.police.uk and London MOPAC Public Attitudes Survey.

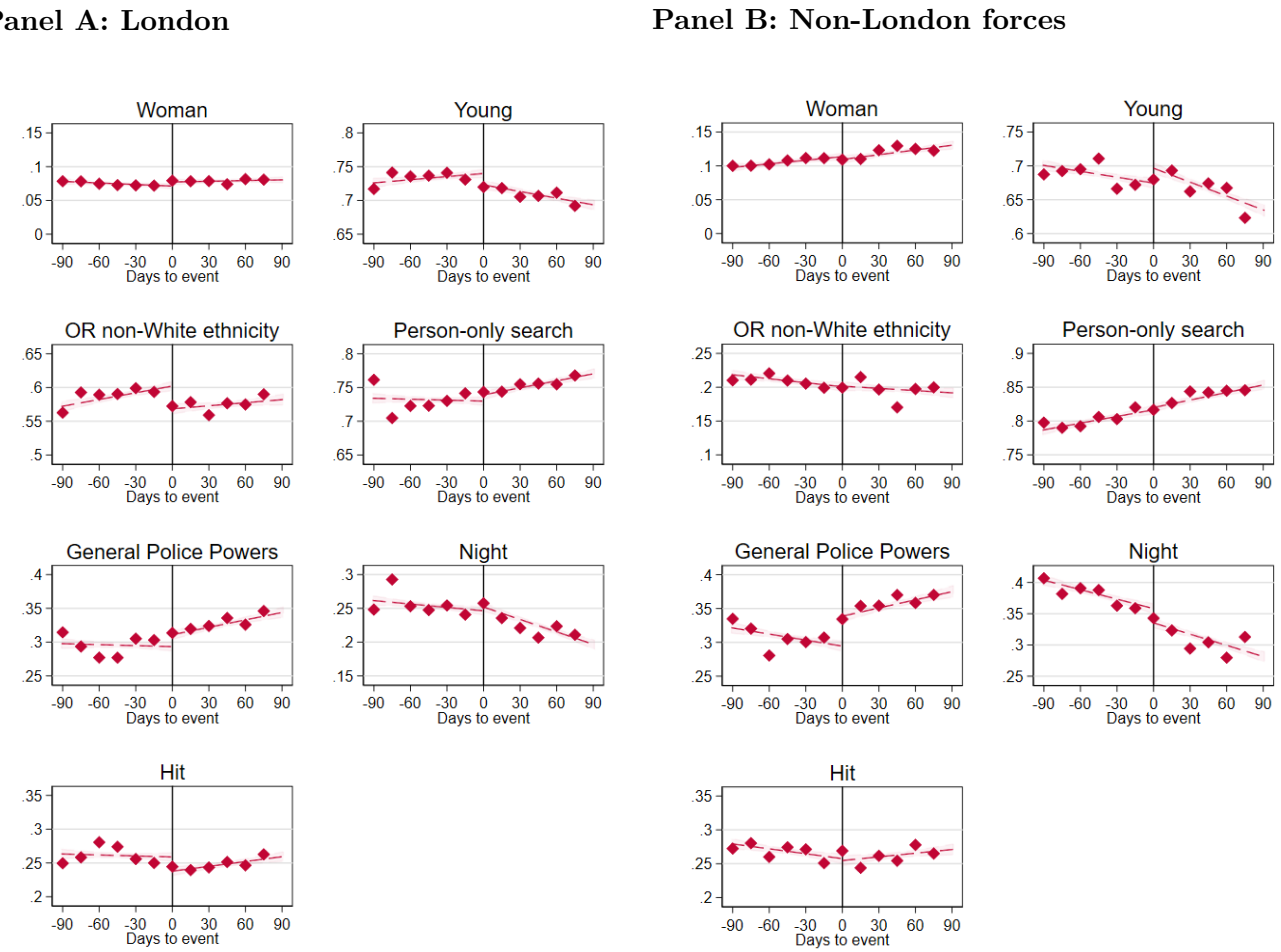
E Supplemental Figures and Tables: Police Misconduct

Figure E1: Balancing tests — number of stops by stop characteristics



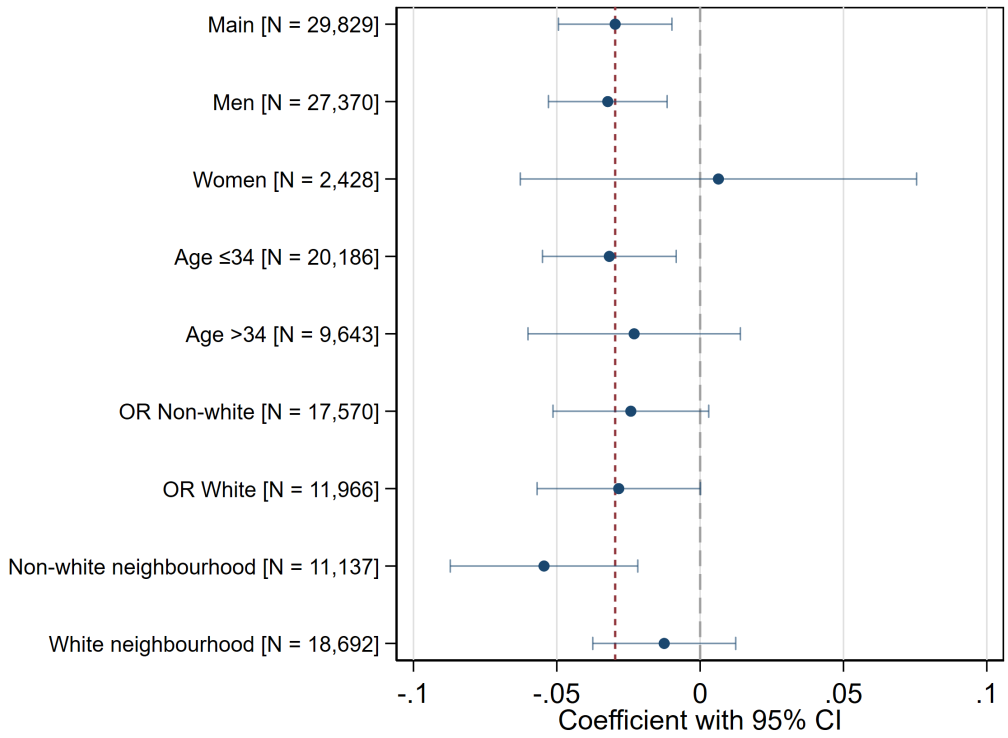
NOTE. The figures present binned scatter plots, with 15-day bins, for the six months around the Sarah Everard murder, separately for London (Panel A) and non-London forces (Panel B). Each plot shows the number of stops with a given subject or stop characteristic: all subjects, female subjects, male subjects, officer-reported non-White subjects, officer-reported White subjects, subject younger than 35 years old, stops with a contraband hit, and stops with a contraband miss. The vertical line corresponds to March 10, 2021, when the arrest of Officer Couzens was first covered in the media. The dashed lines correspond to fitted linear trends. Shaded areas indicate 95% confidence intervals. SOURCE. Authors' calculations based on stop and search data available from data.police.uk.

Figure E2: Balancing tests — share of stops by stop characteristics



NOTE. The figures present binned scatter plots, with 15-day bins, for the six months around the Sarah Everard murder, separately for London (Panel A) and non-London forces (Panel B). Each plot shows the share of stops with a given subject or stop characteristic: female subject, subject younger than 35 years old, officer-reported non-White subject, person-only search, search conducted under general police powers, stop occurring between 10PM and 6AM (Night), and stops with a contraband hit. The vertical line corresponds to March 10, 2021, when the arrest of Officer Couzens was first covered in the media. The dashed lines correspond to fitted linear trends. Shaded areas indicate 95% confidence intervals. SOURCE. Authors' calculations based on stop and search data available from data.police.uk.

Figure E3: Heterogeneous impact of the sentencing of Officer Couzens and the arrest of Officer Carrick (London) by subject/area characteristics



NOTE. The figure presents heterogeneity analyses for the effect of the sentencing of Officer Couzens and the arrest of Officer Carrick on trust in police in London. Point estimates and 95% confidence intervals from the baseline specification (Column (4) of Table 5) estimated separately by demographic group — gender, age, and officer-reported ethnicity — and by the ethnic composition of the neighborhood of the stop, distinguishing non-White from White neighborhoods, where non-White neighborhoods are defined as those in which less than 50% of the population identifies as White. The red dashed line indicates the baseline estimate for the full sample. SOURCE. Authors' calculations based on stop and search data from data.police.uk, and census data from ons.gov.uk.

Table E1: Balance test — daily number of stops

	Non-London	London			
	Mar 10 2021	Mar 10 2021	Sep 30 2021	Feb 1 2022	Mar 21 2023
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
Post	-5.073***	-2.278***	0.458	0.025	0.420
	(0.530)	(0.658)	(0.660)	(0.733)	(0.593)
Baseline mean	22.190	20.981	14.508	18.586	13.293
Observations	5,995	5,157	2,051	2,048	2,045
Time trend	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Differential time trend	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Region FEs	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Day-of-week FEs	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes

NOTE. The table presents balance tests for the daily number of stops (specification with full controls) across five samples. Columns (1) and (2) correspond to the arrest related to the Sarah Everard murder (March 10, 2021), estimated for London (borough × day) and non-London forces (police force × day), respectively. Region fixed effects are police force fixed effects for Column (1) and borough fixed effects for Columns (2)–(5). Columns (3)–(5) present results for London (borough × day) around three subsequent events: the sentencing of Officer Couzens and arrest of Officer Carrick (September 30, 2021), the release of the IOPC Operation Hotton report (February 1, 2022), and the release of the Casey Review (March 21, 2023). Specifications are indicated at the bottom of the table. Standard errors (in parentheses) are heteroskedasticity-robust except for column (1), where they are clustered at the police force level. *** $p < 0.01$, ** $p < 0.05$, * $p < 0.1$. SOURCE. Authors' calculations based on stop and search data available from data.police.uk.

Table E2: Balance test — sample composition

	Non-London	London			
	Mar 10 2021	Mar 10 2021	Sep 30 2021	Feb 1 2022	Mar 21 2023
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
Woman					
Post	-0.003	0.005*	0.016**	-0.003	-0.001
	(0.005)	(0.003)	(0.006)	(0.006)	(0.007)
Baseline mean	0.106	0.074	0.082	0.083	0.088
Age $\leq$ 34					
Post	0.017	-0.015***	-0.014	0.006	-0.002
	(0.012)	(0.005)	(0.011)	(0.010)	(0.012)
Baseline mean	0.687	0.733	0.664	0.682	0.660
OR ethnicity: Non-white					
Post	-0.006	-0.022***	-0.032***	0.028***	-0.011
	(0.009)	(0.005)	(0.011)	(0.010)	(0.013)
Baseline mean	0.209	0.588	0.587	0.582	0.555
Person-only search					
Post	0.002	0.010**	-0.009	-0.006	0.014
	(0.006)	(0.005)	(0.010)	(0.009)	(0.010)
Baseline mean	0.802	0.732	0.772	0.759	0.797
General police powers					
Post	0.043***	0.019***	-0.025**	0.006	0.023*
	(0.008)	(0.005)	(0.011)	(0.010)	(0.013)
Baseline mean	0.308	0.295	0.348	0.323	0.425
Night					
Post	-0.015**	0.005	-0.002	-0.006	0.018*
	(0.006)	(0.005)	(0.009)	(0.009)	(0.011)
Baseline mean	0.380	0.253	0.218	0.269	0.242
Hit					
Post	-0.000	-0.020***	0.005	-0.004	-0.010
	(0.004)	(0.005)	(0.011)	(0.009)	(0.012)
Baseline mean	0.268	0.261	0.280	0.274	0.282
Observations	104,620	116,930	29,829	34,791	24,845
Simple & differential time trend	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Region & day-of-week FEs	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes

NOTE. The table presents balance tests for stop and subject characteristics across five samples, all using the full-controls specification. Column (1) covers non-London forces around the arrest related to the Sarah Everard murder (March 10, 2021). Columns (2)–(5) cover London around four events: the Sarah Everard arrest (March 10, 2021), the sentencing of Officer Couzens and arrest of Officer Carrick (Sep 30, 2021), the release of the IOPC Operation Hotton report (Feb 1, 2022), and the release of the Casey Review (Mar 21, 2023). Each row reports results from regressing a subject or stop characteristic on the Post indicator. The baseline mean refers to the mean of each dependent variable in the three-month period prior to the event for column (1)–(2), and the 31-day period prior to the event for columns (3)–(5). Specifications are indicated at the bottom of the table. Standard errors (in parentheses) are heteroskedasticity-robust for clustered at the police force level for column (1) and heteroskedasticity-robust for columns (2)–(5). *** $p < 0.01$, ** $p < 0.05$, * $p < 0.1$. SOURCE. Authors' calculations based on stop and search data available from data.police.uk.

Table E3: The impact of the murder of Sarah Everard on trust in police, robustness checks

	(1) All	(2) All	(3) Donut	(4) All	(5) All
	Panel A: London (Y: self-reporting ethnicity)				
Post	-0.018***	-0.018***	-0.018***	-0.018***	-0.018***
	(0.005)	(0.005)	(0.005)	(0.005)	(0.005)
Baseline mean	0.757	0.757	0.757	0.757	0.757
Observations	116,930	116,930	107,113	116,930	116,930
	Panel B: Non-London forces (Y: self-reporting ethnicity)				
Post	-0.008	-0.008	-0.008	-0.009	-0.008**
	(0.006)	(0.006)	(0.010)	(0.006)	(0.004)
Baseline mean	0.889	0.889	0.889	0.889	0.889
Observations	102,377	102,377	94,258	104,620	102,377
Time trend	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Differential trend	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Region FEs	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Time FEs	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Controls	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
2nd polynomial	Yes	No	No	No	No
Region-specific differential trend	No	Yes	No	No	No
Donut hole	No	No	Yes	No	No
Missing SR ethnicity coded as zero	No	No	No	Yes	No
Alternative standard errors	No	No	No	No	Yes

NOTE. The table presents robustness checks on the regression results corresponding to Equation (6), estimated separately for London (Panel A) and non-London forces (Panel B) using stops in the six-month window around the arrest of Officer Couzens on March 10, 2021. All columns include the full set of baseline controls; each column then departs from the baseline specification in one dimension, as indicated at the bottom of the table. Column (1) allows for a second-order polynomial in the running variable. Column (2) adds a region-specific differential trend, i.e. a borough-specific (Panel A) or police force-specific (Panel B) linear time trend allowed to differ before and after the event. Column (3) is the donut hole specification, which excludes stops in the two weeks immediately around the event. Column (4) uses an alternative coding of the dependent variable, equal to one if the subject self-reports their ethnicity and zero if the subject does not state their ethnicity or if self-reported ethnicity is missing. Column (5) uses alternative standard errors, clustered at the borough level in Panel A and heteroskedasticity-robust in Panel B. Region fixed effects are borough fixed effects in Panel A and police force fixed effects in Panel B. Time fixed effects include both hour of day and day of week fixed effects. Controls are subject characteristics (gender, age, and officer-reported ethnicity) and stop characteristics (indicator for person-only search, stop reason). The differential trend allows the linear time trend to differ before and after the event. The baseline mean refers to the share of stops with self-reported ethnicity in the three months prior to the Sarah Everard murder. Except in column (5), standard errors (in parentheses) are heteroskedasticity-robust for Panel A and clustered at the police force level for Panel B. *** $p < 0.01$, ** $p < 0.05$, * $p < 0.1$. SOURCE. Authors' calculations based on stop and search data available from data.police.uk.

Table E4: The dynamic impact of the murder of Sarah Everard on trust

Sample	(1) All	(2) All	(3) All	(4) All
	Panel A: London			
Post (0-30)	-0.016***	-0.017***	-0.014***	-0.014***
	(0.005)	(0.005)	(0.005)	(0.005)
Post (31-60)	-0.027***	-0.029***	-0.019*	-0.019*
	(0.006)	(0.006)	(0.010)	(0.010)
Post (61-91)	-0.022***	-0.024***	-0.008	-0.006
	(0.008)	(0.008)	(0.016)	(0.016)
p-value: Post (0–30) = Post (31–60)	0.020	0.009	0.504	0.514
p-value: Post (0–30) = Post (61–91)	0.299	0.222	0.660	0.559
p-value: Post (31–60) = Post (61–91)	0.321	0.292	0.161	0.103
Baseline mean	0.757	0.757	0.757	0.757
Observations	116,930	116,930	116,930	116,930
	Panel B: Non-London forces			
Post (0-30)	-0.007	-0.008	-0.009	-0.009
	(0.006)	(0.006)	(0.006)	(0.006)
Post (31-60)	0.001	0.001	-0.005	-0.005
	(0.010)	(0.010)	(0.010)	(0.010)
Post (61-91)	0.001	0.000	-0.009	-0.010
	(0.010)	(0.010)	(0.014)	(0.014)
p-value: Post (0–30) = Post (31–60)	0.298	0.279	0.587	0.575
p-value: Post (0–30) = Post (61–91)	0.384	0.389	0.991	0.951
p-value: Post (31–60) = Post (61–91)	0.974	0.944	0.599	0.557
Baseline mean	0.889	0.889	0.889	0.889
Observations	102,377	102,377	102,377	102,377
Time trend	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Differential time trend	No	No	Yes	Yes
Region FEs	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Time FEs	No	Yes	No	Yes
Controls	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes

NOTE. The table presents regression results corresponding to Equation (6) but with separate post-dummy variables for the 0-30 days, 31-60 and 61-91 days after the arrest of Officer Couzens, estimated separately for London (Panel A) and non-London forces (Panel B) using stops in the six-month window March 10, 2021. The dependent variable is a binary indicator equal to one if the subject self-reports their ethnicity during a stop. Specifications are indicated at the bottom of the table. Region fixed effects are borough fixed effects for Panel A and police force fixed effects for Panel B. Controls are subject characteristics (gender, age, and officer-reported ethnicity) and stop characteristics (an indicator for person-only search and stop reason). The differential trend allows the linear time trend to differ before and after the event. The baseline mean refers to the share of stops with self-reported ethnicity in the three months prior to the Sarah Everard murder. We report p-values of the tests of equality between the coefficients of the post-event periods. Standard errors (in parentheses) are heteroskedasticity-robust for Panel A and clustered at the police force level for Panel B. *** $p < 0.01$, ** $p < 0.05$, * $p < 0.1$.
SOURCE. Authors' calculations based on stop and search data available from data.police.uk.