Making and Breaking Barriers

Assessing the value of mounted police units in the UK

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Preface

While the use of mounted police (i.e. police horses and riders) can be traced back to before the advent of the modern police service in 1829, very little is known about the actual work of mounted police from either academic or practitioner standpoints. Police horses are thought to have unique operational and symbolic value, particularly in public order policing (making barriers) and community engagement (breaking barriers) deployments. They may represent a calming presence or, and potentially at the same time, an imposing threat of force. Yet, the relationship between the use of police horses and broader notions of policing by consent in the UK is presently unknown, and all evidence for these claims is anecdotal at best.

In recent years, mounted units have come under resource scrutiny in the UK due to austerity measures. Some forces have eliminated their mounted capacities altogether, while others have developed collaborative or mutual assistance arrangements with neighbouring forces. The relative costs and benefits of the available options – maintaining units, merging and centralising mounted resources or eliminating them in whole or part – cannot at present be assessed confidently by individual forces or by national coordinating agencies such as the Home Office, the Association of Chief Police Officers (ACPO) and the National Police Coordination Centre (NPoCC).

This research makes a timely contribution to pressing decisions regarding the future of mounted units, and should be of interest to police managers including mounted section, public order, and neighbourhood commanders, as well as Chief Constables and Police and Crime Commissioners. It will also be of value to academics and researchers interested in a wide range of public policing issues including public trust and legitimacy, police visibility and public order police work.

The research undertaken for this project was multi-method and exploratory in nature. Beginning in February 2013, the project has examined mounted police in multiple deployment scenarios including neighbourhood policing, football policing and public order policing in festival and demonstration settings. This project also includes research activities designed to understand the costs of mounted policing, and a survey of senior mounted police officers in other countries to understand the potential transferability of these findings.

This research was commissioned by the ACPO Mounted Working Group (MWG) through Avon and Somerset Constabulary, to assess the value of mounted police units in the UK across various deployment scenarios. It has received funding and contributions from Avon and Somerset Constabulary, Gloucestershire Constabulary, the Metropolitan Police Service, the University of Oxford's John Fell Fund and the Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC) Knowledge Exchange Opportunities scheme.

RAND Europe

The project has been undertaken through the Centre for Criminology, University of Oxford in partnership with RAND Europe.

Abstract

This report outlines findings from an 18-month project examining the value of mounted police in the UK. The research approach took a broad view of the concept of value in police work, including responding to and preventing crime and disorder as well as building public trust and confidence in the police, providing reassurance and visibility. The project also examines the costs associated with mounted policing, and includes an international questionnaire exercise involving senior mounted officers in other countries to place the project findings in a more global context.

Chapter 2 provides an overview of mounted police work using available UK police deployment data, prior literature on mounted police and relevant theoretical literature from policing studies. Following this, Chapter 3 examines research findings from mounted police in neighbourhood patrol settings, alongside comparative data for non-mounted police in similar roles, particularly foot patrol officers. The following two chapters examine data gathered on mounted police in public order or crowd control deployments, first in the context of football policing (Chapter 4) and then in other public order settings, including research undertaken with mounted police in music festivals and political demonstrations (Chapter 5). The report then reviews focus groups discussions undertaken with football fans and non-mounted police officers (Chapter 6) to understand how mounted police are experienced by members of the public and other police. Chapter 7 examines the costs of mounted policing through two separate costing exercises, and Chapter 8 presents the findings from the international questionnaire exercise.

The conclusions of the study, presented in Chapter 9, provide a synthesis of the findings. The conclusions take into account data from across the multiple and mixed-methods approaches used in the project, which provide evidence of what mounted police do, and how their value may be measured and understood. The study concludes that mounted police provide a unique policing resource that generates positive police visibility in neighbourhood contexts as well as has the capacity to offer effective response to certain public order scenarios. Based on the data, the study suggest that the highest demonstrable value of mounted police is found in neighbourhood settings, which runs contrary to the predominant opinion among police that suggests that police on horseback are primarily a public order resource. In turn, the conclusions suggest that a reorientation in this predominant opinion is warranted.

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Abbreviations

ACPO	Association of Chief Police Officers
DoF	Director of Finance
ESIM	Elaborated Social Identity Model
ESRC	Economic and Social Research Council
FIO	Football Intelligence Officer
GMP	Greater Manchester Police
MPS	Metropolitan Police Service
MWG	Mounted Working Group (ACPO)
POA	Police Objective Analysis
SSO	Systematic Social Observations
UKFPU	UK Football Policing Unit

1. Introduction

Police on horseback provide a complex and longstanding symbol of British policing, resonating both with accounts of policing that stress public consent and the police role as peace-maker – with one paradigmatic example being the clearance of the pitch in advance of the 1923 FA Cup final by a lone white horse, Billy, and his rider, PC George Scorey in what became known as the 'White Horse' match[1] – and with accounts that have pointed to a rather different idea of policing, with mounted officers charging protesting crowds or confronting striking miners, and representing the power of the state to physically threaten, coerce and constrain citizens. As do so many other aspects of police-work (Reiner 2010), mounted police offer both a threat and a promise to the public: a calming presence that enables public events, and, potentially at the same time, embodying the threat of physical force. Yet, like so many specialist areas of police-work (Brodeur 2010), little is known about what mounted police actually do on a day-to-day basis, and even less is known about the effectiveness of mounted units, either in their own terms or in relation to other ways of doing policing.

There are at least three metrics against which police are commonly evaluated. While plainly interrelated, each taps into different aspects of practitioner, academic and public understandings of the role and meaning of police. First, effectiveness is measured by arrests, detections and convictions – on this view, the primary role of the police is to 'fight crime' that has, at least implicitly, already occurred. Second, police are successful when they *prevent* crime and disorder. Based not least on a reading of the original (and very possibly mythical) Peelian principles, on this account police are successful when they are not needed (Reiner 2010); an absence of crime (and/or the 'presence' of order) indicates the wider success of police practice. Third, police are successful when they garner public trust and popular legitimacy (Bradford et al. 2008). Here the argument is that since police rely on the willing support of the policed, any activity that undermines this should be a cause for concern, and success is therefore measured by maintained or increased trust and legitimacy.

Inscribed in all three accounts of success are particular understandings of what police *actually* do, and perhaps more importantly of what they *should* do, and a key distinction separates the first from the second and third. According to the first account, action-oriented, control-minded police officers are primarily thief-takers, concerned above all with the business of dealing with crime and outbreaks of disorder. By contrast, the second and third accounts take a wider view, recognising that police activity extends beyond

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[1] Although the 'lone horse' story is not entirely accurate, as there were other police working to clear the touchline at the time.

law enforcement and order maintenance and, moreover, that officers' actions in one domain can spill over to have effects in others.

What, then, do mounted police, symbolically resonant of both cooperation between police and public and the application of force by the state against citizens, contribute to the success of policing across these three criteria? What activities do mounted police engage in, and what if any work does the symbolism that surrounds them do in terms of contributing to policing goals?

This research seeks to address these questions through the first systematic examination of the different impacts from mounted deployments across different scenarios. The research team took a broad understanding of the notion of value that mirrors the ways in which the value of police work is assessed more generally. Available indicators for police effectiveness, such as levels of arrest or stop and search/accounts completed by mounted officers, have limited value in this context, and the research has in turn looked at the many ways in which mounted police may (or may not) control situations, inhibit crime and engage with or reassure citizens. Alongside these considerations of value, the research has also sought to capture an estimation of the financial costs of mounted policing. The overall intention is to provide an empirical basis for understanding what benefits (as well as risks and costs) may be derived from the continued use of mounted police. Further detail on the research questions and approach are outlined later in this chapter.

1.1. Mounted policing in a context of austerity

There are currently 12 mounted sections in the UK. These vary in size from as few as five to as many as 145 officers (this latter number representing the MPS, by far the largest mounted branch in the UK). At the force level, mounted police are usually treated as a 'central' resource, meaning that they can be tasked to support operations across the geographic range of a police force. Nationally, they are organised under the ACPO National Conflict Management (NCM) Policing portfolio, alongside other public order police as well as armed police, police dogs and underwater search units.

A major motivator behind the commissioning of this research has been the widespread cuts to public policing capacity in the UK since the advent of government austerity measures in 2010. Police in the UK are currently in the midst of dealing with across-the-board cuts to their operating budgets, and are expected to achieve reductions in real terms of 20 per cent between 2011 and 2015. Alongside these broad-based cuts has been the introduction of increased local control of police budgets, particularly the introduction of Police and Crime Commissioners (PCCs) in 2012. One goal of the introduction of PCCs was to encourage forces to become more locally accountable in terms of budgets and the focus of their activities.

1.1.1. Loss of local capacity

In this context, a number of forces have determined that mounted police units are too expensive to justify maintaining. In the past three years, the number of forces with mounted units in the UK has decreased

from 17 to 12,[2] and overall capacity has dropped substantially. As of the end of 2013, the 12 mounted police units in the UK have 271 officers, 103 staff and 247 horses, which represents a cut of nearly a quarter of national mounted capacity since the beginning of 2012 (see Table 1.1, below). Similar trends have been witnessed in the US context (see for example, Cooper 2011; Garlock 2014; Martin 2010; Nock 2013), where news media reports suggest that many cities have been unable to see the value in keeping a mounted section or have cut mounted capacity either to deal with budget cuts or because mounted sections have been increasingly seen as 'largely ornamental' (Garlock 2014) and of little operational value.

While any decision to cut police capacity is certainly taken seriously, decisions to cut mounted units have to date been taken without systematic evidence that can assist decisionmakers in understanding the potential impact of cuts to mounted branches on overall policing capacity in an area. While some police managers expressed uncertainty or scepticism about the value of horses, others have decided to maintain their units and believe there is clear operational value in these units. However, these beliefs are currently based in anecdotal evidence and personal experience rather than systematic evidence. To address this limitation in available evidence, the ACPO Mounted Working Group (MWG) commissioned the research team to consider ways in which the relative value of mounted police work may be measured and understood.

Table 1.1: Forces with mounted units (incl. recently disbanded)[3]

Force	Active or Disbanded (date disbanded)
Avon and Somerset Constabulary	Active
City of London Police	Active
Cleveland Police	Disbanded (2013)
Essex Police	Disbanded (2012)
Greater Manchester Police	Active
Humberside Police	Disbanded (2013)
Lancashire Constabulary	Active
Merseyside Police	Active
Metropolitan Police Service	Active
Northumbria Police	Active

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[2] This reduction includes an amalgamation of mounted units alongside the amalgamation of Scottish police units into Police Scotland; there had previously been two Scottish mounted units in Strathclyde and Lothian and Borders, and there is now one for all of Scotland.

[3] The Royal Parks Constabulary (2004), West Midlands Police (1999) and Royal Military Police (1999) all disbanded their units in the past 15 years as well.

North Wales Police	Disbanded (2010)
Nottinghamshire Police	Disbanded (2012)
Scotland (Police Scotland)	Active (amalgamated Lothian and Borders and Strathclyde Police mounted sections)
South Wales Police	Active
South Yorkshire Police	Active
Staffordshire Police	Disbanded (2000)
Thames Valley Police	Active
West Midlands Police	Disbanded (1999)
West Yorkshire Police	Active

Table 1.2: Mounted capacity 2012 and 2013

	Apr 12	Dec 13	Difference	% Change
Officers	359	271	- 88	-25%
Staff	134	103	- 31	-23%
Horses	318	247	- 71	-22%

1.1.2. Loss of national capacity

At present, there is no minimum national standard for mounted policing capacity. This means that both the ways in which mounted are used, as well as the number of units and levels of mutual aid offered by mounted sections is entirely up to individual forces. While such a national standard is currently in development – based in part on preliminary findings from this project – mounted units have historically been managed as a force-level resource only. However, mounted police are regularly shared both between forces with mounted capacities as well as with forces without, through mutual aid agreements as well as through informal arrangements. There is currently no national guidance as to what level of available mounted resource needs to be maintained for emergency response to large-scale disorder as well as certain other events, such as the recent UK floods in winter 2013–14 where mounted police were needed to access areas that were impassable to other police vehicles.

Alongside a lack of guidance on overall national capacity, the recent depletion of mounted units also raises regional capacity issues. The loss of units from certain geographical areas may have the function of increasing the distance for forces without mounted units from their nearest available mounted section, which would increase response times and potentially decrease availability of mounted units in times of need. As outlined in the maps below, the geographic coverage of mounted units has been reduced substantially in the last two years:

Figure 1.1: Map of forces with mounted sections, 2012 and 2014[4]
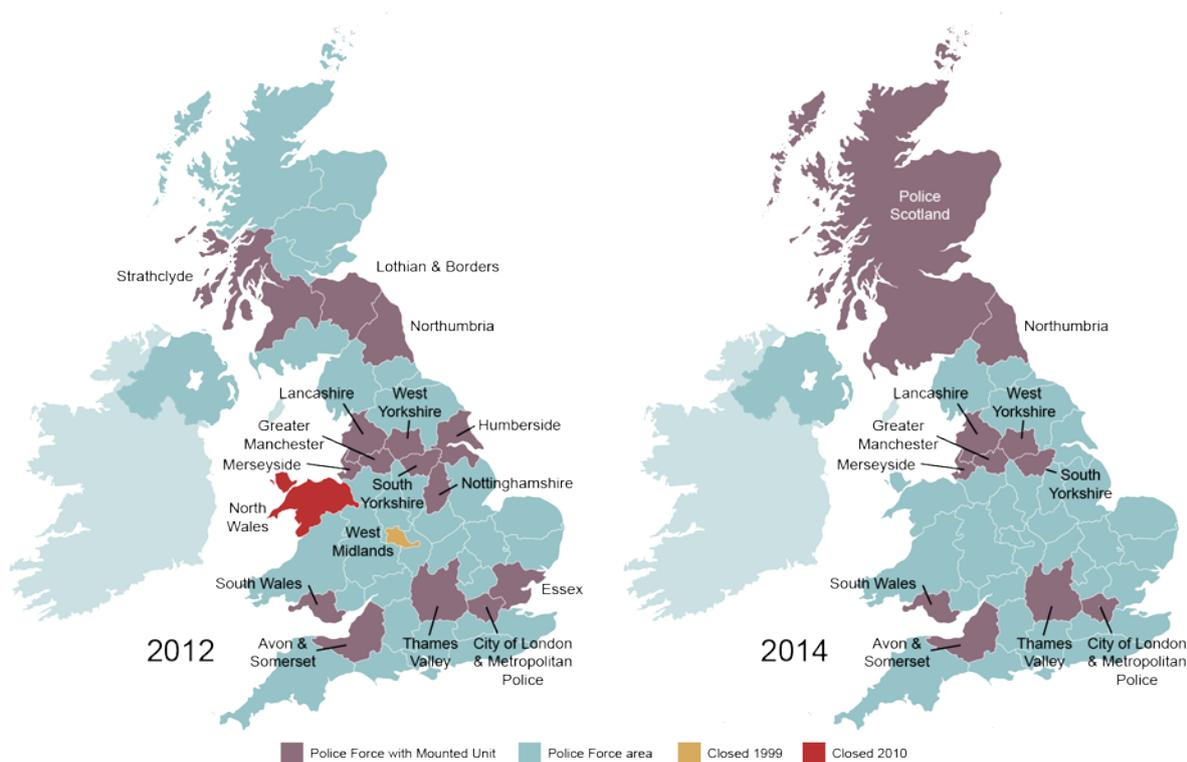
In turn, the MWG has asked the research team to consider potential implications of this research toward informing a national model for mounted police resourcing. While this is ultimately a matter for police managers, where relevant this report outlines the potential trade-offs and implications (compared with the current status quo) of such a model.

1.2. The research approach was by necessity multi-method, exploratory, flexible and iteratively defined

Unlike many areas of public police activity in neighbourhood or public order settings in the UK, mounted policing has not received any meaningful research attention on any level. At the outset of the project, a literature review was conducted, which sought to identify both academic and grey literature that made any mention of mounted police in more than a passing fashion. The few sources identified have been included in the review in Chapter 2, below. Virtually none of these were analytic or empirically rigorous, and many were out of date. An extensive review of national media was also conducted (reported in Chapter 5) to understand whether and how we might understand popular representations of mounted police, and again found very limited coverage. As such, the research project was built in almost entirely uncharted territory regarding the specific subject matter.

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[4] Note that the map also includes three mounted sections closed since 1999, represented by different colours.

Despite this limitation, the research was also formed within a very substantial tradition of sociological research of the police, a tradition that has built multiple, complementary and subject (i.e. police) specific research methods and methodologies. Methods that have been developed for observing, interpreting, evaluating and reporting on police work span across the quantitative and qualitative spectrum. As well, a good deal is known about public attitudes towards, popular representations of, and the key activities undertaken by police in the UK, especially visible uniformed police, of whom mounted police are a small subset. Thus, after examining available data and gauging access requirements, a set of methods was decided. These methods would provide a broad picture of mounted police work, which would integrate into the broader literature on police work and also involve multiple stakeholder perspectives. The research aimed to include perspectives of mounted and non-mounted police officers from around the country, as well as commanding officers and managers; and also, importantly, to understand the specific and general public opinion on the use of horses in policing.

Through this process, four core research questions were identified, which can be stated as follows:

1. **What do mounted police do when deployed in different scenarios?** From the beginning of the project it was clear that a baseline descriptive account of mounted police work did not exist. Therefore, it was important to develop an account of how mounted units were deployed, how an average shift was spent, and how if at all this differed between forces.

2. **Second, when deployed, how and in what ways do they provide value to the overall policing operation?** Again, as stated above, the research examined a broad conception of value in police work, since an examination of crime-fighting data alone would be unlikely to encapsulate the potential value of mounted police activities. In turn, the project sought to understand the specific ways in which mounted police may be considered valuable within policing operations.

3. **Third, what impact does their deployment have on public perceptions of policing?** It was important for this research not only to understand how mounted units may assist in a specific instance of police work – intervening in a crowd, engaging with a member of the public, and so on – but also what the effect of their use had on broader perceptions of policing at an event or in a local area. As outlined in Chapter 2, this concern was based in the project's theoretical framing within current theories on crowd and social psychology.

4. **Finally, what are the costs and potential drawbacks of using mounted police units in policing operations?** Whether or not mounted police can be shown to have demonstrable value, it was seen as equally important to understand the financial and other costs associated with the use of mounted units. There was little question that the use of horses represented an additional cost to police, but police did not have a clear understanding of the degree of additional expense involved. Additionally, the research sought to understand what if any negative impacts mounted units might have on police operations in certain deployment contexts.

The research received funding approvals at various stages, first in January 2013 from police partners, then in June 2013 from Oxford's Fell Fund and finally an ESRC Knowledge Exchange Grant in late autumn 2013. In turn, the project proceeded in a phased and contingent fashion, meaning that research activities had to be designed in ways that could produce usable results within a specific funding phase (i.e. assuming that the research may end at the end of the phase, and results would need to be reportable at that point), but also in ways that would allow extension of these activities should further funding become available.

Moreover, as there was no starting point for understanding UK mounted police work, the research plan had to be iteratively responsive to field experiences and negotiations for access to data and personnel, and this required regular redrawing of priorities.

Finally, owing to the knowledge-exchange focus of the project and strong participation from police collaborators, unexpected opportunities regularly arose for potentially valuable research activities, which were in turn prioritised over ongoing or planned activities. Examples of this include the replacement of community-level focus groups with the broad-based public survey; replacement of mounted officer focus groups with a combination of case studies with mounted units (including group interviews) and feedback workshops examining initial findings with police practitioners; and replacement of structured observations at the May Day march, London, 2014 with qualitative observations at the March for England, Brighton, 2014; and the replacement of expansion of the observational dataset with a research exercise involving force finance directors.

A summary of the research activities can be found below in Table 1.3, which charts the activities against the research questions, and Figure 1.2, which provides a visual representation of the flow of research activities across areas of interest. As will be clear from this figure and the subsequent report, the research activities were predominantly focused on mounted police deployments in three main settings – football policing, other public order policing, and neighbourhood policing. These have been consistently seen within the project team and in discussions with police partners as the primary areas of potential 'value' that justify the maintenance of mounted capacities. While the ceremonial value of mounted police was discussed with officers and brief observations of mounted police were conducted in ceremonial deployment at the Lord Mayor's parade in the City of London, determining what value ceremonial deployments may have on, for example, police morale or public opinions of police has been outside of the scope of this study. Additionally, the research has not examined the use of mounted police in other settings, such as search and rescue or rural deployments, as these were low-volume activities within the broader deployment patterns of mounted police in the UK. More specific details of these methods will be outlined where relevant in subsequent chapters, and the research tools can also be found in the appendices.

Table 1.3: Research activities

Research activity	Description	Type(s) of data used	Research questions addressed	Place in the report
Football data analysis 2010–13	Analysis of data on outcomes of football match policing where mounted were and were not present	UK Football Policing Unit (UKFPU) and MWG data	2	Chapter 4, Appendix C
Football observations	Observations of policing operations at four London football matches	Observations/field notes	1, 2	Chapter 4

MPS Public Attitudes Survey (PAS) analysis	Review of survey data from wards where mounted do and do not patrol regularly	MPS PAS data	3	Chapter 3[5]
Analysis of MPS deployment data	Examining available data from MPS deployments from 2010–2013	Police deployment data	1	n/a[6]
Media content analysis	Review of coverage of mounted police in five national newspapers from 2007–2010	Newspaper articles	3	Chapter 5
Football deployment and survey data	Repeat of earlier football data analysis, using smaller dataset from 2013–14 and including additional survey and deployment data	Police deployment data, UKFPU and online surveys of police officers	2, 3, 4	Chapter 4, Appendix C
Football fan focus groups	Group discussions with 'serious' football fans	Focus group transcripts	3	Chapter 6
Daily Diary Exercise	Self-report exercise tracking the activities of mounted police on patrol shifts in July 2013	Quantitative activity tracking data	3	Chapter 3, Appendix A
Police focus groups	Group discussions with non-mounted (a) public order police and (b) police in neighbourhood teams	Focus group transcripts	1, 2, 4	Chapter 6
Observations at Lord Mayor's Parade	Observations at Lord Mayor's Parade, City of London 2014	Observations/field notes	2	n/a[7]
Performance Framework data analysis	Review of data collected by the MWG tracking	Performance Framework dataset	1	Chapter 2
Patrol quasi-experiment	Before–after survey of neighbourhoods where mounted were and were not deployed in March	Survey data	2, 3	Chapter 3

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[5] The data from this exercise provided indicative evidence of the effect of mounted policing at ward level but were not suitable for reporting in full, and as such are reported in a footnote only in Chapter 3.

[6] These data were undertaken in advance of data being available through the performance framework. They were used to provide context to interim reports and support scoping of further activities. Their use was replaced by the performance framework analysis in the final report, but it is worth noting that deployment data from MPS were broadly reflective of national deployment patterns found in the performance framework.

[7] This exercise was undertaken to determine the viability of examining the value of mounted police deployed in symbolic activities within this project. The Lord Mayor's Parade is the flagship event for the City of London police and mounted police play an important role in the overall event. In turn, members of the research team attended pre-event briefings and also observed the mounted police presence in and around the parade. However, it was determined after this exercise that an understanding of the value of purely symbolic deployments was outside of the scope of this research, and in turn the data from this exercise are not reported in this document.

	2014			
Systematic observations on patrol	Observations of mounted and foot patrols in neighbourhoods involved in the quasi-experiment	Systematic social observation (SSO) dataset, field notes	1, 2, 4	Chapter 3, Appendix A
Systematic observations at Glastonbury	Observations of mounted and foot patrols at Glastonbury Festival 2014	Systematic social observation (SSO) dataset, field notes	1, 2, 4	Chapter 5, Appendix A
Demonstration observations	Observations of far-right nationalist and counter-demonstrations where mounted were involved	Observations/field notes	1, 2, 4	Chapter 5
Cost data analysis	Secondary data analysis and exercise with police Directors of Finance (DoF) to estimate absolute and relative costs of mounted policing	Police Objective Analysis (POA) data 2013, DoF estimates	4	Chapter 7
International questionnaire	Survey of senior mounted officers internationally	Survey data	1, 2, 4	Chapter 8, Appendix A

Figure 1.2: Research approach by area of activity and project phase

Research activity area	Phase 1	Phase 2	Phase 3
Football policing	Football data analysis 2010–13	Football deployment and survey data	
	Football observations	Football fan focus groups	Further football observations
Neighbourhood policing	MPS Public Attitudes Survey analysis	Daily Diary Exercise	Patrol Quasi-Experiment
			Systematic observations on patrol
			Police focus group - neighbourhood
Other event / public order		Police focus group - public order	Demonstration observations
		Observations at Lord Mayor's Parade	Systematic observations at Glastonbury
Other activities	Literature review		Cost data analysis
	Analysis of MPS deployment data	Performance framework data analysis	Validation workshops
	Media content analysis		International questionnaire
Timeline	Feb-Jun 2013	Jul-Oct 2013	Nov 2013 - Sep 2014

1.2.1. Limitations to the data

There are five main limitations to the date collected in this project that should be borne in mind when interpreting the findings.

First, the data have been limited in many instances by being non-random in nature. The data for the patrol quasi-experiment, survey of officers at football matches, focus groups and observations, and international questionnaire all constitute various forms of non-random samples, which means that data were collected from a population thought to be able to provide the best available data for the study, but were not selected randomly from a known population of relevant individuals and groups. A non-random

sample was used in each case owing either to time and resource constraints within the project, or the nature of the methodology involved. The data should nonetheless be seen as reliable, but they do suggest that results should be validated through further testing.

Second, there is no single agreed approach to unit costing across police forces in the UK. As such, cost data are indicative of the probable additional cost represented by mounted police, but these data should be treated with caution. Third, the data are not able to indicate whether or not mounted police have an impact on crime. The data from the quasi-experiment may provide suggestive evidence regarding their effectiveness in lowering levels of crime in an area. However, in the absence of systematic testing of crime-reduction or 'hot-spots' deployments – an exercise that was outside of the scope of this project – any conclusions to this end are at present speculative.

Fourth, in terms of international transferability of these findings, the international questionnaire provides indicative data that suggest the conclusions of this report may be transferable outside of the UK context. However, any assumptions about transferability should be made cautiously, keeping in mind in particular that the British relationship with police in general, as well as specifically with police on horseback, may be unique in important ways when compared with other countries.

Finally, despite repeated attempts, the research team was not able to make contact with protest groups or those attending demonstrations to conduct focus groups, interviews or questionnaires. As such, the data are unable to provide an indication of how mounted police are viewed by those attending demonstrations. It therefore remains an open question not only how demonstrators and organisers perceive police on horseback, but also and more interestingly within the context of this research, how they perceive mounted units in comparison with other kinds of public-order policing tools.

2. An overview of mounted police work

There is very limited literature on mounted police work, in the UK or elsewhere. What does exist rarely includes the systematic collection of primary data or comparative analysis between mounted policing and other forms of police work, although these prior studies do provide some insight into the historical context of mounted policing in the UK. Other social science literature on public police work – for example, on the importance of symbolism in police work and the significant body of research that exists on public-order policing, crowd psychology and social identity – can also help develop a starting point from which to understand the place of horses in 21st-century policing. This chapter addresses research question one by first examining literature directly dealing with mounted police to provide an historical overview of the evolution and uses of mounted police units. It then reviews data on mounted police deployments for 2013 to provide a current overview of their uses in modern Britain.

Finally, two strands of literature particularly relevant to this research project are reviewed. This includes literature on the policing of public order, and particularly the Elaborated Social Identity Model (ESIM) of crowd and social psychology (e.g. Stott 2009), which provides a framework for understanding how mounted police may be received and interpreted by people in a crowd setting. Following this, literature on public trust and confidence in the police is reviewed, which foregrounds the data presented in Chapter 3.

2.1. Mounted police have existed in the UK since before the modern police service

The history of mounted units in the Metropolitan Police Service (MPS) reveals an enduring appeal of police horses. Mounted branches in the Met have faced threats to their existence since their inception, but have ultimately always found support for their continued use. The very first mounted 'police' were deployed in 1760 to watch the turnpikes on the outskirts of London and to intercept fleeing criminals. While they appeared to be effective in doing so, the units were disbanded after only two years on the grounds of economy (Scott 1970). It was another 40 years before mounted police were used again, under the guise of the Bow Street Horse Patrol, to patrol the increasingly urbanised areas within London. Eventually they were incorporated into Peel's modern police force in 1836. Thereafter, they enjoyed a relatively stable period during which they were increasingly used for public order policing, replacing a militaristic style of policing disorder that had resulted in tragedies such as the Peterloo Massacre. However, concerns over economy again resulted in the depletion of the mounted units in London during World War I. With the introduction of motorised vehicles to police work by the middle of the 20th

century, there was a sense that 'the day of the police horse was ending' (Campbell 1967, 25). However, population growth and rapid urbanisation resulted in a large number of deprived areas that required regular police patrols, to which mounted units were deployed. What is more, continued social and political unrest also served to reinforce the need for horses in public order policing (Campbell 1967).

Literature on mounted police suggests three main functions most often carried out by mounted units – crowd control, patrol work and ceremonial and community displays.

Crowd control and public order policing

This history indicates that whether it is concerns about economy or the use of modern vehicles, mounted units have continued to find a purpose – particularly within a crowd control capacity. While this is not evidence that mounted units are more effective than other forms of policing mass public disorder, their enduring history is at least suggestive that there is a degree of long-standing support for the existence of mounted units.[8]

In turn, one of the uniting themes across the literature is the value of police horses in managing large crowds. This is seen to be one of their most powerful functions and mounted police are regarded as preferable to both officers on foot and in vehicles in this context (Scott 1970). This is attributed to the enhanced visibility of the officer on the horse; public respect and fear of the animals (Campbell 1967) and a potential pacifying effect on crowds (Lawrence 1985).

Patrol

While mounted police may have been historically linked to public order work, mounted police are currently used primarily for patrol work, as discussed later in the chapter. Patrol work, either random or 'tasked',[9] takes up most of the mounted rider's time, but there is little discussion in the literature of how mounted officers operate while on patrol. Although the introduction of motorised vehicles replaced some of this work, Scott (1970) concluded that police horses still occupied an important role in what would now be called neighbourhood policing, at least in the areas in which they were available. There are also accounts in literature of mounted police being used in the neighbourhood or local patrol context for traffic control, chasing and apprehending suspects and intervening in suicide attempts (e.g. Campbell 1967, 79).

Ceremonial and community

Mounted police serve a decorative function through their ceremonial work. They are often deployed in grand public events (for example, royal ceremonies), where both the horses and the riders are dressed for

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[8] A similar case is presented by Lawrence (1985) in relation to one unidentified city in the United States in which the mounted unit had encountered multiple threats of abolition due to its expense. However, each time the move had been rebutted by the public who were strongly opposed to losing their mounted unit.

[9] Tasked patrol refers to instances where a mounted officer or team has been sent to patrol a specific area or within a broader policing operation. On the other hand, random patrol suggests a shift where an officer's patrol pattern is entirely self-tasked (which is not necessarily random, but has not been ordered by a senior officer).

show (Campbell 1967). They are also used in public-relations venues such as community open days or school visits, where citizens can interact with police horses in a relaxed environment.

Additional activities

The literature also points to a wide variety of other functions that police horses are able to perform when called upon. Their ability to move through rough terrain and various natural obstacles means they can be used for search and rescue operations, or as more recently observed in the UK, to provide support to communities affected by natural disasters such as the flooding in the south-west of the UK in 2014. However, as presented below, in the UK context these kinds of additional activities account for a very minor proportion of the overall activities of mounted sections.

2.1.1. While police dogs have also been used in public order and neighbourhood activities, they are considered less suitable for public engagement than horses

As the other type of animal deployed regularly in police activity, a brief comparison with police dogs is worthwhile to understand the similarities and differences between these two tools of policing. Both are currently located within the NCM portfolio at national level, and both have roles in a wide variety of police deployments, though there are noteworthy differences between the roles of these two kinds of police animal.

The use of dogs in policing was a more contentious movement in England and Wales and it took a considerable amount of time and effort to introduce a recognised dog unit (Mahir 1970). Some enthusiasts within the police had attempted to introduce dogs at the start of the 20th century, but they were faced with strong resistance. Chief constables were concerned about using animals that could bite as a means of upholding the law and were anxious about liability if the dogs misbehaved, while the Home Office and Police Authorities were uneasy about the costs of training and regularly using dogs (Mahir 1970). However, following persistence and successful cases of dogs being used to apprehend thieves in London, greater resources were put into dog units and support grew for their use by the mid-1950s (Mahir 1970).

Like horses, police dogs were initially used for assisting patrol work and only began to adopt more functions several years later (Scott 1970). One of their core functions became tracking and searching, but they are also able to perform a number of duties, ranging from drug detection, rescue operations and prison work (Mahir 1970). In both accounts of police horses and dogs, the literature tends to personify the animals by relating stories about individual animals and their heroics. Such framing serves to distinguish the animals from inanimate tools or vehicles and highlights their interactional abilities. One key distinction between police horses and dogs, however, appears to be that horses are more suitable for public engagement work, given that the police horse is more docile in nature. For this reason, police horses are entrusted with public engagement roles and the public are encouraged to pet the horses – something for which police dogs are not trained.

2.2. Analysis conducted for this research project shows mounted police in the UK currently contribute across a wide spectrum of policing activities

While the literature provides an indication of what mounted police have historically done, there has been notably scant data previously available to understand how much time is spent in various areas of activity. To understand what mounted police do, data from the national mounted police 'performance framework' from January 2013 to December 2013 was examined. The dataset detailed the main activity of each mounted deployment across all forces in the UK, representing 43,305 deployments in total.

Categories for the performance framework dataset were developed in late 2012 by the MWG, with consultation from the research team. Deployment categories are broadly divided along the types of activities in which mounted are engaged, including local-level deployments (force tasking and local operations categories, typically some form of high-visibility patrol), events policing (football/sporting events, ceremonial events and other public disorder deployments, such as planned demonstrations or unexpected disorder), major incidents (such as natural disasters) and mutual aid deployments assisting other forces.[10] Remaining activities, such as search and rescue activities or unique operations, for example rural patrols to discourage misuse of recreational woodland, are included under 'other'.

Overall, mounted were deployed most frequently to force taskings, which are deployments where mounted units are requested by a policing team to support a priority activity, generally in a patrol capacity. These kinds of deployments accounted for a third of all deployments in 2013 (Table 2.1). Mounted units were also frequently deployed to local operations (local-level deployments not connected to a central force tasking), football/sporting events and 'other' activities, and to a lesser extent, ceremonial events, public disorder, mutual aid and major incidents (such as floods).

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[10] These categories are not always mutually exclusive; for example, a mutual aid deployment may also be a football or public order deployment, yet is categorised as mutual aid. Similarly, a major incident may also involve public disorder policing.

Table 2.1: Total national deployments of mounted units, 2013

Deployment	Total 2013
Force tasking	17,134
Local operations	6,703
Other	6,092
Football/Sporting event	4,979
Ceremonial events	3,404
Public disorder	1,084
Mutual aid	441
Major incident	37
Total	**39,874**

When force taskings were grouped together with local operation deployments under a broader 'neighbourhood' category, they accounted for 60 per cent of all deployments (Figure 2.1). Public order activities, when combined with football, made up 15 per cent of all deployments in 2013. Ceremonial events accounted for 9 per cent of deployments, while just 1 per cent of total activities were mutual aid.

Figure 2.1: National mounted activities 2013, total percentage by activity type
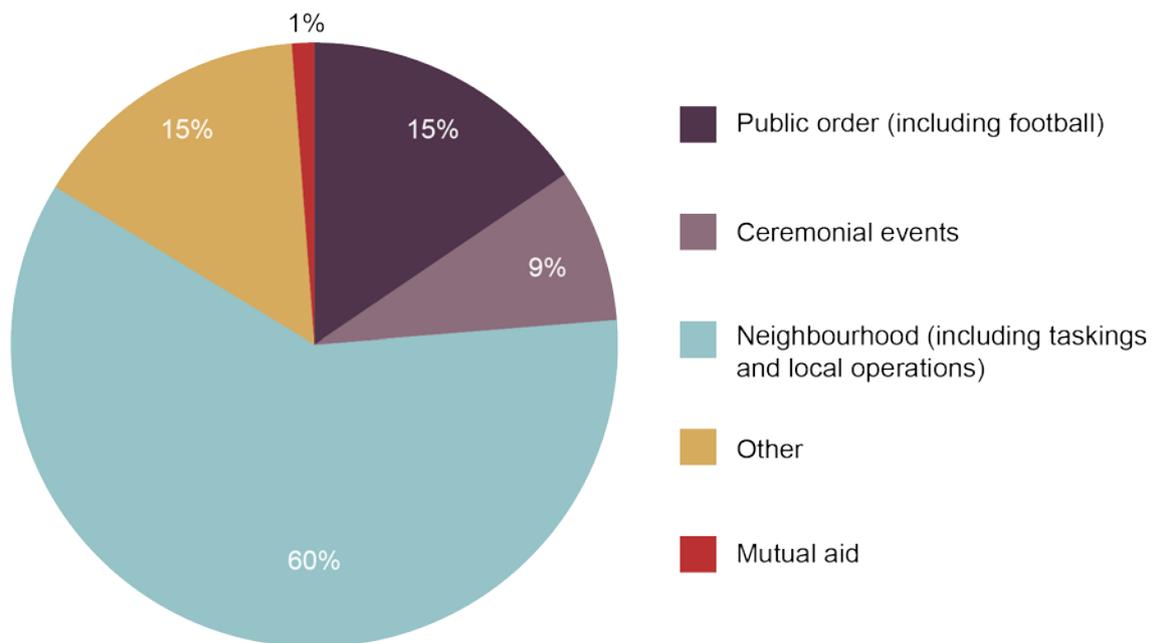
Neighbourhood activities increased throughout 2013 (Figure 2.2), which was a result of a move towards more tasked deployments. All other activities remained relatively consistent over the same period, with the

exception of 'other' activities, which fell by over a thousand deployments between January 2013 and June 2013.[11]

Figure 2.2: National mounted activities 2013, quarterly by activity type
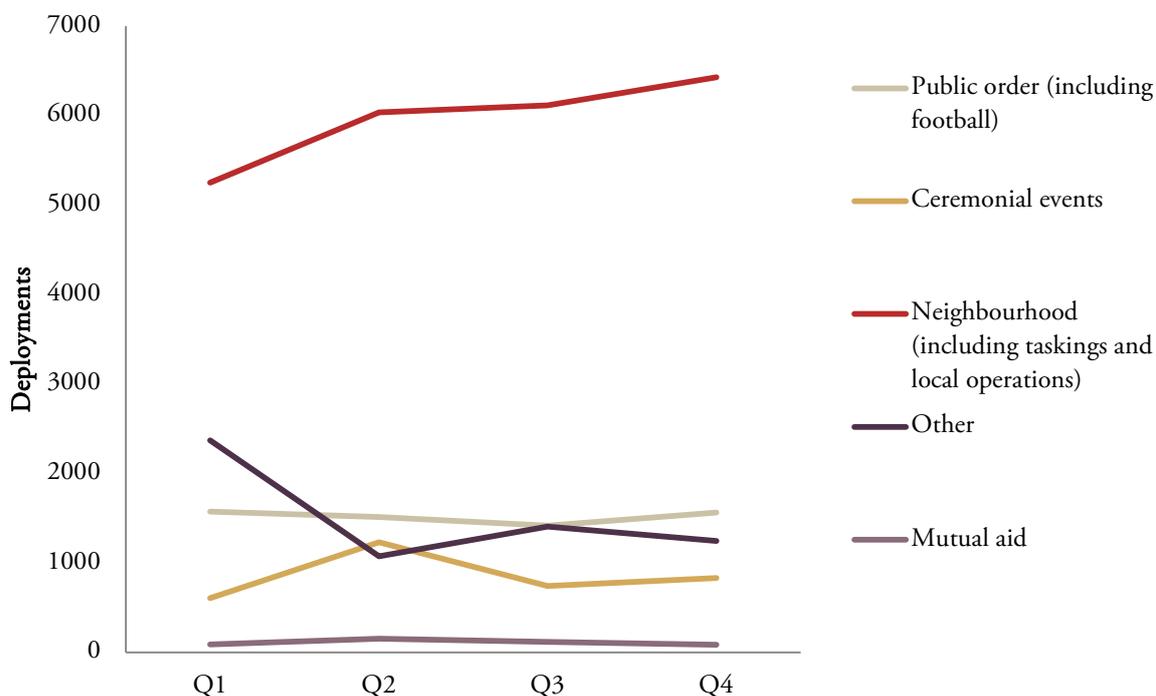
Finally, as illustrated in Chapter 3, mounted police shifts do not tend to involve a substantial amount of intervention in crime and investigation, but they nonetheless are involved in direct crime-reduction work. The framework data report that mounted officers were involved in 740 arrests (either leading or assisting) in 2013, or approximately 2.7 arrests per officer in the year; and reported 16,472 instances of crime reduction-related activity in the year, or approximately 60 such acts per mounted officer per year. In this case, crime reduction related activity may include stop-and-search, stop-and-account, and hot-spots patrols.[12]

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[11] There is no obvious reason why 'other' deployments fell over this period. As this was the first year forces had reported data to this framework, the change may be a function of mounted section managers becoming clearer on the categories to which different deployments should be reported, and thus relying less on 'other' by year's end.

[12] Data allowing comparison of these outputs from mounted police with outputs from other police (in terms of arrest and crime-reduction statistics) are unavailable. This report therefore cannot determine whether or not these outputs are high or low in terms of average police officer outputs on an annual basis. Nonetheless, these data suggest that mounted officers are involved in crime-reduction activities less than once per shift, which leads to the conclusion that they are not regularly involved in this type of work.

2.3. Understanding mounted police in the context of policing studies

Now that an historical and current account of what mounted police do has been presented, it is necessary to consider how this work can best be interpreted. As noted in Chapter 1, police effectiveness is not only a function of success in reactive policing, such as arrests and charges from crimes already committed, but also and increasingly, police effectiveness can be understood in terms of what was prevented and how the public interpreted the policing they received.

In these terms, public order policing is very much about prevention, and a substantial amount of thinking in the past two decades has focused on what differentiates effective policing of crowds from instances where crowds turn violent or disruptive. Additionally, a growing body of literature on the legitimacy of the public police – based in part on measurable levels of trust and confidence in public police, as well as their visibility in an area – provides a coherent framework for understanding how the public perceive and interpret police activity. In turn, this section will briefly review key ideas in these bodies of literature, which will help frame the data reported in subsequent chapters and analysis.

2.3.1. Public order policing and the Elaborated Social Identity Model (ESIM)

Few policing topics have received such sustained attention in the UK as public order (or order-maintenance or crowd-control) policing. In this context, it remains surprising that the particular public-order activities of mounted units have never been subject to specific analysis. This section focuses predominantly on social-psychological literature and crowd theory, as these have recently gained traction in police management and operational planning in the UK, and this will foreground later discussions of the use of mounted police in crowd and demonstration settings.

The 'Elaborated Social Identity Model' or ESIM (Drury & Reicher 1999; Stott 2009) has become the accepted scientific theory of crowd psychology in UK protest policing (HMIC 2009), and this provides a framework through which to understand mounted policing as a tactic in public order activities. ESIM examines 'the underlying social psychological processes that determine [the impacts of police activity] upon crowd dynamics' (Stott 2009, 11). This theoretical approach highlights how police action influences crowds and is one of the dynamics of crowd behaviour; while it does not presume that all disorder is a result of police activity, ESIM proponents stress that negative police action can encourage crowds to become unified against police, and perceptions of legitimacy of police activity can influence the emergence of 'collective conflict' (Stott 2009, 11).

The ESIM and related recommendations on 'knowledge-based public order policing' (Reicher et al. 2004) have produced a number of strategies that are becoming increasingly commonplace in the planning of large-event and political protest policing, in particular in supporting a 'graded, differentiated and information-led' approach to use of force (HMIC 2009, 89). This will no doubt already be known by many readers of this report. The ESIM model stresses four key principles police should adopt in order to maximise their capacity for promoting peaceful crowd behaviour minimising the escalation of minor into large-scale disorder. These are 1) *education* about the identities, cultural norms, expectations, intentions and sensitivities within the expected crowd; 2) strategic orientation toward the *facilitation* of legitimate crowd intentions and activity (whether protesting or attending a football match); 3) increasing police

capacity for *communication* between police and crowd members; and 4) *differentiation* between groups within the crowd to avoid indiscriminate coercion and disproportionate use of force (Stott 2009, 11).

The other predominant UK body of scholarship in this area, the 'Flashpoints' model of public disorder (Waddington 2013; Waddington et al. 1989), stresses a broader approach to interpreting situational factors that lead to disorder. Flashpoints suggests that a social psychological approach alone is insufficient to understand how some public events become disorderly, and that social/political/historical analysis needs to accompany any situation-specific considerations. The differences between these models should not, however, fundamentally impact the way mounted police are thought of as a potential facilitator of peaceful crowd activity. It would seem that, for practical purposes, Flashpoints simply asks for a more in-depth education phase, and suggests that this more thorough education impacts on subsequent communication and differentiation activities.

Within either theoretical approach, the important consideration regarding mounted police in public order situations will be to understand how the deployment of mounted are understood by crowd members (in line with research questions two and three). This is a point that is returned to later in the report, particularly in the Chapter 6 account of focus groups with football fans. It will be less important whether crowd members see mounted police as forceful, effective or dangerous (i.e. a strong physical deterrent to engaging in disorder) than if they see their presence in any specific context as legitimate. These dynamics will bear on interpretations of both their presence (and the meanings wrapped up in their visible deployment), and their activities – whether they are used for cordons, charges, or waiting in the wings until a threshold of disorder has been reached.

Of course, crowd perceptions of mounted police will also be bound up in the surrounding policing operation – whether police have effectively communicated their intentions in advance, and whether the broader police activity facilitates crowd participants' legitimate activities. If crowd members expect mounted police to be in attendance, understand and accept the utility and potential facilitating aspects of mounted police presence, and if mounted police only use force where appropriate, then it could be expected that mounted police achieve their aims within the broader operation. To the degree that mounted are used without prior consideration of these factors, the outcome might be much less successful in terms of facilitating orderly behaviour or positive crowd sentiment towards the police.

Focusing in particular on the notion of *differentiation*, the ESIM model suggests that physical crowds contain different psychological groups who may experience mounted police differently and therefore must have their interpretations of mounted police measured separately from one another. Moreover, different types of crowd events may also lead to different forms of interpretation of the same tactic. For example, those attending football matches may have very different expectations of, and assessments of legitimacy regarding, mounted police, than student protesters or organised labour groups. Within these groups, further differentiations may be expected, for example between casual football fans and 'risk' fans, or between moderate and radical political factions. Certain groups, especially in political protest settings, may have historically derived cultural assumptions relating to past mounted police incidents that were understood as illegitimate, and while this may not preclude mounted deployments where these groups are active, it may make these events more sensitive to the kinds of activities in which mounted officers engage. This consideration reinforces the importance of the principle of education outlined above.

Crowd members' assessments of the legitimacy of policing will also not necessarily be determined by the question of whether force was used or not, but rather how and in what specific circumstance it was used. Where minor disorder threatens to become major disorder in a crowd setting, the police are regularly required to use force in some way, whether this is in the form of arresting individuals who are instigating the disorder, standing as a cordon between rival fans or protest groups, or intervening in physical altercations between citizens. As the literature reveals, many crowd members hope for police intervention in these instances, but they want it to be proportional to what is happening. Hence, a reaction against the crowd as a whole when only a small number of people within the crowd are behaving criminally is likely to be seen by previously peaceful crowd participants as disproportionate and therefore as illegitimate. The choice to intervene on horseback versus other available options must also be understood in relation to its potential impact on the situation and perceptions held by different groups within and between crowds.

Finally, in considering determinants of other police (i.e. non-mounted) behaviour in and on crowds, we need to understand if and how mounted police presence impacts on the ways in which other police do their jobs in crowd situations. If mounted police have a calming effect on other police, who believe mounted units offer physical protection in crisis situations, those police may react to threats of violence in a more measured fashion than if they believe they may be imminently overpowered by crowd members. This notion is further supported by longitudinal research on demonstration policing in the US context (see, e.g. Davenport & Soule 2009), which suggests that demonstrations are policed less aggressively when police are less threatened in their ability to exert control.

2.3.2. Neighbourhood policing, visibility, and trust and confidence in the police

There is a well-known link between police visibility and public confidence, and this link will be further explored in this report particularly in relation to the work of mounted police in neighbourhood settings. Surveys regularly report that people who feel they see police more tend to report higher levels of trust and confidence (Bradford et al. 2009b; Sindall & Sturgis 2013). It is worth briefly outlining what is meant by these two terms 'confidence' and 'trust', which are often used interchangeably. They are clearly closely related terms, and can be used more or less interchangeably, yet there is also some distinction between them.

Confidence can be understood as a job-rating of the police organisation in the eyes of the public. It may, therefore, be imagined as centring on *beliefs* or *attitudes*, which themselves are based on basic social understandings and assumptions, focused on the police as an *institution* (Bradford et al. 2008). Trust, in contrast, is more deeply rooted in lived and experiential relationships with others, involving expectations of how others will behave, along with the predictability of police actions (Bradford & Jackson 2011). For police practice, this suggests that public trust in the police is, in particular, born out of dynamics related to encounters with the police.

In summary, then, *trust* is primarily, but not exclusively, about the relationship that exists between members of the public and individual officers; confidence, however, relates more to the public's perception of the police based on a broader and more remote assessment of the process and activities of the police (Bradford et al. 2008, 2). Conceptualised in this way, it is apparent that trust developed during encounters with individual officers can flow into confidence in the organisation as a whole (conversely,

trust-damaging encounters will damage confidence). As such, Section 3 of this report distinguishes between three measures of trust (fairness, effectiveness, community engagement) and a measure of overall confidence.

There are a number of ways of explaining the link between visibility, trust and confidence. One might be **reassurance** – people may feel more positive about the police when they perceive a visible police presence in their neighbourhood because they feel safer as a result. Another might be that people associate visibility with police **effectiveness** in reducing levels of crime, perhaps because a visible presence suggests police are 'doing something'. Yet, while both these explanations may find some purchase, in some circumstances (Bradford et al. 2008 Tankebe 2009), research has shown that feelings of (in)security are only weakly associated with overall trust and confidence (Jackson et al. 2009), while, similarly, perceptions of police effectiveness are not particularly strong predictors of the same outcomes (Jackson & Bradford 2010; Tyler & Jackson 2013).

An alternative explanation may be more important. There is much research evidence to support the idea that police are, to many people, an important **symbol of order and stability**. This body of work suggests that public perceptions of policing are shaped by a whole range of sensitivities about community values, social cohesion and order, rather than simply more instrumental concerns such as the perceived risk of victimisation (Jackson & Sunshine 2007; Jackson et al. 2009). On this account, policing is associated with a value-bearing narrative that revolves around the ability of communities to reproduce social order over time. When communities consider their social environment as 'marked' by order and cohesion, positive features are attributed to the police (Jackson et al. 2009; Jackson et al. 2012b). Conversely, impressions of community breakdown diminish confidence in policing because 'they undermine the narrative of policing – they suggest that there is a *failure* to maintain order and cohesion, and the police are implicated in this failure' (Bradford & Myhill 2014, 5, original emphasis).

This idea has been persuasively adapted to policing in the British context. The police, as an institution, has come to provide an iconography of the *nation* state, expressing a collective national identity that is strongly linked to community and belonging (Loader & Mulcahy 2003; Loader & Walker 2001). However imagined the notion of the 'British bobby' may have become, the process by which the police have come to operate as a symbol for wider sensibilities and fears (Loader 1997), has found empirical support in recent studies, which have shown that 'affective' or 'expressive' factors such as collective efficacy and neighbourhood disorder are associated more strongly with public confidence in the police than instrumental factors, such as being a victim of crime or general fears about crime (Jackson et al., 2009; Jackson & Sunshine 2007).

What this research suggests is that the symbolism of police is important (which is not to suggest, of course, that the practical aspects of policing are somehow unimportant). Notions of policing, and order, are strongly associated with each other in many people's minds, and it may be that a visible police presence, in and of itself, communicates to many a sense of order and stability, or at least efforts to maintain these, thus bolstering trust and confidence. Moreover, a visible police presence may reassure people that they have not been forgotten by 'the powers that be', and that the authorities are taking an active interest in maintaining order in their communities.

Mounted patrols can, of course, be seen from one angle as simply a form of high visibility policing, and it may be on this basis that they influence trust and confidence. Yet it seems likely that **the use of horses may in and of itself be beneficial**, as the discussion in Chapter 3 of the report underlines. Mounted patrols are not the same as other police patrols, due to the presence of the horse, and it may be that there is a context-specific way *mounted* police patrols increase trust and confidence. One reason for suggesting this lies in the strong correlation between good quality interaction between police and citizens, on the one hand, and trust and confidence, on the other.

A significant body of research now exists showing that trust in the police is founded most importantly in perceptions of the fairness of police actions (Jackson & Bradford 2010; Murphy et al. 2013; Tyler & Huo 2002). Procedural justice theory suggests that this sense of fairness is multi-dimensional, comprising concerns about the quality of treatment and the quality of decisionmaking that police display (Blader & Tyler 2003). Specifically, for the police to be perceived by the public as procedurally just, they should be fair and neutral, with trustworthy motives behind their decisionmaking. They should also treat the people they are dealing with, regardless of who they are, with dignity and respect, as well as allowing them to have a voice in decisionmaking (Tyler & Fagan 2008; Tyler & Huo 2002).

At first glance it is hard to see why encountering a mounted patrol should enhance perceptions of police procedural fairness. Central to this model, though, is the quality of interpersonal treatment and the importance of enhancing the everyday, often mundane, interactions and encounters police officers have with the community (Myhill & Bradford 2011 398; Skogan 2006). Through their actions, expressions and general demeanour, officers can communicate 'not only that they are acting fairly and properly but that those who they are dealing with are worthy of respect, consideration and police attention in a positive sense' (Bradford et al., 2009b, 6). In Oakland and Los Angeles, for example, research has evidenced that fairness during personal experiences with police can be five or six times as important as the nature of the outcome, suggesting that even when delivering negative outcomes, police officers could build legitimacy by acting in fair ways (Tyler & Fagan 2008; Tyler & Huo 2002). National and local surveys within the UK also reveal the profound effect procedural justice can have on legitimacy (Bradford et al. 2009b; Jackson & Bradford 2010; Jackson et al. 2012b). Findings from the quantitative research of Jackson et al. (2012b) have evidenced that everyday contacts between police and public have the potential to catastrophically damage community trust, as well as eroding the legitimacy of the law and the right of legal authorities to command common support.

Linking the benefits flowing from procedural justice in terms of confidence and trust with the visibility of mounted police in neighbourhood settings, it seems reasonable to suggest that the high visibility of the horses might a) increase the chances of interactions with members of the public, and b) those interactions, when they occur, might tend to be positive. Police horses in community patrol settings may encourage the public to experience friendly officers, seen as having trustworthy motives and engaged with the community, for example by providing a focal point around which discussions between police and public can develop. Another possibility here is that the use of horses decreases the social distance between public police, acting as an 'ice-breaker' and enabling interaction between officer and citizen through which trust can be developed.

There are, thus, a number of reasons for suggesting that provision of mounted police patrols in an area might enhance trust and confidence. They may both stand as a visible representation of order and offer a way of encouraging positive interaction between police and public. It should be noted at the outset, however, that it is highly unlikely visible police patrols – whether mounted or not – will *always* be linked with higher levels of trust and confidence. It is not hard to imagine, for example, that in areas where police–public relations are strained, increasing police visibility may make an already poor situation worse. Equally, on an individual level, not everyone will react to visible policing – or police horses – in the same way. Upon seeing officers, some may become worried about possible crime or disorder events; others may simply be indifferent and place little store in either an increased o*r* decreased police presence. What current research suggests is simply that, *on average*, people who see more police in their local area evince higher levels of trust and confidence, and it is this idea that the quasi-experiment, reported in Chapter 3, was designed to test.

2.4. Summary

This chapter reviewed available literature on mounted police, as well as relevant theoretical perspectives on policing that may be useful to understanding police on horseback within a broader context, particularly relating to neighbourhood and public order policing.

The use of horses in a wide variety of police work across time and across cultures is striking. What is more remarkable, however, is the notable lack of academic exploration into their use. From the available literature, clear patterns emerge about the favourability of police horses in crowd control work, as well as their positive interactional abilities in patrol duties and their social significance in ceremonial activities. Historical accounts of mounted police units (such as the MPS) also point to a general public acceptability of police horses. But these accounts – written largely by horse enthusiasts – lack independent methodological rigour and are unable to unpick some of the more complex aspects of mounted policing, such as the paradoxical messages around order and disorder. Symbolically, police horses have a potent role in communicating messages about policing that can only be known through analysing public responses to mounted policing (as opposed to focusing on the riders' perspectives).[13] In this light, there is a clear need for further research in this field to better understand the value that police horses can (and cannot) add to policing.

More to this end, the literature on public order policing – and in particular the predominant ESIM model of crowd psychology that has been adopted by UK police – suggests very strongly that the effectiveness of mounted police is tied directly to crowd members' interpretations of mounted units and their activities. An increased understanding of how members of the public view police horses in conflict situations, and how these views differ between contexts, is essential to understanding whether and in what ways mounted police are valuable in public order situations.

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[13] Lawrence (1985), for example, appears to have interviewed predominantly mounted riders. Where she did interview officers outside of the mounted branch, she found largely antagonistic views towards the mounted unit.

As well, when viewed through prior research on trust and confidence in the police – and related work on the impact of police visibility – it is possible to see the basis on which police horses may have an effect in various situations. To the degree that police horses project images of competence, sophistication and effective presence in neighbourhood situations, they may also improve not only public assessments of police visibility, but also potentially the level to which the public are reassured by that visibility.

Situated within these contemporary approaches to understanding the value of police in various deployments, the subsequent chapters will examine empirical evidence developed within this project, which will shed light on if, how and to what degree mounted police may have impacts on both specific and general policing objectives.

3. Mounted police on patrol

This chapter presents findings from research activities that investigated the extent to which mounted police add value in patrol settings (research question two). While traditional wisdom regarding the value of mounted police tends to emphasise their role in public order and crowd control settings, as outlined in Chapter 2, the initial review of deployment data revealed that over 60 per cent of mounted police time is spent in patrol settings. As such, whether or not their primary justification lies in their public order roles, since public order policing only accounted for less than 15 per cent of their overall activity, it was important to understand the extent to which they add value, if at all, to policing operations in the neighbourhood patrol context.

Section 3.1 outlines the findings from a 'daily diary' activity-sampling exercise, which used a time-entry tool to track the activities of mounted officers on shift in summer 2013, and compared these with data collected in a previous similar study conducted in 2011 by the National Policing Improvement Agency. Section 3.2 reports the findings from a quasi-experiment of mounted police on patrol conducted in February to April 2014, measuring the impact of mounted units on public perceptions of policing in their area. During the experimental period, systematic social observations (SSO) of mounted and foot patrol officers were undertaken in order to provide a comparative analysis of the results of different kinds of patrol activities and to help explain the experimental results. The results of the SSO are reported at section 3.3.

Key findings in Chapter 3:

- Daily diary results suggest that mounted officers spend somewhat less time in 'public-facing' activities than foot patrol officers.
- The levels of time spent in public varies substantially between forces, and the differences may be attributable at least in part to the amount of 'stable duties' required by officers in different forces.
- Mounted patrols in community settings offer an extremely visible form of policing – people actively register, and remember, this mode of police activity.
- Higher levels of (perceived) police visibility are associated with higher levels of trust and confidence, a finding that resonates with previous UK studies.
- Results from a quasi-experiment conducted in six areas of Gloucestershire and London suggest that the provision of mounted patrols in local areas had an effect on trust and confidence; specifically, in relation to trust in police community engagement, fairness and measures of 'overall' confidence.
- A programme of Systematic Social Observation, conducted alongside the quasi-experiment,

revealed that mounted patrols generate a far higher level of casual engagement between police and public than standard foot patrols. However, levels of longer, more substantive engagements are similar across the two modes of patrol.

- The experiment could not determine whether it was the sheer visibility mounted patrols offer, an effect of the horse itself or the actions performed by the officers that produced the observed effects. It seems likely, however, that some combination of all three factors was important.

3.1. A 'daily diary' exercise provided an indication of the average composition of a mounted unit patrol shift

To develop understanding of the day-to-day activities of officers in mounted units, a daily diary tool was developed, based on a similar tool developed for a recent NPIA study (Mclean & Hillier 2011), and modified in consultation with MWG members. This diary tool (in Appendix A of this report) was sent to all mounted units represented within the MWG, with instructions and codebooks distributed to forces through their MWG representatives. Below, a descriptive account of those findings is reported.

A total of 333 daily diaries were returned (although not all were complete). Using the diaries, officers recorded the activities or tasks they undertook over the course of a working day, generally using 'pre-coded' response categories such as 'stable and care duties' or 'patrol/visible presence', along with the time the task started and finished. Using these data, it was possible to derive estimates of how long officers were spending on tasks, and, therefore, the overall proportion of their work-time taken up by different activities.

The basic unit of analysis in what follows is termed 'activity-events'. Each activity-event comprises a single activity or task for which a specific time was recorded in the diary. The daily diaries returned comprised 2,821 discrete activity-events and, therefore, an average of 8.5 activities per daily entry. There was very significant variation in the level of detail recorded in the diaries – some officers provided an almost minute-by-minute account of their activities, while others took a much more broad-brush approach. Some of this variation was ironed out during the data entry phase, where obviously related and contiguous activities were grouped together into one new activity-event.

Nine forces were represented in the data: City of London; GMP; Lancashire; MPS; Merseyside; Scotland; South Wales; Thames Valley; and West Yorkshire, while no data were received from the remaining three forces. All entries pertained to the month of July 2013, with dates of individual days ranging from 1st to the 31st of that month. It is therefore worth noting that very few, if any, taskings would have been football related, and the data presented below may have looked different if the data collection had occurred during the football season. However, as this exercise was interested in examining the composition of a patrol shift, the fact that data were collected outside of football season should not be seen as a major limitation of this data.

3.1.1. *Most of a mounted officer's time during a patrol shift is spent on patrol or caring for the horse*

The mean length of an activity-event was recorded at almost exactly one hour. The modal (most frequently entered) task time was 30 minutes, while the median task time was 45 minutes. These figures suggest that officers were often rounding out the time they took doing something to the nearest half hour, and that a majority of discrete activities took less than one hour.

The entries provided represented some 2,868 hours of activity. Of the 2,794 hours where a location for the activity could be ascertained, just over half (53 per cent), in terms of time, occurred outside the station/stables; in other words, mounted officers were spending just over half of their time out of the station. Similarly, 51 per cent of activity-events were recorded as taking place outside the station/stables.

There was significant variation by force in terms of the amount of time spent outside the stables. Discounting one force from which only a very few diaries were returned, the proportion of time spent outside the station/stables ranged from a low of 42 per cent to a high of 65 per cent.[14] It is worth noting that these figures compare rather favourably with general estimates of the amount of time police officers spend outside the station. Brodeur (2010, 161) refers to a number of studies, conducted in the UK between 1980 and 2002, which provide estimates of the proportion of police time spent out of the station that range from a low of 44 per cent to a high of 64 per cent. Brodeur concludes that uniformed police spend 'at least 40 per cent of their time in the police station' (see below for more discussion of this point).

Activity-events were coded into nine different general types of task. These are shown in Figure 3.1, which displays the proportion of all activity-events associated with each type of task. The figure shows that the most common task was stable based, with 28 per cent of all activity-events taking place in or associated with the stable. The next most common task was patrol – 24 per cent of activity-events were associated with Patrol tasks.

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[14] Note that the data disaggregated by force are not directly comparable with the overall figures due to missing data patterns.

Figure 3.1: Tasks, by prevalence (Percentages)
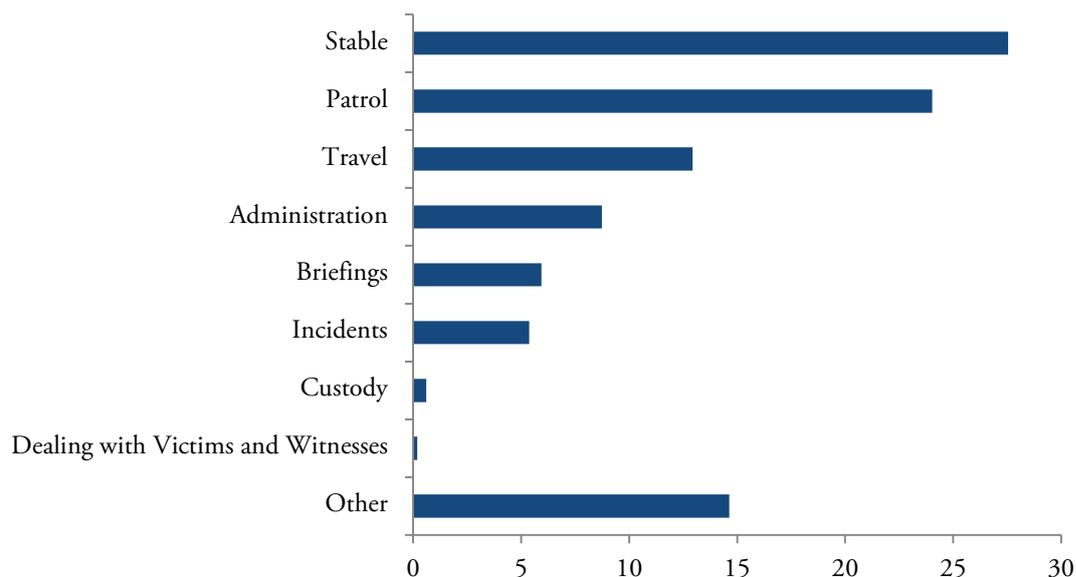
Figure 3.2 repeats the above analysis, but this time examines the time, in hours, spent on each task type. Patrol took up the largest amount of mounted officers' time, according to the diary entries, at 31 per cent. Some 28 per cent of their time was spent on stable work, and 10 per cent on travel. Note the large 'other' category – mounted officers spent 13 per cent of their time on activities not shown elsewhere in the figure (likewise, 15 per cent of activity events were recorded under 'other' – see Figure 1 above). Further analysis suggested that much of this was largely 'incidental' activity, such as meals/breaks and training. Officers also spent a small amount of time on activities such as attending court (around 1 per cent), ceremonial duties (also around 1 per cent) and looking for missing persons (less than 1 per cent). Adding together the sections of the pie chart (and some of the tasks grouped under 'other') that are definitely 'public-facing' (patrol, incident, dealing with witnesses/victims, ceremonial and missing persons), mounted officers spent approximately 37 per cent of their time in such contexts.

Figure 3.2: Tasks, by time committed
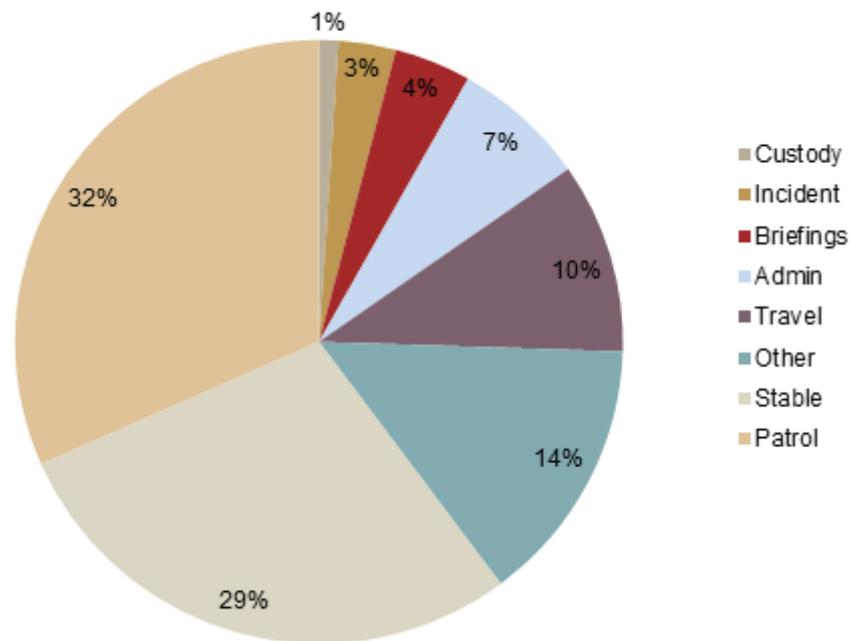
Figure 3.3: Patrol tasks, by time committed
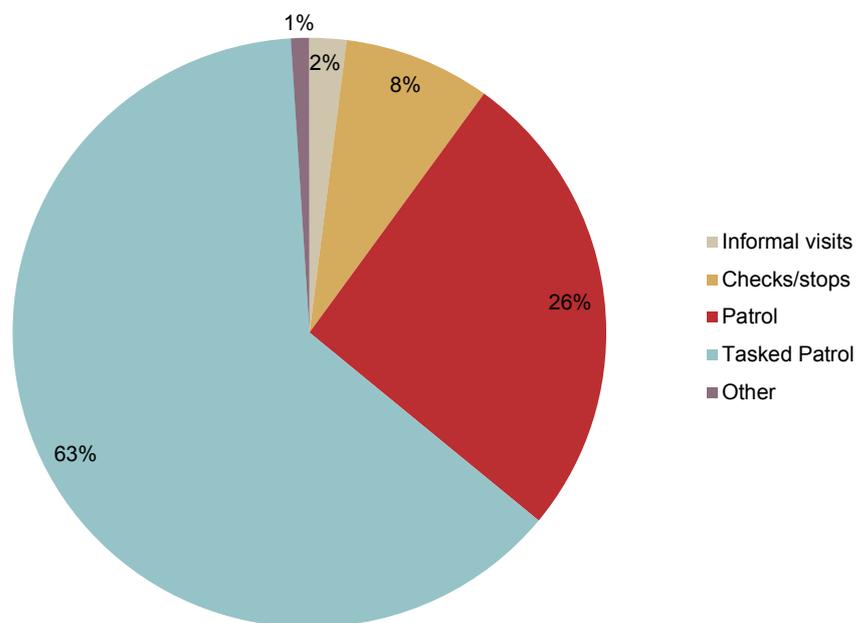
Patrol duties therefore took up the largest proportion of officers' time during July 2013. In turn, the largest proportion of this was, by some margin, tasked patrols (Figure 3.3), which accounted for 63 per cent of all patrol hours. The next most common activities were non-tasked patrols (26 per cent) and checks/stops (8 per cent). There was also variation in the proportion of time spent on patrol across different forces. Again excluding one force that returned only a few diaries, estimates of the amount of mounted officers' time spent on patrol ranged from a high of 38 per cent to a low of 20 per cent.

The report previously published by the NPIA (Mclean & Hillier 2011) allows us to compare the time use of mounted officers, as recorded in the diaries for this study, with the time use of response and neighbourhood officers, as recorded in the earlier work. The NPIA project used a direct observation (rather than self-completion) methodology, and both it and the current study are subject to a number of shortcomings, for example in relation to sampling; direct, detailed comparisons between the two should be treated with some caution. However, some broad conclusions can be reached.

Table 3.1: Comparison of mounted, patrol and response officers' time use[15]

	Neighbourhood	Response	Neighbourhood and response	Mounted
		Percentages		
Public facing				
Community work	32	13	20	.
Dealing with incidents	10	23	18	3
Post-incident work[1]	4	7	6	1
Patrol	.	.	.	31
Other	.	.	.	2
Total 'public-facing'	46	43	44	37
Support activity				
Administration	26	27	27	7
Travel	9	9	9	10
Custody	2	4	3	1
Briefing/meeting	4	6	5	4
Other	11	8	9	11
Stable work	.	.	.	28
Total support activity	52	54	53	61

Notes:

'Post-incident work' includes dealing with witnesses/victims.

'Other' displayed in Figure 2 split here between public-facing and support activity.

Total public facing plus support activity may not sum to 100 due to rounding.

Table 3.1 combines data from the current study with figures taken from Mclean and Hillier (2011, p. 21, Table 2). Most notably, the findings reveal that mounted officers spend less time on 'public facing' duties than their non-mounted counterparts. However, the difference is not large, 37 per cent compared with an average of 44 per cent for neighbourhood and response officers. Correspondingly, mounted officers spend more time on 'support activity' – mainly, of course, on stable work, with less time spent on administrative tasks than their non-mounted counterparts.

As noted previously, stable work was the next most common activity-event after patrol (accounting for 28 per cent of officers' recorded time overall). Over half (57 per cent) of officers' stable-based time was spent

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[15] Mounted data in this table are from this study; all other data from Mclean & Hillier (2011).

on grooming and feeding their horses, with the next most common activities being recorded as 'other stable based' (29 per cent) and cleaning stables (14.5 per cent).

It seems therefore that mounted unit officers spend around a quarter of their time caring for their horses and/or working in the stable. Yet there was significant variation in this across different forces. Again excluding one force that returned only a few diary forms, the proportion of time spent in the stable ranged from a low of 16 per cent to a high of 36 per cent. Similarly, the proportion of time spent on patrol ranged from a low of 20 per cent to a high of 55 per cent (although this latter figure is so high there must be some doubt about its veracity, or at least generalisability). It is not possible to know the degree to which these differences in the data are a result of actual differences in working patterns between forces or differences in reporting by officers, though it is reasonable to assume both of these factors are involved in generating this range of responses.

3.1.2. Mounted officers may spend a somewhat higher proportion of their time dealing with crime than suggested by the above data

Officers completing the diaries were asked, wherever appropriate, to indicate the nature of the 'initial incident' associated with an activity-event. Given the way the form was laid out – officers were allowed to indicate whether a specific activity event was related to an 'incident', with only relatively few activities identified as such – diary entries under 'initial incident' are most likely to refer to the general context of an activity-event (for example a patrol directed towards an area with specific ASB problems, or mounted officers being called to engage in searching for a suspect). 'Incidents' as discussed in Figures 3.1 and 3.2 above, by contrast, are likely to refer to activities either initiated by mounted officers themselves or in direct response to a call from the public, or dispatch.

While this section of the form was often not completed, at least in part because many activity-events were often not associated with a specific incident, analysis does reveal some interesting patterns. Most notably, an initial incident type was recorded in just over half (51 per cent) of patrol activity-events (of which there just under 700 in total). Just less than half of these *initial* incidents were recorded as crime-related, with ASB and traffic accounting each for a further 10 per cent of incident types (see Figure 3.4). Incident types were also, rather unsurprisingly, recorded in relation to 72 per cent of incident activity-events. As Figure 3.4 shows, over half (53 per cent) of these incidents were crime related, with a further 20 per cent related to ASB.

Perhaps the safest conclusion that can be drawn from these data is that mounted officers do spend some of their time directly dealing with crime and ASB related issues, and probably more than the 3 per cent figure suggested in Figure 3.2 above. However, it is not possible to be sure as to the exact extent of this involvement.

Figure 3.4: Initial incident types associated with 'patrol' and 'incident' activity-events

Percentages
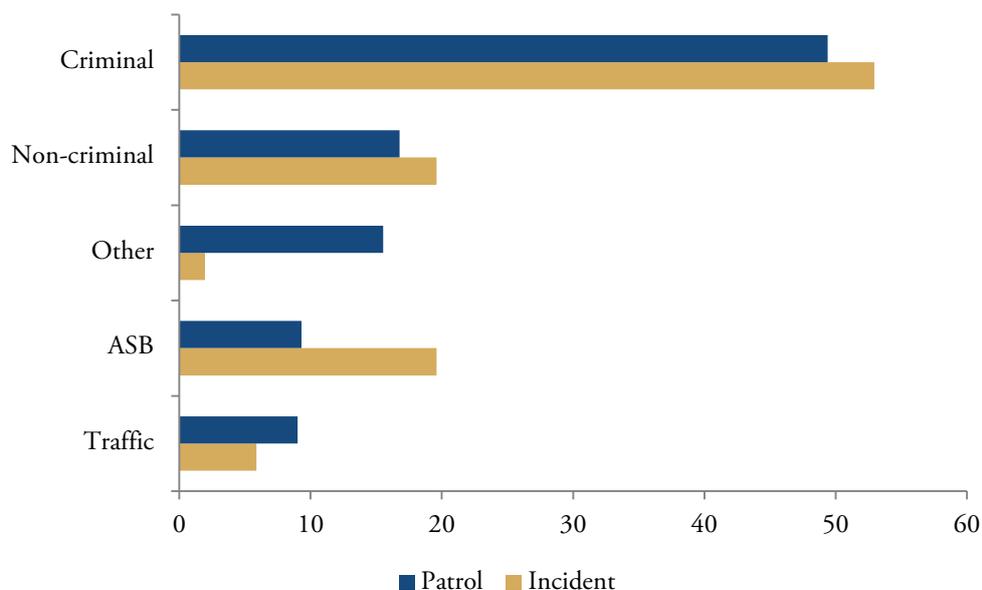
3.1.3. *Mounted police work is largely self-directed work: More than half of mounted police activities were self-tasked*

Finally, diary respondents were asked to indicate the tasking context of activity events; however, the source of a tasking was recorded in relation to only around one quarter (27 per cent) of activity events. We assume that a significant proportion of activity-events (e.g. tasks in the stable) were not tasked in any direct way, and that tasking context was only relevant for activity-events taking place during public-facing time.

Table 3.2: Tasking context, by selected task types

Percentages

	Self-tasked – community priority	Self-tasked – team targets/ priorities	Tasked from briefing	Tasked over radio	Generated by public	Other units	Total (=100% (numbers)
Patrol	32	16	47	3	1	0	355
Incident	32	12	3	42	10	1	109
Total	36	20	31	10	2	1	766

Note: 'Total' includes task categories not shown elsewhere in the table.

Analysis of tasking context still proved illuminating, however (Table 3.2). Most notably, over half (56 per cent) of activity events were recorded as 'self-tasked', either in response to 'community priorities' or 'team targets'. A further 31 per cent of activity events were tasked from a briefing. Only 2 per cent of activity events were recorded as being generated by the public. Looking at patrol activities, specifically, these proportions were broadly replicated. However, in relation to incidents, over one half (52 per cent) were tasked over the radio or generated by the public, reflecting, presumably, the more reactive nature of this aspect of mounted officers' work.

This research seems to suggest that mounted officers, at least in the month of July 2013, appear to be considerably more pro-active (self-tasked) than many of their uniformed colleagues who, it is thought, spend more of their time *reacting* to calls from the public. Brodeur (2010, 153) reports on several studies that have found that fewer than 20 per cent of police mobilisations are proactive. Yet, it may be that we are not comparing like with like – most mounted unit activities (and even deployments) are not 'mobilisations' in response to some external stimuli but routine patrol or stable activities (or pre-planned events). It is interesting to note, therefore, that in relation to 'incidents', mounted officers were responding to calls over the radio or directly from the public, suggesting a more reactive role in such situations.

3.1.4. Summary of findings from daily diary exercise

The above findings indicate that, for the time period examined, mounted police spend approximately half of their time out-of-office, and compare reasonably well with other officers in terms of time in visible roles. They do not have significant roles as incident responders, though there remains a possibility that a proportion of non-incident-related mounted police work nonetheless addresses crime, order and/or ASB.

Finally, as this exercise was completed outside of the football season, it may be worth undertaking the exercise again during the football season to determine whether there are the differences in overall patrol deployment patterns during this period. However, as football deployments only account for 10–15 per cent of all mounted deployments, and as this exercise is largely concerned with the work mounted police do outside of major event work, the findings can be considered indicative of the ways in which mounted police operate in Scotland, England and Wales.

3.2. The Mounted Patrol Quasi-Experiment

The quasi-experiment discussed in this section of the report ('quasi' because the treatment – delivery of mounted community patrols – was not randomised) was concerned with the impact of mounted police on public trust and confidence in neighbourhood settings. A key driver behind the experiment was the well-known link between police visibility and public confidence. Surveys regularly report that people who feel they see police more tend to report higher levels of trust and confidence (Bradford et al. 2009b; Sindall & Sturgis 2013). To the knowledge of the researchers, though, this is the first experiment to directly test the effect on trust and confidence of the delivery of a highly visible form of policing.

As described in Section 2.3.2 above there are a number of reasons for suggesting that provision of mounted police patrols in an area might enhance trust and confidence. Perhaps most importantly,

mounted police may both stand as a visible representation of order and offer a way of encouraging positive interaction between police and public. It should be noted at the outset, however, that it is highly unlikely that visible police patrols – whether mounted or not – will *always* be linked with higher levels of trust and confidence. It is not hard to imagine, for example, that in areas where police-public relations are strained, increasing police visibility may make an already poor situation worse. Equally, on an individual level, not everyone will react to visible policing – or police horses – in the same way. Upon seeing officers, some may become worried about possible crime or disorder events; others may simply be indifferent, and place little store in either an increased o*r* decreased police presence. What current research suggests is simply that, *on average*, people who see more police in their local area evince higher levels of trust and confidence, and it is this idea the experiment was designed to test.

3.2.1. It was hypothesed that mounted police patrols would increase visibility, trust and confidence measures compared with control areas

The core hypothesis behind the experiment described here was that public confidence would increase in areas that received mounted patrols relative to other, similar areas that did not. More specifically, three research hypotheses guided the quasi-experiment. H1 was that a significant proportion of people would notice mounted patrols in their neighbourhood; absent this, it would be hard to envisage the patrols having any effect on confidence. H2 was that, on a cross-sectional basis, seeing mounted police would be associated with a higher level of trust and confidence. Finally, H3 was that provision of the mounted patrols would increase trust and confidence in the areas to which they were fielded, relative to those where they were not.

H1 and H2 thus comprise pre-conditions for H3, the real question of interest. The quasi-experimental research design utilised can provide answers to these questions with a relatively high degree of certainty attached to them, although not as high as would be provided by a full Randomised Controlled Trial.

3.2.2. Neighbourhoods were matched along key characteristics to identify test and control sites

The quasi-experiment used a matched-pairs design, with pre and post test measures of public opinions in all areas. Six research sites were selected via discussion among the project partners, representing a mix of affluent and less affluent locales (see Table 3.3). The sites were Kingsholm and Wotton, and Matson and Robinswood, in the city of Gloucester; Cirencester Urban and Tetbury, also in Gloucestershire; and New Cross and The Lane in South London. All are electoral wards, except Cirencester Urban, which is a larger area that combines five different wards and covers the whole of the town of Cirencester (this exception matches the way Gloucestershire Constabulary organise their local policing effort).

Pairing was essentially geographical (i.e. within Gloucester, within London, with Cirencester Urban and Tetbury forming the last pair). However care was taken to select sites such that, when matched, the paired areas were as similar as possible to each other across a range of characteristics, such as age structure, employment, deprivation and crime rates. Table 3.3 displays key demographic and other characteristics of the six areas. While the areas within each pair clearly differ from each other they are also, in a broad sense,

generally similar. Notably, the proportion of under-15s, the employment (and unemployment) rate and crime rate within each pair are quite similar, as were the measures of deprivation.

Table 3.3: Socio-demographic and other characteristics of the six research sites

Data derive from the 2011 Census and police and crime data for each area.

	Pair 1		Pair 2			Pair 3
	New Cross	The Lane	Cirencester Urban	Tetbury	Matson and Robinswood	Kingsholm and Wotton
Population 2011	15,756	15,565	20,240	9,250	7,925	7,410
Percentage children aged 0–15 – 2011 (0–16 in Gloucestershire)	20	20	17	17	18	*14*
Population density (persons per hectare) – 2012	94	108	6	1	34	18
Employment rate (16-74) – 2011	62	66	65	68	60	*60*
Unemployment rate – 2011	10	10	4	3	9	*6*
Households not deprived in any dimension[1] – 2011	8	7	47	49	32	39
IMD 2010 – Rank (within London/Gloucestershire)[2]	145	151	189	254	48	36
Crime rate per 1,000 population – 2011/12 (victims per 1,000, 2012/13, in Gloucestershire)	145	150	30	22	65	67

1. The Office for National Statistics counts four dimensions of household deprivation:

- Employment (any household member not a full-time student is either unemployed or long-term sick);

- Health and disability (any person in the household has general health 'bad or very bad' or has a long term health problem);

- Education (no person in the household has at least level 2 education, and no person aged 16–18 is a full-time student); and

- Housing (Household's accommodation is either overcrowded, with an occupancy rating -1 or less, or is in a shared dwelling, or has no central heating).

- A household not deprived in any dimension has none of these characteristics.

2. In Gloucestershire this was calculated the mean of the rankings of the LSOAs comprising each site.

As far as is known none of these areas had experienced mounted police patrols in the recent past. Those in Gloucester certainly had not as Gloucestershire has no mounted unit – the patrols there were conducted by officers from Avon and Somerset. While London has a number of mounted sections, the patrols in London were conducted by officers, based in Lewisham, in an area that had no recorded mounted patrols over the previous 12 months. Nonetheless, mounted police are a relatively common sight in London, which suggests the treatment may have been weaker here than in the other sites (see below for more on this issue).

3.2.3. Experimental design

Once the areas were selected the first stage of the experiment was to survey residents of all six areas *before* the patrols took place. The polling company SMSR was commissioned to conduct a telephone survey of residents in February 2014. A total of 1,042 survey interviews took place. These surveys provided baseline measurements of police visibility and public confidence.

Subsequently, mounted community patrols took place in three of the areas in March (one in each pair – Kingsholm and Wotton, Cirencester Urban and New Cross). These areas therefore comprise the 'test' sites in the quasi-experiment. Seven or eight patrols took place in each test location, on both weekdays and weekends. All involved two mounted officers patrolling together, and on any one day only these two mounted officers patrolled the test site. Foot patrols continued as normal in the test as well as control sites. The experimental intervention was therefore simply an addition to existing police services in the areas concerned. All mounted patrols took place during daylight hours, and public facing time generally occurred from midday into the afternoon. Shifts generally comprised two or more distinct periods of patrol, punctuated by breaks – average public-facing time for the mounted patrols was 2 hours 19 minutes. The mounted patrols were generally of a more or less 'random' nature, in that officers would simply select a route through the area and follow it. On occasion, however, they would go to a specific location, for example if one had been recommended or pointed out to them by a local community officer.

Researchers from the University of Oxford and Gloucestershire Police accompanied 15 mounted and 13 foot patrols in the 'control' sites, over the course of the experiment to observe the number, type and nature of contacts between officers and public across the two modes. Full details of the systematic observations conducted are presented in Section 3.3 below; in summary, findings suggested that mounted patrols generated a significantly higher level of visibility – as measured by observable, active cognisance of a police presence on the part of members of the public – than foot patrols. The level of more meaningful engagements, such as extended conversations between an officer and a member of the public, was similar across the two patrol modes.

The final stage was to survey the areas again, and a second telephone survey was fielded in the first two weeks of April. This survey was identical to that conducted in February; a total of 1,041 people were interviewed. Comparison of responses from the two surveys allows investigation of the effect of the mounted patrols on public confidence. In essence, the idea is to see whether public confidence rose in the test sites but not the control areas, or, alternatively, whether it fell in the control areas but not in the test sites. If either case pertains, it is possible to conclude with a high (although not full) degree of certainty that the mounted patrols had an effect on public confidence.

3.2.4. The survey

Sampling and sample limitations

Sampling in both survey waves was conducted in such a way as to achieve a fixed sample size in each site, 179 in the pretest period and 179 in the posttest. The survey company used a dialling list of telephone numbers in each area, and contacted each number in turn until the required number of interviews was achieved. An overall response rate for the survey is thus not particularly meaningful, and it is not a true random probability sample. However, in some of the sites almost every number was in fact contacted before the required number of interviews was achieved. In one area, for example, 904 of 1,051 numbers were contacted over the entire period – the resulting 358 interviews approximates to a response rate of 40 per cent, based on the number contacted, or 34 per cent, based on the total of listed telephone numbers. It is important to note that, since it was conducted in the same way across all the sites, the survey methodology is not a threat to the internal validity of the experiment. People without landlines, or who were ex-directory, are excluded from the sample, for example, but this did not vary across the different sites. However, the survey methodology may threaten external validity, precisely because people without telephones or, more importantly, those who are ex-directory or only have a mobile phone, are excluded from the sample. These people may have reacted differently to the presence of mounted police patrols in their neighbourhoods

Demographic characteristics of achieved sample

Table 3.4 shows the sample demographics across the six research sites. Ideally, these should not vary within the matched pairs. That is, the demographic composition of one area within a pair should not vary significantly from that of the other area in the same pair. In general, this was the case. However, there were exceptions: in London, the proportion of BME respondents in the New Cross sample was slightly higher than in the Lane sample; the sample in Tetbury was slightly skewed towards younger people, when compared with Cirencester, while the latter sample contained more people with disabilities; in Gloucester, the Kingsholm and Wotton sample was somewhat younger than that of Matson and Robinswood. However, none of the differences were large. Moreover, regression analysis revealed few if any significant correlations between the demographic variables and the ten response variables used in the analyses described below (the only consistent association was that people aged over 75 tended to have more favourable views on some measures of trust and confidence). This suggests that the small differences in the demographic composition of the research site samples are unlikely to have biased the results of the experiment in any significant manner.

Table 3.4: Demographic structure of the sample

	London		Cirencester/Tetbury			Gloucester
	New Cross	The Lane	Cirencester Urban	Tetbury	Kingsholm and Wotton	Matson and Robinswood
Age						
16 to 24	7	5	2	1	3	1
25 to 34	8	5	2	3	6	4
35 to 44	13	12	4	11	10	5
45 to 54	19	20	15	17	15	14
55 to 64	19	23	23	20	20	22
65 to 74	19	17	22	26	21	30
75 and over	14	17	28	20	24	22
Refused	1	1	3	3	2	1
Gender						
Male	37	36	40	38	44	45
Female	63	64	60	62	56	55
Refused			.	0		
Ethnicity						
White	54	60	99	99	96	97
BME	46	40	1	1	4	3
Disability						
Yes	20	17	16	9	15	20
No	79	82	82	88	84	79
Refused	1	1	2	3	2	1
Chi² (p-values) tests within matched pairs						
Age	7.328	(.40)	21.797	(.003)	15.67	(.03)
Gender	.055	(.82)	1.322	(.52)	.142	(.71)
Ethnicity	2.96	(.09)	.113	(.74)	.347	(.57)
Disability	1.13	(.57)	7.65	(.02)	2.88	(.24)

The survey provided ten key measures to determine effects on trust and confidence

The potential effect of the mounted patrols on trust and confidence was assessed via ten key measures, which represented different aspects of trust as well as 'overall' confidence. All measures derive from survey items that used Likert-type response scales – for ease of interpretation these were dichotomised, with positive responses (e.g. strongly agree and tend to agree) scored as 1 and negative responses (e.g. tend to disagree and strongly disagree) scored as 0.

First, three survey items assessed respondents' trust in police community engagement (all on 4-point agree/disagree scales). These were ('do you agree or disagree that' police):

- Understand the issues that matter to people in the area in which you live?
- Engage with all members of the public in the area in which you live?
- Are tackling the issues that matter to people in the area in which you live?

Second, two survey items assessed respondents' trust in police fairness (again on 4-point agree/disagree scales). These were ('do you agree or disagree that' police):

- Treat people with dignity and respect?
- Are friendly and approachable?

Third, two items tapped into respondents' trust in police effectiveness (with 4-point response scales, very successful to not at all successful). 'How successful do you think the police in (your area) are at':

- Preventing crimes such as burglary?
- Catching people who commit crimes such a burglary?

Finally, three items probed confidence in a more general sense. Responses were again all on 4-point scales:

- If you were to report a crime or incident in the future, how confident are you that you would receive a good service from (the police in your area)?
- How confident are you that (the police in your area) are able to deal with crime and disorder problems in your community?
- Taking everything into account, how good a job do you think (the police in your area) are doing?

3.2.5. Some 'treatment migration' was identifiable through the SSO activities

As noted above, a programme of observations was conducted during the experimental period. The methodology and results are described in Section 3.3, but, essentially, this involved researchers following mounted patrols, in the test sites, and foot patrols in both control and test sites, in order to record the number and tone of encounters between police and public. Relevant here is that while conducting these observations, the researchers noticed the mounted units in Gloucester were spending some time outside the test area and, in particular, were patrolling in parts of the city centre where they were visible to anyone using it, for example to do their Saturday shopping. This raised a significant risk of 'treatment migration' – people from the control area in Gloucester seeing the mounted patrols – and, potentially, this having an effect on their opinions of the police. This issue is investigated below.

3.2.6. The results show consistent positive effects of mounted patrols on trust, confidence and visibility

The following section reports the results of the quasi-experiment across the hypotheses presented at Section 3.2.1. In broad terms, the mounted patrols appear to have a consistent effect on citizen perceptions of police visibility, as well as trust and confidence in the police.

Did people notice the mounted patrols?

H1 was that people living in the test areas would *notice* the mounted patrols. Table 3.5 shows the proportion of respondents who answered positively to the question 'Are you aware of any of the following types of police activity occurring in your local area in the last month? – Officers patrolling on horseback', broken down by experimental condition. In the test sites, the proportion answering yes increased significantly, from 15 per cent to 43 per cent. Note that essentially all those who answered yes in the pretest period lived in London; it seems that the generally higher level of mounted police visibility in London translated into people in the test site believing they had recently seen mounted patrols in their neighbourhood. As noted above, though, no mounted patrols had taken place there for at least 12 months prior to the quasi-experiment commencing. By contrast, the proportion in the control sites answering yes to this question rose from 6 per cent to just 8 per cent, an increase that was not statistically significant at any conventional level. Therefore, there is strong evidence that *as an intervention* the mounted patrols 'worked', in as much as they were noticed by significant numbers of residents.

The study also investigated whether there was a change in the visibility of foot patrols. If (public perceptions of) foot patrols changed in the test sites compared with the control sites this might have a bearing in the results described below. In the event, foot patrol visibility *declined* marginally in the test sites (result not significant) and *increased* marginally in the control sites (significant at the 10 per cent level). Any changes in public opinion in the test sites cannot, therefore, be attributed to an increase in foot patrols during the experimental period.

Table 3.5: Are you aware of any of the following types of police activity occurring in your local area (i.e. within 15 minutes' walking distance of your home) in the last month?

Percentage answering yes

Officers patrolling on horseback?

	Pre	Post	z-statistic (p)
Test sites	15	43	-9.83 (<.0005)
Control sites	6	8	-1.32 (.18)

Officers patrolling on foot?

	Pre	Post	z-statistic (p)
Test sites	48	45	.65 (.51)
Control sites	33	38	-1.69 (.09)

As outlined above, observations of mounted patrols in Gloucester suggested the possibility of treatment migration (i.e. people living in the control site may have witnessed mounted patrols in the city centre). To investigate, Table 3.6 shows the proportion of respondents in the three *control sites* saying they had recently seen mounted patrols, broken down by location and period. Ideally, there will be no significant differences between pre and post surveys; but the findings indicate that the proportion of respondents in the control site in Gloucester (Matson and Robinswood) who reported recently seeing mounted patrols rose from 2 per cent to 7 per cent, a difference significant at the 5 per cent level. There was no significant change in the two other control sites. This suggests significant treatment migration in Gloucester, a possibility compounded if one considers that more people living in Matson and Robinswood may have seen the mounted police in the city centre, answered the survey question negatively, and accurately, because this was not within 15 minutes' walk of their home, and yet still have altered their opinions of the police as a result of seeing the mounted police.

Table 3.6: Control sites: Are you aware of any of the following types of police activity occurring in your local area (i.e. within 15 minutes' walking distance of your home) in the last month?

Percentage answering yes

Officers patrolling on horseback?

	Pre	Post	z (p)
Tetbury	2	4	-1.28 (.20)
Matson and Robinswood	2	7	-2.37 (.02)
The Lane	16	15	.31 (.75)

The treatment migration in Gloucester suggested by Table 3.6 is impossible to deal with 'post-hoc'. When describing the results of the experiment, therefore, all the results are shown twice – once using data from the full survey sample, and then again using only data from London and Cirencester/Tetbury. This will allow consideration of the possible effect of the treatment migration in Gloucester. The data excluding Gloucester is believed to be more reliable, although it is hard to gauge the magnitude of any effect from the treatment migration that seems to have occurred.

Is seeing mounted police associated with higher levels of trust and confidence?

The second hypothesis guiding this research was that seeing mounted police would be associated with higher levels of trust and confidence. Figure 3.5 displays the proportion of people responding positively on each confidence measure, according to whether they had (a) seen neither foot nor mounted patrols in their area recently; (b) had seen foot patrols only; (c) had seen mounted patrols only; and (d) had seen both foot and mounted patrols. This four-way split allows consideration of whether mounted patrols had an 'additive' association with confidence over and above the much more widespread visibility of foot patrols. Only test sites (in both pre and post periods) are covered by the figure, since by definition people in the control sites cannot have seen recent mounted patrols in their neighbourhoods (despite the responses given above, which are likely to have been caused most importantly by a general sense among Londoners that they do see mounted police from time to time).

There are two main findings here. First, compared with having seen no recent foot or mounted patrols, having seen a mounted patrol was associated with a higher level of confidence across all the measures shown. Second, in almost every case having recently seen foot *and* mounted patrols was associated with a higher level of confidence when compared with having seen foot patrols alone, although it is of course unclear whether this is due to a simply higher level of police visibility, in a general sense, or due to public reactions to the horses, specifically.

However, while the difference between the 'neither' and 'mounted only' groups was statistically significant (at the 10 per cent level or lower) in every case, the difference between the 'foot only' and 'both' groups was significant in only two: dealing with the issues that matter (z=1.74, p=.08) and future reporting (z=2.49, p=.01). This suggests that the effect of mounted patrols on confidence, net of more general

police visibility, is rather marginal. Note, however, that this conclusion is based on a purely cross-sectional analysis of the data – the true test of whether mounted patrols influence trust and confidence will come from analysis of the experimental data. At this stage, it may be sufficient to simply note that people who have recently seen mounted patrols in their local areas tend to report somewhat higher levels of trust and confidence than those who have not.

Figure 3.5: Police visibility and confidence (Full sample)
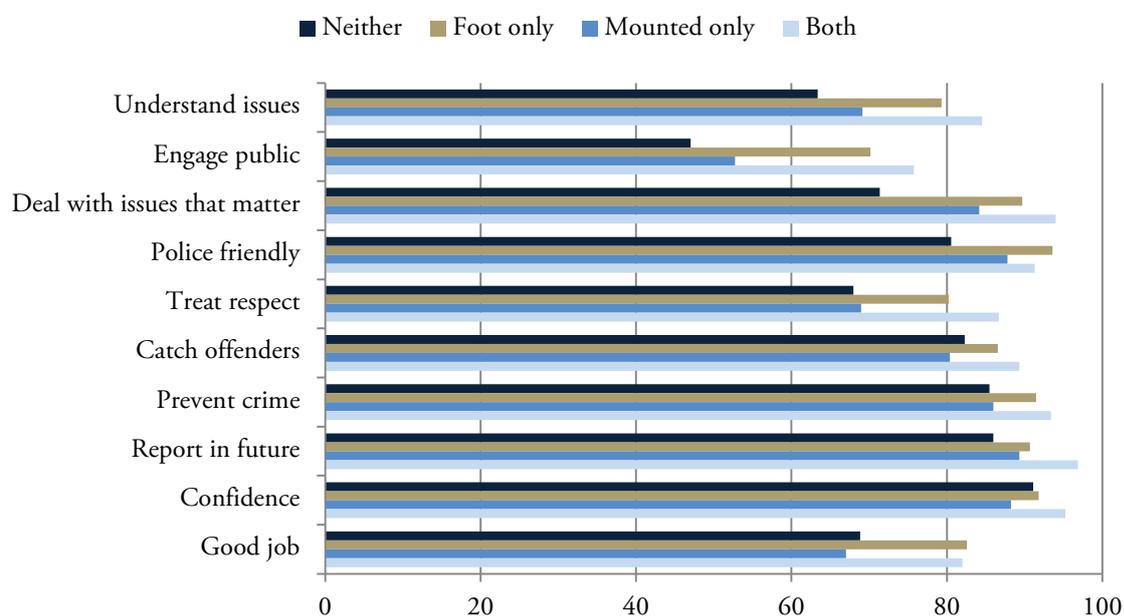
Did the introduction of mounted patrols increase trust and confidence?

Here, H3 is considered, which proposed that trust and confidence in the police would increase in the test areas relative to the control areas.

As a preliminary matter, Table 3.7 shows the percentage of respondents scoring positively on each measure, broken down by condition and time period. The results are intriguing – in the control sites trust and confidence fell on every measure, while in the test sites trust and confidence rose slightly on most measures, but fell slightly on others. A similar pattern emerged in analysis that excluded Gloucester (see Table 3.8). These findings imply that, if they had a significant effect on confidence, this will primarily have been due to the mounted patrols providing a 'buffer' against a general decline in trust and confidence between February and April – that is, the patrols may have ameliorated or prevented a decline in trust and confidence that would have occurred had they not taken place.

Table 3.7: Trust and confidence: by condition and time

Full sample	Percentage agreeing or confident that police …			
	Test sites		Control sites	
	Pre	Post	Pre	Post
Trust in police community engagement				
… understand issues that matter to people	72	73	73	65
… engage with all members of the public	59	60	60	59
… deal with issues that matter	74	77	81	74
Trust in police fairness				
… are friendly and approachable	81	84	86	83
… treat people with dignity and respect	88	86	86	83
Trust in police effectiveness				
… are successful at catching offenders	87	83	84	83
… successful at preventing crime	90	87	89	87
Overall confidence in police				
… would provide a good service in future	89	91	90	87
… are able to deal with crime and disorder	91	92	90	89
… do a good job	77	73	75	71

Table 3.8: Trust and confidence: by condition and time

Excluding Gloucester

| | Percentage agreeing or confident that police … | | | |
| | Test sites | | Control sites | |
	Pre	Post	Pre	Post
Trust in police community engagement				
… understand issues that matter to people	76	76	72	61
… engage with all members of the public	63	65	61	59
… deal with issues that matter	80	82	82	71
Trust in police fairness				
… are friendly and approachable	85	90	91	83
… treat people with dignity and respect	90	90	90	82
Trust in police effectiveness				
… are successful at catching offenders	89	84	86	80
… successful at preventing crime	90	88	88	85
Overall confidence in police				
… would provide a good service in future	90	91	90	85
… are able to deal with crime and disorder	92	94	91	87
… do a good job	76	76	76	70

Overall declines in trust and confidence may be explained by national events during the experimental period

The matched-pairs, pre-post design used in this experiment entails the assumption that what occurred in the control sites would have occurred in the test sites had it not been for the intervention (i.e. the fielding of mounted patrols). As such it is not strictly necessary to consider why confidence may have fallen in the control sites, since this is considered the 'natural' state of affairs that the experimental intervention, in the test sites, may have influenced in some way.

Despite this it is instructive to consider why trust and confidence may have fallen over the period in question. Accordingly, a small piece of media content analysis was conducted. Lexis-Nexis was used to search for newspaper stories in: (a) Gloucestershire (the *Wilts and Gloucestershire Standard*); (b) London (the *London Evening Standard*); and (c) Nationally (*Telegraph*; *Independent*; *Daily Mail*; *Guardian*). Search terms were 'police' and derivations ('officers', 'cops', 'police force'), and articles were coded according to a simple positive/neutral/negative/ambiguous frame. The search was limited to the months of February, March and April 2014.

Results from this process revealed, first, that in Gloucestershire there were four neutral reports, and one positive. One story, in mid-March, noted the presence of mounted police in Cirencester, another reported

increased patrols around Cirencester in response to thefts and vandalism at local allotments, while a third story was of an IPCC investigation following a murder in Gloucester. The mid-March story constitutes a breach of an embargo on reporting of the mounted patrols agreed between Gloucestershire police and local media. In exchange for access to the mounted patrols taking place in the test sites during the experiment, media outlets agreed not to publish their stories until after data collection was completed in mid-April. With this one exception the embargo was, as far as is known, upheld by local media.

Six articles were identified in the *London Evening Standard*: three neutral; one positive and two negative. One was a report of officer misconduct, while a further two concerned reported organisational failures in the MPS.

Finally, some 18 articles were identified in the national papers, 11 neutral and seven negative. Seven articles related to individual officer misconduct, while a further six related to organisational effectiveness. A total of ten of the stories were reports about the MPS. These were mostly negative and concerned, again, misconduct, for example allegations of spying on the Stephen Lawrence family; mass shredding of evidence; issues with undercover policing; and officers facing hearings regarding 'Plebgate'.

In sum, the tone of media reporting on the police over the period was rather negative, with the national press, in particular, concerned with high profile scandals and reports of police malpractice. While it cannot be said that this caused the decline in trust and confidence described above, it might at least be taken to suggest there was something of an adverse atmosphere around policing at the time the experiment was conducted.

A difference in differences analysis of the experimental results further reinforces the effects of mounted police patrols

Figures 3.6 to 3.9 display, graphically, results from a series of regression models predicting each of the ten measures of trust and confidence. These are all tests of H3, which proposed that provision of the mounted patrols would increase trust and confidence in the areas to which they were fielded relative to those where they were not. Full results from these models are shown in Appendix Tables B1-B4. Included in each model were fixed effects (dummy variables) for the matched pairs: London, Cirencester/Tetbury and Gloucester, as applicable. These fixed effects partial out variation in responses associated with the areas in which people live. Results from the full sample, and then excluding Gloucester, are shown in each case.

Plotted in each figure are the 'difference in differences' coefficients. These represent the change in the probability of a positive response on each measure of interest, from pretest to posttest period, in the test sites *compared with* the change in the probability of a positive response in the control sites (note that the vertical axis is in the log odds scale). Coefficients are represented by the dots, and a positive value indicates that trust and confidence *improved* in the test sites relative to the controls. The bars show the 90 per cent confidence intervals – if a bar does not cross the zero line, it can be concluded that the experimental intervention had a significant (at the 10 per cent level) effect on the indicator in question (exact p-values are given in the appendix tables). When a bar does not cross zero, therefore, this indicates that the association in question has a greater than .9 probability of being *non-random*, in which case the

conclusion is that there was a systematic and, potentially, causal relationship between the mounted patrols and changes in trust and confidence.

Figure 3.8 shows results in relation to the measures of trust in police community engagement. These are striking – whether Gloucester is included or not, opinions on the 'understand issues' and 'dealing with the issues that matter' items both improved in the test sites *relative to the controls*. That is, people living in the areas that received a 'dose' of mounted policing evinced, on average, a positive shift in opinions of police community engagement when compared with those who lived in the areas that did not receive the intervention. As suggested by Tables 3.7 and 3.8 above, this overall shift was the product of a small *improvement* in trust in the test sites and a larger *decline* in trust in the control sites.

Figure 3.6 turns attention to trust in police fairness. Here, again, whether data from Gloucester are included in the analysis or not, perceptions of police friendliness increased in the test sites relative to the control sites. When Gloucester is excluded, the proportion of people in the test sites agreeing that police treat people with dignity and respect increased relative to the proportion agreeing this in the control sites. Looking at Table 3.8 above, this seems to be entirely due to a decline in trust, on this measure, in the control sites – demonstrating a 'pure' buffering effect.

In contrast to the results in relation to fairness and community engagement, Figure 3.7 shows that the mounted patrols appear to have had little effect on trust in police effectiveness. Both including or excluding Gloucester, there was a significant difference in differences between test and control sites.

Finally, Figure 3.9 shows results in relation to the measures of overall confidence. Here, both when Gloucester was included and when it was excluded, 'overall' confidence and confidence in service provision both improved in the test sites relative to the control sites. The intervention appeared to have little effect, however, on the 'good job' measure.

Figure 3.6: Results from models predicting trust in police fairness

Difference in differences coefficients
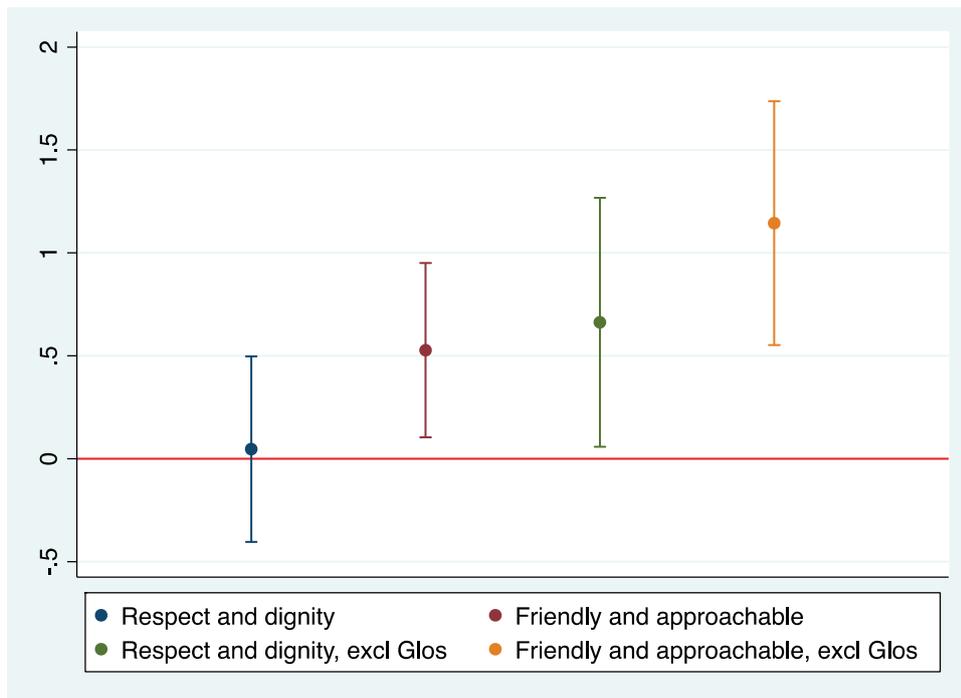
Figure 3.7: Results from models predicting trust in police effectiveness

Difference in differences coefficients
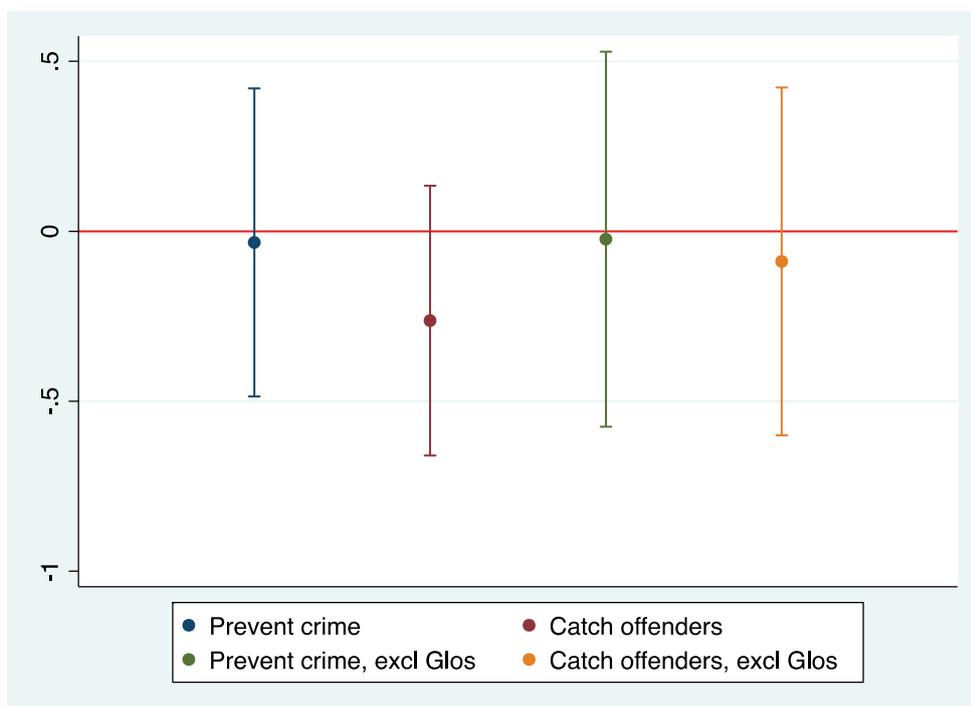
Figure 3.8: Results from models predicting trust in police community engagement

Difference in differences coefficients
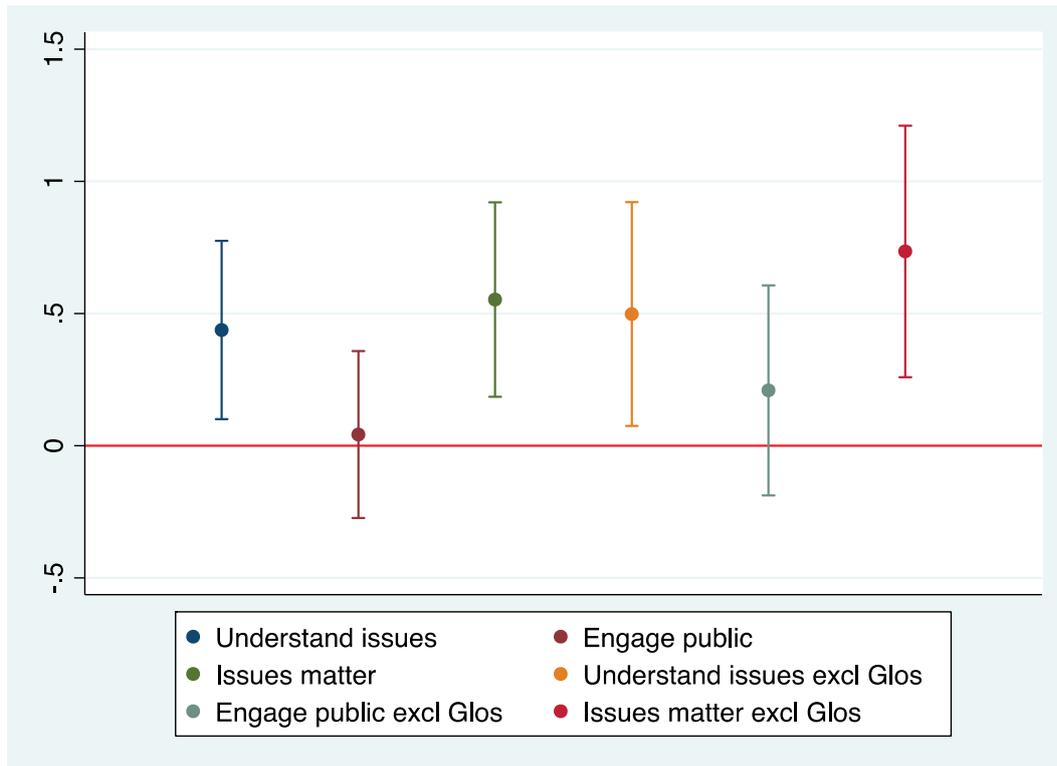
Figure 3.9: Results from models predicting overall trust and confidence

Difference in differences coefficients
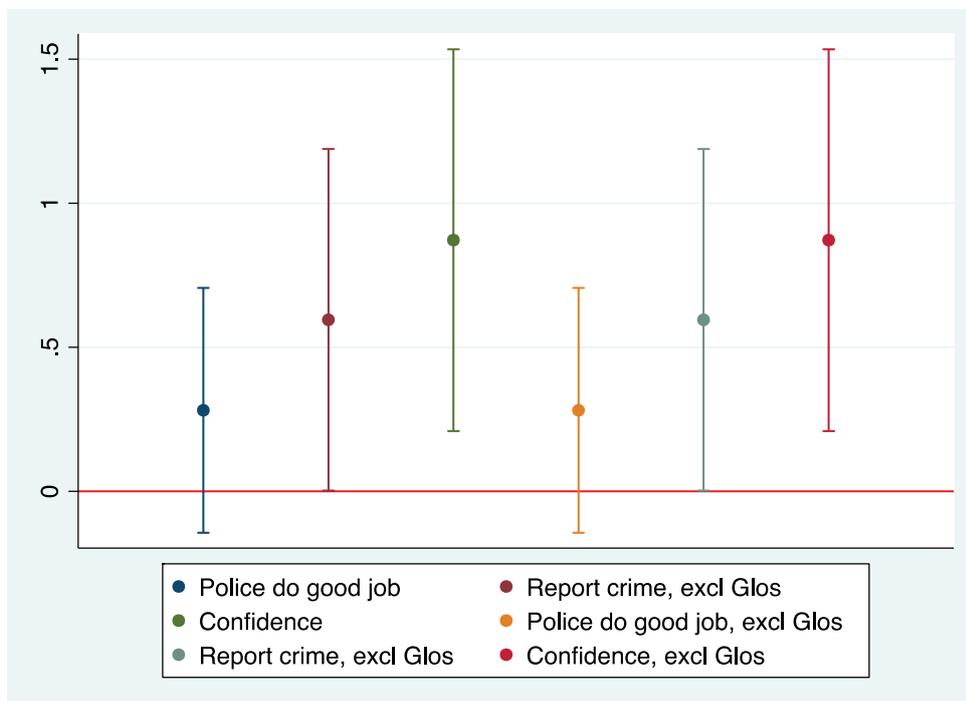
Two provisos are in order here. First, using a 10 per cent significance level in these analyses has the effect of 'boosting' the number of findings judged statistically significant. Appendix Tables B1-B4 show a number of p-values in the .05–.10 range; if the more stringent 5 per cent significance level had been selected, the number of positive findings would have been smaller (note that the findings in relationship to the 'understand issues', 'engage public' and 'police friendly' variables are consistently significant at the 5 per cent level). Broadly speaking, though, a 10 per cent significant level seems justified in this context. The experimental design is a robust one, allowing estimation of effects with a relatively high degree of certainty, and moreover a 10 per cent significance level still rules as 'insignificant' associations with a less than .9 probability of being non-random (in other words, there is a less than 1 in 10 chance that the results described above are due not to the putative effect of the intervention but simple random chance).

Second, closer investigation of the data suggested that most of the apparent effect of the experimental intervention came from one site, Cirencester, where the mounted patrols appear to have had by far the biggest effect vis-à-vis its matched control site (Tetbury) – in Cirencester, in fact, opinions consistently *improved* from the pretest to posttest periods. However, in London, too, where opinions on almost every measure declined across both sites, this decline was consistently greater in the control site (The Lane) than in the test site (New Cross). Results from the Gloucester pair are much more mixed, and hard to interpret, most likely due to the treatment migration effect described above.

3.2.7. Discussion of the results

To return to the original hypotheses, it was found that there was strong support for H1 – people noticed the presence of mounted patrols in their areas. There was also some support for H2, although this was somewhat more equivocal. While having recently seen mounted police was associated with substantially higher levels of trust and confidence when compared with having seen no police at all, the 'additive' effect of mounted patrols on top of the more common foot patrols was much smaller.

Finally, there was significant, albeit mixed, support, for H3. Of the ten measures of trust and confidence used, five (six, when Gloucester was excluded) seem to have been affected by the experimental intervention; notably, measures of trust in police community engagement, fairness and overall trust and confidence. The only consistent exception was trust in police effectiveness, which did not seem to alter as a result of the mounted patrols.

Consistently, the pattern was one of 'buffering' – trust and confidence fell quite substantially in the control sites, but increased slightly, or at least fell by less, in the test sites. A general worsening in public opinion appears, on this basis, to have been inhibited by the mounted patrols. One interesting question is, therefore, what would have happened if trust and confidence had been generally *rising*, not falling, over the period of the experiment. Would opinions in the test sites still have improved *relative to* opinion in the control sites? At present, it is not possible to determine whether or not the intervention would still have had an effect under these conditions, though the results suggest that it is at least plausible that higher police visibility and/or the use of mounted patrols might lead to greater increases in trust. That said, however, there may be a something of a boundary effect here. Trust and confidence tended to be already high in the areas included in the survey (generally higher in London than in Gloucestershire,

interestingly), which might suggest that there would be little room, in a more favourable climate of opinion, for yet further improvement.

The sheer visibility of the mounted patrols is worthy of a little more consideration. The idea that people living in local areas notice changes in police activity is open to some doubt, notwithstanding that many police policies and programmes, such as neighbourhood, community and hotspot policing are premised on the idea that increasing levels of police activity in local areas will, via various mechanisms, affect public opinion or the actions of potential offenders. For example, Weisburd et al. (2011) found that a programme of hotspot policing, where crime hotspots were identified and then provided with significant extra resources (essentially, more policing on the ground) had almost no effect on the opinions and perceptions of local residents. The authors concluded that:

> While we often assume that citizens will be very aware of police presence, our findings suggest that even adding three hours of police activities on a street segment each week does not necessarily mean that citizens come into regular contact with the police. People are ordinarily going through their daily routines which may include spending large parts of their day at work or shopping or carrying out other daily routines. This may mean that the likelihood of observing the police on a daily basis is not very high, even when police presence is intensified. (Weisburd et al. 2011, 315)

This is, of course, emphatically not what was found in the experiment described here. Moreover, as reported in Section 3.3 in relation to the observational activities, mounted police appear to generate substantially more engagement with the public while on patrol, and members of the public appear to 'actively notice' mounted patrols at about six times the rate at which they notice police on foot. One implication here may be that mounted patrols might, because of the visibility they command, be effective components of hotspot style interventions, a point that is returned to at the end of this report.

Limitations to the quasi-experiment

It is important to note that the results discussed above should be treated with some caution – because the treatment was not randomised, it is not possible to demonstrate a direct causal affect of the mounted patrols on public opinion. That said, it is hard to imagine what, other than the patrols, *could* have caused the buffering effect observed in the test sites. However, it is not certain as to the cause of this putative effect. Was it due simply to increased police visibility, in and of itself; the fact that mounted patrols were used (the effect of the horse); the qualities of the mounted officers; or some combination of all these factors?

It is ultimately impossible to unpick this knot with the data at hand, although the sheer visibility of the mounted patrols may have been a key mechanism – it may simply be that people respond to more visible policing in ways that, on average, may enhance their levels of trust in police. As discussed in Section 3.3, observations of the mounted patrols, though, suggested that beyond the issue of visibility a two-step mechanism may have been in play – the mounted patrols afforded the police more visibility, but the horses also acted as ice-breakers, and the mounted officers were able to use this as an opportunity for interaction with local residents, which enhanced people's sense that police are friendly and engaged with the communities they serve.

A further issue is how long the observed effect might last. The post telephone surveys were conducted very soon after the mounted patrols had finished, meaning the experience of this form of policing would have been fresh in people's minds. This would almost certainly fade over time, leading to a diminution and, eventually, a negation of the effects described above. This suggests that the experimental effect would need 'topping up' by repeated 'doses' – something that may of course be difficult in policy terms.

This is a problem with all experiments, but it seems particularly pertinent here given the potential 'novelty value' of mounted patrols. That is, people may react very positively to seeing one or two such patrols, but much less so when they become mundane or even every day. On balance, it would seem that some sort of 'normalisation' effect is inevitable; yet, by contrast, observations of mounted patrols in the centre of Lewisham – where mounted police are extremely common – demonstrated that even here the mounted patrols garnered a significant public reaction. Even in an area where people were used to seeing mounted police, many still reacted positively to their presence and crowds readily formed around mounted units to take pictures, chat with officers and pat the horses.

Finally, to reiterate a point raised earlier, the sampling technique used for the survey, which was not a random probability sample, presents a threat to the external validity of the experiment. Most importantly, people with ex-directory numbers, mobile numbers only and others were excluded from the sample – such individuals may, for a variety of reasons, react differently to police and policing interventions from those who were included in the sample. It is unknown whether the results would generalise to these individuals or, of course, people living in areas other than those included in the experiment.

Provisos aside, the findings presented above provide strong support for the basic hypothesis tested by the quasi-experiment – public confidence did not decline as much, and even improved, in the areas that received mounted patrols when compared with areas where such patrols did not take place. In effect, trust in police community engagement and fairness, in particular, appeared to have been buffered in the test sites; by contrast, the mounted patrols appear to have had little effect on trust in police effectiveness.

3.3. Systematic Social Observation (SSO) of mounted police on patrol

The data above show how mounted police patrols are associated with variations of public trust and confidence in, and the visibility of, police in an area. However, as discussed in the preceding section, the survey findings leave open the question of how and why this association with trust and confidence takes place. To investigate these underlying processes, systemic social observations (SSO) of mounted police and police on foot were undertaken across 28 patrols (15 mounted and 13 foot patrols) in the test and control sites.

Systematic social observation of the police has been pioneered in the US context through a number of studies, particularly the Policing of People and Neighbourhoods (POPN) studies by Mastrofski and colleagues (1998) and later used in Canada by Schulenberg (2014). SSO provides a means to examine selected aspects of social interaction in a structured fashion, and has been previously used to measure the quality of interactions between citizens and police in terms of, for example, levels of conflict, potential bias by police, legitimacy of the interaction, and so on.

Based on these earlier studies, a coding structure was produced to provide a comparative assessment of mounted and foot patrol policing (the coding structure had fewer data categories than those used in previous studies to simplify recording and focus on the most relevant variables). Where prior studies had relied on notes transferred into paper codebooks to develop a quantitative dataset, researchers in this study were able to record the data through an existing business-oriented data-recording app called 'Forms' by DeviceMagic Inc. This approach was both time-efficient and allowed real-time recording of data during shifts.

3.3.1. The SSO strategy provided a way to measure 'active noticing' of police patrols

The unit of analysis for this exercise was termed 'engagements' by the research team, which is any instance where a member of the public was seen to 'actively notice' police presence in public space. The objective of this approach was to determine a measure of 'noticeability'. People may see police of all kinds walking or driving in their area on a daily basis, but in many cases the presence of police is not registered in a way that is memorable or renders police presence as 'visibile' in the minds of members of the public. It was not of interest to record how many people may have been present in the vicinity of police on patrol, but rather how many could be seen to engage with the presence of the police in a way that might plausibly impact their assessments of police visibility in their neighbourhoods and, potentially, their assessments of trust and confidence regarding that police presence.

Based on initial (non-systematic) observations of police patrols, the types of engagements were divided into four categories:

1. **Acknowledgements** – the shortest and least substantial engagement, where a member of the public briefly could be seen to explicitly notice the presence of police. Things classified as acknowledgements included stopping and pointing at police, saying hello to the officers, discussing police presence with others in a crowd, and so on.

2. **Encounters** – a brief but more substantial engagement with police, encounters were recorded where a short (i.e. less than one minute) mutual engagement took place, such as a brief conversation between police and a member of the public, normally about a relatively trivial topic, such as the name of the horse or the weather, and normally lasting less than a minute. Instances where people patted the horse or had physical contact with the officer, or stopped to take a picture or video, were also classified as encounters.

3. **Multiple encounters** – particularly with mounted police patrols, but also with foot patrols, it was found that in some circumstances crowds can tend to form around police officers, with multiple people stopping to briefly chat or simply watch others interact with police. These encounters could last up to 30 minutes with people coming and going, and these were seen by the research team as a unique kind of engagement that warranted a specific category.

4. **Interactions** – these were any engagements lasting over a minute with an individual or small group, which include all engagements related to crime and police intervention in incidents.

Acknowledgements were recorded by hand-tally counter. Encounters, Multiple encounters and Interactions were recorded in the mobile app, alongside a number of details regarding the engagement – number of people involved, length, tone, level of conflict, outcome, reason for the engagement (i.e.

relating to crime, or not), and so on, to see if mounted police patrols were different from foot patrols in any of these qualitative or categorical measures. The full codebook and variables recorded can be found at Appendix A.

The 28 shifts subject to SSO by the research team represented approximately 68 per cent of all mounted patrols during the experimental period (15 of 22). Data are unavailable regarding how many foot patrols occurred in the same period in the test and control sites, but the number of mounted patrols will have been a much smaller proportion of foot patrol shifts. Assuming each of the six areas involved had at least two foot patrols per day over a 31-day period, there would have been in the area of 370 or more foot patrols over this same time period. Foot patrol shifts were selected to match similar mounted patrol shifts; for example, as mounted patrols were all midday during this period (beginning between 10 a.m. to 11 a.m. and ending between 1 p.m. and 3 p.m.) the researchers only undertook observations with daytime foot patrols. Additionally, efforts were made to balance the amount of time spent with each during days which were assumed to be less busy in terms of foot traffic on streets (i.e. Monday to Thursday) and busier days (i.e. Friday to Saturday), so that a preponderance of busier days with either mounted or foot patrols did not skew the data.[16]

Through this approach, data were collected on over 5,600 engagements across approximately 64 hours of public-facing time in the 28 shifts where observers were present. The final count of number of engagements includes each individual person engaged, such that, for example, if a group of four people spoke together to an officer, that was recorded as four engagements rather than one.

Additional data were collected in pilot shifts and 'confirmatory' patrols in other force areas that broadly reflect the findings in this report, however the data reported below refer only to the 28 observation shifts conducted during the experimental period in the experimental and test sites.

3.3.2. Analysis of SSO data shows substantially higher levels of casual engagements with mounted police than with foot patrols

These data revealed that mounted patrols in the experimental period generated approximately 6.5 times as many engagements over an equivalent period as their counterparts on foot in the control sites, which in real terms amounts to on average 332 engagements per shift for a mounted officer and 50 for an officer on foot. As illustrated in Table 3.9 below, mounted unit shifts were more variable than foot patrols in terms of the levels of engagement they generated, but the lowest level of engagement recorded on a per-shift basis for a mounted officer was about equal to an average shift for a foot officer, and the highest level of engagement for a mounted officer was more than an order of magnitude greater than the highest level of engagement found on a patrol shift.

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[16] In total, observers spent four shifts each with foot and mounted during Friday or Saturday shifts, with all remaining shifts of weekdays. Three of the shifts with mounted officers were recorded as wet or rainy, while one foot shift faced inclement weather.

Table 3.9: Mean, maximum, minimum and range of engagements per shift by foot or mounted patrols

	Mean	Maximum	Minimum	Range
Foot patrol	50	78	10	68
Mounted patrol	332	838	47	791

Figure 3.10 below presents the engagement data from this exercise, across the four categories of engagement used in the SSO approach. These findings strongly suggest that the mechanism by which mounted police generate trust and confidence is that they are simply much more likely to generate public engagement.

Figure 3.10: Mean engagements with police, by foot and mounted patrols

	Mounted	Foot
■ Interactions per shift	12	12
■ Encounters per shift	9	10
■ Multiple encounters per shift	74	2
■ Acknowledgements per shift	246	34
■ Total engagements/shift	332	50
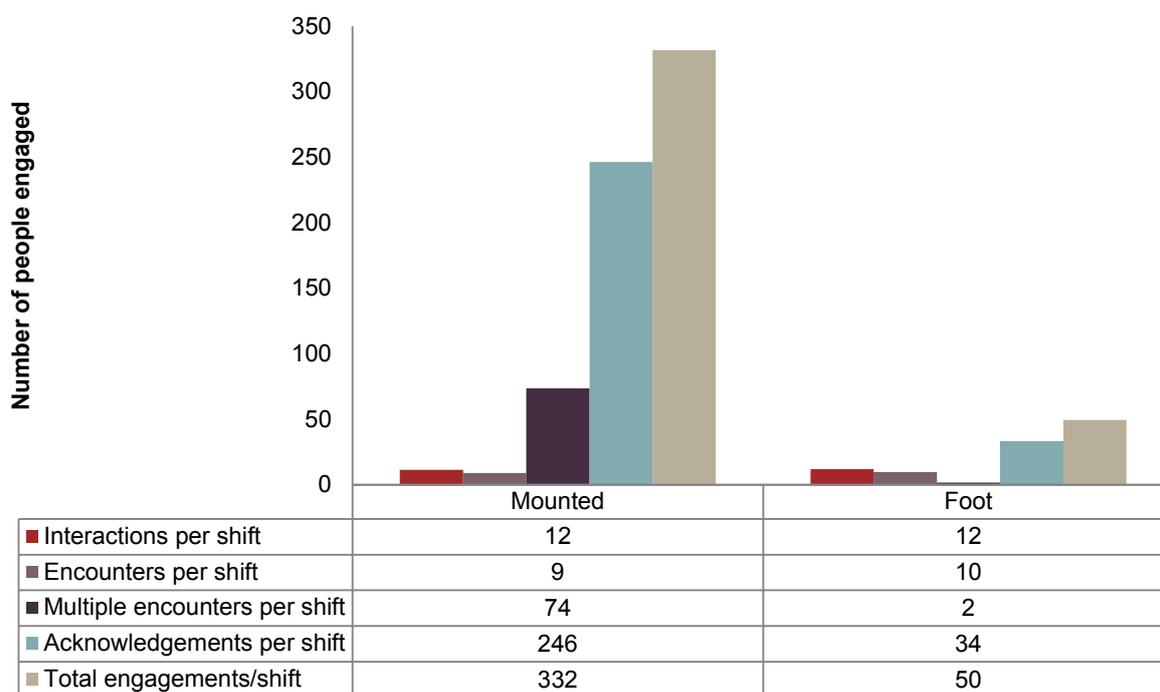
This equates to about 147 engagements per hour on horseback and 24 per hour on foot, based on an average of 2 h 19 min public facing time per shift for mounted patrols and 2 h 17 min for foot officers observed during the study.

Additionally, the qualitative observations accompanying the SSO exercise suggest that mounted patrols were positively received by people across demographic categories – people across age, ethnic, and gender backgrounds were seen to approach the mounted officers during their patrols. It was also apparent from the observations that the visibility of mounted patrols extended beyond simply members of the public passing the officers in public spaces; on occasions researchers observed residents – mothers and children, for example – coming to the windows of their homes, or even stepping outside their front doors, having seen or heard the mounted branch passing. While some of this level of engagement may be related to the

novelty of mounted police in these contexts (i.e. in areas where they never patrol), it is worth noting that additional systematic observations were undertaken in areas where horses patrol regularly. In these contexts, similar volumes of engagements between mounted units and members of the public were observed.[17] This suggests that they remain noticeable, and also an attraction, for people who see them regularly.

It is important to recognise that mounted police generate about the same number of interactions and encounters per shift as their counterparts on foot, which means that mounted police are primarily generating 'casual' engagements with the public. The difference in the total numbers of engagements between foot and mounted patrols is down to larger numbers of acknowledgements and multiple encounters with mounted patrols. This is not to devalue the importance of these brief casual engagements (i.e. acknowledgements and multiple encounters); in fact, quite the opposite. It would appear from these findings that brief but memorable engagements are essential for generating widespread increases in police visibility. During the observations of the patrols, for example, the researchers witnessed children cycling the length of their street behind the horses, multiple residents in blocks of flats opening their windows to look out at the horses passing by and, in one instance while in a park, children and their parents flocked out of the play area to see the mounted unit and in some cases to have their pictures taken with them.

Conversely, another example from foot patrols illustrates the relatively lower noticeability of officers on foot. During one shift, an officer suggested in conversation that, despite the fact that he patrols a neighbourhood virtually every day, and patrols are in the area at least five days a week, people regularly greet him by mentioning that they 'never see police around here' and are happy that police are finally present in the neighbourhood. Subsequently, the observer witnessed just such an interaction between the officer and a person working in their front garden. A man who claimed to have lived in the neighbourhood for 25 years told the officer that 'this is the first police patrol he can remember seeing in the neighbourhood', despite the fact that police patrol there on a daily basis.

3.3.3. Outside of volume of engagements, there were few other significant differences between mounted police patrols and foot patrols

Very few other differences were found between foot patrols and mounted patrols in terms of the nature of their engagements with the public, apart from the volume of casual engagements generated by the mounted units. In general terms, the vast majority of the observed patrol police engagements with the public were positive, not related to crime, respectful and devoid of conflict, and there were no significant differences in the dataset across these variables where mounted police were and were not present. In turn, for the most part there was no difference in quality of engagements where they occurred, but rather a difference in *quantity* that may account for the difference in outcomes in the experimental data.

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[17] It would be misleading to report data from these other observations as they were undertaken during methods piloting (where data was collected slightly differently as methods were being refined) or in a different area of the country (a 'confirmatory' case study was undertaken with a police force in the north of England), but the pattern was consistent that mounted patrols generate substantial levels of engagement on patrol.

However, the data contain two interesting exceptions to this statement. First, a difference was identified in the 'tone' of encounters observed. Virtually all – 95 per cent or more – of the encounters (brief conversations, physical contact, etc.) with both mounted and foot patrols were categorised by researchers as 'positive' or 'neutral' in tone; however, a statistically significant difference ($p<0.01$) was found in the tone between mounted and foot patrols, owing to a substantially higher proportion of foot patrol encounters being 'neutral' rather than 'positive', as shown in Figure 3.11 below. This suggests that mounted police encounters are more positive in tone, although this difference did not extend to interactions (longer, more substantial engagements between police and public).

Figure 3.11: Tone of encounters by type of patrol
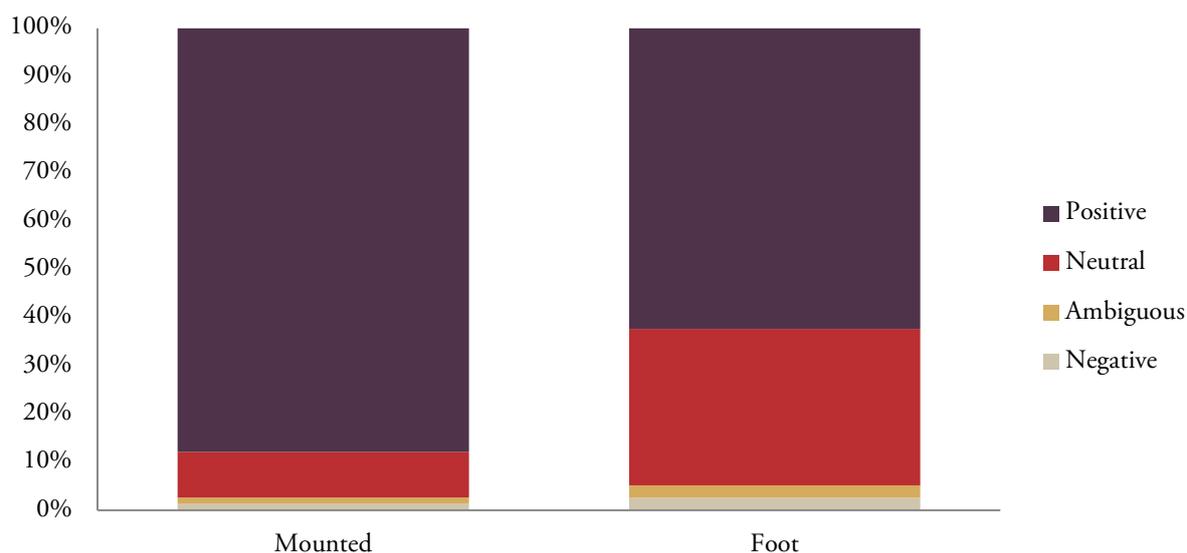
However, a similar finding relating to the tone of encounters emerges when considering the gender of the officers involved. Specifically, when one female officer was involved, whether on foot or on horseback, the tone of the encounter was significantly more likely to be more positive ($p<0.05$), as illustrated in Figure 3.12 below. Since the mounted patrols in this study often involved a female officer, it was not possible to conclude that it was the *mounted* aspect of the patrol that generated the positive tone, and consideration should be given to the notion that female officers may generate a better reception in public interaction as well. Research has shown, for example, that female officers generate fewer complaints than their male counterparts (e.g. Brandl et al. 2001), although others have cautioned against over-estimating gender differences in policing styles (Rabe-Hemp 2008). Based on these observations, there may be an additive effect involved here – that female officers and the presence of horses are each independently seen as positive signals by the public, and that where both are present the engagement is increasingly likely to be positive. This is a theme that is revisited in Chapter 6, where the findings from the focus groups are reviewed.

Figure 3.12: Tone of encounters by gender of officers
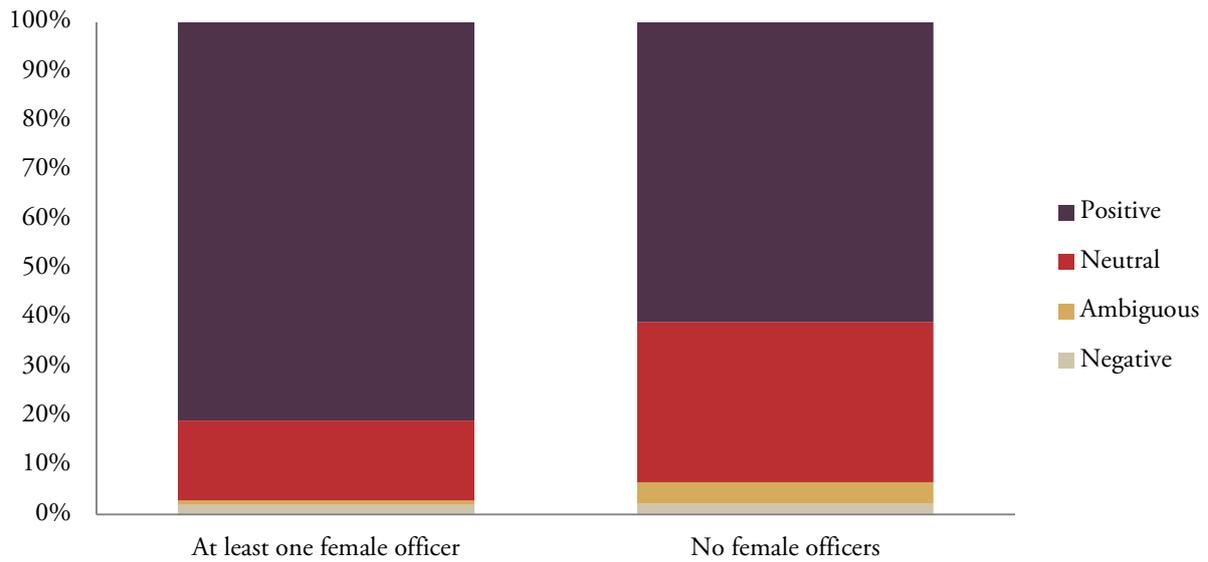
The second significant difference between mounted police and foot patrols was that foot patrols were significantly more likely (at the p<0.01 level) to engage in interactions (i.e. extended engagements) related to crime, antisocial behaviour (ASB) or traffic offences, including stop-and-search and stop-and-account activities. The difference in interactions observed is reflected in Figure 3.13. This finding also holds for observations. During the fieldwork, mounted officers explained to researchers on a few occasions the practical difficulties of conducting a stop-and-search or pursuing a particular incident when two mounted officers are on patrol, with some officers seemingly reluctant to dismount from their horses. Similarly, in fieldwork in London, officers recognised the limits of their ability to offer assistance for live incidents and noted that they were unable to respond to demands for rapid response that came through on the radio.

Figure 3.13: Type of interaction by foot or mounted patrol, percentage and total count
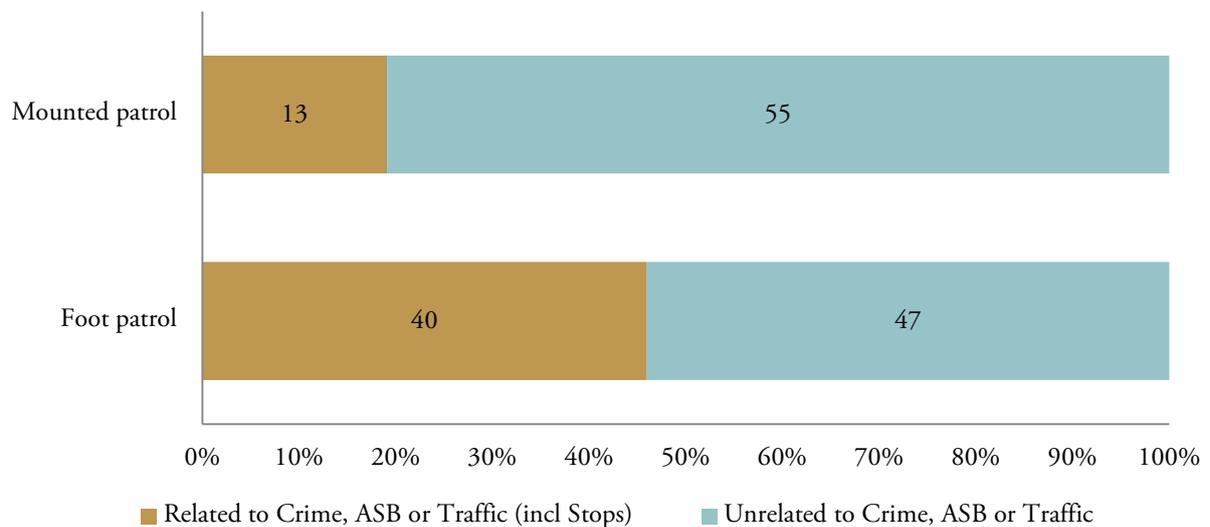
Interactions relating to crime, ASB or traffic normally resulted in the gathering of information or verbal warnings, as no arrests were observed on any patrols. Nonetheless, this finding reaffirms the suggestion from data in Chapter 2 that mounted police are less likely than other police to be directly involved in interventions against criminal activity or minor offences.

4. Mounted police in football policing

This chapter reviews primary and secondary data that offer an indication of the value of mounted police at football matches (in response to research question two). As initial project discussions suggested that a substantial justification for the maintenance of mounted police levels rested with their role in football policing, the research sought to determine where and in what cases mounted police may be seen as adding value to football policing operations.

Section 5.1 reviews a secondary analysis of quantitative data collected by the UK Football Policing Unit (UKFPU) from 2010–2013. Section 5.2 discusses findings from an analysis of full deployment data and surveys of officers policing football matches undertaken for this project, which reviews qualitative and quantitative indicators of policing at a small set of football matches in the 2013/14 season. This exercise was undertaken to address gaps in the initial UKFPU data analysis, as the UKFPU data does not include full police deployment data. Section 5.3 reports findings from other sources, including qualitative data from the UKFPU and observations at football matches in 2013 and 2014.

Because of various data limitations, which are described below, all findings in this section of the report should be considered as exploratory at this stage. It is hoped this aspect of the report will serve as a springboard for further research.

Key findings in Chapter 4

- The number of mounted officers assigned to each match varies with the match category – on average, the higher the risk, the more likely it is that mounted units will be in attendance. Therefore:
- At the bivariate level, at matches included in the UKFPU data set the presence of mounted officers was associated with a higher likelihood that disorder occurred, a greater number of ejections from the ground, and more arrests.
- Multivariate analysis suggested that, once relevant factors such as crowd size were taken into account, there was no significant association between the presence of mounted officers and either whether ejections occurred or whether a report of disorder was filed. However, the presence of horses at a match had a positive association with the probability of arrests.
- Multivariate analysis also suggested that, at matches where horses were present, the number of horses had a weak positive association with the number of arrests, and a negative association with the probability of disorder being reported.
- Based on the data gathered through the survey of officers working at matches, the presence of horses at matches was associated with higher levels of reported disorder, but at matches where

horses were present their number had a negative association with the probability of disorder being reported.

- The number and presence of mounted police at a football match is related to police officers' perceptions of the levels of overall positive interactions between public and police.
- Analysis of observations and text reports of match activity suggest that mounted police provide a unique capacity for intervention in disorder and crowd control, particularly where large crowds are concerned
- The presence of mounted officers is associated with approximately 3.5 times the levels of resourcing for equivalent fixtures where they are not present. However, there is some indication that the use of mounted police as 'on call' resources may allow for decreased overall resourcing levels at a football match.
- The associations between the presence of mounted police, arrests and reports of disorder were statistically significant, but because mounted officers are more likely to attend matches with higher levels of policing, and because resources allocation decisions may be made in such a way that mounted units are more likely to be sent to matches were trouble is more likely, it is not possible to draw causal conclusions as to the effects that the presence (and number) of mounted officers had on any of the outcomes assessed below.

4.1. Data from the UK Football Policing Unit (UKFPU) provided a starting point for understanding the effect of mounted police at football matches

The dataset analysed in this element of the study was constructed from data provided by (a) the UKFPU and (b) the Mounted Working Group (MWG).

The UKFPU, which is a civilian body that collects and analyses data and information provided primarily by Football Intelligence Officers (FIOs), maintains a large national-level dataset relating to football policing that was made available to this research. The UKFPU also supports football-related enforcement such as pre-match intelligence and cases for 'banning orders'[18] brought against football fans.

The UKFPU dataset comprised 2,804 games played at Premier League and Championship grounds in the 2010/11, 2011/12 and 2012/13 seasons. It included, for each match, attendance data, match category, number of arrests, number of ejections and an indication of whether a report of disorder had been filed by an FIO. The data provided by the MWG related to the number of mounted officers present at each match. The two datasets were merged by matching on date and home team, with a subsequent visual check of each line confirming the merge was successful. This process revealed a small number of possibly erroneous entries in one or other dataset (for example, matches where a team from overseas was named as the home team, or where attendance data had obviously been entered incorrectly), and these were

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[18] Banning orders are civil measures restricting access to football matches and grounds based on past behaviour on match days.

discarded if the data could not be reconciled. International games were also excluded. The final dataset used in the analysis comprises almost all matches played at Premier League and Championship grounds over the period in question, including those played in international competitions (Champions League and Europa League) as well as friendlies.

Two initial provisos are, first, that a number of major football grounds are located in the West Midlands (Aston Villa, Birmingham City, West Bromwich Albion and Wolverhampton Wanderers); and according to the data received, there were no mounted units present at matches played at these grounds during the period in question. Mounted units were also totally absent from a number of other grounds, but these tended to be geographically more dispersed. The concentration of grounds in the West Midlands where no mounted units attended may be a particular issue in interpreting the results, since this implies that there are significant geographical factors that might shape police decisionmaking and, possibly, match-day outcomes. Second, results from the multivariate analysis seemed to be sensitive to model specification, and which matches were included in the analysis, underlining that the results described below should be treated as indicative rather than conclusive.

How many mounted officers attend each match?

In total, 44 per cent of the matches in the sample had mounted units in attendance (Table 4.1). Football matches are graded by police into one of one of five categories, based on a risk assessment made by police prior to the day of the match that is used to help in assigning resources to the match. These categories range from the least serious or risky category CS (where CS stands for club security only), through categories A, B, and C to the most risky category C-IR (where IR stands for increased risk). One initial assumption was therefore that horses would be more likely to be sent to matches with a higher risk categorisation. Discounting category CS matches – which in theory should have no or nearly no police presence, there was in general some correlation, although this was also rather contradictory. The proportion of matches with mounted units in attendance ranged from 46 per cent of Category A matches to 58 per cent of Category C matches and 63 per cent of Category B matches. The proportion of Category C-IR matches with horses in attendance (54 per cent) might be seen as surprisingly low: however, this is at least partly accounted for by the West Midlands effect described above, in that local derbies (e.g. Birmingham vs Aston Villa, Wolverhampton vs West Brom) are common in this area, tend to be classified as C-IR, and yet, because they are in the West Midlands, never have mounted units in attendance.

The mean number of horses present at each match with a mounted presence also varied significantly by the match category. Again excluding CS matches, the lowest mean was for Category A matches (7.1), while the highest mean was for Category C-IR matches (13.1); note that the mean number of horses present at the less serious Category B matches was lower (8.7). If one accepts that mounted units *should* be targeted at matches where it is thought there is a greater potential for trouble, it appears that the number of horses assigned to a match does generally increase with the perceived risk, and there appears to be something of a contrast between Category A and B matches with fewer horses on average, on the one hand, and Category C and C-IR matches with more horses on average, on the other.

Table 4.1: There is only a loose correlation between match risk categorisation and mounted attendance

Match category	Percentage of matches with horses present	Mean number of horses attending[a]	Conditional mean[b]	Total number of matches
CS	7	2.4	2.4	613
A	*46*	7.1	7.0	1,072
B	*63*	8.7	8.6	765
C	*58*	12.6	12.6	236
C-IR	*54*	13.1	13.1	109
All matches	*44*	8.5	.	2,795

[a] Excluding matches with no mounted presence.

[b] Conditional mean generated from regression model that included attendance and match category as covariates.

However, the size of the crowd may have an effect here, influencing both the match category and, in particular, the number of mounted officers assigned to it. Accordingly, conditional means were calculated from a regression model that adjusted for the crowd size – these are shown in the Table 4.1 above. The conditional means almost exactly match the raw means shown in the adjacent column, suggesting that it is the match category, rather than crowd size, that 'attracts' a particular level of mounted presence. Note, however, that the coefficient for crowd size was significant in the model: controlling for match category, matches with larger crowds were, on average, likely to have a larger number of mounted units in attendance than matches with smaller crowds.

Figure 4.1 shows the proportion of matches at each of the 50 grounds where mounted officers were present (see also Appendix C). The grounds can be placed into four rough categories: a small group of five where mounted officers were nearly always in attendance (Chelsea–Tottenham Hotspur, in the chart), mostly in London; a large middle group (Queens Park Rangers–Bolton Wanderers) where levels of attendance ranged from over 90 per cent to around 40 per cent; a smaller group where mounted units were only infrequently present; and those grounds where they were never in attendance (Wolverhampton Wanderers–Aston Villa).

Figure 4.1: Large variation in the use of mounted units at different grounds

Proportion of matches with mounted units present (%)
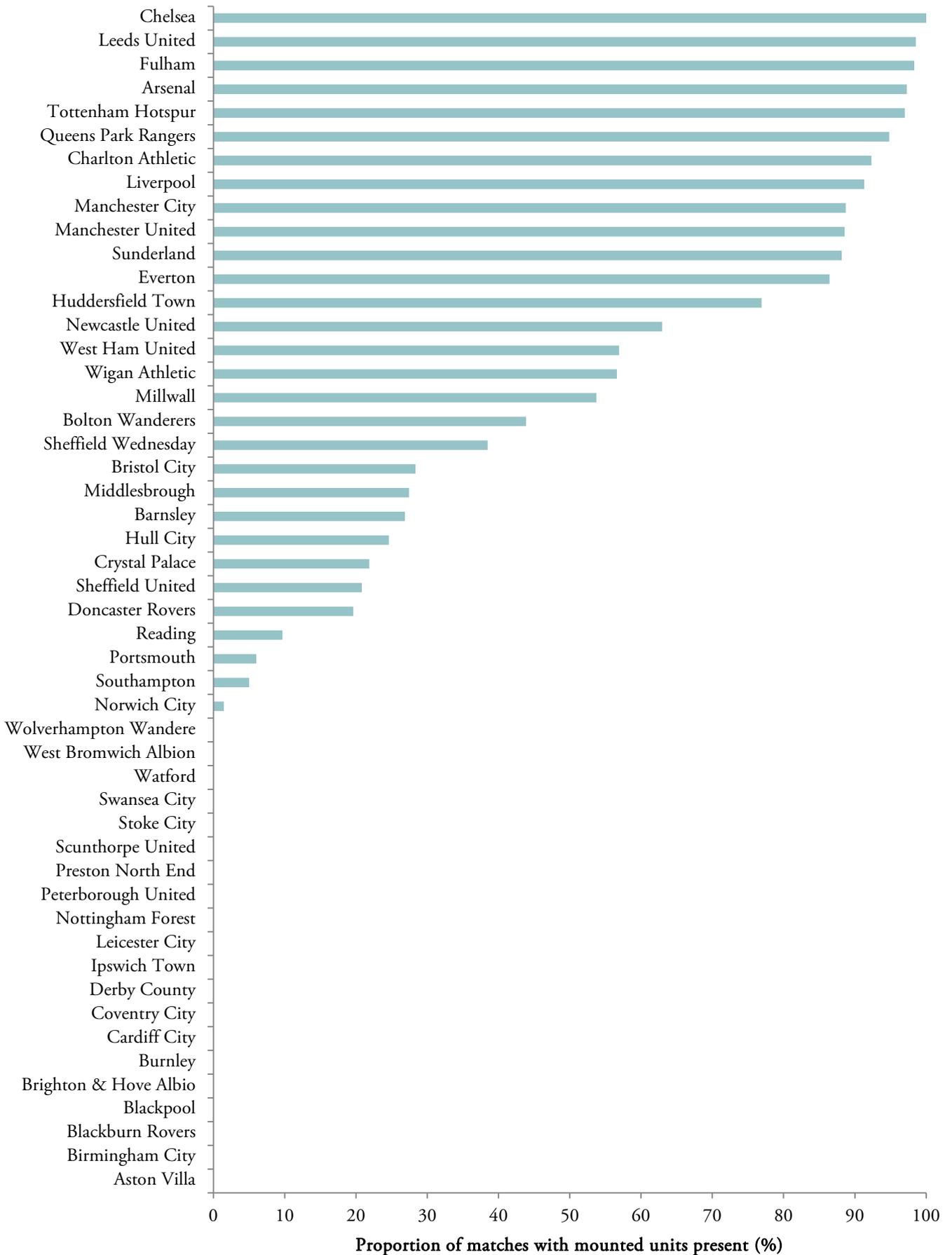
There is, unsurprisingly, a strong geographical patterning to the data displayed in Figure 4.1. Many of the grounds where mounted units were never in attendance were in the wider Midlands area (as well as other regions); those matches where horses were nearly always present were in the most part located in just three regions – London, Merseyside and Manchester – with one obvious exception being Leeds. Note also the difference in the level of mounted attendance between Sunderland and Newcastle, which are clubs geographically very close to each other, and which draw very large crowds (an average of 50,000 for Newcastle and 41,000 for Sunderland), yet which, on this basis at least, appear to be policed in rather different ways.

Is the presence of mounted units associated with events at the match?

There was significant variation in the distribution of 'problems' at matches. There were three measures of such occurrences available in the UKPFU data: ejections from the ground, reports of disorder filed by FIOs and number of arrests. The mean number of ejections per match ranged from 0.03 at Middlesbrough to 20.5 at Manchester City (overall mean 3.0). Similarly, the percentage of matches where a disorder report was filed ranged from 4 per cent at Arsenal to 47 per cent at Scunthorpe. Finally, the mean number of arrests per match ranged from 0.4 at Watford to 6.3 at Manchester United (overall mean 1.9) (see Appendix data table C.1 for a full ground-by-ground breakdown). While, of course, no one of these measures can be considered definitive, together they provide significant insight into the prevalence of disorder and criminality at a particular event – a match with more ejections, a disorder report and arrests seems almost by definition to be more 'problematic' than a match with fewer ejections, no disorder report and no arrests. It is worth noting, in this regard, that nearly half (49 per cent) of the matches in the dataset had no recorded arrests; similarly, 47 per cent had no ejections from the ground.

The presence of mounted units was associated with a greater likelihood of problems at and around the match. The mean number of people ejected from the ground was significantly higher at matches with mounted units in attendance than at matches where they were not (4.5 compared with 1.8). Similarly, reports of disorder were more common from matches where mounted units were in attendance than those where they were not (25 per cent compared with 20 per cent). Finally, the mean number of arrests was significantly higher at matches where horses were present (2.8) than at matches where they were not (1.3). (All these associations are statistically significant at the 5 per cent level.)

However, such bivariate associations are likely to tell only part of the story, since they do not take into account the size of the crowd, the match category or other factors that may have a relationship with both the probability of disorder and the decision to send horses to the match. Table 4.2 therefore shows the results from three multi-level regression models predicting: whether at least one ejection occurred (Model 1); whether disorder was reported, inside or outside the ground (Model 2); and whether at least one arrest occurred (Models 3 and 4). Included as covariates were attendance, percentage of away fans (upon whom police attention tends to be concentrated), risk category, league and, in Model 4, the measures of ejections and disorder.[19] Multi-level modelling is used because it takes into account the 'clustering' of the data (i.e.

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[19] The ejection and arrest variables were highly skewed and contained many zero values, making them rather unsuitable for entry in the model (as response or explanatory variables) as raw numbers or as rates corrected for

that it relates to individual matches played at 50 different football grounds) and therefore, among other things, the fact that particular grounds might be policed in consistently different ways. These differences would be most obviously because they are served by different forces, but also because, even within force areas, different clubs have different histories and 'reputations' that may affect the way police behave.

The main findings from this analysis are, first, that taking attendance figures, match category and league into account there was no significant association between the presence of mounted officers and either whether ejections occurred or whether a report of disorder was filed (Models 1 and 2). Second, however, conditioning on the same variables there was a statistically significant association (p<0.05) between the presence of horses and whether an arrest occurred (Model 3); and, third, even after the occurrence of ejections and reports of disorder were added (Model 4), the positive association between the presences of mounted officers and arrests remained. Note that there was a strong correlation between ejections, disorder and arrests – matches with ejections, and reports or disorder, were also more likely to have arrests.

Table 4.2: Multi-level binary logistic regression models predicting ejections, reports of disorder and arrests

	Model 1 Ejections	Model 2 Disorder	Model 3 Arrests	Model 4 Arrests
Horses present (ref: no)				
Yes	−0.02	0.13	0.37**	0.34*
Attendance	0.00**	0.00**	0.00**	0.00**
Percentage away fans	0.04**	0.06**	0.06**	0.04**
Category (ref: A/CS)				
B	0.12	0.87**	1.10**	0.98**
C	0.04	1.23**	1.85**	1.67**
C-IR	0.04	2.01**	2.09**	1.66**
League (ref: Championship)				
Premier League	0.31	−0.98**	0.52**	0.76**
Ejections (ref: no)				
Yes				0.28**
Disorder (ref: no)				
Yes				1.53**
Constant	−1.3	−2.54**	−2.50**	−2.75**
ICC	0.24	0.06	0.07	0.08
n	2783	2783	2783	2783

p<0.1; * p<0.05; ** p<0.01

crowd size, thus necessitating the use of dummy variables. However, see Table 4.3 below for more detailed investigation of arrests.

Taken in conjunction with the bivariate associations reported above, these results suggest that mounted units are, in the first instance, more likely to be sent to matches where problems in and around the ground are more likely and/or expected. Yet, taking two matches with the same size of crowd, proportion of away fans, risk category, and occurrence of ejections and disorder, arrests were more likely at the match that had mounted units in attendance. One might conjecture that the presence of mounted units serves both as an indicator of the likelihood of problems at a given match – that is, even within matches in the same category, some are more likely to result in arrests than others, and are also more likely to be assigned mounted police – *and* that the presence of mounted officers in some way enables arrests to occur (see Phase 1 report for more discussion of this point; Giacomantonio et al. 2013).

Other results from the models are broadly what would be expected. Matches with larger crowds tended to be more likely to generate ejections, disorder and arrests; similarly, the higher the proportion of away fans, the greater the probability of ejections, disorder and arrests. Category B, C and particularly C-IR matches were more likely to generate reports of disorder and arrests. Finally, arrests were more likely at Premier League matches, although reports of disorder were more likely at Championship matches.

To investigate further, the same models as above were re-estimated, this time excluding those grounds where mounted units were *never* in attendance. Since it seems likely that in many cases a complete absence of mounted units will be enforced by circumstance (as in the West Midlands) rather than as the result of deployment decisions, excluding matches played at such grounds may allow us greater insight into the consequences of the use of mounted units in circumstances where it is possible to decide to send them to a match or not. Results are shown in Table 4.3.

Table 4.3: Multi-level binary logistic regression models predicting ejections, reports of disorder and arrests

Grounds where mounted units were never in attendance excluded

	Model 1 Ejections	Model 2 Disorder	Model 3 Arrests	Model 4 Arrests
Horses present (ref: no)				
Yes	–0.13	0.02	0.48**	0.50**
Attendance	0.00**	0.00**	0.00**	0.00**
Percentage away fans	0.04**	0.06**	0.07**	0.05**
Category (ref: A/CS)				
B	–0.01	0.91**	0.88**	0.76**
C	0.22	1.37**	1.81**	1.57**
C-IR	0.28	1.96**	2.30**	1.92**
League (ref: Championship)				
Premier League	0.44**	–0.95**	0.42*	0.62**
Ejections (ref: no)				
Yes				0.43**
Disorder (ref: no)				

Yes				1.43**
Constant	–1.83**	–2.53**	–2.50**	–2.79**
ICC	0.31	0.07	0.08	0.08
n	1998	1998	1998	1998

p<0.1; * p<0.05; ** p<0.01

The results shown in Table 4.3 replicate those in Table 4.2 above: null when it comes to ejections and reports of disorder (Models 1 and 2); but with Models 3 and 4 showing that even controlling for attendance, category and league, and in Model 4 ejections and reports of disorder, arrests were more likely to occur at matches with mounted units in attendance. In general, this would seem to support the suggestion raised above. Mounted units may be both more likely to be sent to matches where problems are expected (and that their presence is, in addition to the match category, an indicator that trouble is expected) *and* in some sense enabling of arrests.

The implications of this finding, at the ground level, are displayed in Figure 4.2, which plots the proportion of matches with mounted units in attendance against the proportion of matches at which an arrest occurred (grounds where mounted units were never deployed are again excluded). While there are a few outliers, notably Cardiff and Manchester United, there is a clear correlation between the two figures; to reiterate, it seems that the presence of mounted officers is associated with a greater probability of arrests being made.

Some of the text reports from FIOs – brief written accounts of match policing, discussed further below – that mentioned mounted units provide evidence of how the presence of mounted officers might enable arrests. At one match, two fans were chased through the stadium after entering without tickets, were detained by a mounted officer as they exited and were later arrested for alcohol-related disorder. On another occasion, mounted units chased and arrested a group of ticket touts outside the ground, resulting in two arrests. It has also been suggested to us during observations that police abilities to enforce against ticket touts are enhanced by mounted officers, who are better placed to witness touting activity from horseback, especially in dense crowds.

Figure 4.2: Proportion of matches where arrests occurred by proportion with mounted in attendance (grounds with at least one mounted deployment only)
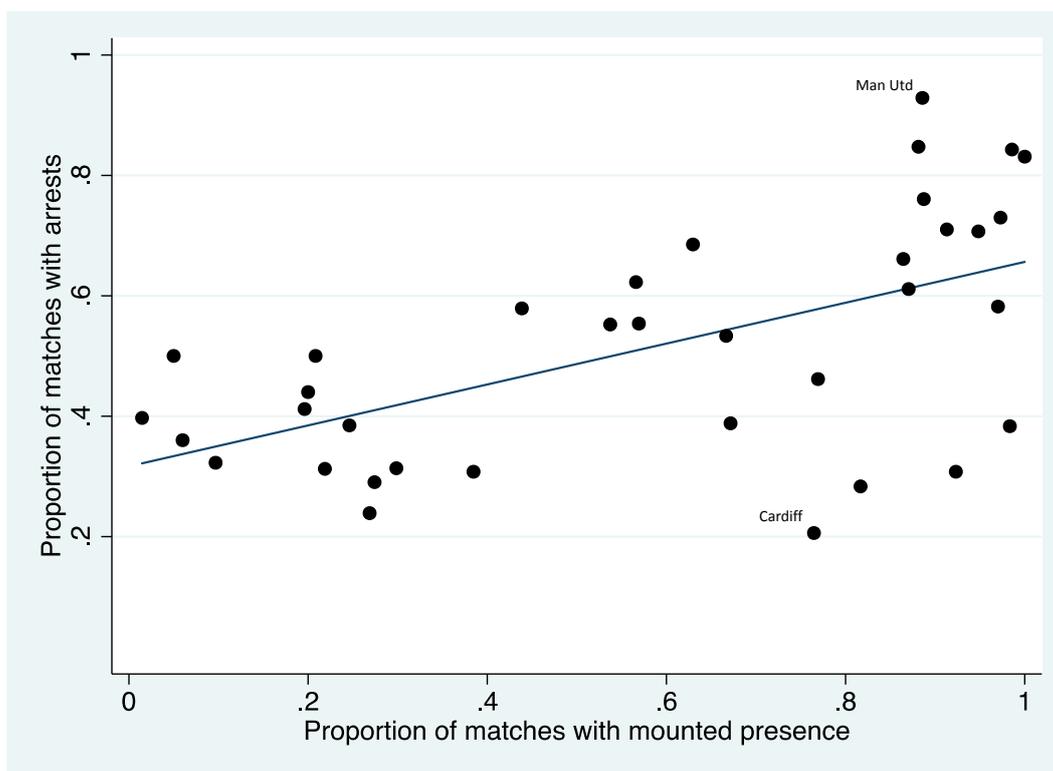
Finally, Table 4.4 shows models that again repeat those shown in Table 4.3, but here restricted only to matches where horses were present (i.e. matches with no mounted presence are excluded even if they occurred at grounds where mounted units were present on other occasions). This allows assessment of the effect that the *number*, rather than the simple presence, of mounted officers may have on the same three outcome measures.

Results can be summarised as follows: there was no significant association between the number of mounted officers present (Model 1) and whether there were ejections from the ground. By contrast, the number of mounted officers present was significantly, and negatively, associated with reports of disorder (Model 2); holding constant the other variables in the model, reports of disorder were less likely at matches with more horses present (see Section 4.2 below for more on this issue). Finally, there was no significant association between the number of mounted police and the probability of at least one arrest occurring (Models 3 and 4). Controlling for whether disorder and ejections took place, arrests were no more likely when a greater number of horses are present.

Table 4.4: Regression models predicting ejections, reports of disorder and arrests (matches with mounted units in attendance only)

	Model 1 Ejections	Model 2 Disorder	Model 3 Arrests	Model 4 Arrests	Model 5 Arrests
Horses present (ref: no)					
Yes	0.02	–0.05*	0	0.01	0.03⁺
Attendance	0.00**	0.00*	0.00**	0.00**	0.00**
Percentage away fans	0.04*	0.05**	0.06**	0.05**	0.03**
Category (ref: A/CS)					
B	0.09	1.08**	0.85**	0.69**	0.30**
C	0.20	1.58**	1.64**	1.41**	0.52**
C-IR	0.19	2.54**	2.68**	2.19**	1.15**
League (ref: Championship)					
Premier League	0.99**	–0.86**	0.64*	0.83**	0.09
Ejections (ref: no)					
Yes				0.30⁺	–0.06
Disorder (ref: no)					
Yes				1.49**	0.64**
Constant	–1.29**	–1.93**	–1.79**	–2.15**	–0.75**
ICC	0.29	0.06	0.11	0.12	
n	1188	1188	1188	1188	1188

⁺ $p<0.1$; * $p<0.05$; ** $p<0.01$
Models 1–4 are multi-level binary logistic regression models; Model 5 is a Poisson model estimated with robust standard errors, with clustering at ground level.

Some of the text reports that mentioned mounted units again provide suggestions of how the presence of police horses may prevent outbreaks of disorder. At one match, mounted officers were able to form a cordon between a pub where away fans were singing offensive songs and the home fans against whom those songs were directed; similar reports were made by other FIOs at other matches. At another match, police spotters[20] and mounted officers were able to warn a rowdy group of 'risk' supporters about their behaviour, with the apparent result that they quietened down. The speed with which mounted units can move to 'spark-points' may be one way in which they prevent disorder – one report mentions mounted units arriving 'quickly on the scene' and assisting spotters with a potential problem until other officers arrived. Further details on text report findings are below.

The results shown in Table 4.4 contextualise those presented in Tables 4.2 and 4.3 above. If the *presence* of horses enables arrests, why does a greater *number* of horses not lead to a greater probability of arrests

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[20] Police Football Spotters provide a football policing operation with live and relevant information and intelligence on supporter groups, and also act as a link between the police and a club's supporter community (College of Policing 2013).

occurring? Part of the reason is likely to be the kind of reverse causality described previously. Horses are more likely to be sent to matches where arrests are, for other reasons, themselves more likely, and one would not necessarily expect under these conditions that a greater number of horses would predict a higher probability of arrests (since the horses are not causing the arrests). To investigate further, however, a fifth model was estimated. Here, the response variable was the number of arrests, rather than a binary measure indicating simply whether an arrest occurred or not. Since the response variable was a count, with a mean of 1.9 (minimum 0, maximum 49), a Poisson model was estimated. This model suggests that a greater number of horses was indeed associated with a slightly greater number of arrests (result significant at the 10 per cent level). Controlling for the other variables in the model, increasing the number of horses at a match by one multiplied the expected number of arrests by 1.03. While far from conclusive, this finding does suggest that the number of horses at a match *may,* all else being equal, be associated with the number of arrests that occur.

Once more, it seems the most likely interpretation of the analysis reported above is that mounted officers are both more likely to be assigned to matches where trouble is likely and that, perhaps, the presence of mounted police in some way enables arrests. To reiterate, though, this is a small statistical effect, and the idea that horses enable arrests is, at this stage, speculative to say the least. Much more research would be needed to confirm whether this statistical effect is in any sense 'real'.

4.2. An analysis of a small set of matches with additional resourcing and survey data provided insight into areas not covered by UKFPU data

A major limitation of the UKFPU data is that it does not include full resourcing numbers in terms of police presence at each match. This meant that the above analysis was undertaken using the assumption that the overall policing presence remains constant with only the number of mounted police changing, which is not always the case. While mounted police may have a measurable (if small) effect at matches where they are present, without knowing how many other police were at these matches, it is not possible to understand (a) what effect overall police resourcing may have had on outcomes, and (b) if mounted police acted as additions to police numbers, replacements for an equivalent number of other police or, perhaps, allowed police forces to reduce overall staffing numbers to reflect the additional value of mounted police (perhaps in line with suggestions made throughout the research that mounted police are worth six officers on foot in crowd control situations).

Additionally, the outcome measures that are available through the UKFPU data are crude and somewhat ambiguous – the numbers of arrests and ejections, as well as the fact of a disorder report being submitted or not, provide an unclear indication of levels of disorder and crime at football matches. For example, one may interpret a match with high levels of disorder but low numbers of arrests in two ways. One interpretation is that there was a substantial amount of disorder but nothing warranting an arrest. Alternatively, it could be that there were many arrestable offences occurring in view of police, but due to the levels of disorder police chose not to arrest during the match, and alternately sought to effect arrests afterwards, or proceed through obtaining banning orders on identified individuals. Both kinds of

situations can occur, and the data provide no real means to identify which kind of situation actually took place.

To examine the effects of police resourcing information on the conclusions regarding the impact of mounted police at football matches, as well as to get a fuller account of the quality of policing at matches where mounted police were and were not present, an analysis of a smaller number of matches occurring between August 2013 and March 2014 was undertaken. In this analysis, full resourcing data and survey responses from officers attending those matches relating to quality of policing at the match were available.

Based on a request sent from the MWG, officers were asked to fill in a brief online survey within one day of the completion of a policing operation at a football match. Surveys asked officers to rate the overall quality of policing at the match as well as related variables such as ability to respond to incidents in appropriate time, feelings of readiness to intervene and quality of interaction with the public. The full survey can be found at Appendix A. Surveys were aimed at officers in supervisory roles at the matches, though it was possible for any officer involved to complete it.

Alongside the survey, operational orders from forces' planning departments for each match where a survey had been returned were requested. Operational orders are pre-match planning documents that provide information on the numbers of police present, by area of activity.

This data were used to address three questions:

1. **Are matches with mounted presence seen by police officers to have been policed 'better' than matches without?** This was measured through survey questions asking officers to rate on a Likert-type scale their assessments of overall quality of policing at a match, ability of officers to respond to incidents of disorder or crime, levels of disorder at the match and so on.
2. **Are interactions with the public seen by police to be better at matches with mounted presence compared with those without?** This was measured through a survey question asking officers to indicate on a Likert scale the quality of interactions with members of the public at the match.
3. **Are matches with mounted presence resourced at a higher or lower level than matches without mounted police?** This was measured through using full deployment data from operational orders.

The full survey tool used to gauge officer perceptions can be found in Appendix A of this report.

To the degree that these questions could be answered, it was envisaged that cost-benefit statements relating to mounted police activity at football matches could be developed. However, for a number of reasons outlined below – particularly that the resourcing levels of football matches are extremely variable – it was not possible to present cost-benefit statements.

4.2.1. Match resourcing data and survey responses came from across all match types and officer roles

The survey received 128 valid responses across 49 matches occurring during the period of the research.[21] As outlined in Table 4.5, approximately 69 per cent of respondents were match commanders ('bronze' or 'silver') or FIOs, with the remaining 31 per cent including people in roles such as tactical advisor or Police Support Unit (PSU) commander. By rank, the officers were 48 per cent sergeant or constable rank, and 52 per cent inspector or above. Some 55 per cent of matches had mounted police present.

Table 4.5: Match roles of survey respondents

Role	Number of respondents	Percentage
Silver Commander	16	12.5
Bronze Commander	48	37.5
FIO	18	14.1
Other (please specify)	46	35.9
Total	128	100.0

Match data and surveys came from all match types, from CS to C-IR. About equal proportions of responses came from Category A, B and C matches (31.3, 29.7 and 27.3 per cent respectively, with 7.8 per cent CS and 3.9 per cent C-IR), while in terms of total matches reviewed the proportions were weighted somewhat more towards Category B matches (38.8 per cent of the sample), with A (26.5) and C (18.4) slightly lower in proportion. The differences in proportion between matches and responses are due to the fact that some matches included surveys from only one respondent, while some had responses from two or more. These data are elaborated in Table 4.6.

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[21] It is not possible to calculate a response rate as it is unknown how many people were asked to complete the survey by their MWG representative.

Table 4.6: Overview of matches and survey responses by match category

Match category	Number of matches	Percentage	Number of respondents	Percentage
Club Security (CS) only	5	10.2	10	7.8
Category A	13	26.5	40	31.3
Category B	19	38.8	38	29.7
Category C	9	18.4	35	27.3
Category C-Increased Risk (IR)	3	6.1	5	3.9
Total	49	100.0	128	100.0

Survey and operational order data were also collected across a range of match sizes, from under 4,000 attendees to over 80,000. Most matches were between 10,000 and 40,000 in size, as shown in Table 4.7, and responses were predominantly but not exclusively from Championship, Premier League and League 1, as shown in Table 4.8.

Table 4.7: Overview of matches by size category

Size category	Number of matches	Percentage
0 to 10,000	7	14.3
10,001 to 20,000	22	44.9
20,001 to 40,000	13	26.5
Above 40,000	7	14.3
Total	49	100.0

Table 4.8: Overview of matches and responses by match type

Match type	Number of matches	Number of responses
Champions League	3	3
Championship	19	42
League 1	9	41
League 2	4	8
Premier League	10	26
SPL	3	7
World Cup 2014 Qualifying	1	1
Total	49	128

4.2.2. This exercise provides further indicative evidence that mounted police presence is related to more positive public interactions in football settings

Within this dataset, there is a significant relationship between the presence of mounted police and positive reports of police–citizen interactions.[22] As with the findings regarding the tone of police engagements on community patrol, virtually all interactions with the public in this exercise are reported to be neutral, somewhat positive or very positive in tone, and mounted police presence appears to move police-reported perceptions of interactions from neutral or somewhat positive to somewhat positive or very positive, as shown in Figure 4.3 below.

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[22] The association between the presence of mounted police and survey respondents' views of the quality of interaction between police and public was tested in a multi-level regression model that took into account the clustering of responses within matches. The association proved significant at the 10 per cent level.

Figure 4.3: How would you rate the overall police interaction with members of the public [at today's match]?

	Very negative	Somewhat negative	Neutral	Somewhat positive	Very positive
No mounted	0	0	9	29	25
Mounted	0	0	1	27	28
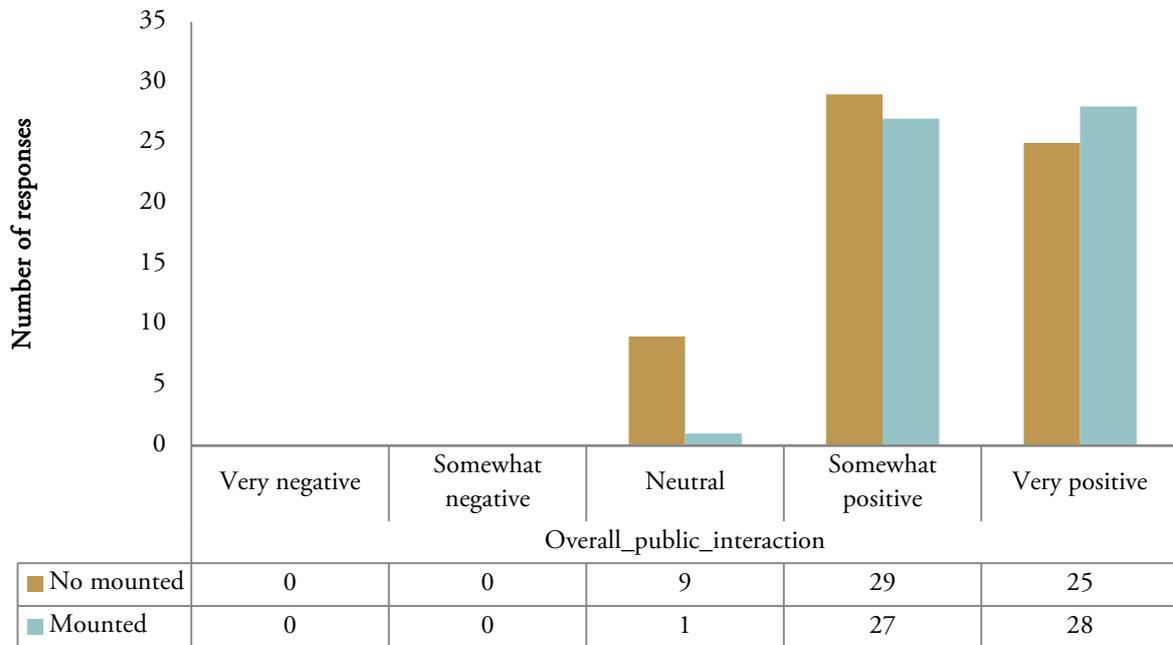
Within these data, a significant relationship was found in relation to respondents' rating of the overall level of disorder at the match (where officers were asked to rate from 'very high' to 'very low' disorder on a five-point Likert scale). Perceptions of levels of disorder at matches were significantly more favourable when mounted units were present.[23] Additionally, higher levels of disorder reported in surveys were strongly correlated with the likelihood of a disorder report also being submitted by an FIO ($p<0.01$), which helps validate the assumption used in Section 3.2 that submission of a disorder report is a reasonable, if binary, indicator of levels of disorder at a match. Interestingly, there was no significant relationship in these data between mounted police presence and any other measure of quality of policing at the match.

It is also worth noting that other measures of quality of policing at the match were strongly correlated with one another. Positive assessments of overall policing quality were correlated with positive assessments that: policing levels were appropriate; police were prepared and able to respond to incidents; and interactions with the public were positive (all at the $p<0.01$ level). However, all of these indicators of policing quality were also strongly correlated with the number of police in total at a match, and the resourcing of matches in the sample in turn presents problems for any analysis of these data. Of course, a major limitation of these data is that all estimations of quality of policing and interactions with the public are reported by police only, so are subjective measures from a particular perspective. The addition of more

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[23] The association between the presence of mounted police and survey respondents' perceptions of disorder at matches was again tested in a multi-level regression model that took into account the clustering of responses within matches. The association proved significant at the 10 per cent level.

objective observational data or data from members of the public at these matches would be valuable in a future exercise.

4.2.3. From this small sample of matches, it appears that resourcing levels vary widely at football matches, which presents problems for analysis of outcomes

While this is a relatively small sample of the total number of football matches taking place in the UK – and the matches were selected by voluntary participation of police officers rather than randomly, so it is not possible to claim to have a representative sample of matches – the data still point to an interesting issue that makes interpretation of existing data on football matches rather complicated. Specifically, the results revealed that, even when controlling for crowd size and match category, the levels of resourcing at different matches were highly variable.

To illustrate this variability, a simple metric was examined – police per 1,000 fans. In the sample (across matches where mounted were and were not present), this ranges from less than 0.3 (which comes from a Category A/low-risk match with over 22,000 fans and six police, plus two mounted officers 'on call')[24] to 24.2 (which comes from a Category B/medium-risk match with just under 6,400 attendees and over 150 officers including a mounted deployment). This means that some football matches have approximately 90 times as many officers per 1,000 fans as others.

Additionally, and adding to the problem of interpretation of the effect of mounted police on football policing, the results show that matches within the sample where mounted police are present are much more highly resourced overall than matches without mounted police present, even when controlling for match category. As shown in Figure 4.4 below, matches with mounted police present had over 3.5 times as many officers per 1,000 attendees as matches without mounted police, and this remains true even at the higher-risk Category C matches (all Category C-IR matches in the sample had mounted police present so no comparison is possible for the highest-risk category). In turn, one cannot be sure whether the effect of mounted police is really due to mounted police presence, or due to the overall high levels of policing at these matches.

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[24] 'On call' mounted units were not included in the count of police attending a match; these are officers who are working in the nearby area and can be called to the match if needed, but are deployed elsewhere otherwise.

Figure 4.4: Police per 1,000 attendees at matches where mounted police were and were not present
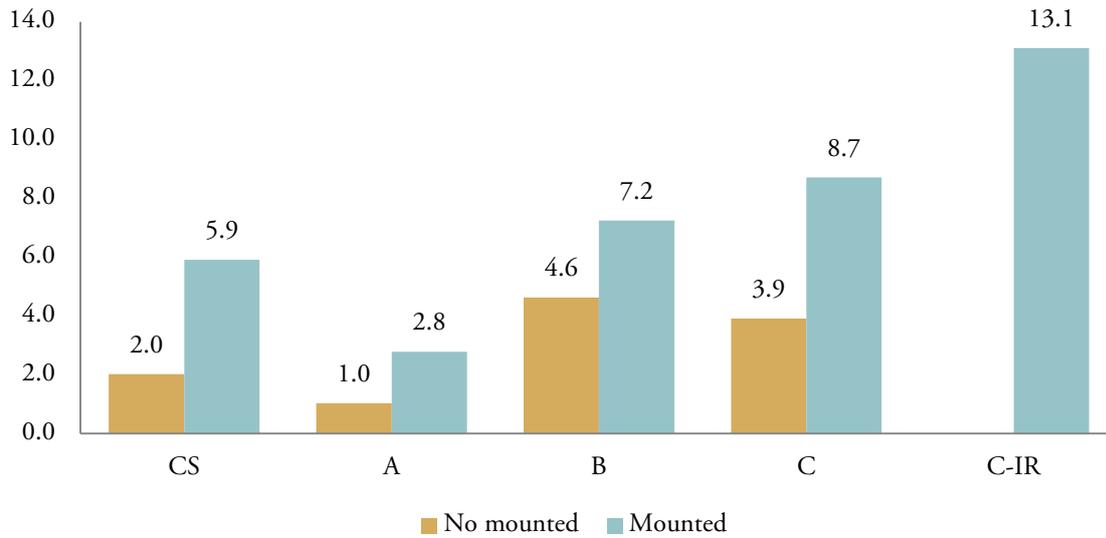
There are two plausible interpretations of these data, in terms of how such variability in resourcing between various football grounds exists with little obvious change in outcomes. First, it is possible that certain football grounds in areas where mounted police are not available have learned to police football matches effectively with substantially lower levels of police presence, even when risk and crowd size are taken into account, and with no appreciable difference in quality of outcomes. This interpretation suggests that mounted police may be a predictor of high proportionate levels of resourcing, and potentially a symptom of this.

Alternatively, the risk categories currently in use (i.e. A, B, C and C-IR) may not be strong indicators of actual policing need at a match; these categories are determined differently between forces and this suggests differing levels of risk sensitivity in different force areas. Both of these interpretations are likely to be true in some cases. Additionally, it should be recognised that other factors – a football stadium's willingness to pay for additional police resources, or an operational commander's level of risk tolerance at football matches, for example – will probably bear on the ways in which these matches are resourced and cannot be captured by these data.

These data also illustrate that the use of mounted as an 'on call' resource may support a lower overall police resourcing at a match. In the initial analysis above, where mounted officers were listed as on call this was interpreted as 'no mounted in attendance'. However, in Table 4.9 below, the cases where mounted were on call are separated out; mounted police were on call for nine of the 49 matches.

Table 4.9: Distribution of matches by no mounted, on call, or at event

	No mounted	Mounted on call	Mounted at event
Club Security Only	4	0	1
Category A	3	3	7
Category B	2	4	13
Category C	4	2	3
Category C - Increased Risk (IR)	0	0	3

Looking at the ratio of police per 1,000 fans at those matches, as shown in Figure 4.5 below, matches where mounted are on call have substantially fewer police per 1,000 fans than either matches where they were present or matches where there was no mounted presence. Note that 'on call' was not used in C-IR or CS matches, so these match categories are excluded from Figure 4.5.

Figure 4.5: Police per 1,000 attendees at matches where mounted police were present, were on call, and were not present, by match category
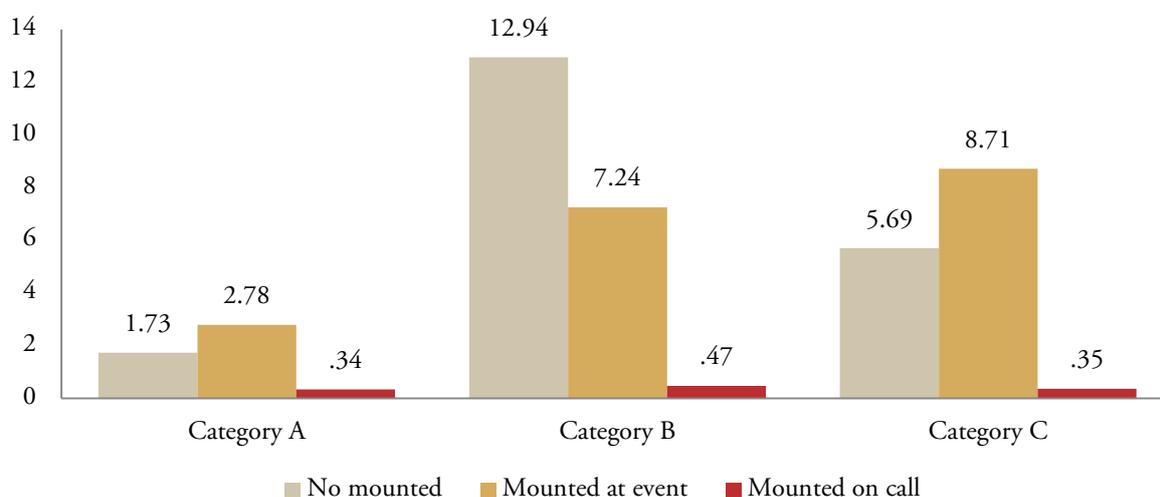
It is also noteworthy that when these on-call matches are separated out within the dataset, the pattern of over-resourcing of matches where mounted are present is not as clear as where on-call and no mounted presence are grouped together. In fact, there are more officers per 1,000 fans at Category B matches where there are no mounted police present (on average 12.94 police per 1,000 fans) than where they are present (7.24) or on call (0.47), suggesting that in this medium-risk deployment it may be possible to replace a higher number of foot patrol officers with a lower number of mounted units or even on-call mounted units.

In line with this finding from the data reported in this section, the validation workshop participants noted that foot patrol officers are increasingly being replaced with mounted officers at Category A (low-risk) matches, and in doing so could provide a high-visibility police presence with substantially lower numbers

of police. Verbal reports at multiple workshops suggested that forces across the UK have started to experiment with replacing one Police Support Unit (PSU), which has 22 officers in total, with one mounted serial unit, which has six, in lower-risk settings. If this is effective in terms of policing outcomes – an issue that cannot be addressed through these data in conclusive fashion, but which could be tested by police forces – it represents a potential saving for police at these matches.

Nonetheless, based on these data, caution should be taken in relation to the findings suggesting that mounted police presence at football matches increases the levels of positive interaction with the public. Since mounted police presence is (at least in this dataset) also an indicator of higher numbers of police overall, one cannot be sure if it is the presence of horses or the presence of more police that is associated with the police's own positive assessments of public interactions.

4.2.4. Further data sources reveal additional value considerations

While the quantitative data on the effects of mounted police at football matches suggest at best a small positive impact of mounted police presence in these settings, the data reported thus far in this chapter are unable to capture certain aspects regarding the ways in which mounted police potentially provide value – particularly, the ways in which mounted police engage with football match attendees, and the ways in which they intervene in disorder or criminal activity at matches. The following additional considerations are based on observations at football matches and review of text reports submitted by football intelligence officers, as well as from the validation workshops and focus groups.

Observations provide indications of the unique capabilities of mounted police at football matches, but also indicate a lower level of public engagement compared with patrol

The research team attended three football-related deployments with MPS Mounted Branch in January and February 2013 and another in April 2014. All four matches were Category B matches with few arrests or ejections and none resulting in any serious disorder. The researchers observed ingress and egress procedures, as well as the preliminary briefings at the Wembley matches. They also attended the Hammersmith police station stables, and had brief opportunities to discuss the project with mounted branch members during breaks between activities. Each event had at least three researchers present, and researchers provided field notes and debriefed on their impressions after each event.

In the observations of mounted officers, it became clear that they serve a function that no other tool achieves in similar fashion. In a large crowd, they provide visibility that cannot be achieved on foot, and approachability that cannot be achieved by police in riot kit, in vehicles, in positions of surveillance (e.g. posted on an overhead bridge) or hidden away. Crowd members regularly positively interacted with horses, petting them and occasioning conversations with their riders, although it is worth noting that they also regularly positively interacted with police on foot as well. Officers on foot at these events regularly and without prompting discussed with the researchers the positive effect that the mounted branch had on their own estimations of their ability to control a crowd, which in turn may limit the likelihood of over-reactions to crowd activity by foot police.

Also, mounted cordons during egress are unique relative to options such as movable plastic barriers or cordons by police on foot. In their cordons at Wembley Stadium, five mounted officers stand near the

entrance to the Wembley tube station, facing the crowd as it exits the stadium. When the tube station is full, the horses then turn perpendicular to the crowd, creating a barrier to movement, which is then held until it is deemed safe for more crowd members to enter the station. This is depicted in the image below: [25]

Whether or not such a peaceful barrier could be achieved with officers on foot is unclear, but it is likely that many more than five officers would be needed to produce a similar stopping effect.

It is also recognised that mounted police have previously demonstrated value in mass disorder such as pitch incursions; while the research team were not able to observe their intervention in these situations as they are quite rare, there are many examples available in newspaper and online video accounts of mounted police quickly and effectively clearing a pitch, perhaps none more famous than the 'White Horse' match referenced at the outset of this report. These kinds of interventions by mounted police were also reported to the research team regularly by police during observations and in the validation workshops.

As in neighbourhood settings, the value of mounted police at football may also be in public engagement roles and in particular in building trust and confidence in the policing presence through providing a well-regarded high-visibility policing option. However, observations at football matches suggest that mounted police are often waiting in the wings of an operation rather than actively engaging with match-goers. This differs from their observed approach to neighbourhood policing, where they are seen to approach people and present themselves as approachable. Certainly, mounted police were often approached by fans and were normally happy to engage. As the observations at football matches were limited to London grounds, it is recognised that different football policing approaches may be in place in other force areas. Nonetheless, in this context mounted police remain a tactical resource for crowd control (and are often wearing public order equipment), and this appears to have a limiting effect on their overall engagement value, when compared with their presence at neighbourhood level.

It was not possible to undertake large-scale surveys of football fans, so the research cannot say whether or not mounted police in the football context provide similar forms of positive visibility here as they do at

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[25] Image credits to the authors for both images, taken during the Capital One Cup match, Wembley, February 2013.

neighbourhood level. However, as illustrated in the football fan focus groups reported in Chapter 6, there is also reason to believe that their presence is regarded more ambiguously by football fans than by neighbourhood residents.

Text reports (Match Resumes) provide indications of how mounted police intervene in crime and disorder at matches

The UKFPU dataset reported in Section 4.1 included text reports (referred to as 'Match Resumes' in the UKFPU data system) for 999 Premier League and 1,668 Championship matches. These outline any disorder or arrests as well as notable police actions during each match. These match resumes had been created in each case by the FIO on scene at the match, and are separate from the FIOs' disorder reports discussed in the quantitative findings section. Some content from these text reports has been included in the previous section to add context to the qualitative findings, and here the overall content of these reports is examined more closely.

Thirty-eight of the Premier League reports and 37 of the Championship reports explicitly mentioned actions of mounted branch or police horses, representing 75 reports of mounted activity in total. These reports were reviewed by the research team and categorised based on their content and the scenario(s) in which mounted units were mentioned within the report.

It must be recognised that the match resumes are highly variable in quality and size. FIOs have often vastly different approaches to reporting, and the reports are not written for wider consumption. Some match resumes are hundreds of words detailing multiple incidents involving police, activities of internal stadium security (stewards), analysis of operational effectiveness and even reports of the football match itself. Other reports may be only one or two words where very little has occurred.

This limits, though does not negate, the utility of these data; in particular, it is not possible to know meaningfully if the high proportion of non-mentions of mounted branch indicates inactivity or reporting style. Further, while it must be recognised that all reporting of this sort suffers from a positive-action bias (i.e. reports are only made of notable activities, and only notable activities observed or known by the FIO), where mounted branch does appear, there is a notable consistency in these reports. The number of reports where mounted units are mentioned may therefore be less important in this instance than the content and context of these mentions.

Of the 75 mentions of mounted units, 56 reported mounted officers intervening in disturbances to curtail potential serious disorder or violence, normally between opposing fans. Statements suggesting that disorder did not occur due to the interventions of mounted officers were often included in these reports as well. Fourteen of the remaining mentions were regarding single incidents (e.g. an individual arrest effected by a mounted officer) or intervention in ticket touting. As noted earlier, mounted patrols have increased visibility over crowds, and so can spot ticket touts far more easily than officers on foot. The final five of the reports only mentioned the presence of mounted police, without reporting specific activity.

The characterisation of mounted activity in these reports provides suggestive evidence in line with findings presented above in Sections 4.1 and 4.2, that mounted units may increase arrests and limit disorder and escalation of disturbances at football matches. Nonetheless, as with all data collected on the role of mounted police in football policing, the data suggest at best a small effect. While there are

indications within the data that mounted police may improve football policing operations, the overall impacts of mounted presence in this context is unclear.

5. Mounted police in other public order policing

While football policing may be the primary public order deployment setting for mounted police, there are many other public order and crowd control settings in which mounted police may be deployed. To further answer research questions one and two, this research sought to find public order events suitable for observation that could be seen as indicative of the activities of mounted police at (a) large-scale peaceful events, such as festivals, concerts and non-football sporting events, and (b) demonstration settings where conflict was expected.

For the former, the research team were able to gain access to the policing operation at Glastonbury music festival 2014, which is an annual music festival held each June in Somerset and is attended by approximately 180,000 people over five days. The findings from Glastonbury are reported in Section 5.1

For the latter, the research team were made aware of two public order events related to far-right nationalist demonstrations, which were seen as ideal settings for the research in that they included both demonstration and counter-demonstration groups, and so the police role was to facilitate opportunities for opposing sides to demonstrate. The findings regarding demonstrations are reported in Section 5.2.

Following this, to better understand one way in which mounted police are viewed in public order settings, Section 5.2.2 provides a review of mounted police activities reported in national media outlets, specifically five national newspapers from 2009–2011. The research team reviewed all content involving mounted police over this time period and found that mounted police are predominantly depicted in conflict settings in national newspaper coverage. In turn, these findings were included in the public order section of the report, given their relevance to understanding the value of mounted police in this context.

Key findings in Chapter 5

- Mounted police at Glastonbury serve an 'ambassador' role and generate nearly three times as many engagements with concert-goers as police on foot.
- Interactions between all police – mounted and foot – at Glastonbury are predominantly positive in tone.
- Mounted police in demonstration settings provide a unique tactical resource for crowd control that does not have any obvious parallel in other deployment options.
- In conflict settings, the public engagement value of mounted police is minimal.
- Analysis of mounted police activity reported in the media demonstrates the memorability of mounted police in conflict settings, and provides an indication of potential consequences for public perceptions of mounted police from these deployments.

5.1. Systematic social observations of mounted policing at Glastonbury

The principles behind the systematic social observations (SSO) of events policing were similar to those for the SSO of patrol policing, in that the researchers sought to measure the effect of mounted police on public engagement with the police through structured observations. However, the research also sought to determine whether or not mounted police had an effect on crowd behaviour, which was not included as part of the patrol SSO approach. Drawing on previous studies of football policing by Adang & Cuvelier (2001) and later by Stott & Pearson (2007), an 'interval'-based observation method was developed, whereby field researchers would return an observation form through a mobile app every 10–15 minutes from a point within a crowd.

With a team of ten researchers, including postgraduate student volunteers from the University of Oxford and staff from Gloucestershire Constabulary, a codebook suitable for deployment at crowd events was developed. This was piloted at a football match in April 2014, and subsequently refined in discussion with the research team for use in the Glastonbury context. The full codebook is available at Appendix A, and was intended to provide a means to understand how and if crowd behaviour changed where mounted police were present in terms of levels of order and conflict.

The SSO method required rapid modification in the field, owing to the unique crowd setting at Glastonbury

However, within hours of the first shifts at Glastonbury, it became obvious that such an approach was unsuitable for the policing operation. Glastonbury festival is essentially a small and crowded city, rather than a crowd similar to that found at a football match. The venue is a series of interconnected areas each with unique layout, facilities, crowd composition and commercial services. Patrols by mounted and certain foot officers were referred to as 'neighbourhood patrols' and were conducted in much the same way as normal neighbourhood patrols, albeit in a much more hectic and densely crowded environment. Patrols were tasked to certain neighbourhoods, and were led by pre-shift intelligence briefings regarding areas and individuals of concern.

Within the context of approximately 180,000 attendees, at any given time there are no more than four mounted police patrolling, and normally fewer than 70 police in total at the venue. Crowd behaviour is controlled primarily through the event security apparatus whose staff monitor barriers and entry and exit points (of which there are many), and police rarely intervene in minor instances of disorder.

Upon recognising this – as well as owing to some technical problems with the app itself that unfortunately manifested in the first night of shifts[26] – a simpler approach without mobile technology was taken. This involved following mounted patrols and recording a count (using a hand-tally counter) of all engagements with the public – similar to the patrol SSO approach, though not differentiating between acknowledgements, encounters, multiple encounters and interactions – alongside narrative reports of patrol activities submitted by each researcher within a week of the end of the event, based on notes taken

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[26] Specifically, the app stopped working on all of the iPhones in the group, which affected four of the researchers.

on shift. Observers were also asked to submit an additional set of field notes based on their experience as a crowd member, relating both to whether and how they experienced mounted police as well as their experience of police presence more generally.

5.1.1. The findings from Glastonbury suggest a similar 'casual engagement' impact to mounted police in neighbourhood settings

Through this approach, a total of 5,321 engagements were observed across 20 shifts (10 on foot and 10 mounted) from 26–29 June. These included observations on all mounted patrols during the event. Observers were instructed to maintain a distance from the police to ensure that their presence did not impact on police ability to engage with crowd members, and qualitative accounts of these patrols suggest that observers tended not to be noticed. For illustration, the image below includes an observer within the crowd; on first glance it would be hard to notice their presence.

Qualitative accounts show a predominantly positive tone of engagements across both foot and mounted patrols

Qualitative accounts from these shifts, with both foot and mounted police present, tended to reflect a consistent pattern – both mounted police and foot patrols were received in generally positive terms, and engagements tended to be brief (of the 'acknowledgement' or 'encounter' sort). Police rarely intervened directly in the behaviour of crowd members during observations, as crowd activities were generally peaceful or at least not harmful to others. Police were sometimes seen to caution people who were violating the norms of the environment (such as urinating in public view) and would respond verbally if challenged or insulted, but generally appeared to provide a visual signal that police were present and concerned with crowd safety, rather than a signal that they were there to control behaviour (within reason).

Positive engagements with crowd members discussing the horses as they passed were often heard by observers. For example, one group of young girls was overheard discussing previous Glastonbury festivals where the horses were seen with flower garlands, recounting it as an 'amazing' experience. Other observations included overhearing discussion of how impressive it was that a horse could be controlled in a crowd atmosphere. Many parents brought their children over to see the horses as well, with at least one

crowd member noting to a mounted officer that he and his son had been searching the concert ground for quite some time to find and pat the horses.

People also regularly asked to have their pictures taken with officers, both on foot and horseback, and this often required playful interaction by the officers, for example allowing the crowd member to wear their hat or put an arm around them. Officers were also regularly asked for 'high fives' from passing crowd members. Another form of regular positive interactions was officers providing directions around the concert venue, which could often turn into an opportunity for positive discussion between police and crowd members.

Where interactions were seen as neutral by the observers, these would be instances where an officer had issued an order that was met with compliance (e.g. to stop urinating in public), and some instances of asking for directions were seen as neutral as they did not involve additional conversation or positive sentiment from the crowd member.

Negative engagements recorded by observers (and it is worth reiterating that these were seen by observers as substantially fewer in number than positive engagements, though the data do not allow a quantification of this difference) could be grouped into three categories. First, there were a number of instances of people – usually young men – having fun at the officers' expense, either by shouting insults, throwing mud or approaching the officers in an attempt to make them look foolish by asking insulting questions or gesturing rudely for a photograph. This was experienced in both foot and mounted patrols, and normally drew a brief response from officers but was never seen to escalate. In a particularly interesting engagement, a pair of foot officers were smeared with mud by a passerby, and made light of it rather than reacting with anger. This was greeted with cheers from the nearby crowd, who were heard to exclaim, 'These guys are great!' and 'Glastonbury mud police!' among other positive statements regarding the foot patrol officers, which turned a potentially negative engagement into a positive one.

As a second type of negative engagement there were negative experiences specific to mounted police in that people expressed fear of horses or concerns about horse welfare. Crowd members were heard to either discuss or in other cases shout their concerns about mounted policing as cruelty to animals, and people also expressed fear of getting kicked or trampled.

Finally, negative experiences would include instances where police were called to intervene and had to move quickly through a crowd, which could draw ire from crowd members who were not pleased to see police intervention of any kind in the festival context. This applied to both foot and mounted patrols.

While the low level of negative engagements with police is notable and worth recognising, the overall tone of all engagements remains positive. Additionally, it is worth noting that observers' reports of their experiences as crowd members suggested that policing at the event was not a particularly noticeable component of the overall crowd experience – in other words, when observers were not attached to specific police patrols, they rarely saw police acting in any capacity, which suggests that the police presence at an event such as this is part of the background rather than a central component of the event experience. Finally, other forms of policing at the festival – for example, those police tasked with searching tents, or those working in the arrest and processing area – would likely have had more negative engagements as a proportion of total engagements.

Mounted police generate significantly more engagement per shift and per hour than foot patrols

The quantitative data from this exercise show a significantly higher amount of engagement generated during mounted shifts than foot patrol shifts. The differences on a per-shift and per-hour basis are shown in Figure 5.1.

Figure 5.1: Total engagements at Glastonbury by shift and by hour, foot or mounted patrols

	Mean engagements per hour	Mean engagements per shift
Foot	69	157
Mounted	245	417
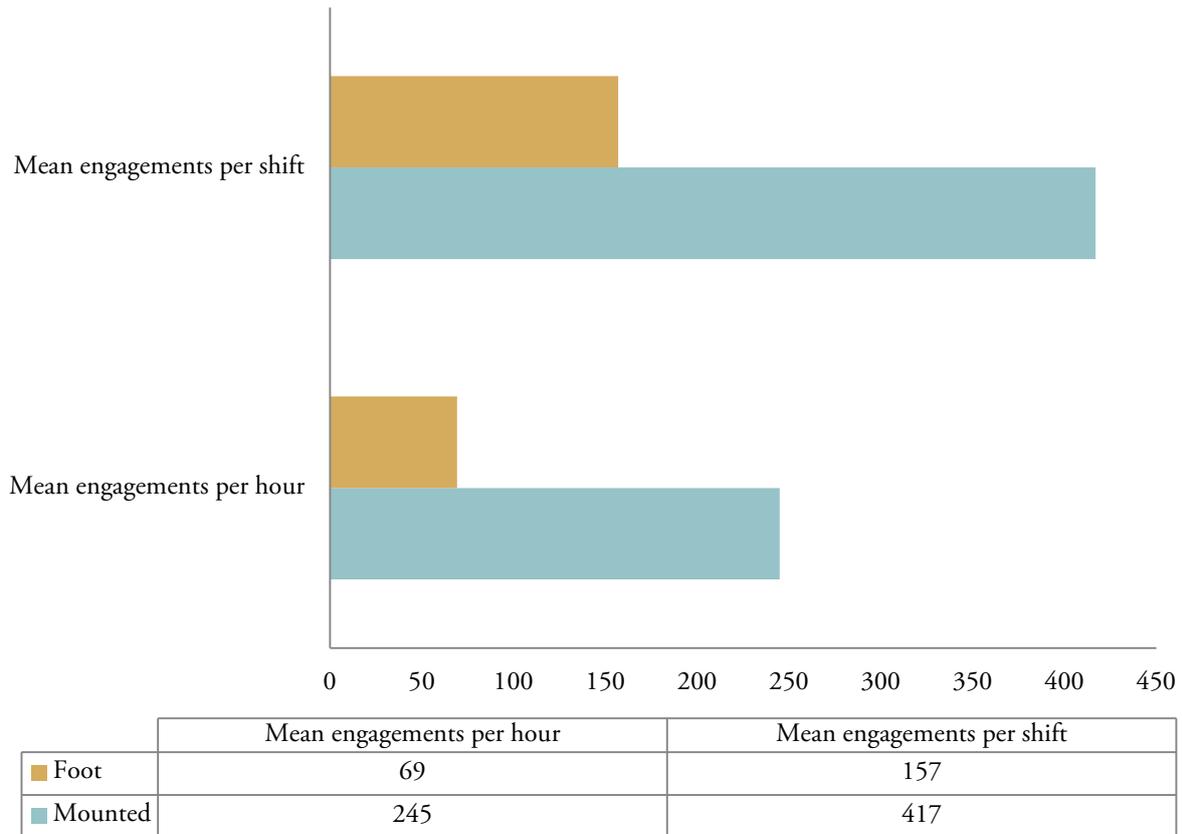
As was observed during neighbourhood patrols, mounted police tended to generate crowds much more readily than their counterparts on foot, which provides the ability to create a substantial number of engagements in a short amount of time. A 'domino' effect appears to be involved in this dynamic – when one person stops to talk to a police officer, this provides permission for others to do so. In some cases, this would lead to people in effect informally queueing to pat the horses and chat with the officers.

However, while the difference in levels of engagement was significant, the difference in overall levels of engagement was lower than that observed in neighbourhood patrols in Gloucestershire and London. Mounted police generated 3.5 times as many engagements on a per-hour basis at Glastonbury, compared to 6 times as many on neighbourhood patrols. Additionally, foot patrol officers were also able to generate a substantial amount of positive engagement in this setting, with one patrol recording 531 engagements and four of ten patrols generating more than 150 engagements across the shift (see Table 5.1 for more on this data).

Table 5.1: Mean, maximum, minimum, and range of engagements per shift by foot or mounted patrols at Glastonbury

	Mean	Maximum	Minimum	Range
Foot patrol	157	531	10	521
Mounted patrol	417	1181	132	1049

5.2. Mounted police in demonstration settings

Any account of mounted policing in Britain requires a discussion of mounted police in conflict settings, such as political protests or labour demonstrations. The images of police on horseback clashing with protesters opposed to the America-Vietnam war in London in the 1960s, or with striking miners in Yorkshire in the 1980s, seem to hold a special place in the British public consciousness. As historian Andrew Marr once put it in his televised documentary, the history of modern Britain 'sometimes feels like a history of police horse charges' (Marr 2007). This serves as a reminder of the symbolic power held by police horses, as previously highlighted by Chapter 2, and also reinforces the sheer memorability of seeing police on horseback, as images from these protests and others continue to circulate in the mass media, as discussed below.

In turn, the project sought to understand how and to what degree mounted police in settings of civil disorder could be seen as valuable, particularly examining (a) what observable effect they had on crowds or individuals during an event and (b) how their use in these settings was subsequently interpreted by members of the public. To answer these questions the research team sought to observe mounted police during deployments where conflict was likely – conflict between police and demonstrators, and/or conflict between demonstrators and other members of the public (such as counter-demonstrators).

However, unlike football policing, neighbourhood patrols or festival activities, demonstrations are not always planned in advance, and even those that are planned in advance are not always known to the public or the police. Furthermore, it is rarely easy to predict which protest events will generate conflict. Nonetheless, two demonstration events[27] were identified that were sufficiently likely to generate conflict and were known about well enough in advance that the team could receive adequate advance briefing from police to develop an observational strategy.

These events were the March for England in Brighton on 27 April 2014 and a National Front demonstration and leafleting event in Oxford on 26 July 2014. These were seen as ideal settings in that they included both a planned demonstration and a counter-demonstration, which meant that police would likely be required to intervene to separate the groups and facilitate peaceful protest by both sides. The results of these observations are reported at Section 5.2.1.

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[27] The research team had identified a third – the May Day march in London in 2014 – where mounted police have historically been deployed. However, the risk profile of the event was low and so mounted police were ultimately removed from the operational plan, making it unsuitable for the research observations.

The project also sought to engage in interviews or focus groups with those involved in the demonstrations, and attempted to make contact with demonstration leaders from the various groups involved, both through the police where appropriate (i.e. where a protest liaison had been established between police and demonstrators) as well as through emails to publicly-available email addresses advertised by the groups. Despite multiple attempts to contact a representative and arrange a focus group or interview, this effort was (perhaps unsurprisingly) unsuccessful, potentially due to the project's direct affiliation with the police.

While direct discussion with demonstration organisers would have been a valuable way to understand public perceptions of police horses in protest settings, other sources of information are able to shed light on this issue. In the early stages of the project, the research team undertook a content analysis of mounted police in the national mass media, which predominantly seems to depict mounted police in conflict settings. The results of this analysis are presented at Section 5.2.2.

5.2.1. Observations of demonstrations involving mounted police highlight a unique capacity to forcefully intervene in conflict situations

As noted, researchers attended two demonstration events in the UK in 2014 to observe the impact that mounted deployments had in these settings. This involved a team of four researchers attending the March for England (MfE) in Brighton, and a team of two researchers subsequently attending a National Front event in Oxford.

Based on initial discussions with police relating to the MfE event, as well as a survey of the MfE event's physical layout, it was clear that an SSO approach would not be suitable for the dynamic nature of the event. Instead, researchers planned to undertake observations at these events looking in particular to determine the ways in which mounted police were used at these events. Drawing on Drury and Stott's (2001) concept of 'bias' and 'taking sides' in observational settings, during observations two members of the research team observed from within the counter-demonstration crowd while the two others stood outside of the protest area, behind police lines. This allowed us to gain insight into the experience of being policed at these events, and to draw researchers away from the predominant police-side perspective represented by taking part in briefings and observing solely from policed areas. At the National Front event in Oxford, such a structure was not achievable, and observers instead took the position of bystanders, neither within the counter-demonstration nor behind police lines.

The details of each event are outlined below, followed by a discussion of the observers' interpretations of mounted police presence at these events. All claims in this section are based on observations and/or discussions with police at each event, unless otherwise stated. It is worth recognising that these two demonstrations are a small subset of the total number of political demonstrations that take place each year in the UK, and so the findings from this section are much more indicative than conclusive regarding the role of mounted police in the demonstration context.

Brighton

The MfE in Brighton is an annual event organised by the March for England (2014), which brings together like-minded nationalist groups such as, but not limited to, supporters of the British National

Party and the English Defence League. The MfE leaders organise events nationally, and are not based in Brighton, but the demonstration in Brighton tends to receive a particularly strong anti-MfE response from the Brighton community, which is considered one of the more liberal communities in Britain. In turn, where the MfE event attracted approximately 100–150 supporters who would march on the day, the counter-demonstration attracted well over 1,000 people. The counter-demonstration was not limited to a single group; like the MfE, it represented a coalition of many groups including the Anti-Fascist Network and the English Disco Lovers (a play on EDL), among others.

On the day before the march, the research team met with three supervising officers at Sussex Police to receive a briefing on the event plan. The team was told that due to past policing experience and the likelihood of conflict between the MfE and the counter-demonstrators, the police presence at this event was substantial and planned well in advance. It involved over 800 officers from Sussex Police as well as mutual aid deployments from the MPS and Thames Valley Police, which meant a police to citizen ratio of nearly 1:1 at the event. The police also engaged in advance protest liaison[28] activities with both the MfE groups and counter-protest organisers, with varying success in terms of ability to make contact and communicate the policing plan.

Regarding police horses, during the briefing one senior officer explained that he sometimes uses police horses as a means to break tension with demonstration groups, sending them as ambassadors to engage with the crowd prior to any disorder taking place in the hopes of engendering positive sentiment toward police. However, other officers in this case – and in discussions since – have suggested that this would be a very rare use of police horses, and it was not observed at this event.

The march was to be strictly shepherded along a designated route at set times. The police plan involved metal barriers, 'CBRN'[29] barriers, police vehicles and police officers (including mounted police) separating the marchers from the counter-demonstrators. As well, as set out in 'section 12' and 'section 14' orders[30] for the event, counter-protest activities and locations were strictly limited to designated areas. Breach of these conditions could result in arrest or detention for protest members, and all were advised that in the event of disturbance, those in the designated protest areas may be held in place and not allowed to leave.

Events on the day – including the opening up of a 'sink-hole' underneath part of the march route, as well as an unexpected clash between marchers and counter-demonstrators at a pub prior to the march taking

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[28] Based in particular on the work of Stott and colleagues as discussed in Chapter 2, protest liaison officers (PLOs) have been used in recent years in UK police forces to help the police communicate their policing approach to protest/demonstration groups, as well as to ensure that their approach allows the protest group to convey their message and exercise their rights to speech and expression in an effective way. PLOs are identifiable at protest events by their blue tabards.

[29] CBRN refers to **C**hemical, **B**iological, **R**adioactive or **N**uclear events; these large portable cordons were initially designed to create a strong barrier to restrict crowd movement in the case of an emergency or crisis event, and have more recently been used in public order settings.

[30] These refer to orders published in advance on the Sussex Police (2014) website, which outline the relevant details of where and when protest groups were allowed to gather on the day of the event.

place – led to the police creating a very tightly controlled march environment. Police horses were used to physically separate marchers from counter-demonstrators in the aftermath of the clash, but in the lead-up to the march were otherwise set well behind police lines with no interaction with the public. All visible conversation or non-conflictual interaction between police and demonstrators on either side was between police on foot at the boundaries of the event and members of the public, and members of the public were regularly seen talking with both PLOs and officers on foot in riot kit.

Once the march had begun, MfE marchers were surrounded by police with police horses on all sides, and led through a path marked by police vehicles. The protective barrier created by the police meant that at points in the march it was not actually possible to view the marchers from the position of the designated counter-protest areas, although it was always possible to see police vehicles and horses. A number of disturbances occurred along the march route, for example where a number of EDL supporters entered the counter-demonstration area and started a fistfight. However, based on our understanding of the events of the day, most disturbances took place away from the parade route, including at least one PLO being attacked away from the demonstration route (James, 2014).

Horses were again used after the march concluded to protect the marchers' movement from the march route to the train station. Horses provided a mobile cordon that was not, in our observations, physically challenged by counter-protestors, though the use of police horses did generate a number of derogatory comments from within the crowd, normally regarding animal welfare (calling police 'horse torturers') or treating it as a signal of over-policing or inappropriate use of police resources (i.e. 'protecting fascists').

The event concluded with a number of violent clashes between protest groups as well as between protesters and police having been recorded, and 27 arrests on the day resulting in three charges (BBC News 2014). Again in relation to police horses, online media reporting of the event was often accompanied by photographs of police horses (Childs 2014), despite their relatively small representation within the total policing deployment.[31]

Oxford

The demonstration in Oxford, which was relatively small compared with Brighton, was organised by the National Front (NF), who intended to distribute leaflets in the city centre. In total, approximately 30 NF members attended and were greeted by a group of around 60 counter-protestors, with a total police presence of no more than 30 and at points less than 20 near to the protest. There was a heavy police presence that was difficult to quantify, but included four mounted police, initially a dozen or so officers on foot, two liaison officers, alongside numerous police vehicles (including riot vans, police cars and motorbikes). Unlike the MfE event, there was no advance planning in terms of issuing Public Order Act section 12 or section 14 notices, and there was limited liaison between police and any groups involved. In turn, the locations and timings of events were much less tightly controlled than in Brighton, though the scope and level of risk involved was also perceived by police to be lower than the MfE.

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[31] While exact numbers within the police deployment cannot be reported, mounted police represented less than 3 per cent of the total number of officers deployed.

In this event, NF members arrived via the central bus depot, and were soon met with counter-demonstrators vocalising their opposition to the presence of the NF. During this early stage of the demonstration, the precise role of the mounted police was unclear. Mounted were on patrol in the city centre when the counter-protestors first arrived at the bus depot and arrived after the early confrontation at the bus station between counter-protestors and NF members was already well underway. Upon arrival, mounted officers took positions in support of foot officers who were separating the two groups. Here the foot officers and the police liaison officers were observed to be active in attempting to manage the two groups through verbal and physical negotiation, while the horses were positioned as physical barriers but did not generally verbally engage with the either group.

After the initial confrontation began to de-escalate, two of the horses repositioned themselves in the area where the diminishing group of counter-protestors had now been held back (there were approximately 40 counter-protestors at this stage). These officers positioned themselves on the opposite side of the square and made limited efforts to engage with the counter-protestors. Instead they watched over the protestors to assess the situation. The other two mounted officers remained with the NF group.

The goal of the NF was to distribute leaflets, and mounted police provided a movable barrier throughout the NF leafleting activities to ensure that the counter-protest group was unable to disrupt this leafleting and attempted to contain the counter-protest. In one instance the counter-protestors attempted to circumvent the police cordons, though were stopped again by police at which point they began to take their frustrations out on the police, chanting a number of anti-police statements. During this, foot officers formed the main police line, with two mounted officers located several metres back from the main police line. In general terms, the police, both mounted and on foot, did not intervene in the activities of the NF members, who were not seen to be physically aggressive but did make a number of racist and other inflammatory statements towards the counter-protesters and passers-by.

A number of incidents within this demonstration provide examples of the uses of mounted police for physical intervention in demonstration settings. In one case, an aggravated counter-protestor pushed past an officer on foot in order to get closer to the NF, but was forcefully stopped by one of the mounted officers standing behind the cordon. The horse charged towards the counter-protester and the mounted officer struck the individual twice with a baton before an officer on foot was able to restrain the individual. Although tensions between the counter-protestors and police were already charged, this moment appeared to be incendiary and generated a high degree of hostility from the protestors. This incident highlights both the physical dominance of the horse – which secured rapid compliance from someone otherwise willing to challenge police – while at the same time showing how such intimidation and physical intervention can generate negative feelings from the crowd.

In another example, a counter-protestor was shouting verbal abuse at one foot officer. After a while, some of the foot officers who had been standing behind the police line responded by advancing into the crowd and physically and forcefully detaining this individual. In this instance, mounted officers protected the line that was preventing the protestors from moving forward, thus giving the foot officers a 'sterile area' in which they could detain the individual. The officers on foot then formed a tight cordon around the counter-protestors. Eventually the NF were escorted back to the bus station, led by the two mounted

officers who cleared a way through the busy street. The counter-protest also seemed to disperse without any further clashes between the two groups.

While these incidents were taking place, it is worth noting that several curious members of the public came to stand by one of the horses and stroked it, which appeared to provide some comfort and security to them in this hostile setting. It was also noticeable that several children and parents came up to the horses to pet them and speak with the officers, with little regard to the tensions behind. It should thus be recognised that the mounted police here played a greater public engagement role compared with the MfE protest in Brighton. They utilised their public facing capacities prior to the conflicts while patrolling the city centre (to the point of missing the first clashes between both groups) and engaged with the public at various points, even when they were standing next to some very hostile protestors. However, this was secondary to their primary function, which was tactically oriented towards creating barriers between opposing protestors and acting in support of foot officers.

Both events highlight the tactical rather than engagement value of mounted police in conflict settings

A common theme in observations at both events was that mounted police at these events, even at moments of relative calm, tended to be placed away from the crowd and were not used for engagement with the public. While in some cases in the Oxford setting mounted officers were approached by members of the public who were interested in the horse, the use of horses in these events was essentially to control crowds through physical intervention by horses or at least the threat of it. This appears appropriate given the tone of the events, and as such this should not be taken to suggest that horses may have an 'untapped' engagement potential here; rather, it should be recognised that in this context they appear to be a fundamentally force-oriented resource.

In particular, the police horse in these contexts offers a unique kind of barrier, which can be moved constantly but once in place is less likely to be compromised or challenged than other kinds of barriers, particularly where these are created by officers on foot or by inanimate objects.[32] Their ability to achieve compliance comes in large part from the unwillingness of people to challenge horses in the way they might otherwise challenge officers on foot. Our observations suggest that this unwillingness to challenge comes from, most obviously, the physical presence of the horse and the futility of any challenge (plus the likelihood of injury), coupled with the unpredictability of the horse – while they may in fact be controlled by their riders, there remains some unpredictability from the perspective of the crowd member.

Additionally, horses may provide something of a perceptual buffer between the rider and the individual or group being coercively controlled. Observations suggest that people being moved are interacting directly with the horse – they are rarely seen to speak with or verbally challenge the rider, and tend to comply more quickly than where officers on foot are seeking to move them along. It is of course not possible from

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[32] With the possible exception of CBRN barriers, which do provide a comprehensive barrier that cannot, unlike smaller metal or plastic barriers, be easily climbed over or picked up by crowds. However, a CBRN barrier obviously does not offer the mobility of mounted units, and provides a different kind of symbol of policing.

these observations to offer conclusive statements regarding how and why people comply with mounted units in comparison with other units; however, the observations strongly suggest that horses provide a unique tactical resource and that other resources deployed in the same way would be likely to achieve different results.

In subsequent discussion at validation workshops, discussions with police suggest that this experience is broadly indicative of normal uses and effects of mounted police in conflict settings. While the two events outlined above represent a small subset of the total number of demonstrations occurring in the UK in a given year it appears that the similarities between the events, as well as subsequent discussions with police regarding this interpretations of the events, supports the conclusion that mounted police are primarily a tactical resource where conflict is expected.

While this on its own is unsurprising – since public order deployments by their nature are more tactically oriented than deployments such as city-centre patrols – the predominantly tactical role of mounted police is notable particularly because in neighbourhood and festival settings they were placed in 'ambassador' roles with a comparatively higher engagement value than other police. However, in the context of a demonstration, other police units – particularly PSOs and even officers on foot in protective equipment – were more important in the public engagement aspect of these events than their mounted counterparts. Nonetheless, while they were not seen as engagement-oriented resources even in comparison with other police resources, mounted police were seen to offer a unique value in these settings particularly relating to their ability to intervene forcefully and separate crowds.

As the research team were unable to speak with protest organisers or participants as initially hoped, it is not possible to offer substantial insight into how horses are viewed by crowd members, and whether or not mounted police are viewed differently from the wider policing operation. However, as outlined in the next section, it is clear that mounted police in protest settings present a powerful image of policing that can hold a place in popular memory for decades, in some cases making them iconic symbols of conflict between citizens and the state.

5.2.2. Mounted police coverage in national newspapers

This section reviews data relating to the coverage and representation of mounted police in UK newspapers. To provide an indicator of how mounted police activities are represented in the public sphere, a structured content analysis of print media coverage of mounted police in the UK was completed. While there is no necessary correlation between media content and public opinion towards the police, print media content may reflect extant public opinion, and also serves as an indicator of ways in which specific mounted police actions may be interpreted.

Recent research (Jackson et al. 2013, Chapter 6) has suggested that the overall coverage of public police in the UK mass media is largely neutral (i.e. fact-based without value judgements regarding police activity) in its depiction of the police. Where values are included in print media reporting, content tends to be very slightly on the negative side. It was our expectation that coverage of mounted police would differ from this trend; if mounted police are thought to be sympathetic characters in the public sphere, media coverage would be more often positive than negative. In addition, if they are indeed a central symbol of

UK police work, they should garner a reasonable amount of coverage within a media establishment that reports on police activity on a daily basis.

A structured content analysis of five key newspapers provided a comprehensive account of mounted police coverage over a three year period

This exercise began with a LexisNexis search of all articles from April 2007 to March 2010 from five key national newspapers – *The Daily Mail*, *The Mirror*, *The Guardian*, *The Sun* and *The Times*. A search was conducted in all content for the terms 'mounted police', 'mounted branch', 'police horse', and 'mounted unit', excluding any article where the phrase 'Royal Canadian' appears to remove articles on the RCMP. This search returned an initial 223 documents.

Seventy-two articles were then excluded from these results, where either the search term was a false positive (for example, 'mounted unit' referring to a piece of furniture), where the coverage of mounted policing was related to a country other than the UK, or where the article was a letter to the editor, duplicate or near-duplicate of a previous article, or single-line caption (for example, under a photograph with no related story). This left a sample of 151 articles, which were then coded for content.

The key variables examined were as follows:

- **Community engagement**: Whether or not the article shows police involved in positive community engagement (0=no mention, 1=mentioned).
- **Misconduct**: Whether or not the article shows police officers behaving unlawfully or abusively (0=no mention, 1=mentioned).
- **Mistreatment**: Whether or not the article shows police officers behaving in unfair or disrespectful, but not unlawful, ways (0=no mention, 1=mentioned, 2=fair and respectful treatment mentioned).
- **Organisational effectiveness**: If the article discusses the effectiveness of the police organisation, and if that discussion is positive or negative (0=no mention, 1=critique of police, 2=mentioned but neutral, 3=positive mention, 4=mentioned with ambiguous[33] tone).
- **Overall tone**: How police are portrayed in the article (1=negative, 2=neutral, 3=positive, 4=ambiguous)
- **Level of focus on mounted police**: How central were mounted police in the article (1=central, 2=significant but not central, 3=peripheral/passing mention of mounted police)
- **Tone regarding mounted police**: How are the mounted police portrayed in the article (1=negative, 2=neutral, 3=positive, 4=ambiguous).
- **Context of mounted police**: In what context do mounted police appear (1=football, 2=political demonstration, 3=symbolic[34] activities, 4=search and rescue, 5=patrol, 6=all other).
- **Mounted activity**: What are the mounted police doing in this context (1=in conflict with citizens, 2=engagement with citizens, 3=a mix of conflict and engagement).

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[33] Ambiguous differs from neutral, as neutral means that no statements of judgement were made in the article, while ambiguous suggests that both positive and negative statements were made to approximately equal effect.

[34] In this context, symbolic is equivalent to ceremonial activities such as parades or the changing of the guard at Buckingham Palace.

- **Historical article**: Is the mention of mounted police relating to an historical event rather than current news (0=no, 1=yes).

This approach allowed the research team to analyse the context in which mounted police regularly appeared in newspaper articles, as well as to analyse comparatively how they were portrayed alongside other police. As such, the 'Overall tone' category was used to code general statements about police in an article (not specific to mounted police actions), while the 'Tone regarding mounted police' category was used to code statements specific to mounted policing or mounted actions.

A team of two coders divided the articles for coding using a list randomiser, and also each coded a duplicate set of nine articles to test inter-coder agreement. The coders analysed seven of nine articles without disagreement on any coding categories, with no disagreement in eight of nine articles when coding mounted policing variables. The team also initially coded physically together in a shared room to discuss any questions regarding variable definitions and promote agreement in coding strategies.

The methods were designed to provide comparisons with a similar study undertaken by Jackson et al. (2013), in particular to have a dataset with which to compare indications of favourable coverage of police. However, where the original study only coded print news content with 'police' in the title, in this case a search of 'mounted police' and similar terms in article titles only would have turned up almost no results, which is why article content was searched. The content analysis tool was also modified from the original study to include variables regarding mounted police specifically, as well as removing certain variables that were not regarded as relevant to the analysis. As a result of the change in search criteria particularly, the hoped-for comparison with the Jackson et al. study is not possible. This means that all comparative analysis in the following findings, where mounted police and other police are compared, relates only to the comparative representations of mounted and other police within articles where mounted police are mentioned (rather than all articles where police are mentioned). The results do, however, provide some useful data on the coverage of mounted police in the UK.

Mounted police are rarely the subject of newspaper coverage, and where they are mentioned it is often in conflict settings

After review of all identified articles, the following patterns in reporting were found:

First, the presence of mounted police officers was usually a fact reported in a broader story, and usually only peripherally to the story content (mounted police were peripheral in 89 per cent of articles, and central in only 3 per cent of the sample, or 4 articles in total).

Most coverage of mounted police, like most coverage of all police within the sample, was neutral regarding both officers and organisation (see Figure 5.2; neutral coverage of police in 71 per cent of articles in this sample, and neutral coverage of mounted police in 82 per cent of articles).

Figure 5.2: Tone of the depiction of police in the article
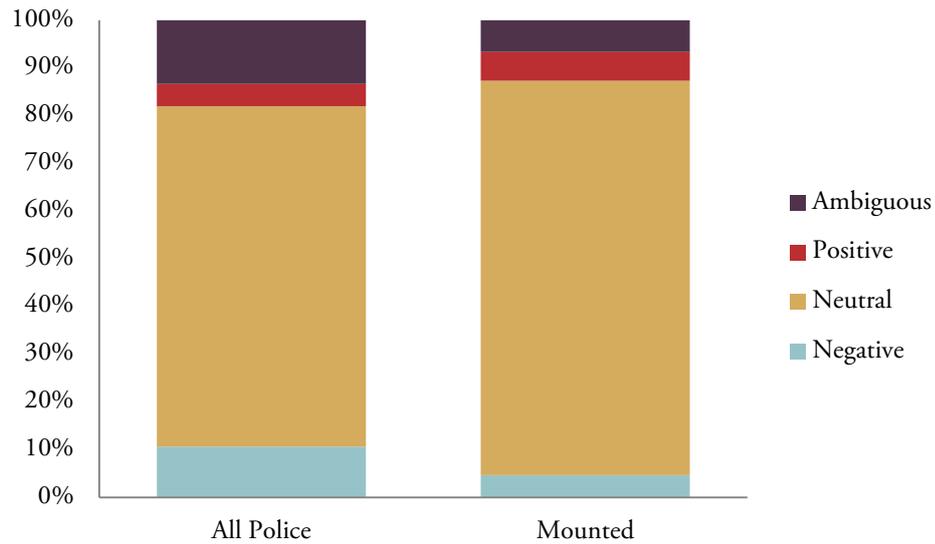
Coverage of mounted police was slightly more positive than negative, though not significantly. Nine articles made explicitly positive comments regarding mounted police and seven articles made explicitly negative comments. A further ten articles were coded as ambiguous, meaning they contained both negative and positive comments.

Mounted police primarily appeared in news stories about football or political demonstration (32 per cent and 33 per cent of articles, or 48 and 49 articles, respectively). Symbolic activities, neighbourhood patrol or search and rescue cumulatively appeared in 12 per cent of articles, with the remaining 23 per cent of articles referring to mounted police in other or unclear contexts, as shown in Figure 5.3.

Figure 5.3: Context in which mounted police appear in the article
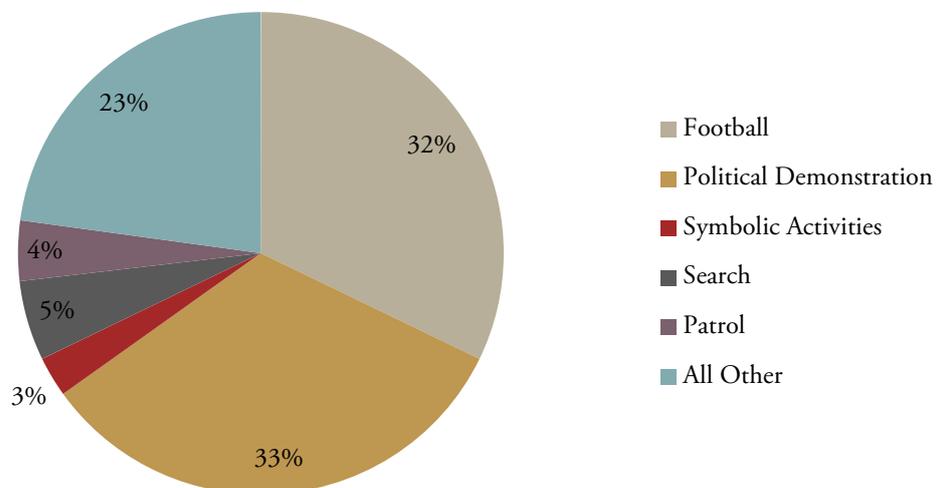
Most coverage of mounted police, as detailed in Figure 5.4, either shows them in direct conflict with citizens (56 per cent/84 articles) or makes no mention of their activity (37 per cent/56 articles). Mounted police were rarely depicted in citizen engagement or other peaceful activities.

Figure 5.4: Activities in which mounted officers engaged in the article
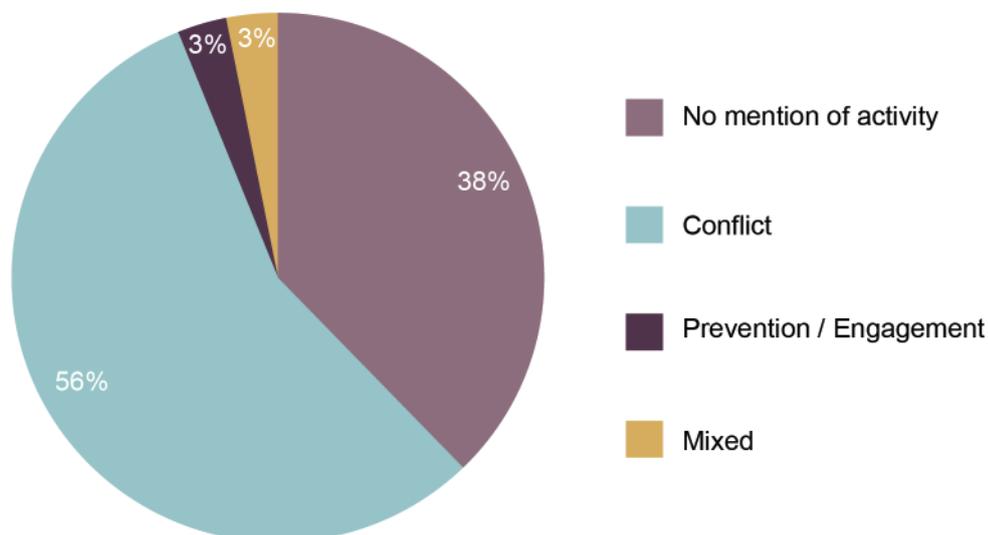
A surprisingly high number of articles (48 of 151, or 32 per cent) discussed mounted police in historical context, usually coinciding with anniversaries of major historical events: the 1984 miners' strike, the Hillsborough disaster, and anti-Vietnam protests in Trafalgar square all received multiple mentions.

Probably due to the sampling procedure (searching all content rather than just title, creating a much higher proportion of articles where police were not a central feature), the Engagement, Misconduct, Mistreatment and Organisational effectiveness measures produced very few results, and were not mentioned in 85 per cent or more of all articles in each case, with police misconduct not mentioned in 98 per cent of articles.

As a whole, these findings suggest that mounted police do not receive particularly favourable or particularly unfavourable coverage in the national mass media. They also do not receive coverage as central actors in public police work. With only four news stories centrally focusing on mounted police work over a three-year period within five of the national agenda-setting papers in the UK, they generate a very low level of media interest. This suggests some limits on the value of police horses for broadly promoting a positive image of the police, at least in terms of their representation in print media contexts. The data from the research in neighbourhood context suggest that they nonetheless have public-relations value in interpersonal interactions and local area deployments, and the print media data can tell us little of their interactional qualities.

When mounted police do appear in print, it is more often than not in a conflict situation. However, this is not always in a negative light, as they are regularly depicted in their capacity to quell football disorder. Nonetheless, their image in political demonstrations is almost invariably one of instigation or clashing

with protesters, and they are rarely shown in their other capacities such as facilitating peaceful protest through positive interaction. The degree to which historical images of mounted police clashes were recalled in current news stories should also serve as a reminder of the powerful effect police horses have on the collective memory of Britons, and in turn on how memorable high-profile mounted police activities can be.

6. Focus groups and interviews

To address research questions two and three, it was identified as important that the project look not only at observable effects of mounted police in various contexts, but also at how their activities were perceived by various stakeholders, particularly the public but also by other police. As such, the research sought to gauge public opinion of mounted police in the neighbourhood context through the public attitudes survey as reported in the previous chapter.[35] The research team sought to identify citizen views on mounted policing in public order contexts through focus groups with key stakeholder groups, including football fans and demonstration organisers. While the team successfully conducted two focus groups with football fans, it was not possible to engage demonstration organisers, despite multiple attempts to do so.[36]

The research also aimed to understand the opinions of police officers regarding the value of mounted police, and more specifically their perceived effects and relative value across a number of deployment scenarios. Thus, three focus groups with officers were held – two groups with police working in public order settings and the other with those working in a neighbourhood context – to further develop the picture of where and how mounted police may be considered valuable, or not. In addition, interviews were conducted with three operational inspectors who were responsible for deployment decisions, in order to better understand how they viewed mounted police officers among other police options in tactical decisionmaking. All focus groups and interviews were recorded using digital voice recorders and were then transcribed and analysed to identify the main areas of consensus among participants using NVivo by one member of the research team.

Key findings in Chapter 6

- Overall, football fans regarded the policing of football in negative terms. However, they differentiated both the role and effect of mounted police at football compared with other police, such as police on foot or in riot kit.

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[35] The team also attempted to organise focus groups in communities where horses regularly patrol; however, it became clear that this would not provide valuable information, primarily due to the self-selection bias of identified participants.

[36] As noted in Chapter 5, multiple email approaches were made to the London May Day organising committee as well as groups involved in the March for England main march and counter-demonstrations. While some expressed initial interest none ultimately committed to taking part in the research. It is recognised that this creates limits on any claims relating to the public relations value of mounted police, since the relative acceptability of mounted police in these settings remains an open question at this point.

- Fans' views of policing at matches was more influenced by other aspects (such as containment tactics and the use of force) than by the presence of mounted officers.
- Public order police who had worked with mounted police were convinced of the value of mounted police in terms of intimidation and control of crowds, and saw them as irreplaceable in certain situations.
- Neighbourhood police who had worked with mounted police believed that they strengthened community engagement and that they were a valuable additional resource for policing the night-time economy and dealing with incidents more generally.
- Operational inspectors who had experience deploying mounted police claimed that they were uniquely valuable in breaking down community barriers and operating in public order situations, which made them an indispensable asset to the force.

6.1. Football fan focus groups

With the support of the Football Supporters' Federation (FSF), the research team twice engaged with what may be considered 'serious' or lifelong football fans to take part in focus groups in Manchester and London. There were 19 participants in total across both groups. At least two participants had been subject to banning orders, and most had been attending football matches since an early age. It was not uncommon for a participant to claim that they had attended football matches since four years of age, and some attended upwards of 60 matches per year including travel to away and international matches. As all were involved with their fan associations or the FSF, most participants had substantial and reflective opinions on football policing, its current shortcomings, and how it could be done better in the future. As such, they did not represent 'average' football fans, but instead were included in the focus groups because of their depth of experience as fans.

The group was initially told that the research team were undertaking a study comparing various policing options at football matches, and in particular that they were interested in match-day tactics by police, although were happy to discuss other issues that were important to participants. The team was conscious that revealing their interest in mounted police at the outset might unreasonably bias discussion, and it was important for the researchers to understand the participants' opinions of mounted police in context of their broader sets of beliefs about football policing. The research team ultimately revealed their interest in mounted police as the focus group progressed, once they were confident that they had adequately determined the priority issues and concerns for this group of fans. Although the focus group discussions were at times co-opted by participants to discuss unexpected issues, the discussions were mostly free-flowing and were based on questions around fans' experiences of (dis)order in football, the policing of football matches in general terms, and specific police tactics (in particular, mounted policing). The schedule for the football fans focus group can be found in Appendix A of this report. The analysis of these discussions elicited the following themes:

> **Attitudes towards policing at football matches**: The overall attitude of participants in both groups towards the police could be characterised as sceptical. Most participants believed that

many police actually enjoy confronting football fans, especially risk supporters – fans known to the police who have a record of football related disorder. Fans felt police often went out of their way to escalate incidents by unnecessarily dividing the crowd into 'opposing' sides or otherwise intervening improperly.

Most participants agreed that good policing was where police formed part of the background and did not use excessive coercive tactics that impinged their freedom of movement. The participants tended to highlight what they saw as unnecessary interventions, such as kettling of small groups of fans, which can have the unintended effect of helping fans commit to a mob mentality. Other forms of containment, such as the use of artificial barriers, were regarded with a similar level of resentment for the same reasons.

These measures were perceived to also detract from enjoyment of the game, and were often seen as over-reactive to potential disorder. Similarly, the quality of police interventions and demeanour were thought to send signals to those attending matches that there would (or wouldn't) be trouble at the match, and participants suggested that as often as not people engaged in disorder as a reaction to police signals that disorder would happen. This links to the quantitative findings in Chapter 4, which illustrated that the presence of mounted officers correlates with 'over-resourcing' and the presence of disorder.

Communication with the fans was seen as essential to good policing of football and several participants believed that fans should have greater input (or at least greater access to information) in the planning of the matches. They also tended to see the regime of football banning orders as a matter of collusion between clubs and the police. While not illegitimate in all cases, banning orders were abused in enough cases to bring the overall practice into disrepute.

As discussion progressed in both focus groups, participants acknowledged that the police were often in a no-win situation, where both action and inaction would be looked on negatively within different segments of the public. At the same time, the groups conceded that some police forces do a very good job, while other forces are thought to be hostile to fans. This discussion suggested that the participants, to the degree they represent serious football fans, did not solely regard policing of football as collectively negative and were are able to recognise differences between good and bad police work, albeit from a particular perspective.

Overall, these attitudes towards policing of crowds reflects many broader themes in police research regarding crowd dynamics and police legitimacy, and are worth further exploration in future research studies.

Views on mounted police at football matches: Although participants had a generally negative view of policing of football matches, they expressed some positive reaction to police horses at football matches. In one sense, mounted police were often seen as separate from what 'the rest' of the police were doing at matches, and were part of the traditional scenery of a match day.

It is worth noting that mounted police were not discussed at all until both groups were explicitly asked about them, after over an hour of discussion. It was clear that for the most part, mounted

police at football matches were simply regarded as part of the background and did not particularly stand out from the overall experience of attending matches:

> Police horses at the match are part of the parcel. You expect to see them, if you don't, you probably wouldn't even think about it....

> …for me when I go to a big game of football, the smell of horseshit is part of the overall [experience].

This suggests that the activities of mounted police may not be a priority concern for these fans; however, the fact that mounted policing is not a priority consideration does not mean that they go unnoticed. Indeed, discussion in the focus groups suggests that these fans are regularly aware of the presence – and potential effects – of mounted police.

In response to questions about mounted police at football, there was broad consensus among fans that police horses were an effective way of securing public safety as opposed to other containment tactics. Participants identified specific instances where they had seen mounted police positively intervene in crowd disorder, specifically at Wembley but also at other grounds. Discussions in both groups indicate that mounted police had a powerful symbolic role that differed from other public order policing tools that have the potential for force. As one fan explained:

> ...if you see mounted officers, for me it doesn't ring any alarm bells. If I came out of the train station and had seen some mounted officers, I'd give them a little pat on the side…but if I see the police in riot gear, suddenly I think what's going on here.

In response to questions about mounted policing, several participants regarded it in more favourable terms compared with other forms of policing, such as police in riot kit on foot, or the visible presence of high numbers of police and visible police equipment such as vans and helicopters – which send signals that disorder and confrontation are imminent or at least more likely.

However, on other occasions, fans were aware of the physical threat that horses posed in the policing of football matches. The size and the agility of the horses meant that they could use significant force, which some fans had experienced (albeit rarely). Some participants saw them as a liability and were wary of the potential for riders to lose control of their horses:

> …no matter how well trained these horses are, they're not fully controlled and there's the element of them turning sharply, kicking out.

> I know dressage, walking nicely, the horses I see at football matches aren't doing it currently, the riders don't look in control. They're hopping about, they're not walking in a way that you would if you were fully in control of a docile animal.

A minority of participants expressed that this unpredictability was something that the police used to their advantage in order to intimidate fans. In this respect, they were sometimes seen as comparable to police dogs as an intimidation tactic.

Although some participants recognised that the presence of horses could generate fear among fans, unlike other police tools, police horses were not solely associated with excessive force. They

were seen to have a pacifying effect on crowds in some situations – 'it just sort of calms the fans down having the horse there', as one participant explained. By contrast, those participants who discussed other tools such as police dogs, for example, expressed solely negative impressions of dogs as unapproachable and dangerous.

Interestingly, participants offered, without prompting, the idea that female officers represented the same kind of 'non-threatening' and approachable symbol of policing as police on horseback, perhaps amplified when an officer is both a female and on horseback. One fan described this process:

> And to be honest, it's mostly girls who are riding the horses now and they're really quite approachable...They're really quite happy and they're going a lot slower…and quite often stop and chat to people…But...they are actually a lot softer and more approachable than necessarily the coppers that are standing on the corner in their big jackets and that's because they're on a big horse, and it's just like aww!

In this instance, the presence of the female officers riding the horses was clearly seen to be a key ingredient to the positive interactions. But the horse itself is also able to create a similarly warm response. From the focus groups, it was not clear to what extent this positive aspect of mounted policing was a product of the horse or the riders of the horses – an issue similarly highlighted in Chapter 3 with regard to neighbourhood patrols.

The findings from the focus groups have some limitations, which mean they should not be treated as representing the views of fans more generally. More research will be required to understand the degree to which focus group participants – none of whom were casual football fans – hold typical beliefs about policing at football matches. In addition, as discussed in the Phase 1 report, these findings might not be generalisable to mounted policing in other public order and crowd control contexts. Overall, findings from focus groups with fans suggest that mounted police have a particular kind of legitimacy within the context of football policing that may not be easily replaced by other available options. However, their potential force and their unpredictability means that consideration should also be given as to their ability to generate fear among fans.

6.2. Police focus groups

Two focus groups were held with non-mounted police officers. The first was with a group of public order-trained officers in a police force in the south of England, and the second was with a group of neighbourhood officers in a force in the north of England. Neighbourhood and public order policing were purposively selected because these are the predominant activity areas of mounted police.

The research team also wanted to ensure representation of a northern force in this exercise, since a substantial amount of the research on neighbourhood mounted policing reported in Chapter 3 was undertaken in the south. This helped to identify similarities and differences from the observations in

Gloucestershire and London and to test and validate the overall messages related to the use of police horses on patrol. The schedule for both non-mounted officer focus groups can be found in Appendix A of this report.

6.2.1. Focus group 1 – Non-mounted Level 2 public order officers

The experience of officers in this focus group was mostly in public-order settings, but some had also taken part in neighbourhood policing[37] and other activities involving mounted branch such as city-centre policing related to the night-time economy.

Unlike the strategy in the football focus group, the research team was forthright from the outset regarding their interest in mounted policing as the focal point of the research. This was largely done for efficiency's sake, in order to ensure that mounted police work was discussed in-depth within the 90-minute timeframe. Additionally, the specific line of questioning around mounted policing (which was longer and more detailed than in the football fan focus group) would probably have aroused suspicions regarding the purpose of the study, leading potentially to issues of trust that could have damaged the process.

The team was nonetheless conscious not to overestimate the importance of mounted policing in the experience of non-mounted officers, so also asked a number of questions to determine broader attitudes of participants on the goals of and options available in various aspects of police work. The questions centred on themes of success in police work, experience of working with mounted police and comparative value of mounted police relative to other options in various situations. Rather unsurprisingly, there was a consistency between opinions expressed at these focus groups and the opinions expressed by other police encountered throughout the course of this study. The discussion brought out the following ideas:

> **Success in police work**: Focus group participants stressed that successful police work was multifaceted and situation-dependent. Success in patrol police work would obviously look different from success in public order work, and it was agreed by participants that success in public order work also differed between command/strategic and front-line perceptions. They noted that from a command perspective, a strategic plan for a planned public order operation may outline Preferred (no disorder, violence or arrests), Acceptable (disorder and some arrests or incidents but not mass disorder), and Unacceptable (mass disorder, resulting in property damage and/or injuries) outcomes. However, an 'Acceptable' outcome where mass disorder was avoided may nonetheless involve line-level officers facing verbal abuse and allowing criminal offences to occur without intervention or arrest, which can impact on perceptions of 'success' at these different levels of the organisation.

> **Effects of available resources**: The focus groups inquired about the degree to which the available resources – both number of officers and types of deployments (e.g. presence of mounted units, dogs, 'CBRN' barriers, water cannons, police on foot, police in riot kit, and so forth) – impacted

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[37] Virtually all officers in UK police forces will have experience of neighbourhood policing at some point in their careers.

the ways in which officers policed an event or incident. Two points emerged from this line of inquiry.

First, participants thought that police generally worked within constraints of what was available, but that available resources also impacted choices to act or not. For example, in a large crowd situation with inadequate police resources, police may be less likely to intervene in minor offences or disorder even where an arrest is warranted. This is both because they fear escalation of crowd violence in the specific instance, and they are reticent to deplete the overall policing capacity by getting tied up in a small arrest as they need to be able to respond to more serious issues if they arise. Second, and conversely, where resources are abundant, participants reported feeling more confident in doing their jobs.

Value and cost of mounted police: Mounted police were seen as particularly valuable in football policing situations, largely for their ability to enhance compliance through intimidation. The physical size of police horses, the sound of hooves landing on concrete and the sight of horses in motion were all thought to elicit respect and provide 'sterile areas' or stop disorderly behaviour when needed. They also have a secondary impact by being approachable. Where it was thought that police dogs have a similar ability to coerce crowd behaviour to enforce order in situations where disorder had begun or was likely, dogs did not have the capacity to engage with crowd members during relative peace. Mounted police were thought to offer a unique ability to get crowds moving effectively – something that could not be achieved to the same degree and with as much legitimacy through other available tools. It was also reported that the presence of mounted police could increase the level of confidence and security of police on foot in executing their duties.

A similar effect was thought to occur in night-time economy settings in city centres, where participants suggested that specifically more mounted police would always be welcomed by police involved in maintaining order outside pubs and nightclubs. As with football crowds, mounted police were thought by participants to stem alcohol-related violence both by calming members of the public through presumed good humour towards the animals, as well as through intimidation and the threat of force represented by mounted police.

In neighbourhood settings, there was a feeling among participants that mounted police were not particularly effective in detecting crimes (although in some cases, due to the height of the rider, they could see illegal activities that are not visible at ground level, which could lead to supporting apprehension/arrest either immediately or at a later time). However, they were seen as a potential deterrent to crime and also, primarily, as a community engagement tool when involved in daytime urban patrols.

All participants seemed to understand that mounted police cost more than other police, but also felt that they were not particularly expensive and their elimination may not create significant savings. As such, it was suggested that mounted police are being considered for elimination because they are 'easy to cut' relative to other mandatory police capacities.

Few participants could offer instances where horses were detrimental to operations, since in particular they maintain a dual kind of presence that is both physically intimidating and eminently approachable, depending of course on the activities of the crowd at a specific time. They were not thought to be misused in deployments (an illustrative joke was made about taking a horse to a domestic disturbance and 'tying it up outside'), especially because there are a limited number of available mounted units and so it was felt they were always tasked in targeted fashion.

Mounted police were seen as good for both engaging with non-aggressive members of the public as well as quelling the activities of aggressive groups and individuals. The potential for things to go very wrong when a horse gets out of control were explored in one of the focus groups. Some officers recalled a particular instance where the horses had been spooked by 'flashbangs' during a demonstration. Officers described how this had intimidated both themselves and the demonstrators, which exacerbated the situation. However, the participants explained that as a result of this incident, the horses had received training for dealing with flashbangs and reported that they had seen no recurrence of this when they had been used in other demonstrations since. As a result, the officers highlighted the importance of regular training for mounted police.

As most of the initial focus group involved officers involved in public order work trained to national standards ('L2') or above,[38] they have all experienced situations where they felt comforted by, or even needed, the support of mounted police. Therefore, it was unsurprising that they placed a high value on the use of mounted police.

6.2.2. Focus group 2 – Neighbourhood officers

A further focus group was conducted with 11 officers from a neighbourhood unit in a large town in Northern England. The majority of participants were police constables, but there were also three PCSOs and one sergeant present.[39] The officers had varying levels of experience in the neighbourhood policing and most had come into contact with mounted patrols regularly as part of their own patrols. The focus group followed a similar style and format to the public order focus groups and also lasted approximately 90 minutes. The key findings resonated with what was heard from public order officers. In particular, the main findings included:

Mounted units facilitate neighbourhood policing: All participants were complimentary of what the mounted officers brought to their neighbourhood patrols, highlighting in particular their ability to engage members of the local community in large volumes. Relatedly, they also pointed to their value in community reassurance, which was linked to their high visibility. Another perceived benefit of the mounted unit was that they were able to move large crowds of

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[38] There are three levels of police public order training: All officers on the ground (i.e. not in a command role) are trained in Level 3 (L3) peaceful protests; Level 2 (L2) training is given to deal with hostile crowds; while Level 1 (L1) is the most specialist and is provided for officers who deal with the most challenging frontline work

[39] A sergeant from the mounted unit who had helped to organise the focus group was also present, although he did not participate in the discussion.

people when required, which was particularly useful in the town centre on weekend nights. The officers estimated that one horse could do the job of 20 officers in this regard and highlighted how much easier it made their work. For these reasons, the neighbourhood team explained that they felt more reassured when the mounted unit was present.

They also underscored the productivity of the unit in terms of 'police work', suggesting that the mounted officers in their particular local area usually managed to achieve a large number of stops and arrests. They believed that this was partially because the mounted officers were not a response unit and consequently, they were 'not tied to their radios'. This meant that the mounted officers did not have to concern themselves with responding to incidents in the same way that the neighbourhood officers did. Therefore the participants believed that mounted officers had more time to deal with problematic individuals or groups in specific locations, as well as more time for community engagement.

The value of mounted police in neighbourhood settings justifies their cost: The neighbourhood officers were unable to think of any limitations of the mounted unit. They estimated that the only reason other areas in the country had disbanded their units was simply to do with cost. At the end of the discussion, when they were informed about the running costs of the unit, they expressed surprise at the costs, which were perceived as relatively low. They were keen to have more mounted presence in the area and bemoaned the tasking process, which meant that they saw relatively little of them.

These findings should be considered against the fact that they are from a single location and therefore they are not representative of neighbourhood policing in general. Furthermore, the presence of a sergeant from the mounted unit may have constrained some participants from speaking in more critical terms about mounted policing. With these limitations in mind, the findings nonetheless lend further support not only to focus groups with public order officers, but also to the findings that mounted police have a particularly valuable role in neighbourhood policing, as discussed in Chapter 3.

6.3. Police inspector interviews

In one force area, two public order inspectors and one neighbourhood inspector were interviewed. All three had extensive experience in their respective roles, and one of the public order inspectors also had experience working in a neighbourhood setting. All three also had experience in deploying the mounted unit to a range of situations.

The interviews were approximately 30 minutes long and therefore the approach taken was more direct than the focus groups with officers. The inspectors were asked about their experiences in working with mounted units, the suitability of mounted officers in specific deployments, as well as their overall opinions of mounted police. The key themes that emerged from these interviews are as follows:

Mounted units can establish relationships with hard-to-reach communities: For the public order inspector who also had experience of working in a neighbourhood unit, one of the major benefits of mounted police was their ability to break down barriers with the community. The inspector highlighted instances in which he had used mounted police as an ice-breaker in

formerly hard-to-reach communities with hostile views towards the police. In one such area, the mounted unit was deployed for a sustained period of time in order to build relationships with the local community, and in his terms, once the 'seal had been broken', it was then possible to introduce regular foot and vehicle patrols. He emphasised that no other policing tool could break down barriers in the same way that mounted did. The other inspector who had extensive experience in neighbourhood policing echoed this view, explaining that the barrier was often broken through children who would often initiate the contact, with their parents in tow, which would form the basis of interaction between the officers and the citizens.

Mounted police have a powerful (real and symbolic) role in public order situations: For all the inspectors (including the neighbourhood inspector), the capabilities of mounted police in public order situations were of paramount value. They believed them to be the most potent tool they had in terms of both preventing disorder (through pacifying crowds and being able to read crowd dynamics with their vantage point) and dealing with it (through their ability to move groups of people with ease). It was clear that their perceived value in public order centred around the policing of football, which was a product of the intensity of the football rivalries in the region. One football match in particular was recalled by all the officers in which there was a significant level of disorder between the two sets of fans in the stadium. According to all participants, the only thing that prevented mass casualties was the presence of just two mounted officers who were able to relieve the crowd by creating a safe exit for people. Indeed, most officers referred to this as what was almost 'their Hillsborough', and this clearly lived long in the corporate memory of the force. Mounted police therefore had a powerful symbolic role in public order policing as well as a very real one for these inspectors.

The mobility and durability of mounted units need to be taken into consideration for deployment decisions: Very few limitations were identified by the inspectors, but the durability and the mobility of the horses were factors that affected decisions not to use the unit in some circumstances. The inspectors recognised that the horses (and officers) would only be able to last a few hours at a time and were therefore not ideally suited to long days. With regard to their mobility, their reliance on the horseboxes meant that they could only send patrols out within a certain radius of the horsebox. In a similar vein, response times were perceived as another potential limitation. The inspectors highlighted that if the horses were stationed in one side of town and an incident occurred on another side, it would take some time before the horses could arrive.

The cost of mounted units was seen as relatively small: Aside from these limitations, the mounted units were regarded as essential to the force and provided good value for money. One of the inspectors was recently faced with decisions to make significant cuts to different parts of the force, and he was explicit that the mounted branch were one of the only units that he ensured were left untouched by the cuts. He explained that the unit was not as expensive to maintain as people believed, especially given the benefits that mounted police offered to the force. Another inspector argued that given that most horses could provide about 15 years of service and in

consideration of what they offered both neighbourhood and tactical operations teams, mounted units were actually relatively cheap to keep in the long term.

The findings from the interviews reinforced the claims made by officers in the focus groups that mounted police can add substantial value to neighbourhood and public order policing. In sum, they illustrate a consistently positive view of mounted policing, limited only by their potential to lose control, as well as their durability and mobility. This largely positive image of mounted police among interviews with the police reflected a wider sentiment that was shared with us by countless other officers from various units and ranks throughout the research.

7. Costs of mounted policing

The costs of mounted policing are not particularly well understood. As with the costs of policing more generally, efforts have been made to determine a 'unit cost' of different forms of police activity, but these are somewhat inexact. For example, ACPO's guidance on mutual aid charging (ACPO 2009) values mounted officers as a 'scarce' resource to be charged at 25 more than 'normal' resources such as foot officers, giving us a starting point for understanding the relative costs of mounted policing. However, the mutual aid guidelines are broad-brush in their approach; for example, 'normal' resources include a wide range of resources such as Police Community Support Officers, shallow water recovery teams and detectives, and 'scarce' resources include *inter alia* helicopter pilots, close protection staff, marine officers and mounted units. As such, this guidance provides an imprecise measure of relative costs in order to address research question 4.

As discovered through this project, understanding the relative costs of mounted police (as compared with other areas of police work), as well as the absolute costs of mounted sections as a discrete area of activity and expenditure is not easily achievable through available data. It is not possible to simply ask a police force finance office to provide a detailed breakdown outlining all expenditure related to mounted policing. While some expenditure related to a mounted section is easily identifiable – for example, the capital expenditure for a new horse or riding uniform – other costs, such as maintenance on stables that are part of a larger police estate (and thus sharing maintenance staff and costs across areas) or use of central administrative support services cannot be easily divided across force activities.

While police officers and managers involved in this study tended to agree that mounted police were expensive – though perhaps less expensive than one might expect, as discussed in the Chapter 6 review of police focus groups – few could determine how expensive they were relative to other police activities. This represents an obvious gap in knowledge and one that bears directly on the question of the value of mounted units. While the research has shown that mounted police clearly provide a useful and unique capacity, this capacity needs to be weighed against the cost it represents, especially in times of budget cuts and reductions in overall police staffing.

To this end, two separate but related exercises were undertaken to begin to understand the ways in which the additional expense represented by mounted sections could be understood. The first section, of this chapter outlines a secondary data analysis exercise conducted by using the Police Objective Analysis dataset, which gives us the ability to roughly compare the net resource expenditure (NRE) of each force with a mounted section to determine the relative costs of mounted policing between forces as well as across different activities within a force. The subsequent section then outlines an exercise undertaken with

force Directors of Finance (DoF) to calculate a mounted police 'premium' as well as an example start-up cost of a mounted section, to understand the cost implications of starting and running a mounted section and the additional (non-salary) costs that are unique to mounted police work. While the numbers presented below will not provide a definitive answer to the question of mounted policing cost, it will provide a range of ways of understanding this complex financial question.

Key findings in Chapter 7

- Based on Police Objective Analysis (POA) data, mounted police cost on average £6,550 more than other operational support officers such as dogs or firearms officers on an annual basis.
- Also based on POA data, mounted police account for approximately 0.31 per cent of Net Revenue Expenditure among forces with mounted sections, and 0.002 per cent of NRE across all forces.
- Based on an exercise with force Directors of Finance (DoF), mounted police cost on average between £15,500–£22,000 more than 'core' officer costs on an annual basis.
- Also based on the DoF exercise, the start-up cost of a mounted section of ten officers is estimated at approximately £1.9m to £2.4m.

7.1. Police objective analysis provides a starting point for understanding the costs of mounted policing

The most comprehensive effort in understanding relative costs of policing, both within and between forces, is the Police Objective Analysis (POA) exercise, which is an annual comparative analysis of policing spend between UK police forces. The data for this exercise is collected and analysed by the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountability (CIPFA) and then used by HM Inspectorate of Constabulary (HMIC) to create 'Value for Money' profiles of each force. HMIC also makes the raw dataset available, which the research team were able to manipulate specifically to understand the annual spend on mounted policing. The dataset used for this analysis is the 2013 POA dataset provided on the data.gov.uk site (POA 2013).

7.1.1. Costs of mounted police in comparative terms

Within the POA dataset, 'Mounted Police' data can be found under the 'Operational Support' subheading. Operational Support officers also include Dogs Section, Air Operations, Firearms and other similar specialists. Based on this categorisation, Operational Support officers were chosen as the unit of comparison for mounted officers. Operational support officers have many relevant points in common with mounted officers, relating to both additional costs and operational roles, such as the need for specialist equipment and training as well as a heightened or emergency response capacity.

The dataset lists the NRE spend[40] on each of these areas by police force, so it is possible to examine how much is spent on each these units within a force and also compare it with the overall spend.[41] The POA dataset also lists the total number of Full-Time Equivalent (FTE) officers in operational support positions, though does not break these down by sub-specialism. However, from the Performance Framework data it was possible to determine the number of mounted officers in each mounted section in 2013, so these two figures could be used to determine how many operational support officers are mounted under the total FTE figure.

Using these numbers, costs-per-officer for mounted units as compared with all other non-mounted operational support units were calculated, based on the NRE divided by the number of FTE officers, as follows:

$$Costs\ per\ mounted\ officer = \frac{NRE, mounted\ police}{Total\ mounted\ officers *}$$

$$Costs\ per\ op\ support\ officer = \frac{NRE, Operational\ support - NRE, mounted\ police}{Officers\ FTE, Op\ support - Total\ mounted\ officers *}$$

Mounted officer numbers from mounted performance framework, 2013 Q1; all other data from POA 2013 data

From this calculation, across all forces with mounted units, the average cost per officer is £68,885, while the cost per officer for all other operational support officers is £62,338. As a starting point, this difference in cost of £6,547, or about 14 per cent more expensive, appears reasonable; Equine World UK, for example, lists the costs of keeping a horse at between about £6,800-£10,000 per year (Equine World UK 2014),[42] which is directly in line with these data.

However, looking at the data on a force-by-force basis, there is substantial variation between forces, and the data also raise questions regarding some of the force figures provided to the POA exercise, particularly regarding the differences in the estimations made by each force. These data are laid out in Figure 7.1 and Table 7.1 below, which show the costs per officer of mounted and non-mounted operational support officers.

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[40] NRE would include all staff, administrative and equipment costs for each unit as well as officer salary costs, minus any cost recovery, for example through mutual aid.

[41] For the calculations here, NRE was used rather than Gross Revenue Expenditure (GRE) to allow for any cost recovery to be reflected. However, only one force in the dataset – Greater Manchester Police – had a higher GRE figure, which means that any cost recovery achieved through mounted was not recorded against the total mounted expenditure.

[42] The range reported by this website (£6,890–£10,095) is based on considerations such as paid stabling and livery versus keeping a horse at home.

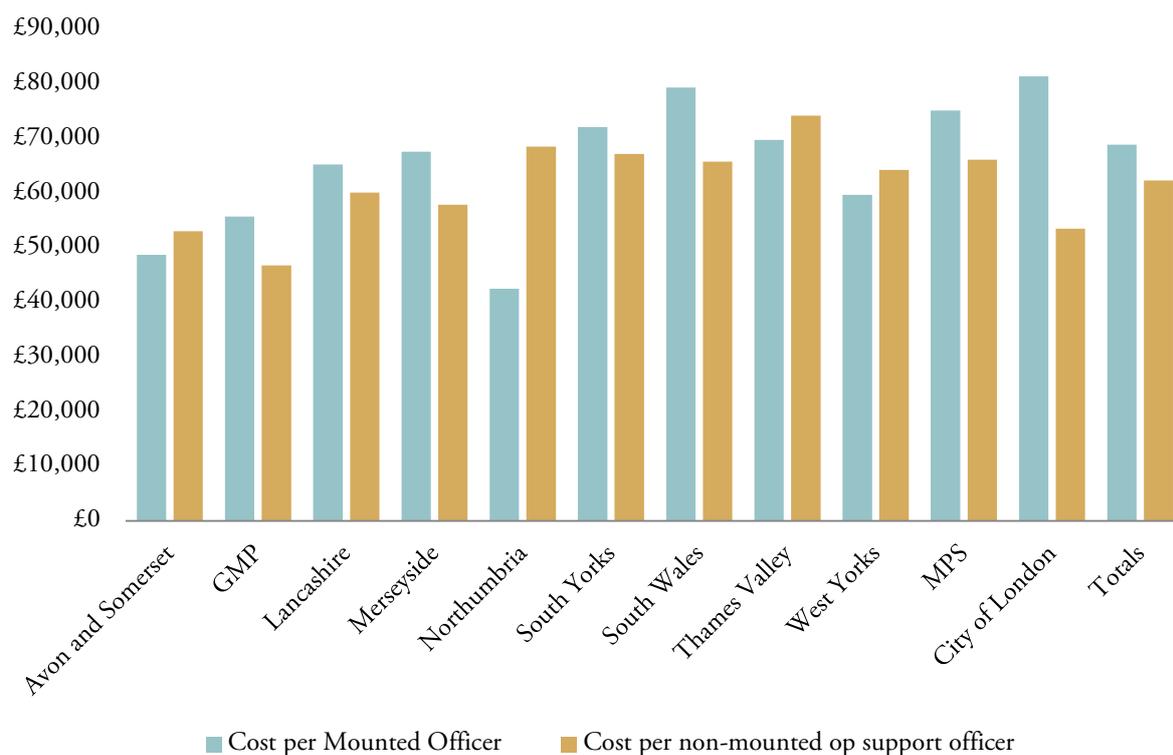Figure 7.1: Annual officer costs, forces with mounted units

Table 7.1: Annual officer costs, forces with mounted units

Police force	Cost per mounted officer	Cost per non-mounted op support officer	Difference
Avon and Somerset	£48,692	£53,014	-£4,322
GMP	£55,700	£46,802	£8,898
Lancashire	£65,250	£60,081	£5,169
Merseyside	£67,588	£57,874	£9,714
Northumbria	£42,500	£68,513	-£26,013
South Yorks	£72,083	£67,166	£4,918
South Wales	£79,333	£65,771	£13,562
Thames Valley	£69,778	£74,168	-£4,390
West Yorks	£59,667	£64,241	-£4,575
MPS	£75,151	£66,144	£9,007
City of London	£81,400	£53,520	£27,880
Totals	£68,885	£62,338	£6,547

Upon closer examination, these data reveal a wide range of cost differences, from mounted officers (apparently) costing £27,880 more than other operational support officers in the City of London to costing £26,013 less in Northumbria. The only plausible conclusion in this case is that the data are

reported differently by each force, and this conclusion has also been verified in discussions with DoFs at three forces.

Additionally, Northumbria in this case has reported the same figure for officer salary costs and total unit costs for their mounted units, so it is unclear whether this figure represents full unit costs or salary only. On the other end of the costs-per-officer spectrum, the City of London's mounted section has a much higher ceremonial activities burden than other mounted sections, which means additional uniform and equipment costs. These factors may account for some of the differences, as may other factors such as staffing levels, unit size or mutual aid revenue.

However, even removing these two mounted sections from the costs analysis, there remains a range in cost differences of over £17,000 between the remaining mounted sections, from £13,562 more in South Yorkshire and £4,390 less in Thames Valley.[43] It remains unlikely that these differences can be explained by differences in unit management (meaning that it is not suggested here that an efficient police manager could trim £17,000 in costs on a per officer basis), and rather it is assumed, also based on discussions with DoFs, that this is at least in part a function of differences in reporting practices between forces. As such, while the POA data give a reasonable starting point, the assumption here is that there are fundamental flaws in the data and therefore it is necessary to consider additional means to determine the costs of mounted policing.

7.1.2. Additional POA findings

While the limitations of the POA data are recognised, they still highlight at least two relevant points regarding the costs of mounted policing. First, when examined as a percentage of total policing spend in a force area, mounted police account for less than 0.4 per cent of the total spend in all forces with mounted sections (with the exception of the City of London), and mounted police costs are less than 1/300th of the total costs of policing across all force areas with mounted sections.[44] This is illustrated in Figure 7.2, below:

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[43] When these outliers are removed, the overall average cost per mounted officer across all forces (except City and Northumbria) increases to £69,204, and the cost per non-mounted op support officer decreases to £62,325, leaving a difference of £6,897, which is still in the expected range based on the costs of keeping a horse.

[44] This figure is arrived through the following calculation, using the 'Level 2 Summary' line from the POA dataset, which represents the total spend for a police force across all areas:

$$\% \ of \ total \ cost = \frac{NRE, \ mounted \ police}{NRE, \ Level \ 2 \ Summary}$$

## Figure 7.2: Mounted police cost as percentage of total cost
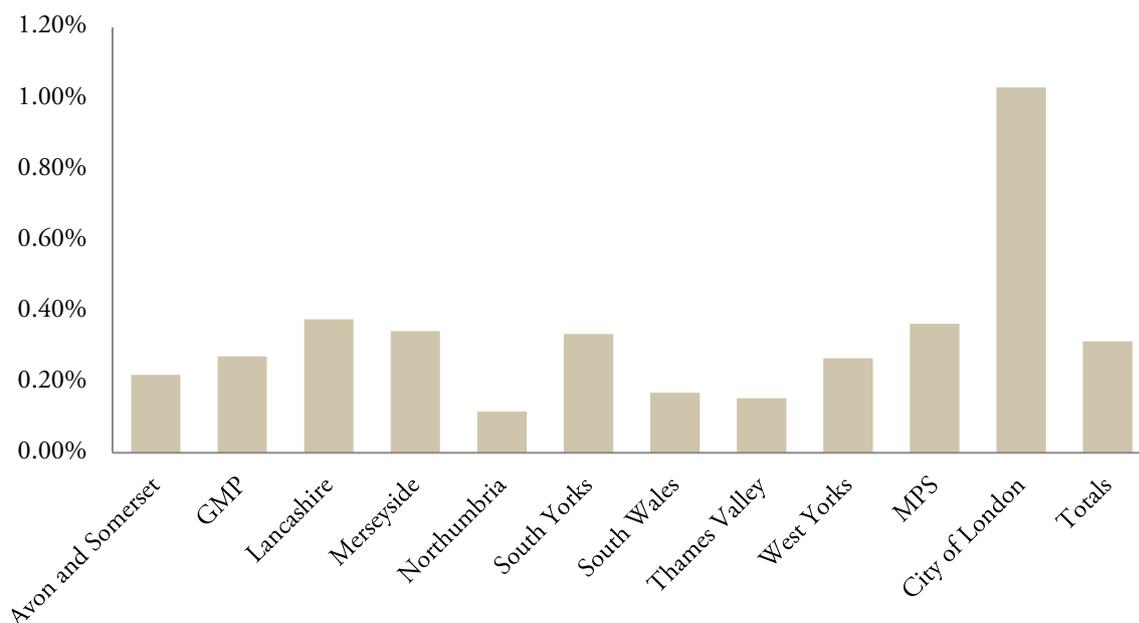
When the total NRE on mounted police is taken as a percentage of the total national spend at force level, this drops to less than 0.002%. While these data are certainly imperfect, they clearly show that the total savings to be realised from any further reductions would be minimal in terms of the overall policing picture in a force area.

The POA data can also be used to estimate the additional cost of running a mounted section, over and above the cost of officer salaries. This is valuable in that it gives us an indication of the 'premium' attached to keeping and using police horses. This analysis is done using the following calculation from POA data:

$$\% \ of \ total \ mounted \ MRE = \frac{Officer \ cost, \ mounted \ police}{NRE, \ mounted \ police}$$

Through this analysis, on average officer salaries make up about 74 per cent of the cost of running a mounted unit (excluding data from Northumbria, which as stated above are listed in the POA as having the same figure for officer salaries and NRE). This means that approximately 26 per cent of the unit cost, or a premium of 35 per cent additional costs over the cost of officer salaries, can be attributed to the other needs of the unit, such as staff costs, equipment, veterinary bills and so on. The POA data from each force for this calculation is shown below in Figure 7.3.

Figure 7.3: Mounted officer cost as percentage of total mounted NRE
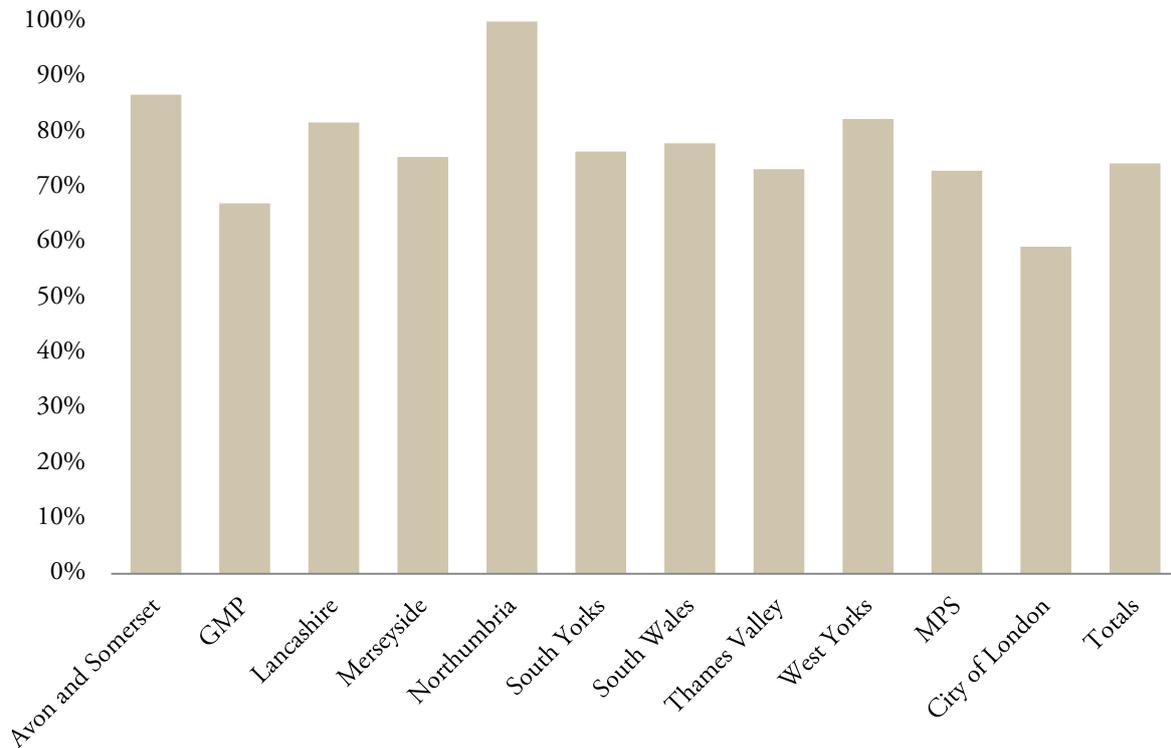
When compared with other operational support sections through the POA data, mounted officer salaries tend to represent a lower percentage of total NRE than officer salaries in other sections. Analysis of these data suggests that on average, officer salaries make up just over 85 per cent of NRE for non-mounted sections, and that for some – for example, in GMP, where officer salary costs are higher than net expenditure – these other operational support sections appear to generate substantial income for the force. These data are further illustrated in Figure 7.4 below.

Figure 7.4: Officer salaries
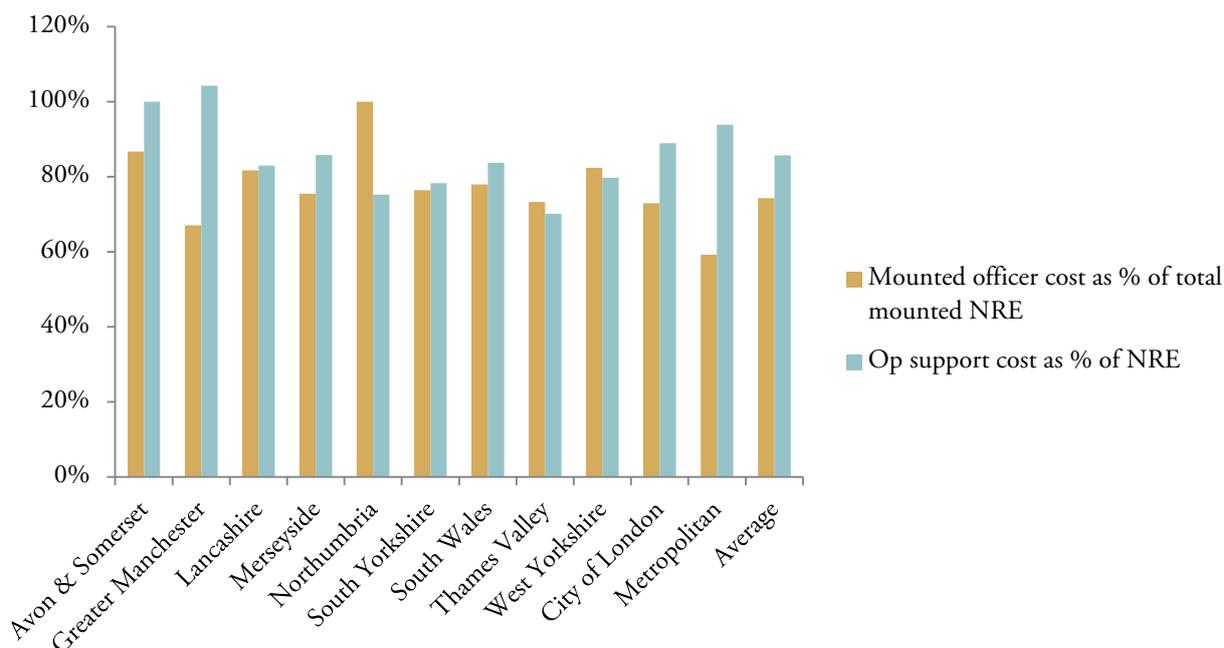
7.2. A 'mounted premium' developed in discussion with Directors of Finance provides an additional means to understand the costs of mounted policing

Given the noted reservations regarding the POA data, the research team approached the national conference of police Directors of Finance to provide support in developing an alternative approach to understanding the additional cost represented by mounted police. In this exercise, the research sought to answer two questions:

1. On top of officer salary and other costs relevant to all police officers (e.g. pension contributions, HR and administrative support, maintenance of IT systems available to all police in the force, etc.), what additional cost is required to keep a mounted officer in the field on an annual basis?

2. Should a police force seek to establish a mounted section where one did not previously exist, what would be the initial financial outlay for that force?

On behalf of the research, a number of DoFs and mounted officers worked to develop a cost model for a mounted section of ten officers, nine horses and four staff, owning three horse boxes. The unit size was based on the modal average unit size, with an adjustment to the number of horse boxes based on the mean average ratio of horse boxes:officers (which is 1:4 across forces). The average unit size is illustrated in Table 7.2 below:

Table 7.2: Average mounted section size

Average section size (excl MPS)	Officers	Staff	Horses	Horse boxes
Mean	14.36	5.91	13.55	3.45
Median	13.00	5.00	12.00	4.00
Mode	10.00	5.00	9.00	4.00

One DoF provided estimates for start-up and annual operating costs based initially on discussions with one mounted section, and subsequently the figures provided were validated by one other force DoF from a force with a mounted section as well two DoFs from forces without mounted sections. The discussions around validation produced what may be considered a 'high' and 'low' cost estimate for costs of mounted units, based on three key differences between models:

1. The 'high' model assumes that officers for the unit represent additional officers, while the 'low' model assumes that recruitment for the unit is done internally from existing officers (this is relevant for start-up costs but not annual costs).

2. The 'low' model assumes that general and vehicle maintenance and corporate support/administration costs are 'absorbed' by the police force, while the 'high' model allocates additional funds for these (this is relevant for annual costs but not start-up costs).

3. The 'low' model assumes generally lower costs for certain items (relevant to both start-up and annual costs), such as purchase of a horse at £4,500 rather than £6,000, annual uniform costs at £7,500 rather than £10,000 and some cost recovery on manure removal (which is often bought by farmers).

The estimates based on these assumptions are outlined in Table 7.3 below, and show a range of between £15,505 and £22,070 additional cost per officer per year. Starting from the assumption, based on ACPO unit costing guidance, that any officer costs £52,000 per annum before additional expenses related to a specialist role, this means a mounted officer costs between approximately £67,500 and £74,000. This represents an increase of between 30 to 42 per cent 'premium' cost. However, it would be a mistake to suggest that a mounted officer costs 30–42 per cent more than an 'average' officer, since officers in any role will have unique additional costs – for example, a response officer would require access to police vehicles, a weapons officer requires special training and equipment and so on. As such, this is the premium cost attached to mounted units, and a similar premium would need to be calculated for officers in other roles to understand how this compares across generalist and specialist roles. Nonetheless, if £52,000 is taken as the cost of a generalist officer, such as a neighbourhood officer, then it could be said that in general three mounted officers cost about as much as four neighbourhood officers on an annual basis.

Table 7.3: Annual cost of a mounted section, high and low estimate models

Annual costs	High	Low
Police staff – grooms x 4	£100,000	£75,000
Police staff – 0.5 Corp Support; 0.5 Handyman	£25,000	£0
Training/courses/fees – new rider (every other year); new horse (every year)	£10,000	£10,000
Riding equipment replacement 1pa @ £4,500	£4,500	£4,500
Uniform issues (annual refresh)	£10,500	£7,500
1 new officer – uniform start-up including boots @ £300	£1050	£1050
1 horse	£6,000	£4,500
Vets' bills	£20,000	£20,000
Farrier	£8,350	£8,350
Feed/Forage	£10,000	£10,000
Manure removal	£4,150	£3,000
Repairs and maintenance	£12,000	£2,000
Ad hoc operational equipment	£4,150	£4,150
Additional fuel for transportation	£5,000	£5,000
Total annual revenue costs for a section of 10 officers	£220,700	£155,050
Costs per officer	£22,070	£15,505

Looking at start-up costs, the initial outlay to start a mounted section of ten officers would probably be in the area of £1.9–£2.4m. This assumes the acquisition of existing riding stables outside of but near to a medium-sized city such as Cardiff or Bristol. This placement would allow for regular deployment on city centre or urban neighbourhood patrols. The cost of acquisition could be lowered for a more rural location, and could increase for a city location and/or if stables needed to be built.

Certain start-up costs, such as the stables and the horseboxes, would retain value and in the case of the stables and land may increase in value over time. As such, if one assumes that the stables and land are an investment that retains full value (and thus removing them from this estimate), the remaining cost of start-up is decreased by £1.2m, to a range of £0.7–£1.2m. The high and low model estimates are outlined in Table 7.4 below.

Table 7.4: Start-up cost of a mounted section, high and low estimate models

Start-up costs	High	Low
Acquisition of riding stables	£1,200,000	£1,200,000
Adaptations for police operations, incl security, offices, ICT installation	£100,000	£100,000
10 horses @ £6,000	£60,000	£60,000
Young horse training 5 @ £12,000	£54,000	£41,500
First issue of riding equipment (bridle, saddle) @ £4,500	£41,500	£41,500
One large horse (new, with 'campervan' facilities)	£150,000	£150,000
2 x secondhand small horsebox @ £ 30,000	£60,000	£60,000
First year training and support	£630,150	£147,150
First issue uniform, including boots @ £300	£13,500	£13,500
Training of 10 new riders @ £4,000	£40,000	£40,000
Project management	£50,000	£50,000
Total initial outlay for a section of 10 officers	£2,399,150	£1,903,650
Minus cost of stables	£1,199,150	£703,650

7.2.1. Additional considerations on annual and start-up costs

Discussions for this exercise as well as in subsequent validation workshops with mounted sections throughout the UK brought forward a number of additional points relating to the ways in which cost assumptions may be altered in certain areas, which bear discussion here. These are related to training, equipment and scale.

- **Training**: The models above assume a full externalised costing for the training that riders and horses receive, meaning that an external trainer would be paid directly to support training for police officers and horses. However, in established mounted sections of adequate size, most if not all training can be provided internally by officers who have themselves been trained as rider trainers. In addition, training of horses would normally be done by officers rather than another service. It is worth noting that some units still require outside trainers and bear this cost and, given the recent depletion of mounted resources in the UK, mounted sections are presently unlikely to be able to provide cost-free training to riders outside of their own force.
- **Equipment**: The model above assumes full cost of new equipment as well as purchase of a new 'campervan' horsebox suitable for four or more horses and a team of riders. Owing to the recent closure of mounted sections in the UK, there is currently a substantial second-hand market for police horse equipment and vehicles, and there may also be horses and trained riders from closed sections who would be suitable to support a new section. As such, starting a unit at this point may require somewhat less additional capital for equipment and vehicles as well as horses and rider training, though this window will close as existing units absorb the available second-hand resources.
- **Scale**: The estimations of a per-officer and unit start-up cost were based on a section of ten officers. However, the assumption should not be made that a larger unit would scale in cost terms

in a linear fashion (i.e. each officer representing an additional £15–£22,000 additional premium cost). There may be economies of scale to be achieved with larger units such as hiring full or part-time veterinary staff, availability of trainer staff to generate income, and additional mutual aid capacity; and conversely, smaller sections may face comparatively higher operating costs in terms of having less resilience and capacity to keep all needs in-house in an efficient manner. A number of officers in the study voiced concerns regarding the viability of mounted sections that were regularly staffed at levels below one 'serial' (i.e. five PCs and a Sergeant), both in cost and operational effectiveness terms.

7.3. While a specific cost figure remains elusive, some general conclusions can be reached regarding the costs of mounted police

The question of the absolute and relative costs of mounted policing has been examined here from a number of angles. From this exercise, it is recognised that there may be substantial variation between forces regarding the ways in which the costs of mounted policing are recorded and understood, as well as differentiation in the actual costs of mounted policing between forces owing to location of mounted units within a force area, different approaches to management, staffing levels and so on. There is little question that mounted police represent an additional expense to a police force on a per-officer basis, and one that is substantially more expensive than 'normal' police resources.

While the data are insufficient to make conclusive statements regarding the precise difference in costs between mounted police and other police or between mounted sections in separate force areas, it can be concluded from the analysis that, first, mounted police are likely to be more expensive than other specialisms by approximately the cost of keeping a horse; second, their specific identifiable 'premium' costs are in the range of £15–22,000 per year per officer in a section of 10 officers; and third, the cost of starting a section of ten officers is approximately £1.9–£2.4m if fully costed.

These findings suggest that the ACPO mutual aid charging guidance highlighted at the outset of the chapter, which classes mounted sections as 25 per cent more expensive than 'normal' units, remains a reasonable starting point for understanding the relative costs of mounted policing compared with policing options such as foot officers. Finally, mounted police remain a minuscule proportion of the overall policing spend in England and Wales, less than 0.002 per cent of the total policing budget. In turn, any reflection on their relative costliness on a per-unit basis should take into account their relative expense within the national portfolio of police activities.

8. International survey of senior mounted police officers

The findings and analysis presented to this point relate primarily to mounted police work in the UK. While numerous parallels exist between the way policing is done in the UK and elsewhere in the world (in terms of organisational structures, tactics, techniques and technologies, priorities and expectations, education and practice-sharing between various police forces internationally), it remains a matter of empirical enquiry whether or not mounted police work in the UK is similar to mounted police work elsewhere.

To this end, and to further address research question two, a questionnaire was distributed to senior mounted police officers around the world. The survey was designed to collect:

- Basic information about the mounted unit (size, length of establishment, balance of activities).
- Estimations of opinion about mounted police.
- Trends or recent changes in deployment patterns, activities or priorities.
- 'Most important' activities/basis of value of mounted police.

The questionnaire was developed as a form-fill pdf[45] and generated responses from 26 forces across 14 countries in North America, Europe and Australia. The questionnaire was distributed through contacts provided by the College of Policing and CEPOL, and then using respondent referrals (snowballing) to identify contacts at other forces. A request email was sent to 40 separate force-level contacts and one response was received per force. This represents a response rate of 65 per cent for the exercise. It is worth noting that the sample is drawn from known contacts only so cannot claim representativeness for all mounted police sections internationally. Furthermore, there were seven respondents who were the only representatives of their countries in the survey, which may mask some of the variation across mounted units within their respective nations. For this reason results should be regarded as indicative of mounted police activities abroad rather than representative of all mounted policing internationally.

The questionnaire was distributed in English only. It asked force representatives to identify the proportion of time their mounted units spent on various activities, the size of their unit and details about its history, and their estimations of the value placed on mounted police by the police service generally. The survey predominantly used closed responses but also provided opportunities for free-text writing throughout.

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[45] Certain forces were unable to use the form-fill version owing to software restrictions on their computers, and so a Microsoft Word version was also created. The questionnaire can be found at Appendix A.

Key findings in Chapter 8

- Mounted units abroad perform a similar range of activities to mounted policing in the UK, with patrol being the most common usage of the units, followed by crowd control and ceremonial activities.
- The most valued activity performed by mounted officers was crowd control, which respondents felt was related to their ability to control through force (and in particular, legitimate force), and the visibility of the horses .
- Mounted police were also perceived to be useful in community patrols (both rural and urban), primarily because of their abilities to draw significant engagement with the public.
- Participants also valued the versatility of horses across a range of policing functions, and the powerful symbolic role that they had, based on long-standing traditions.

8.1. Mounted activities abroad are broadly comparable to their uses in the UK

Most units abroad reported that they used their horses for a similar array of activities as in the UK. Figure 8.1 presents an overview of these tasks according to the time allocated to each activity. As in the UK, most time was devoted to patrol, 35 per cent on average. Training also took up a significant proportion of time (17 per cent followed by caring for the horses (10 per cent). Crowd control accounted for 15 per cent of overall time committed (7 per cent peaceful and 8 per cent disorderly). However, when the crowd control responses are more closely analysed, it is apparent that the majority of forces (11) felt that they spent more time on peaceful crowd control than disorderly, with only 4 units claiming the reverse (Figure 8.2).

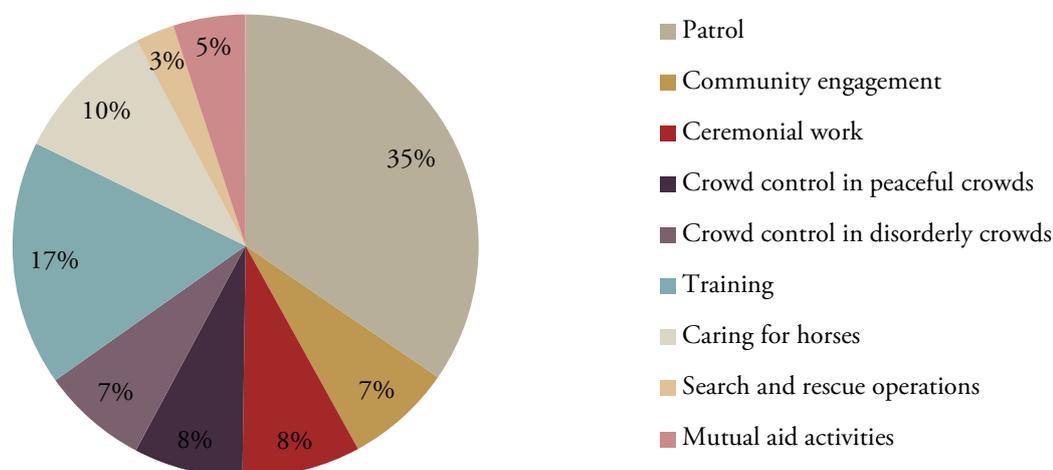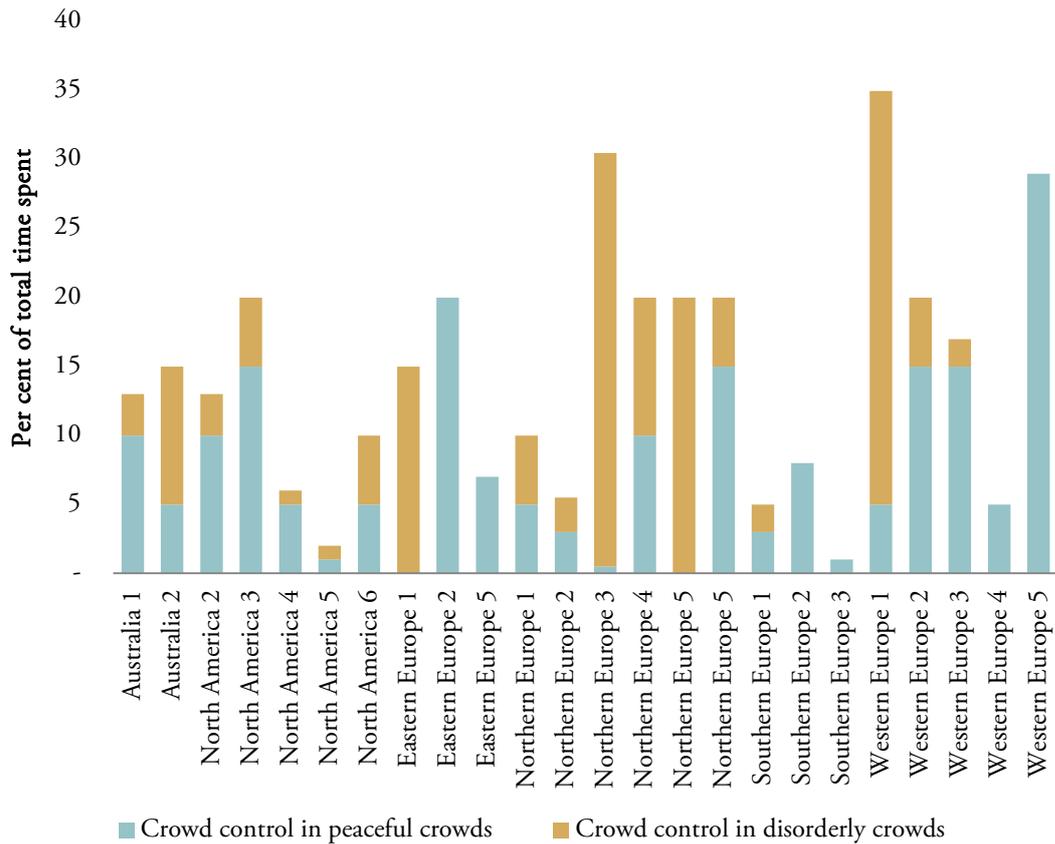**Figure 8.1. International mounted unit activities**

Figure 8.2: Crowd control activities

But there was significant variation between different forces in some activities, as illustrated in Figure 8.3. For example, the time dedicated to patrols ranged from 20 per cent in one force, up to 85 per cent in another.[46]

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[46] The percentages did not add up to 100% because activities such as stable work and training have been excluded to focus on time committed to operational tasks. Also, there was likely to be variation in recording between forces. For example, some units took horses out on patrol as part of training exercises, so these numbers only offer a rough account of time spent.

Figure 8.3. Time spent on operational activities

Figure 8.3. Time spent on operational activities

Legend:
- Patrol
- Community engagement
- Ceremonial work
- Crowd control (all)
- Search and rescue operations
- Mutual aid activities

X-axis: Time spent (%)
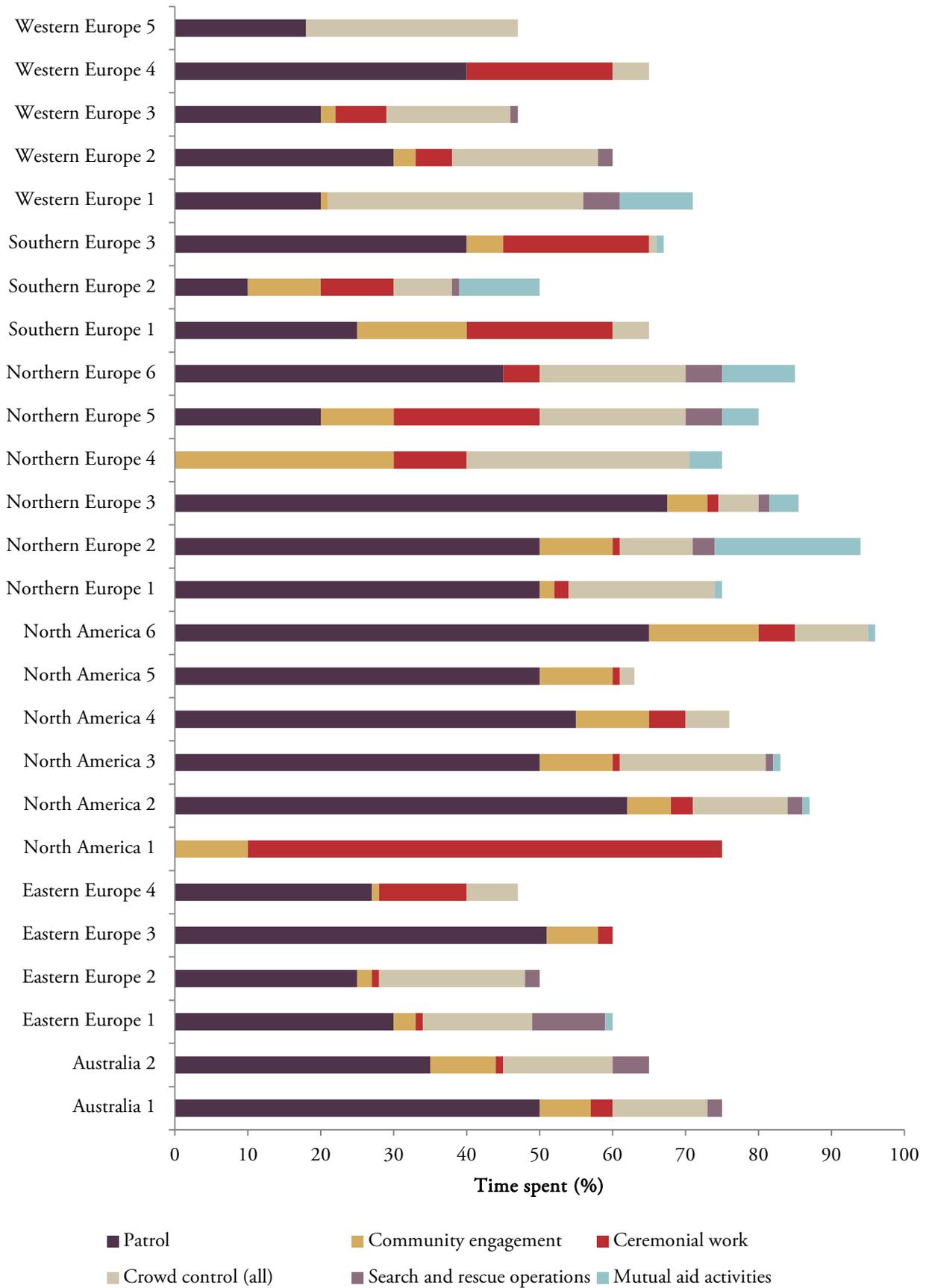
Some forces reported that mounted units were used for different purposes depending on who was responsible for the unit. One Southern European country distinguished between mounted units at the national and municipal levels. The mounted unit owned by the national police force specialised in public order policing, while the municipal police forces that had mounted units tended to use their horses for other purposes, such as ceremonial duties. This was also a separation that was identified in one Northern European force, whereby the national police used horses as an enforcement tool for public order policing, while the municipal mounted units were restricted by law in their use of force and thus predominantly worked as a public engagement and patrol unit.

There were some additional tasks that mounted police do in other countries that were not found in the UK. For example, two forces in Australia supported fire and rescue services (such as assisting evacuation in the case of wildfires). Another two forces in North America also assisted in traffic control, while one unit in Northern Europe had the unique task of assisting the transport of nuclear waste into storage facilities.

8.2. Respondents' opinions of mounted policing emphasised the patrol and public order value of mounted units

Respondents were asked what their two most valued activities were from a drop-down list of activities (which included neighbourhood patrol, engagement, crowd control and public order activities, ceremonial activities and other). Neighbourhood patrol was regarded as the most important function, followed by public order policing (Figure 8.4). Community engagement, ceremonial work and other duties were seen as peripheral to these tasks.

Figure 8.4. Most valuable activities
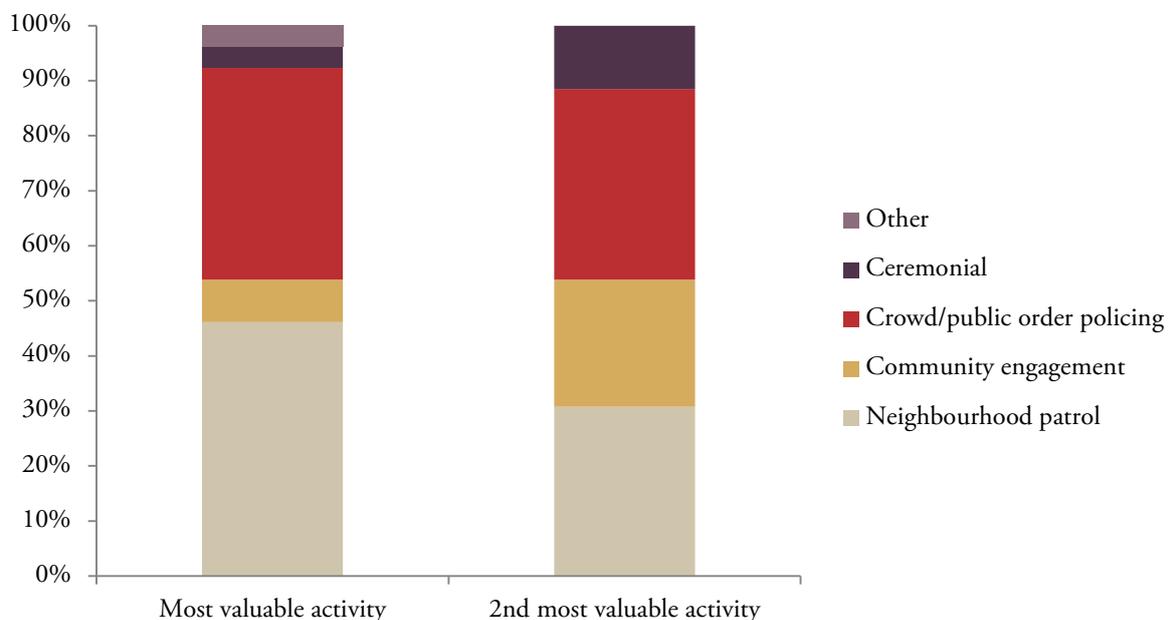
In terms of overall opinions about mounted police, the vast majority recognised them in positive terms, and also reported that in their opinion mounted police were well regarded throughout their particular force. This is probably unsurprising given that the sample were all mounted officers. Looking at opinions of mounted police in crowd control and local settings, participants viewed their abilities in public order settings slightly more favourably than in local settings (Figure 8.5). However, most were positive with regard to both functions and just one respondent believed that they were of little value in local patrols.

Figure 8.5. Opinions of mounted police in crowd control and local settings
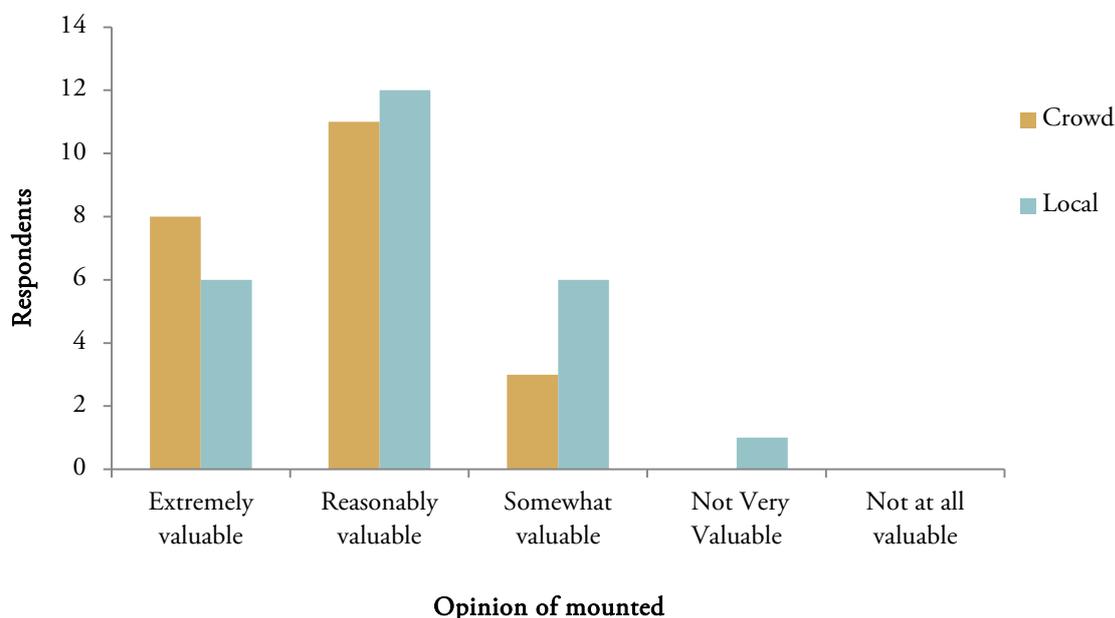
Respondents' comments illustrate the breadth of ways in which mounted units are seen as valuable, both in crowd and patrol settings

When respondents focused on crowd control, they tended to emphasise the physical presence of the horse, in particular the physical force that they could harness and the visibility that they offered to both the police and the public.

Some respondents believed that force was an integral part of mounted policing. One from Western Europe explained:

> …the way we work with our horses, especially the way we work as riot police, is really offensively, it's like the charge of the light brigade, we really charge into crowds. In fact, that's the first thing we do…the operational commander sends his horses when things get out of hand.

This was similarly felt by others who believed that mounted units were more effective at controlling large-scale disorder compared with water cannons or foot officers because of their strength and their ability to chase after people. One force that did not have many other tools available to them (such as water cannons) felt that the mounted unit was valuable as a last resort in large-scale public disorder incidents where vehicles were deemed unsuitable.

But the sheer physical presence of the horses was perceived to be an advantage in itself, since it meant that they did not have to use much of their potential force. One North American participant expressed that mounted police offer 'the most compliance with the least force'. One respondent from a Western European unit described this as their 'unique selling point, since it enabled them to:

> abstain from using force because of the physical presence and the psychological effects of horses when groups of troublemakers who are ready to use violence are separated.

But the key point for many respondents was that it was not simply the large physical presence of the horses that made them an attractive option in crowd control. Their unique strength, which distinguished them from other tools, was that they were perceived by respondents to be a *legitimate* form of force. In this way, despite their physical strength, they were not regarded as a weapon compared with other police tools, such as dogs. One respondent from a Western European force commented on how this had been enshrined in their law:

> In [our] law, a canine is a weapon but a police horse isn't so when they're sending us into a crowd they're not using a weapon, they're using violence but not a weapon.

In a similar vein, one respondent from North America acknowledged that the mounted unit was a more publicly acceptable form of force and highlighted how the number of complaints against officers reduced significantly when mounted officers were used in crowd control.

The visibility that horses afford to officers in crowd control situations was regarded by some respondents as their paramount benefit. In one force, mounted officers had video cameras attached to their helmets because they were able to record useful footage from their height, which provided a good view of the crowd. Another participant also emphasised that the visibility of the horses from the public's perspective was also important in terms of affecting perceptions of police presence.

Some respondents found it difficult to compare mounted to other police tools in crowd situations. They suggested that other tools, such as anti-riot squads or police dogs all had their merits, but that they all worked best when working in tandem. One participant saw mounted police as an 'equal partner' to the other available tools, while another described mounted as a part of a 'complementary synergy' of crowd control.

But there were also some perceived inappropriate uses of mounted units in such contexts. One respondent in Southern Europe felt that while mounted police were useful in orderly crowd control settings, sending mounted units to hostile or aggressive crowds was inappropriate because (unidentified) specialised mass control equipment and the use of foot officers was 'more convenient'. Two respondents felt that it was unsuitable to send horses to events where there would be petrol bombs (presumably because they were likely to spook the horses). A further two participants believed that they were not ideal for long static missions that left the horses standing around for substantial periods of time. One of these respondents commented that particularly in crowd control settings, horses were best at moving crowds but not as good at standing still and could thus be pushed back by crowds.

Patrol was also commonly identified in comments as a good use of mounted police. Their abilities to deal with varied terrain meant that they were perceived as useful to rural patrolling, but also their high visibility, coupled with their abilities to engage with the public, meant that they were regarded as suitable

for urban patrols as part of a community policing approach. Only one respondent from a Southern European city was uncertain about deploying horses on urban patrols because of the narrow nature of the roads in their particular city. Another participant from a Western European force was concerned about the use of the unit as a public relations tool that had 'nothing to do with policing'. He cynically recounted how at one point in the past his unit had nearly become part of an entertainment company. In such cases, their perceived success in public relations meant that there was a fear among some respondents that this would become the defining feature of the mounted unit.

The versatility of mounted units was considered to be another valuable asset by several officers. One unit in Eastern Europe recognised that they were 'indispensable to so many Commands' because of their abilities to carry out public order and neighbourhood policing, among others. This versatility was seen by another force in Eastern Europe as useful in terms of easing tension between different police units: 'The flexibility from a mounted unit ensures a confidence and anti-conflict between mounted and patrol officers during operations'.

But there was also widespread recognition that mounted units played a powerful symbolic function that no other units could do. An officer in a Northern European force described this:

> [The mounted unit] has high traditional value to the force and to the public. It's a pride to the force and to the city...The police work our unit produces gets noticed and respected. Our unit's ceremonial work and value cannot be exceeded by any other police unit.

Several other respondents made references to these longstanding traditions that mounted units represented. As one respondent in Eastern Europe described, 'we keep mounted police traditions alive. We are the "last hussars"'.

8.3. Reform of mounted sections is occurring or has recently taken place in multiple jurisdictions outside the UK

Most units reported that they either had the right capacity or that they were under-resourced, but none felt that they had too many. This may have been related to a concern about possible cuts to their own units. Indeed, four forces reported that their units had reduced in capacity in the last five years owing to budgetary restraints.

Participants were also asked whether they felt there had been a change in activities over the last five years. Most reported no change, but five indicated a shift towards more crime-focused agenda and more tasked patrols. For example, one respondent stated that:

> We are looking to spend less time horseback riding and more time policing...We are trying to make mounted police more part of the police organisation, going to the areas where they can be more effective.

This reference to doing more 'policing' rather than 'horseback riding' was a reflection that this particular mounted unit had previously been regarded by others in the police force as a ceremonial adjunct to the police organisation rather than a core part of its operational delivery. This ability for mounted units to

carry out traditionally perceived police work was observed by others. For example, one North American respondent remarked:

> We stress the horse as a means of conveyance. We dismount many times during our shift to contact suspects.

One Western European participant similarly underlined the arbitrary ways in which her unit had changed its remit:

> We went from a 'crowd control' unit to a 'patrolling' unit and now we go the other way back.

Such comments highlighted broader attempts within the police organisations to align the mounted units with certain core priorities to ensure that they were an operationally purposeful unit as opposed to an accessory to what was perceived as police work. However, as one Australian respondent suggested, implementing change was not always quick within mounted units 'which are slow to adapt because of long-standing traditions'. From this perspective, it appeared that certain long-standing preconceptions about what horses are able to bring to policing can dominate certain units and make it difficult to respond to demands. However, the versatility of horses meant that many units had survived budget cuts and had found ways of justifying their existence.

9. Synthesis and conclusions

This project collected a significant amount of secondary data as well as developing a wealth of new empirical data on the value of mounted police. The research has examined the ways in which mounted police may be considered valuable across a number of deployment settings, focusing particularly on neighbourhood patrol and crowd control activities, reflecting the core importance of these activities in terms of the justification for maintaining mounted resources.

This mixed-method project has been able to undertake a variety of empirical approaches to testing the value of mounted police across deployment scenarios, examining four key questions that consider different aspects of value: What do mounted police do? How and in what ways do they provide value to policing operations? What impact do they have on public perceptions of policing? And, what are the costs and potential drawbacks of using police on horseback? In this conclusion, the data used to answer these questions are considered collectively, to support overarching statements regarding the uses and impacts of mounted police activities.

In certain instances, for example regarding the value of mounted police in generating positive public assessments of police presence at neighbourhood level (as well as at Glastonbury), these findings provide a clear message for police managers about what mounted police can achieve in generating casual and positive engagement with the public, and provide quantitative data to back up qualitative observations as well as vice-versa. The analysis of neighbourhood activities thus provides robust and triangulated findings that offer a strong demonstration of the value of mounted police and a consistent message across these findings.

However, in other settings, particularly regarding football policing, the message is less clear – mounted police may be used to reduce overall resourcing levels and reduce levels of disorder, but their effects as seen in the UKFPU dataset are very small, though statistically significant. Additionally, there remains substantial variability between force-level approaches to match resourcing, which complicates any analysis of the effects of this sub-component of an overall match deployment. Furthermore, the data from focus groups suggest a more ambiguous reception for mounted police among football fans than in the neighbourhood context. In turn, the interpretation of the data from football policing generally shows indications of a positive effect of mounted police at football matches (in terms of policing goals) but the message is not as consistent across data sources.

Findings in public order observations point to a unique and effective physical intervention capacity for mounted units, but that their engagement capacity in this context is limited, even relative to other police such as PSOs who assume a more prominent public engagement role than their mounted counterparts in this setting. It is also clear that the image of mounted police intervening in public protest can have lasting

consequences for the public memory of policing. Given the dynamic nature of crowd events, measurements of effectiveness are much more complicated to tease out. In addition, returning to the discussion in Chapter 2 of the ESIM approach to public order policing and the importance of communication and liaison with crowds (and this approach is relevant for both protest groups and football fans), the effect and effectiveness of mounted police in crowd settings will be intertwined with how their use is understood by, and communicated to, crowd members. While it is not always possible to provide advance communication on what police will do in a crowd setting, where such communication is possible it would appear valuable to include messaging about mounted police, and this may impact on the overall effectiveness of their deployment.

Cost data provide a similarly complicated picture. There is no question that mounted police cost more than other police on an annual per-officer basis, and perhaps unsurprisingly their additional cost over and above other operational support officers is about equivalent to the cost of keeping a horse. However, mounted sections are also a minuscule component of the overall policing spend in any force area, and so in these terms they are relatively inexpensive in terms of a per-section costing.

These findings must also be considered against conceptions of what police *should* do, a message introduced in Chapter 1. While mounted police do engage in activities that are directly intended to address crime and criminal activity, such as engage in arrests and stop-and-account activities, this is a small component of their daily work and certainly not the justification for their continued deployment. Their value is much more clearly demonstrable in disorder-prevention activities and the establishment of visibility of the police and public trust and confidence in police, and so this impact from their deployment as a policing resource must be considered within any statements of their overall value.

It needs to be remembered that the value of mounted police at both neighbourhood and crowd deployments is not just a matter of whether or not they are deployed, but also how they act and are seen to act in these settings. Mounted officers, as found at a number of points in this research, are specially recruited for their abilities to engage with members of the public and present a positive public face of policing, while also of course being able to control a horse in hectic environments. The actions of the riders, and those around them, are an important part of the story of the effectiveness of mounted police, and from these findings it is not suggested that horses alone, regardless of the rider, would always have the observed effects.

While there are complexities to the interpretation of the data in this report when taken as a whole, some clear messages nonetheless emerge. Based on these findings, there are four key conclusions regarding the value of mounted police. Some of these conclusions are in line with accepted wisdom or anecdotal accounts regarding the value of mounted police, but there are also important points of departure with traditional thinking.

9.1. Mounted police are a unique policing resource with both heightened response and public engagement value

> Mounted police generate positive assessments of policing in neighbourhoods, increase visibility, and generate substantially higher levels of engagement with members of the public than

equivalent levels of foot patrol. On top of this value, they also offer the ability to provide heightened response to crowd situations, and can intervene in disorderly crowds in ways that generate compliance more quickly than other options such as police on foot or in vehicles. Secondarily, they are able to provide assistance over rough terrain; while these instances are comparatively rare, they can prove valuable in situations such as the recent flooding in the south-west of the UK, search-and-rescue operations for high-risk and vulnerable persons, or deployments in rural areas. While there are many kinds of police activities for which mounted police are normally unsuitable – particularly, rapid response to calls for service – this research suggests that, for certain outcomes, there are areas of police activity where mounted police are exceptionally and uniquely useful.

9.2. Based on the use patterns and demonstrable value of mounted police units identified by this research, consideration should be given to positioning them strategically as a resource primarily to support neighbourhood policing

Initial fieldwork and discussions found that mounted police are traditionally seen by mounted and non-mounted officers at both senior and junior levels as public-order resources whose core value lies in their ability to control crowds. This characterisation of their work is reflected in their current placement within the National Conflict Management (NCM) portfolio. In turn, the work of mounted police at neighbourhood levels was often seen as very secondary – possibly even something that was done to pass the time between public order events. Recognising that some forces have begun to focus much more on neighbourhood-level tasking and support of operations for their mounted sections, the accepted wisdom appears nonetheless to broadly be that the cost of mounted policing is justified by their use in crowd situations. However, this research suggests that the primary value of mounted police lies in their work at neighbourhood level. Neighbourhood deployments account for the majority of the actual work of mounted police, and the effects from their deployment at neighbourhood level were found to be more substantial than what was found in other contexts. In turn, their exclusive location in the NCM area may usefully be reconsidered.

9.3. It is not entirely possible to separate the effects of the horses from the effects of the officers riding them

A horse may increase the likelihood of engagement with citizens, and on their own may have an effect on citizen attitudes. Indeed, observations show that horses generate substantially more casual engagement with citizens than do neighbourhood foot patrols, and this difference is attributable in large part to the horse itself. However, while mounted police may create a space for positive engagements with and interpretations of police in neighbourhood contexts, officers also determine the tone and content of that engagement, especially where engagements turn into extended conversations. In turn, the value of a police horse is bolstered by a personable, outgoing

and engaged rider. The importance of the actions of the officer (rather than simply the presence of an officer on horseback) within a deployment was reflected in football focus groups, and is recognised within the broader crowd psychology literature and available guidance on the importance of dialogue and liaison in public order policing.[47] The value of horses in these contexts is thus connected to the riders' actions.

9.4. The value of mounted police is not easily monetised, and estimations of their value will be related to the priorities of police in an area

This research outlines many of the benefits of mounted policing. While there is some indication from this research of the additional cost represented by mounted police, these benefits are not easily monetised. Mounted units clearly provide a substantial value in terms of public engagement in neighbourhood settings when compared with foot patrols. The research also provides evidence of the value of mounted police in certain types of public order scenarios; however, it cannot provide conclusive evidence on whether or to what degree they 'improve' public order capacity overall. Moreover, the choice to deploy mounted units will depend in large part on the priorities of a police organisation – and the degree to which that organisation feels that the kinds of engagements generated by mounted police are in line with organisational goals. It is therefore important to understand the relative value that a force's management places on the specific capabilities and effects of mounted police, when judging whether or not mounted police are an appropriate resource to develop and deploy.

These conclusions should be considered alongside the caveat that, while the international survey suggests these findings may be transferable outside of the British context, certain findings – particularly the effects of mounted patrols on neighbourhood trust, confidence and visibility – may be related to a particularly British appreciation of policing on horseback. Only further similar research in other contexts would provide clear answers regarding the effectiveness of mounted policing in other countries.

9.5. Suggestions for future tracking of the value of mounted police

It is outside the brief of this project to provide recommendations on how mounted police should be deployed in the future, and it is firmly believed that this is a decision to be made by police managers, PCCs and policymakers in a context of many complex decisions regarding how best to police locally, regionally and nationally with limited resources. However, based on experience of conducting this extensive research study, the researchers are well placed to provide suggestions of how police forces can track and assess the value of mounted police.

A number of areas for future research are implied by the findings presented here. First, to get a better sense of the effects of mounted police in football policing, the ways in which football policing data are collected could be modified to include full resourcing data as well as qualitative indicators of policing at a

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[47] See, for example, Stott (2009).

match. The dataset of 49 matches with full resourcing data showed substantial variation in the levels of resourcing at football matches, and the validation workshops confirmed that football match resourcing is much more art than science at present. Given the already substantial infrastructure in place for collection of data on football policing through FIOs and the UKFPU, adding resourcing and evaluation data could greatly enhance the ability of police forces to consider resourcing levels against key outcomes.

Second, the effect of mounted police patrols in crime hot-spots could be tested The patrol experiment data did not suggest an impact of mounted patrols on crime levels in an area, but it must be remembered that these were not 'hot-spot' patrols as such – they were not targeted at micro-spatial areas with recent levels of high crime, and were instead deployed across entire neighbourhoods that were selected because they had not experienced mounted policing recently. Additionally, the experiment 'dose' of mounted police – eight patrols over a one-month period – is much lower than would be implied by a hot-spots deployment. It has been reported to the research team that mounted police are regularly used as part of broader targeted patrol operations, and police forces could therefore with some effort track the outcomes of these deployments.

Overall, the research team has heard a number of anecdotal accounts of effective deployments of mounted police – in 'cooling' hot-spots, in improving public relations in an area, in allowing lower resourcing at low-risk 'Cat A' football matches and so on. However, there have been few if any examples of documentation of these effects and outcomes. This is certainly related to a broader issue in public policing regarding how outcomes are tracked and measured, and the challenges that police forces face in terms of collecting good data alongside many often more pressing demands is recognised. Nonetheless, in a context of austerity, building this evidence base offers a way to offer decisionmakers the best available evidence, to validate or challenge existing beliefs about the effectiveness of police on horseback, and to better target these resources at those areas where they have the highest demonstrable value.

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