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1. Executive summary

1.1. Background

Conducted Energy Devices (CEDs) were introduced into UK policing in 2003 and were initially made available for use only by authorised firearms officers. The CED adopted by the UK is manufactured by AXON and referred to as Taser. The College of Police describes CEDs as follows.

> *incapacitate a subject through use of an electrical current that*
>
> *produces a sensation of intense pain. It is one of a number of tactical options available when dealing with an incident with the potential for conflict. CEDs will not be routinely used to police public order or public safety events, but may be used as an option to respond to circumstances within the operation. The use of CED ranges from the physical presence of a drawn device through to the application of electrical discharge to a subject. Even before a*

1.3.1. Affected community voices

- For many of the community participants who chose to engage with the study, several were relatives or close associates of people who had died after Taser had been used against them.
- For our participants, the use of Taser is experienced within a broader context of perceived police illegitimacy, articulated in terms of disproportionality in police use of force (i.e., heavy handedness) as well as embedded institutional and structural racism. The police, in turn, were seen as an organisation that was just one element of a broader criminal justice system unable and unwilling to either deliver even-handedness to Black and minority communities or adequately holding the police to account.
- Decisions by officers to utilise Taser were described as generally driven by colour, most pronounced with regards to dealing with young Black men

- Scrutiny Groups Members (SGMs) we spoke to in the study described taking their work extremely seriously, were concerned to safeguard their independence and were able to cite examples where they felt they had made a difference around incidents involving concerns about unnecessary police use of force.
- Yet they also described the systematic disempowerment of scrutiny groups in multiple ways. Their experiences were that their groups were under-resourced and lacked support. Particularly, they were often not set up to focus specifically on the use of Tasers, nor to address the broader disproportionality issues that surround it. As such SGMs also described how they were unable to provide adequate scrutiny of this important issue.
- SGMs identified a range of structural, practical, and capacity issues which were felt to hamper the effectiveness of these volunteer-led structures, including their groups' lack of representativeness of the wider community, difficulties experienced in accessing data, difficulty accessing officer's Body Worn Video (BWV) footage, defensive attitudes and little or no genuine engagement or financial support.
- Such issues meant it was difficult for groups to shift from individual cases to identify patterns across multiple cases, and to address systemic issues in police-community relationships as well as individual incidents.
- All these factors appeared to amplify a sense of powerlessness that some SGMs feel which in turn may be fostering rather than alleviating a sense of police illegitimacy. Consequently, SGMs expressed important reservations about how much fundamental change they were able to bring about and were sceptical about the ability and desire of police to change.

1.3.3. Body Worn Video Footage (BWV)

- It is often suggested that BWV audits are an effective way forward regarding scrutiny and research-based analysis of CED use. This may well be the case, and we understand that analysis of BWV footage of Taser use for scrutiny purposes is routine among forces in England and Wales. However, mirroring the experiences of SGMs, the research team encountered acute difficulties accessing BWC footage for a variety of different reasons.
- These data sharing problems were overcome with three forces involved in the study but, even here, footage could only be viewed in two forces via police computers, thus restricting analysis. In the other force, the footage had large episodes of verbal interaction and image detail redacted.
- We were heavily reliant on the force Single Points of Contact to identify and process BWV footage incidents and so we had relatively little control over what clips we were able to review.

- Nonetheless, when undertaking analysis of this limited sample, it was evident that the footage itself was not sufficient to make adequate sense of what was happening within the police-public interactions that were occurring. To render it meaningful, it was necessary to examine the footage and cross reference it to other data sets (e.g., use of force forms, incident logs, etc.).
- Therefore, our study was only able to undertake a limited analysis of the BWV data and instead focuses on the opportunities afforded by emerging data integration capacities, like the cloud-based system being used by West Midlands Police, to enable BWV to become a useful analytical and scrutiny tool.
- However, even in our limited sample we observed several instances where use of Taser appeared to us to be contrary to the guidance provided in Authorised Professional Practice (APP) and training.

1.3.4. Taser training

- Taser training sits within a national curriculum, produced, and regulated by the College of Policing which evolves over time. Previous reports (e.g., Anglioni, 2017; IOPC 2021), and coroner conclusions have identified, amongst other issues, the need for improved inputs on de-escalation, disproportionality, vulnerability, the risks of proleraQq0.000008871e 0 0 1 24 595.5 yrtsesr

- Our observations indicated

and interpreted them as a measure of the proportionality of force within a given interaction, rather than a reflection of patterns across multiple interactions. Therefore, when provided with an opportunity to offer explanations of the racial and ethnic disparities that are evident in those statistics, several questioned their validity because the figures did not make sense of their own experiences.

- In contrast, some Black or minority ethnic officers offered powerful accounts of their own first-hand experiences of direct discrimination from some colleagues (i.e., subjective biases). Some also argued that organi

increased the likelihood that Taser had been used. However, these relationships were not statistically significant once other variables were considered, especially police reported impact factors.

half of officers working for the organisation did not record any use of force during the study period, 52.9% recorded at least one incident.

- In West Mercia, multilevel analysis was used to separate the influence of subject and officer level variables. Of those that were involved in use of force there was a decidedly skewed distribution of use of force generally and Taser specifically

overall deprived 10% of neighbourhoods in England.[6] Put differently, our data resonate with the idea that British policing is occurring within a society that is structurally racist, by which we mean that for a variety of different reasons people with ethnic minority heritage find it harder to access opportunity and wealth in the UK and are therefore more likely to reside areas of socio-economic deprivation.[7]

Second, a theme evident in our data is the centrality of mental health as a factor determining patterns of police use of Taser. The issue was evident in our discussions with affected communities who highlighted their experiences of how officers struggle to deescalate situations involving young Black males – and others - with mental health conditions. Our police interview data suggested that it was common experience among STOs to use their weapon in circumstances involving people experiencing a mental health crisis, usually involving self-harm or harm to others with a weapon. Mental

explained solely or even primarily at the level of individual officer behaviour or psychology because they are an outcome of an interaction between structural and institutional racism. For the latter, we use the definition of institutional racism developed by Sir William Macpherson who described it as the "*collective failure of an organisation to provide an appropriate and professional service to people because of their colour, culture, or ethnic origin. It can be seen or detected in processes, attitudes and behaviour which amount to discrimination through unwitting prejudice, ignorance, thoughtlessness, and racial stereotyping*" (Macpherson, 1999).[8] Beyond this, we would add, such patterns of unequal treatment and discrimination also occur because they become embedded in the routine systems, processes, and practices of an organisation. Therefore, recommendations and actions could usefully focus on the following issues.

The prioritising and targeting of specific types of crime (e.g., the supply of illegal drugs, county lines, etc.) by concentrating on relatively small urban economically deprived and ethnically diverse neighbourhoods is likely to inevitably lead to sustained patterns of ethnic disproportionality in Taser use, as well as use of force more generally. This is because such patterns of police deployment are likely to result in higher levels of recorded contact between minority communities and the police, relative to the levels of recorded contact with predominantly White communities that tend to populate the jurisdiction as a whole (e.g., the county). Given our data also suggests that Taser tends to be used where the police are active and police-citizen contact are not evenly spread, it follows that Taser is more likely to be used in areas with larger residential Black populations even if it is other factors that are 'attracting' police attention to that location (i.e., crime, deprivation, and so on).

It is important to acknowledge that these structural and institutional processes are, of course, always channelled through the actions and decisions of individual officers deployed to these locations who choose to use Taser. Nonetheless, our data underline that deployments of Taser are not merely dependent on individual officer decision-making, because its use is part of a broader institutional response to situations categorised as posing a threat or risk. Our evidence suggests that police organisations are deploying STOs in circumstances identified from the call to service as, or likely to become, potentially hazardous

is evident in the view among officers that Taser is less of a weapon and more of tool for driving behavioural compliance. Correspondingly, we would advocate that public scrutiny groups are provided with a better framework of support.

Going beyond Taser policy, our study points to broader considerations around understandings of how discriminatory practices emerge, how policing priorities shape such practices, and how policing is taking place in what we have defined as a structurally racist society fragmented by inequality and debilitated by poverty and mental illness. As we have noted, it is evident that recommendations from previous reports remain to be adequately implemented, particularly concerning the need to involve affected individuals and families within training. If left unchecked, these structural issues will mean that the ramifications of Taser use will endure, and these patterns of policing will continue to significantly contribute to what some might consider to be an ongoing legitimacy crisis for policing in England and Wales.

However, we must remind ourselves that this study can only ever offer tentative conclusions regarding our primary research questions. Our inability to access high quality data, narrowly geolocate officer use of force in all but one force area, integrate different police data sets and gather important data about officer roles, responsibilities, and deployments, all undermined our analytical capability. Consequently, the powerful and enduring issues we have sought to begin to address with this study can only be partially understood. It is therefore a central conclusion that the challenges experienced by this research project will not change without improving the quality and accessibility of police routine data collection at a national level, so that a multi-force comparative and ‘deep dive’ analysis, of the kind that we achieved with Hampshire police, can be undertaken at scale. To resolve this issue, it is imperative for all police forces in England and Wales to enhance, standardise, and integrate their data gathering and sharing practices. This should be centrally supported with quality assurance schemes put in place that would monitor both how the data is being gathered and processed. Furthermore, IT and data science support should be provided to allow the ‘legacy’ systems to be linked.

if the racial disparities in Taser use can be explained by the factors and processes at play during use-of-force incidents. The report is structured into ten substantive empirical chapters each dealing with different issues; chapter three explores some of the voices of communities disproportionately affected by Taser in England and Wales, chapter four examines scrutiny groups and public oversight of Taser; chapter five analyses the empirical opportunities afforded by Body Worn Video footage, chapter six reports on an observational study of Taser training, chapter seven provides an analysis of the experience and understanding of police officers. Chapters eight through

March 31, 2022, in contrast to 64 instances during the previous year ending on March 31, 2021, reflecting a notable decrease of 53%.

Taser usage has shown consistent year-on-year increases from the period ending on March 31, 2018, until the period ending on March 31, 2021. However, in the year ending on March 31, 2022, the level of Taser use remained similar to that of the previous year. The prior increases can be attributed to factors such as the rise in the number of Taser-trained officers and the increasing availability of STOs, which are determined by police Strategic Threat and Risk Assessments (STRAs). Additionally, the rise may have been attributable to a higher number of incidents with the potential for conflict, leading to increased STO deployment. The increase in recording Taser usage can also be attributed to the adoption of improved and simplified recording methods.[13] The similarity in Taser usage during the year ending on March 31, 2022, may also indicate a stabilisation of Taser availability and training following a period of rapid growth and that recording practices have become more established after the introduction of simplified recording methods. The data suggests that, irrespective of background, the frequency of Taser discharge remained comparable across different ethnic groups once the Taser had been drawn. Individuals perceived by officers as belonging to a Black ethnic group were involved in a higher proportion of Taser-related incidents (17%) compared to their already disproportionate representation in overall incidents involving police use of force (14%). Conversely, individuals perceived as belonging to a White ethnic group were involved in a slightly lower proportion of Taser-related incidents (70%) compared to their representation in use of force overall (73%). However, once drawn, Tasers were discharged in approximately 10% of incidents involving individuals perceived to be from a White ethnic group, while in incidents involving individuals perceived to be from a Black or Asian ethnic group, Tasers were discharged in approximately 9% of cases.

The rate of Taser utilisation is higher for individuals perceived by officers as belonging to a Black ethnic group. The use of Tasers, encompassing both discharge incidents (such as firing or using "drive-stun" or "angled drive-stun") and non-discharge uses (including drawing, aiming, and red-dotting), can be assessed for different ethnic categories. This analysis involves calculating the frequency of Taser use on individuals within each ethnic category (as perceived by the officer involved), divided by the respective residential population size of each category within a specified area (e.g., a county). While this calculation provides insights into the relative Taser usage toward ethnic groups across England and Wales, it is essential to interpret the figures with caution due to certain limitations. For example, data on the ethnicity of all individuals who come into contact with the police are not always recorded

3.2. Introduction

This chapter seeks to explore perspectives of non-White ethnic minority communities affected by Taser and, more specifically, on the causes and consequences of Taser disproportionality and how these might be tackled. We have chosen the title Affected Community Voices to emphasise the multiplicity of accounts and views expressed and aim to represent key themes from what we heard, while appreciating that many people did not want to engage in the research, or with particular research questions, for multiple reasons. Multiple reports, including those by Angiolini (2017) and the IOPC (2021), have highlighted the need to attend to the voices of those affected by, and on the receiving end of, police use of force. As such reports have noted, these experiences are critically important in their own right. Moreover, a growing literature demonstrates that experiences of police use of force, including more indirect experiences, such as viewing social media footage, can be highly traumatic and have far reaching consequences (Hawkins, 2022; Stoudt et al., 2011; Williams, 2021) – perhaps especially for viewers from minoritised backgrounds (Ang, 2021), particularly Black people who may be, as a consequence, more vulnerable to developing PTSD (Isen, 2022).

However, with a few partial exceptions (e.g., Deuchar et al., 2019; Dymond, 2022; Rojek et al., 2012; Root et al., 2013), the academic literature on Taser has traditionally focused on officer accounts of the weapon. Yet if we wish to understand and tackle the causes and consequences of the disproportionate use of Taser, studies cannot be restricted to the perspectives of those carrying the weapon, but also need to consider the views of those affected by it and those critical and challenging of it. As one of our participants noted "*they* [officers] *need to know the lived experience impact of what they are doing*" (Participant 10). In turn, this must include not only listening to more positive, 'familiar' or 'comfortable' views about the weapon, but listening to views, themes and suggestions that may be, for some, difficult or uncomfortable to hear and cannot be ignored in a society that emphasises policing by consent. Interviewing those affected by the weapon also provides an important counterpart to, and source of triangulation for, interviews with officers and others.

3.3. Methods

3.3.1. Recruitment and participants

Participants were recruited in multiple ways. A call for participants was held on the project website, via Twitter and a Twitter space. Project consultants drawn from, and with links to, minoritised communities were also involved in a variety of roles. This included raising awareness of the project amongst potential participants, designing the interview schedule, circulating the invite to interview, working to recruit participants directly, conducting individual and group interviews, and a roundtable held with Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) and others to introduce and discuss the project. Following the roundtable, invitations to participate were also kindly circulated by

Indeed, in line with the theme of broader historical context, it was described by some as important not just to focus on the accountability of individual officers per se but to hold senior leadership and the police as an institution responsible for a failure to adequately hold individual officers to account. One participant noted, for example:

> *-to-day police officers who, on the individual level, I*
>
> *against very challenging circumstances. But the police as an institution* [are] *just very stubborn to accept wrongdoing and embrace change. It's at that institutional level where I have the most disappointment, because if the leaders were speaking up about these individual cases of wrongdoing, poor judgement, poor application of professional standards and calling it out at that*
>
> *Actually, what is happening is that these things are going on and being covered up and being brushed off and officers can have several disciplinary actions ongoing against them and still remain*
>
> *serve the communities that they were meant to*

of these things, when you are a working person, they can just

Others describe how such experiences of inequity fed into a lack of trust and legitimacy not just in the police but in the broader criminal justice system and in its ability to hold the police to account, with one participant describing a wider experience of systemic racism.

> *system that permeates the disproportionality in every avenue*
>
> *of being a marginalised group that we face every day and are told to suck it up.* (Participant 15).

As such, a key theme was a lack of accountability. However, this was not merely limited to the issue of individual police officer's use of Taser. Rather, it fed what appears to be a narrative of broader alienation from and distrust of policing and the crim

For some, such differences were due to a lack of understanding of disparities in culture and communication styles. As one participant explained:

> *shouting. They* [police]
>
> *from being brought up in the Caribbean like that. But they think*
>
> *they* [police] (Participant 21).

However, for others, such police attitudes and behaviours were not just about single issues; rather they were the result of the way ethnicity interacted with other factors. Participants described dehumanising and adultification processes focused in particular on Black children:[ii]

> *-year-old where the Taser was drawn. The ten-*
> *year-*
> *back to the adultification of Black children. The adultification*
>
> *O*
> [Taser] *deployment -* [the officers] *see it.*
>
> *whole thing about us being bigger or stronger and angrier, that c*
> *these Imperial systems, like the police force.* (Participant 13).

Germaine Phillips, the mother of Adrian McDonald, discussed her views of how being young, male, and Black whilst suffering a mental health crisis in a White social context, contributed to the death of her son.

> *which is dominated by huge amounts of economic deprivation and sometimes, the high level of crime. To be scrutinised, and again,*
>
> *though I have my work badge present, etcetera, I was made to feel less than who I am and what I represent.* (Participant 2).

As the above quote from Germaine Phillips also indicates, another important intersection was identified between ethnicity and mental health (see also IOPC, 2021). A family member of Oladeji Omishore noted their views on how ethnicity and mental health interact with officer psychology to increase the probability that Taser will be used, and the subject will be exposed to lethal force.

> [family member's] *case a little bit, there's a perception, particularly with Black men of aggression, of this big Black man* [that] *there was no other way to subdue* [but] *to resort othered Black bodies have become. So that when you are confronted with one, you kind of*
>
> *compassion that potentially other people might be able to receive, particularly Black people in mental health crisis and that intersection of Black men and mental health crisis seems to spiral the lethalness of Taser.* (A family member of Oladeji Omishore).

Such tragic deaths were not described as isolated incidents, but as reflective of an inability of the police to understand and deal wl wl wl wl wwwwwwve my 5 23.75 Tm0.2 g-6(l)-6( )

have a Taser, you have to rely on de-escalation, communication and body language and all those sorts of things. Those things can be trained, and I think giving more people Tasers takes away some of the responsibility of actually putting that as the first option. (Participant 28).

3.4.3. Taser as a high level of force

These experiences with Taser were therefore described as having multiple and long-lasting impacts on the person experiencing it, including but also extending beyond the immediate interaction with the police. In the first case, the lack of control over his own body and the sharing of the recording of the incident was described in ways which created psychological pain that combined with the physical pain of the Taser deployment itself. More broadly, participants in this and previous research (Dymond, 2022) told us about the psychological harms and the traumatising psychological effects that occurred following Taser incidents, and the ways in which their behaviour changed, even if no physical harm had occurred. These experiences, described as emotional and traumatic, were seen to have long-term impacts on those involved in ways that were rarely recognised or supported, leaving lifelong damage to those impacted.

> *back on track with their lives because some people, it disrupts their lives immensely.*

> *could be Tasered. Essentially Tasers will deepen that racialised trauma.* (Jessica Pandian, INQUEST).

Participants questioned whether the end result justified the harm inflicted on communities, especially given what was described as the police's focus on low level crime at the expense of crimes of other kinds.

> *only low-*
> *changing the policy from low-level crime to keep the relationship with communities more stable than dividing the communities and*
>
> *you for minor offences, drugs, cannabis and all that. Is it worth it terrorising communities to bring down building* (Participant 23).

3.4.5. Disengagement from policing

As the quotes above indicate, a related theme was disengagement from the police and policing. For example, some expressed reticence to call the police in the event they were experiencing an emergency. One participant noted.

> [I'm] *quite fearful. Not just for myself, but for my* [family members] *who are just going about their day-to-day business. Knowing that*

make any sense. (Participant 1).

3.4.6. Totemic cases

Against this contextual backdrop, individual high-profile cases of Taser use come to be seen as totemic. Throughout the research, several incidents involving Taser – most, but not all, where people tragically lost their lives – were referred to regularly by different participants. Discussions around these incidents were invariantly how they encapsulated for participants the illegitimacy of their community's relationship to the police. One such incident was the death of Dalian Atkinson, on which one participant reflected:

> *think they are the main issues, it is the fact that the police did everything wrong, so if they had dealt with it efficiently, they would have got praise for it. That was their time to do something right. And they tried to back their people, they tried to clear, cover it up as much as possible and it just gave them a bad reputation, and again, they insulted the community.* (Participant 27).

Other totemic incidents that were mentioned by interviewees included the paralysing of Jordan Walker-Brown and the death of Oladeji Omishore. Participants noted that, given this context, such incidents carried with them increasing likelihood of precipitating major incidents of civil unrest. For example, a family member of Oladeji Omishore noted that.

> *Generation*[s] *who had* [weren't] *exposed to their wrongdoing live on Twitter in the way that we are. Communities are able to engage with in a way that they haven't before. And so, I think if these stories continue. It's only a matter of time before there's public unrest.* (A family member of Oladeji Omishore).

However, participants also noted that this was not inevitable and spoke about the necessity for inclusive discussions and urgent change going forward. For example, one participant noted.

> *What is also important is that change any of the discussion and dialogue and a narrative around Taser without the involvement of those with lived experience. There* [needs to be] *an opportunity for those of us with another*

Beyond the Metropolitan Police, a report by HMICFRS found that, with regards to stop and search, and use of force in particular:

> *Whilst we are there to advise and comment on Taser to the Government, Chief Constables, politicians and the media, we are strictly independent and abide by the Nolan Principles* (NTSAG, undated).

As the name suggests, the NTSAG operates nationally and isn't focused on any one force or force area.

4.3.2. Independent Advisory Groups (IAGs)

The College of Policing Engagement and Communication APP notes that:

> *Independent advisory groups (IAGs) should reflect the diversity of local communities and can advise the force on policies and procedures. An IAG can help to build trust and confidence within the community, and can help the police to understand the implications or effect of policies and actions on different communities within the force area* (College of Policing, 2020).

Some IAGs mention a lineage tracing back to the Stephen Lawrence Inquiry report (Macpherson, 1999) and its recommendation of the need to increase trust and confidence in policing amongst minority ethnic communities, eliminate racist prejudice and disadvantage and demonstrate fairness in all aspects of policing.

4.3.3. Community Scrutiny Panels

According to the Home Office, community scrutiny panels allow members of the community to review individual police interactions with the public (Home Office, 2023). They tend to operate at force or sub-force level, and often focus on specific powers. As such, they can be subdivided into various types, depending on the nature of the interaction they are reviewing. For our purposes, they include the following:

1. Groups that focus on stop and search. Amongst other documents, the College of Policing Authorised Professional Practice on stop and search states that "*all forces should have processes in place that allow members of the public to hold the chief constable to account for the use of stop search powers in their force area.*" For example, in London 'Stop and Search Community Monitoring Groups / Network' (CMGs) have been established. These are described by MOPAC as "*groups comprised of volunteer members of the community... (to) monitor all local stop and search issues including the legal powers, number of stops, arrest rates, disproportionality, complaints and Body Worn Video footage. CMGs can also identify and share best practice with other CMGs through their membership of the London-wide Community Monitoring Network (CMN)*" (MOPAC, undated). These groups would only focus on Taser in the context of stop and search.

2. *Groups that focus on use of force and / or Taser.* While community scrutiny is perhaps most advanced around stop and search, in some areas groups have been set up in order to provide a similar function for the use of force and / or Taser. For example, in one force, scrutiny group members described the operation of a panel that "*looks at use of force, including Taser*", with a remit to " [use of force] [and] *provide comments to be fed back to the officer*" (all Participant 12) and to receive further action where necessary.

3. Groups that focus on policing encounters more broadly. For example, the Metropolitan Police describes Police Encounter Panels (PEPs) as: "*being created to give communities an opportunity to feedback on policing encounters, by watching Body Worn Video (BWV) footage and offering their views on what went well or what the Met could improve. The panels will be set up across 12 geographical Basic Command Units (BCUs), and will comprise of independent community members, senior police officers and the Met Federation or appropriate staff support associations*".[16]

As such, while these groups share an emphasis on 'independence', they differ in some crucial respects. These include; geographical remit; composition, chairing arrangements and reporting structure (whether to the police and / or other bodies); area of interest, including the degree to which they focus on Taser and disproportionality; whether they have a role to look at individual incidents and, if so, whether they focus on use of force forms, BWC footage and / or other information; whether they have a role to look at policies and procedures; and links with, and role in regards to, local communities. Importantly, for our purposes, these groups also differ to the extent to which they focus on Taser. While some, such as the NTSAG, are focused entirely on Taser, other groups are focused on stop and search, or on community relations more broadly. As they were not designed to look specifically at Taser, they would only be expected to do so to the extent to which it intersects with their main area of interest (for example, stop and search incidents involving Taser).

4.4. Methods

4.4.1. Recruitment and Participants

We aimed to recruit participants from members of scrutiny groups whose remit included police use of Taser. This included groups that provided scrutiny nationally (i.e., the NTSAG) and groups that provided scrutiny locally (i.e., were focused on police

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forces, or areas within police forces). To enhance triangulation with the other strands of the research, we focused on West Midlands, West Mercia, and the Metropolitan Police. Given the size of the Metropolitan Police, we focused on the 5 London boroughs with the highest rates of Taser use, as well as seeking to speak with

Second, as discussed above, it should also be noted that many of the groups we spoke to did not have a specific remit to look at Taser exclusively. This is an important finding in its own right (to which we return later), but also has implications for the sample of people we were able to speak to. Many participants were members of groups focused on stop and search and, in at least one case, interviewees were reticent to express opinions on Taser, feeling that it wasn't in the groups mandate and that they weren't sufficiently knowledgeable about it to be able to comment. For the avoidance of doubt, this does not imply an individual failing, or a failing of the scrutiny groups we spoke to, as many of these had terms of reference that were focused on other issues.

Third, while we attempted to sample in three force areas, the majority of our participants were involved in scrutiny of the Metropolitan Police, which limits the representativeness of the sample. That said, there were no marked differences between the themes discussed by participants involved in scrutiny of the Metropolitan Police and participants from other force areas; all participants raised similar issues and concerns. We also note the value of focusing on scrutiny arrangements in the Metropolitan Police, as the force with the largest number of Taser incidents.

4.4.3. Data Collection and Analysis

Data was collected through a mixture of group and individual interviews that were held both in person and online throughout 2022. A semi-structured interview guide was used as a starting point for interviews (available in the accompanying 'Qualitative Research Appendix'). Interviews ranged in length, with the shortest being approximately 30 minutes and the longest lasting over an hour. Where permission was given, interviews were recorded via dictaphone and / or video conferencing software. Multiple people were involved in conducting interviews, the subsequent analysis of the transcripts and identification of key themes emerging from the evidence collected, using an approach drawing from Grounded Theory and Thematic Analysis (Glaser & Strauss, 2017). This process aimed to see the world from the perspectives stated by the participants; to identify key passages and themes arising from the material; and to select quotes which exemplified particular themes (please see the accompanying 'Qualitative Research Appendix' for further details).

All participants were given anonymity as standard, however a small number of participants asked to waive this right and, as such, have been identified in the report. Where participants had requested to waive anonymity, they were contacted prior to publication to ensure they were happy for the extracts from their transcripts to be included, and to double check that they still wished to waive anonymity. To protect anonymity for the other participants, we have allocated them a unique number to allow readers to identify how often a particular voice is quoted in the report, while maintaining anonymity. To further protect anonymity, we do not identify which scrutiny groups participants belong to and, instead, combine and analyse the data from scrutiny group members as a whole. This also enables us to draw connections and themes across scrutiny groups and to provide a collective analysis of scrutiny groups**.**

objectivity and being a critical friend, it's quite a challenge. And you're recruiting those people from within the community of the borough that you're in, you know, and you can't always guarantee that the people you'll get becoming members will maintain those principles. (Participant 9).

> *It's a make-believe world that they* [the police] *are accountable and we can hold them to account. We don't hold anybody to account* (Interview with Dr Nicodemi).

For some, this was expressed in terms of scrutiny groups being merely a way that police can be seen to be allowing the community to hold them to account without doing so. As such, while pockets of good practice existed these remained peripheral making little impact on the organisation as a whole.

> *-level projects but they can't just be little islands of good practice. You know it's, really, how does all this knit together in terms of real culture change within the organisation? What I think needs to happen is that we need to see the Met actually embracing accountability structures. At the moment the Met is an organisation that ticks boxes as far as accountability*
>
> *reflection, self-analysis and then some kind of change.* (Participant 18).

As another participant explained, this difficulty in making a meaningful impact was because of the defensive attitude of the police toward scrutiny.

> *nstead of actually listening as much as they can, they defend and justify, instead of being able to just, sort of, step back.* (Participant 6).

As such, scrutiny groups risked being counterproductive; not only unable to hold the police to account but inadvertently enabling and legitimising disproportionate practices. For example, one participant stated.

> *with very good intentions can quickly become an absolute waste of time*
>
> *rather than holds them to account.* (Participant 7).

Indeed, it is worth noting that

> *constituted the group to engender meaningful consultation. Accordingly, we can no longer continue as members.* [17]

For those that chose to stay involved with scrutiny groups, there was a sense of participants feeling disenchanted, disempowered, and insufficiently listened to – but nevertheless feeling like they needed to be there to try to enact change, despite these issues. Participants noted, for example.

> [the police] *can ignore those who are closer to you and those who are meant to be trusted then help the rest of the community.*
>
> ,
>
> (Participant 17).

4.5.4. Access to information

Another theme pertained to accessing relevant information, including Body Worn Camera (BWC) footage of Taser incidents and Taser data. Viewing BWC footage was described as an important way of monitoring Taser usage, in theory, but was beset with difficulties in practice. For example, one participant noted.

> *we were routinely given access to every single Body Worn Video where a Taser was used in order to be able to scrutinise them and*
>
> *as a group not getting access to that information in order to be able to look in and decide for ourselves.* (Participant 13).

> *relation to the use of force or where Tasers were used.* (Participant 13).

Moreover, participants described situations where they were unable to view footage they had selected, noting that practice seems to vary across groups. A participant who was a member of two different scrutiny groups described how this varied across groups.

> [For one group] *we selected an encounter by consensus of opinion. The Metropolitan Police said,*
>
> *Now that to me doesn't sound very open and honest from the Whereas* [in the other group] *and we see it, in its entirety.* (Participant 19).

A related issue pertained to limits for retaining footage, which under certain circumstances, was deleted after a month (see the next Chapter for a detailed exploration of the use of BWC footage for research purposes). This prevented scrutiny groups from tracking officers over time, and from scrutinising more closely officers that frequently used Taser. As one participant noted.

> [so] *we then have to check every individual Taser use to see if that was a lawful use. However, the data is only kept for 30 days, the* [so] *we can only test this for the past month. Now, his past month it may be okay. So, all we can do is*
>
> (Participant 12).

This was compounded by difficulties scrutiny groups faced in accessing data and policies around Taser. One participant expressed this issue succinctly.

> [has asked] *for use of force statistics in relation to stop and search,*
>
> *people involved,*
>
> *into areas or ethnicities or anything like that so, as a scrutiny ce is being used. Most p)4 1 9@05500484.9 176.8 Tm5TJETQq0Tm5TJETQq0Tm5TJETQq0Tm5TJETQq*

5. Body-worn video

5.1. Chapter summary

This chapter examines how police Body-Worn Video (BWV) may be leveraged to explore the interactional dynamics between officers and ‘subjects’ in incidents involving Taser and how these dynamics may contribute to patterns of racial and ethnic

We conclude by drawing out several cross-cutting themes and briefly reflect on the opportunities afforded by emerging data integration capacities, like the cloud-based system being used by West Midlands Police, to enable BWV to become a useful analytical and scrutiny tool. We argue that a mixed method approach, in all likelihood, including a case study approach able to take a 'deep dive' into local particularities, is likely to be best placed to generate useful and actionable knowledge from BWV data. However, we point out that such research would still have to overcome the substantial sampling and data extraction issues that this chapter has highlighted before it would be in a position to meaningfully address complex questions.

5.2. Introduction

Technology has become central to policing. With complex surveillance systems, citizens behaviours and their interaction with frontline officers are increasingly surveilled (Joh, 2016). A fast-growing addition to this panopticon is the Body Worn Camera (BWC), the portable device that fits visibly onto police officers' uniforms to digitally record their encounters with the public. Their use by police forces in England and Wales has increased exponentially across the last decade (IPCC, 2016). The proliferation of BWCs is propelled by the dual benefits brought about by these small, relatively unobtrusive, devices. On the one hand, footage from these cameras (Body Worn Video, BWV) is used for evidential purposes, primarily because it provides direct visual footage of incidents or records verbal utterances from witnesses and those involved. On the other hand, BWV opens officer conduct to scrutiny (though see the previous chapter), as the footage is used to investigate complaints, thus, it is assumed, empowering public trust and confidence in policing (IPCC, 2016).

From a scientific perspective, however, BWV opens significant research opportunities and capacities that allow for detailed analysis of police-citizen interactions. Specifically, BWV may aid our understanding of the potential role of ( )-179(o)-6(f)7( )-179(( )-1

In Part 2 of this chapter, we then reflect on our own experiences of trying to gain a sample of BWV showing incidents involving Taser use. Our intention was to explore the data to begin to understand the extent to which racial disparities in Taser use can be explained by factors and processes at play during use-of-force incidents. Accordingly, we aimed to analyse BWV footage of incidents involving the police use of Taser to try and better understand the escalation and de-escalation dynamics and processes. In this respect, we sought to explore the usefulness of structured coding approaches such as those based in Procedural Justice Theory (PJT; see Nawaz & Tankebe, 2018) and the Observing Rapport-Based Interpersonal Techniques (ORBIT) model (Alison e al., 2013).

However, mirroring the experiences of some community scrutiny groups outlined in the previous chapter and the barriers we identify in Part 1, we report upon the considerable difficulties we encountered accessing BWC footage. Moreover, when undertaking an exploratory analysis of a limited sample of BWV, it was evident that the footage itself was not sufficient to make adequate sense of what was happening within the police-public interactions that were occurring. To render it analytically meaningful, it was necessary to cross-reference the footage to other police data sets (e.g., use of force forms, incident logs, etc.).

Finally, and importantly, our limited review of BWV revealed a few instances where Taser was used in ways that appeared counter to training and doctrine. Whilst it is impossible to generalise given the small sample of BWVs we obtained, the fact that we observed these examples in such a small body of BWV examples is notable. It highlights a potential disconnect between Taser training, doctrine, and everyday policing practices.

Part 3 concludes by drawing out several cross-cutting themes and briefly reflects on the implications. We focus on the opportunities afforded by emerging data integration capacities, like the cloud-based system being used by West Midlands Police, to enable BWV to become a useful analytical and scrutiny tool. We also argue that a mixed method approach, in all likelihood including a case study approach able to take a ‘deep dive’ into local particularities, is likely to be best placed to geoγ ҫ

Evidential'. A non-evidential clip without any tag appears to be normally retained for approximately a month but then subsequently deleted. Non-evidential footage tagged

outside of that specific organisation including, other forces, research organisations and community stakeholders. However, we also note that some organisations are moving toward third-party cloud solutions for storing and sharing their BWVs. One reference point for this type of project is in the US, where the Complex Social Interaction Lab[19] has obtained its own version of Evidence.com and can archive and annotate unredacted video. Whilst the legal protections in England and Wales are clearly not equivalent to those in the US (see below), this approach could potentially be shown to regulators and research boards as a potential model for addressing BWV as a research tool.

5.3.2.6. Complying with GDPR legislation

After the enactment of the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) in the UK under the Data Protection Act (2018)[20], the legal landscape for sharing digital data containing personal data changed significantly. GDPR clearly defines a legal pathway for the lawful sharing of personal data for research purposes, as well as specifying the organisational duties in handling it. BWV data is in one of the most sensitive legal categories, as it invariably contains detailed personal information (e.g., images of

be completed to access the data, with careful consideration given to how personal data will be handled and protected. The DPIA will need to ensure that the scale and category of personal data is minimised, mitigate any identifiable data protection risks arising from the data sharing agreement and costs will need to be factored into any funding arrangements to ensure this work is undertaken appropriately in ways that do not unnecessarily delay the onset of the research itself.

5.3.2.7. Anonymising / pseudonymising data

Depending on the lawful basis for sharing statistical or handwritten records with third parties, police forces may anonymise or pseudonymise the data before sharing it by redacting personal information, such as name and addresses, that could otherwise allow individual people in the dataset to be identified. Aspects of data captured in BWC footage may need to be pseudonymised before it can be shared with third parties.

Interviewees suggested that currently, footage must be pseudonymised

securely appropriate to its risk level. Some police forces have begun to experiment with data sharing via third party cloud services, such as ‘Box’. However, such cloud services should be used with caution as providers seldom disclose their server location and the transfer and storing of personal data outside the UK requires strong justification and comprehensive risk mitigation under GDPR. If a sharing police force opts to transfer BWVs to a recipient organisation digitally, a better way would be a direct transfer to the recipient organisation’s ICT infrastructure, physically located within the UK via a secure connection. The receiving organisation should establish a level of security on par with police systems so that BWV data can be transferred and stored securely.

5.3.2.8. Summary

To summarise, interviewees recognised the complexities of data sharing and saw these processes being a considerable barrier to future work. We suggest that at the very least, for external researchers (e.g., University-based staff) to access BWV systems security clearance, data protection impact assessments and data sharing agreements will need to be established with every police organisation involved. If data is to be shared, based on our interviews, it should be in accordance with the following guidance:

- The sharing police force and recipient organisation should jointly assess the data protection risk and develop a corresponding data sharing framework that balances the risks against the benefits of sharing BWV footage for research purposes.

Adding to this complexity, our interviewees suggested that defining use of force ‘incidents’ within the BWV dataset alone will not be feasible, as they are not categorised in this way. The basic data unit is not defined by ‘incidents’, but by ‘clips’ of duration of up to 30 minutes. It is possible for there to be multiple clips that relate to a single incident, which may not be linked. A more feasible way to sample use of force incidents is through using use of force forms and extracting the relevant BWVs and other pertinent reports from different police systems. In other words, BWV data needs to be linked to other police datasets. For example, if the research is oriented toward understanding the dynamics of interaction potentially driving disproportionalities in police use of force it will be necessary to utilise use of force forms to sample incidents and code some of the variables for analysing the interaction (e.g., racial identities of citizens if this is difficult to interpret from the BWV).

Thus, the interviewees suggested that a way to overcome sampling challenges is to link the metadata of accessible BWV footage from use of force incidents with their corresponding use of force forms, as a means of identifying samples based upon ethnicity, gender, and age. According to the force interviewees, the forms are mandatory. Correspondingly, the most common format for use of force data is the National Use of Force Monitoring Form that contains relevant standardised variables, such as the type of force used, officers’ ethnicity, and the perceived ethnicity of the subject. Random sampling can be achieved based on the variables recorded in the forms and the BWVs corresponding to the forms can be traced and linked. In this way, sampling can be done anonymously, thus avoiding the release of actual BWV footage before they are sampled and selected for observation.

However, it is important to note the limitations of the use of force form described by the interviewees. Firstly, the form records only the highest level of force used. Secondly, the way that police categorise ‘ethnicity’ is problematic because forces rely on a combination of officer defined and self-defined ethnicity – the former can be subject to human error, the latter often missing due to members of the public refusing to self-define their ethnicity or the officer not asking them.

According to the interviewees, there are additional technical challenges for sampling BWVs in conjunction with the use of force forms, as not all BWVs are tagged with a use of force reference, requiring them to be traced manually. It is also possible that one police-public encounter involving use of force generates more than one use of

ethnicity using more complex forms of categorisation. In theory, it is possible to link BWVs to other police databases (beyond the use of force form data) to cross-check the subject demographic data and extract variables for improved segregation in sampling.

However, our interviewees suggested that with their current IT systems and processes the challenges here go beyond the time-consuming process of manually matching BWV with other records. It is apparent that recording practices often differ between police forces, and even within forces across different datasets. Consequently, methods for linking police datasets (e.g., by using a common identifying variable across datasets) are poorly developed. For example, suspect ethnicity may be recorded according to generic ethnic groups (e.g., White, Black, Asian) in one dataset and disaggregated (e.g., Indian, Pakistani, Bangladeshi, Asian Other) in another dataset. Likewise, location, ethnicity and other data may be omitted in a significant percentage of cases.

5.3.3.1. Summary

Despite the limitations associated with sampling and coding BWV data, the analytical potential of systematically observing BWV footage, even a small sample, should not be underestimated. Compared to participant observations, one can tell much more about an interaction by looking at its BWV footage repeatedly. By defining the unit of analysis at a granular level, such as utterance or bodily movements, even a small body of BWVs clips could yield a large quantity of micro data points of police-public encounters. The analysis of this ‘big data’ could potentially elucidate the endogenous structure of use of force incidents (e.g., factors associated with escalation and de-escalation) and facilitate the development of empirically informed strategies for reducing conflict.

However, based on analysis of the interviews, there are challenges that will need to be overcome to use BWV for research purposes including:

- A lack of nationally standardised techniqu 595.5 848008874 0 595.5 841.75 I 12 Tf10.0000

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was saying (e.g., “ ”), the lack of audio meant that we were having to infer the tone and content of conversations rather than being able to explore what was actually said and how.

Moreover, in some of the videos provided it was difficult, if not impossible, to ascertain the ethnicity of the subjects. This issue was variously caused by one or more of the following: redactions completely blurring out the faces of people involved; subjects wearing gloves and/or balaclavas; the darkness of clips of incidents that took place at night; obscuration due to people or other aspects of the environment blocking a clear view.

This issue was alleviated by supplementary materials (e.g., officer witness statements and use of force forms) that described the subject’s perceived ethnicity. For example, one clip shows a male in a hallway that goes into a kitchen and puts a knife to his own neck. The officer responds straightaway by firing Taser as the subject did not drop the knife as instructed. The subject was heavily blurred through redactions and the research team judged this to be a White male, but the use of force form indicated that the officer perceived the male to be of Asian origin.

This kind of redaction therefore further undermined any ability to provide meaningful analysis of the interactive dynamics between officers and subjects. The contrasting positions taken by the three forces expose the lack of clarity and need for coherent guidance such that a standardised and functional position can be determined before any large-scale research is undertaken.

Thus, in accordance with Part 1, our evaluation stresses the need for BWV footage to be viewed not in isolation but rather as part of a wider array of materials. It also emphasises the fine balancing act in forces providing data to researchers that is analytically meaningful whilst also conforming to contrasting legal advice regarding their obligations around protecting personal data, including the need to pseudonymise and to be compliant with GDPR legislation.

5.4.2.3. Structured coding frameworks

Notwithstanding the issues with accessing BWV clips and the data issues outlined, we assessed the application of structured coding frameworks and their potential for exploring racial and ethnic disparities in relation to Taser use. This draws on work by researchers who have developed coding frameworks with the aim to be able to systematically code and quantify the escalatory and de-escalatory dynamics within specific use of force incidents captured on BWV.

For example, Nawaz and Tankebe (2018) who utilised 100 stop and search encounters recorded on BWCs by Greater Manchester Police between 1st January and 31st August 2017. They examined whether these interactions adhered to the main dimensions proposed by Procedural Justice Theorists (i.e., voice, neutrality, respect, dignity). Their technique involved applying scores from 0 to 100 as a standard metric for each encounter used as a total index score of ‘procedural justice’.

Their study suggested that the majority of observed Stop and Searches were characterised by officers allowing citizens to express their voice, followed by police demonstrating respect and offering explanation. The lowest scores were given to 'conveying trustworthy motives'. This analytical approach enabled a very fine-grained coding of the interactions, rather than merely relying upon a simple binary nominal category of 'good' or 'bad'. Such a technique also opens up the data to using more powerful forms of statistical analysis.

However, when we sought to apply a PJT coding framework to the BWV incidents involving Taser an immediate issue was the complexity of coding interactions where there are multiple officers and/or subjects (c.f., Radburn et al., 2022; Savigar-Shaw et al., 2022). This was compounded by the issues of audio and visual redactions, highlighted earlier. For instance, one incident depicts a break in by two masked intruders. Officers had been sent to a report of an abandoned 999 call.

On arrival, both officers discovered the glass on the front door of the property had been smashed and two masked men were in the house with the homeowner present in one of the ground floor rooms. The BWV shows the officers enter the house. Officer 1 enters the property shouting " " whilst walking through the front door. He then turns into the doorway on the left and says, "
going on here?" as he spots the two masked men standing over the homeowner.

Officer 1 immediately starts grappling with Intruder 1, attempting to arrest him. Simultaneously, Officer 2 shouts "*Police officer with a Taser, get on the floor now, get on the floor now, get on the floor*" whilst red-dotting Intruder 2. The audio is then redacted whilst Officer 2 handcuffs Intruder 2 and places his Taser on a nearby table whilst doing so. Meanwhile, Officer 1 is still grappling with Intruder 1 and Officer 2 picks up his Taser from the table and fires it at Intruder 1 shouting "Taser, Taser" which achieved Neuro Muscular Incapacitation.

Within this scenario, it is difficult to see what value can be placed on simply assigning this situation a score between 0-100 based on its adherence to Procedural Justice principles. The nature of the live incident means that the primary objective is to arrest the intruders, keep themselves and the homeowner safe. Thus, given the high threat and risk posed to officers and the homeowner in this situation, 'voice' and 'trustworthy motives' do not seem to be useful indicators of evaluating how the officers handled and resolved the encounter. Moreover, given the multiple non-police actors it is difficult to understand whether the procedurally fair aspects of the encounter would be assessed from the perspective of the homeowner or the two masked assailants.

Accordingly, a notable limitation was the fact that a framework such as the one employed by Nawaz and Tankebe (2018) is in danger of stripping the behavioural dimensions of interactions between officers and subjects away from the contextual and situational complexities of these encounters. Our analysis questions the utility of merely coding video (e.g., the presence or absence of giving subjects 'voice') within

use of Taser incidents at the expense of drawing from other important contextual data (e.g., incident logs, Use of Force forms, witness statements).

For example, one clip shows officers driving slowly towards another stationary car in the middle of a residential street. Upon swiftly exiting their vehicle other officers can be seen and heard shouting instructions to the subject ("stand still, put your hands on your head"; "get down on your knees"; "knees now, hands on your head"; "keep them where they are, no sudden movements").

The BWV footage then shows the subject on his knees with his hands on his head. An officer shouts "cuffs, cuffs, cuffs" and a police dog can be heard barking. An officer then shouts, "do not move, put your hands where we can see them". Meanwhile the subject is red-dotted, and an officer comes in close to handcuff the subject. There is then a struggle where the subject moves and an officer shouts, "stay where you are, stay on the floor". Another officer is then heard saying "Taser's your first primary [tactic], Taser's your primary boys, we're armed officers". An officer then shouts "get your arm round the back now" towards the subject as he still struggles. It is at this point where an officer can be heard shouting "Taser. He's got a handgun, Taser him". One officer fires Taser but it is ineffective, but whilst the struggle continues another officer fires and it achieves NMI, and the subject is subsequently detained under power of the device.

At face value this may well appear as a procedurally unfair interaction where there is an apparent disproportionality in the use of force. Whilst there is mention of the handgun toward the end of the interaction, it is only by reviewing supplementary material that a fuller picture of the incident can emerge. For instance, it is apparent from the incident log and witness statements that this was assigned as a job for specially trained firearms officers due to the fact it had already been categorised by the call centre as high threat and risk. The original call for service had informed the police that the subject in question was in possession of a handgun and had earlier threatened to kill his neighbours.

Therefore, the sudden movement by the subject was deemed an immediate threat to life and hence officers used their primary less lethal option of Taser to neutralise the risk. It did subsequently materialise that the subject was in possession of a firearm. Our assessment is that without this contextual information, it is hard to form an adequate analytical assessment of factors driving the behavioural dimensions of the interaction. Moreover, it is difficult to see how the principles of Procedural Justice relate neatly to this type of interaction which was all about forcing the subject to comply in a situation of high risk and threat both to police and other members of the public. This again may highlight the utility of sampling scenarios where Taser has been used in some capacity but not fired, as these may represent scenarios of lower risk and potentially situations where de-escalatory alternatives to Taser may be more apparent or where Taser is itself the de-escalatory tactic compared to a live firearm.

Moreover, when we explored coding schemes that have previously been applied to police-citizen interactions (i.e., PJT based or ORBIT model approaches) we encountered difficulties. These included accounting for the complexity of the encounters (e.g., multiple subjects/officers) and the relevance of procedural justice elements when considered in the context of certain Taser deployments (e.g., firearms

up a series of complex legal and ethical issues regarding data retention by police that would need to be resolved as this footage is often currently destroyed within a matter of routine when it is not marked evidential.

Fourth, the necessity of supplementary material such as use of force forms and incident logs. This extra contextual information was crucial to gain and adequate understanding of what was happening within the BWV and to explore officer decision-making with regards to their use of Taser. Given these key points, first we assert that improved consistency regarding how BWV footage is stored and categorised as well as better integration with other sources of data. This would allow for easier sampling of footage to enable a more detailed understanding of the (de)escalatory dynamics that may be contributing to the patterns of ethic disproportionality within police uses of Taser. For example, during the project we were given a demonstration by West Midlands Police (WMP) of their Qlik data analytics software. The Qlik system is a significant multi-million-pound investment that enables WMP personnel access to live and detailed data dashboards. The system integrates data from a variety of sources to produce interactive data visualisations. For instance, using Qlik it was possible to focus on specific policing teams and view a breakdown of Taser use by each officer. It was also possible to delineate different types of use ing teams and view ocial, Ethnic and p3TQq0

and micro-sociological frameworks. All these programmes of work have extremely strong track records of well-funded and ongoing research with high impact within which video analysis of police-citizen encounters and use of force plays a central role (e.g., Lindegaard & Bernasco, 2018; Mosselman et al., 2018; Philpot et al., 2020). These approaches and their associated methods would allow a ‘deep dive’ approach that uses a smaller sample of BWVs but examines them empirically in granular detail. This approach does not preclude quantification and coding; it merely moves beyond relying merely upon it to embrace a ‘mixed method’ approach. For example, extracts of BWV could be offered in combination with a reflective interview tool, used to interview participants. This could be engineered with and cross referenced with localised data on the background and context to the interaction (e.g., intelligence, radio communications, participant histories, use of force report forms, outcome data, etc) for each encounter.

In much the same manner as some forces undertake scrutiny, BWV deW* nBT/m0 g0 G[12 Tf1 012

6. Taser Training

6.1. Chapter summary

This chapter addresses

6.2. Introduction

This chapter explores the initial and refresher police Taser training programmes across several forces in England and Wales. The broad research objective was to assess the impact and effectiveness of the content and delivery of these courses. Particularly, we sought to identify where improvements could be made in respect to Taser training provision relating to the issues of racial and ethnic disproportionality, as well as highlight the existing strengths of the course content and delivery.

Accordingly, we start with a brief overview of the national context of Taser training in England and Wales, including an outline of the national minimum standards. We then highlight several important recommendations from national reports and coroner conclusions that emphasise the need for a greater focus on disproportionality, including the need to involve the voices and perspectives of affected communities. Considering this context, we outline the findings from our observations of Taser training, including the classroom-based sessions, weapons handling, and assessment.

6.3. National Minimum Standards

Taser was introduced in England and Wales in 2003 and initially made available only to authorised firearms officers in 2004. In 2008, Taser was available to non-firearms officers who could be equipped with the device after undertaking specialist training. This transition was particularly important because it meant that training for Taser moved from delivery within the specialist world of firearms into a more generic police training framework. Thus, whilst the training curriculum for Taser remained the same the background and experience of those delivering the training changed considerably.

Taser training courses are delivered across England and Wales either by individual forces or via regional cross-force collaborations. In all cases, the core curriculum of the training is standardised via the College of Policing's National Curriculum which specifies minimum length and mandatory content. Candidate officers in each force are trained by 'in-house' trainers, but all forces in England and Wales have a Lead Taser Instructor, with some having more than one, who is trained by a small team of National Instructors overseen by the College of Policing. At the time of writing, further standardisation is being introduced via a national Taser licencing scheme which aims to provide further quality assurance and oversight procedures via an inspection framework managed by the College of Policing.

Under the current national framework, to carry Taser an officer in England and Wales is required to undertake a minimum of 18 hours initial training (typically delivered across 3 days). Once accredited, these Specially Trained Officers or STOs, must then undertake refresher training of a minimum of 6 hours or 1 day every 12 months. This

> *incremental risk with multiple Taser activations and no training provided as to the maximum number of activations nor of their duration which is appropriate or safe. The evidence was that the training given to police officers in this aspect is as set down by the College of Policing and that it is silent as to the potential incremental risk of multiple and or sustained activations (the sc*
>
> (p. 2).

He continued:

either: have been confirmed in the rank of constable, (or equivalent agency rank / grade), or be a student officer having met the requirements for student officers wishing to access CED training or be a special constable having met the requirements for special constables wishing to access CED training[36]. Accordingly, in "*line with national guidance and training, the CED user should possess sound judgement, a knowledge and understanding of the NDM to resolve incidents involving conflict, have demonstrated maturity of action in the workplace, demonstrated an ability to use legitimate force in a proportionate manner and have an acceptable Professional Standards / Complaints and Misconduct record. There is no requirement for psychological profiling to be used for selection*"[37]. The STO will be signed off by an officer of at least the rank of Superintendent and is expected to undergo a biennial eyesight test to the same level as authorised firearms officers.

6.6. The policy environment

In sum, as we have highlighted, Taser training at a local and regional level sits within a national curriculum which has evolved over time. This provides a mechanism to take into consideration the key findings and recommendations of the reports and coroner Regulation 28 conclusions we discuss above. As we have shown, these previous inquiries and reports have already emphasised the need for better levels of training for de-escalation, a fuller appreciation of the issue of disproportionality and involvement of affected communities in the training. More specifically, that Taser training provides officers with an understanding of the nature of ethnic discrimination, the social context of racism and involves genuine engagement with communities affected by Taser including bereaved people. These reports have also recommended that Taser training has a focus on vulnerability and the risks of prolonged exposure. Based on the above, it is apparent that the working assumption held by those involved in policing is that Taser training sits within a coherent suite of other training packages where officers arrive with a pre-existing set of skills. However, it is evident that the College of Policing has already recognised and been working to address the findings of its own research about the gaps in officer safety training, particularly related to communication and de-escalation skills[38].

6.7. Observational analysis

In this section, we provide an analysis of the data we gathered on the status of the delivery of Taser training in a small sample of forces. In total, we attended sessions from four initial courses and three refresher courses which contained candidates from seven police forces across England. For each of these sessions, we had between one

[36] It is also important to note that it is the individual force Chief Constables decision on who/how many they train based on their CED Strategic Threat and Risk Assessment (STRA).
[37] From NPCC (2020). *Frequently Asked Questions about TASER*.
[38] See: https://collegeofpolicing-newsroom.prgloo.com/news/college-of-policing-rolls-out-new-safety-training-for-officers

and three observers who examined the delivery of the training and engaged in ad-hoc conversations with the candidates and Trainers where appropriate[39]. The research team produced written field notes during and following each session to capture theoretically and practically meaningful episodes and exchanges. We also draw on the interviews that we conducted with police officers which are discussed in detail in the next chapter. Where we draw on these interviews, we assign each participant a number. In line with previous chapters, we include this number in parentheses after each extract to demonstrate the fact that quotations were derived from multiple sources[40]. Alternatively, where we use verbatim quotations from trainers or others within the sessions that we observed these extracts are followed with 'fieldnote' in parentheses.

6.7.1. Infrastructure

We visited four training facilities, three of these were single force facilities and one a regional centre delivering training for four regionally co-located forces. One of the single force facilities was a new purpose-built facility designed for a broad range of training requirements but was being used primarily for public order and Taser. It was a relatively new building that was reasonably well equipped to accommodate the three major components of Taser training: that is, the classroom-based sessions, passive target shoots and live play scenarios. However, others we visited were less well located and equipped. For instance, the regional collaboration facility we observed is located on a former RAF base. The old hangars are collapsing so are unsafe to use. Consequently, all the training takes place in several portacabins. The training we observed at the regional centre occurred during a hot sunny period and the classroom had poor ventilation and no air conditioning and so it was not a comfortable learning environment. The lack of financial investment in the training infrastructure was palpable to us and surprising given this centre serviced the needs of several forces. In another force, training was conducted in a range hired from the army due to a lack of suitable premises in force. While the range itself was used only by Taser training participants, at times shared spaces such as corridors, which were utilised during scenario exercises, became cramped due to others using the facilities.

The trainers we met and spoke to were all very welcoming and appeared candid. It was clear they were all highly motivated and very competent individuals with a comprehensive depth of background knowledge about Taser and its policy environment. We want to stress that it is our judgement that the trainers we met and observed took a professional approach to their work and were very conscientious and reflexive about the training they delivered. They were generally both Taser and public order trainers but as far as we were aware none were firearms trainers. They were

[39] Ad-hoc conversations referred to in this chapter and the next

often able to give highly impactful accounts of occasions where they felt Taser had been beneficial to themselves and their colleagues and tended to be highly positive about the weapon. They were often less enamoured with the environment they were being asked to deliver that training in and had much to say about the limitations they were regularly forced to confront. For example, it was the case that during our conversations with trainers that they too recognised that officer safety training was deficient in the areas outlined above, which had knock on effects for them because many of the candidate officers they were educating lacked these basic skills.

For most of our observations, it was apparent that the firing range was a relatively small space. Correspondingly, when several candidates were practising the different stances and verbal instructions the environment became congested and loud and it was our conclusion that it was not an effective learning environment. Sometimes the basic resources available for trainers were also inadequate meaning they often had to improvise by mimicking activity because they lacked props or basic equipment. Trainers in the regional centre we observed were also reliant on Taser batteries that had been discarded from operational use because they could no longer hold an adequate charge. Consequently, the trainers and candidates were frequently having to interrupt and break away from their training to change their batteries.

6.7.2. Candidate Offic

by the use of the BUGEE mnemonic to help officers understand the basic principles they should consider in Taser use: **B**e prepared to back off, **U**se of effective cover, **G**ive space and time if possible, **E**arly negotiation and **E**vacuate the immediate area. The session then explored potential environmental and situational factors and dealing with 'subjects' deliberately trying to provoke a use of force response. The final part of the session on vulnerable people revolved around children and people of small stature, the medical issues in using Taser in these contexts and the psychological impacts of using it while in the presence of children.

The last component of one of the classroom-based sessions we observed focused on the safe carriage and use of Taser. For example, the importance of carrying the weapon on the non-dominant side to aid drawing the Taser was emphasised. There was then a section relating to risk factors that influence and sometimes preclude the use of Taser (e.g., flammable materials, explosive materials, water hazards, falls from heights were all highlighted and discussed). It was also stressed by the trainers that Taser should not be used as a capture or compliance tool against a fleeing subject. This discussion of risks was reinforced by showing and critiquing an incident captured using BWV footage where a person was subject to Taser despite being at a height and therefore at considerable risk of a fall. Multiple firings and the potential for havi

(Participant 2).

This risked a situation whereby the material was too basic and ‘insulting’ for those officers that already ‘know how to de-escalate' – missing opportunities to develop their skills further – while at the same time not sufficient for those officers that did not have such skills.

The issues we observed were not limited to time, however, but also reflected working assumptions and beliefs around Taser (both implicit and explicit) that were, in turn, conveyed to candidates. As we note above, during these classroom

repeated discharge were salient. However, this incident was not mentioned at all to the officers in the training we observed at that force, even when general issues around prolonged and repeated discharges were discussed. Moreover, during our observations, both candidate officers and trainers sometimes misinterpreted the concept of disproportionality. More specifically, the discussions we observed tended

on their breastbone). This section of the course aimed to provide officers with the foundational confidence and competence in using Taser. Particularly, that they can operate the device's various controls and settings in the context of it being deployed in earnest.

Having covered the basics of handling the Taser, the candidates were then introduced

introducing situational decision-making under increasing amounts of pressure (i.e., when and if so in what form to use Taser).

6.7.4.2. Analysis of the practical course content

According to our observations, the practical elements of the course had four primary objectives. The first was to ensure that candidates were competent and confident handlers of Taser, particularly under conditions of stress. In this regard, it was notable that the trainers were skilled and proficient in introducing increasing levels of complexity and decision-making. Yet our observations also indicated that despite this logical progression, some candidates struggled with the physical handling elements and in combining these fine motor skills with decisions around when and in what form

also a sufficient basis to use Taser (e.g., it is the belief that someone may be holding and about to use a weapon that is required regardless of whether a weapon is present). Indeed, during the assessment on one refresher course a candidate officer fired a Taser at the actor in the scenario when he was merely looking inside his bag. Even though the trainers were concerned about the fact that this firing took place too early because no weapon had been visible, the candidate passed because they were able to articulate that they had assumed a weapon was present. Nonetheless, in the training courses that we observed, such examples and discussions were rarely accompanied by any explicit recognition or exploration of the ways in which assumptions may, themselves, be impacted by ethnicity and other factors.

A third key objective seemed to us to be about teaching the candidate officers how to take control of interactions through Taser. In effect, by having and deploying Taser officers can take a dominant position in the interaction with 'subjects' using it alongside 'tactical communications' in ways that are proportionate to situations of high threat and risk. For example, trainers on one course we attended suggested that "*Taser is designed for a reason* " (Fieldnote). Therefore, whilst it was emphasised within every session that Taser is not to be used as a 'tool for compliance', candidates were taught to use it in ways that leave 'subjects' with little choice but to adhere to the commands of officers.

This was visibly difficult for some officers who struggled to transition from the way in which they are used to policing without Taser. For instance, one Response officer we spoke to on an initial training course suggested that she usually negotiates and "*talks her way out of trouble*" (Field ld ł eld ld

in a way that did not involve the deployment of Taser were effectively precluded[44]. As one Taser trainer explained:

> *The scenarios are difficult. So, if you imagine when an officer comes on a course, we have to assess them. Now, it might seem strange to you, but I'm not there to assess how they talk to people. I'm not there to assess how they stand. I'm not there to assess their uniform. I'm there to assess Taser. So, in a way, I have to write a scenario that puts their arm up their back that makes them use a Taser. So, they're very, much what I would call, gift us somebody else, and that somebody else is going to be presenting must use that.* (Participant 2).

However, scenarios that can be resolved without discharging Taser – and, indeed, without the weapon even being drawn – can play an important role in ensuring that officers are assessed not only on their ability to use the weapon, but on their ability to refrain from using the weapon, and to de-escalate situations without using force (see also Dymond, 2022 for similar findings on Taser; Cushion, 2020 and Rajakaruna et al., 2017 for studies on the importance of scenario-based training in use of force more broadly).

Relatedly, a fourth objective seemed to be to teach the officers how to justify and defend its use. In this regard, while the APP refers to the use of the NDM in decision-making, the focus on the NDM during discussions between candidate officers and trainers seemed to us to be not merely about its role as a live decision-making tool but also

This was highlighted as problematic by one STO that we spoke to who had previously worked for the NHS in a psychiatric secure unit:

> *My background prior to policing was mental health. So, I talk to*
>
> *standing talking to him and he was like* [the Trainer]
>
> *be a bit more, and he's like* [the Trainer], *just Taser him. But, for*
>
> *wrist and you Taser them, they suddenly lose all control. Whereas if you can just keep talking to them, my tolerance with mental health is probably higher than that of some of my colleagues.* (Participant 6).

Additionally, issues of racial and ethnic disproportionality in Taser use did not feature within the practical element of the course we observed at all. A Senior officer with responsibility for Taser noted:

> *The training guidelines have recently changed. There is loose*
>
> *mention of race relations and the importance of that and making decisions based on the NDM. My view is we could do more. I think we need to challenge ourselves in the operational context. Scenario-based training should mandatorily involve unconscious bias training* [and] *look to mitigate disproportionality. We should use stooges of different minorities when we're doing simulation-based training. We should mitigate risks with simulation training, by testing unconscious biases, potential unethical decision-making. We should promote better reflection when we're training.*

and were often not grounded in local context or experiences. This reflected a broader point: that the discussions during the training we observed rarely explored the impacts of Taser on public trust and confidence and police legitimacy.

Under-resourcing and time constraints applied not only to the initial training but, equally as importantly, to the refresher training which occurred only once a year. Moreover, in some cases, the apparent lack of financial investment in the training environment and infrastructure significantly reduced the immersion for candidates and hindered the Trainers' ability to provide an adequate learning setting. While important, we suggest that resourcing alone is not sufficient to address the sometimes problematic working assumptions and objectives that we observed in the training environment which function to promote the (over-)use of, and over-reliance on Taser. These included, first, a push towards normalising the use of Taser, positioning the weapon as the lowest use of force – and sometimes not a use of force at all – and aiming to overcome hesitancy with the use of the weapon. Issues associated with the use of Taser (including prolonged use) were sometimes downplayed, while the training context functioned to deliver an understanding that Taser was an effective, useful, and safe device – for both those subjected to it and the officers involved – compared to the

officers must be volunteers and are able to withdraw from the course at any time; however, in practice, it may be difficult and seen as professionally damaging for officers to refuse a place on the course, to withdraw or fail. Another check is the assessed nature of the course. It appeared nearly impossible to fail the 'knowledge check' section of the assessment, as the process appeared to be structured to maximise the pass rate. Moreover, our analysis highlighted that candidates had to use Taser in at least some, if not all, of the summative scenarios to pass the course. In practice, then, it was more difficult to assess officers on vital skills around de-escalation, dealing with mental health and their ability to refrain from using the weapon. Indeed, some of the trainers that we spoke to argued that this was not a core feature of their remit.

Such difficulties in assessment may be due, in part, to the current guidance being vague with regards to what constitutes (in)appropriate use and the very low threshold for the use of weapon. Indeed, the UN's Committee Against Torture (2013, 2019) has twice commented on the UK's Taser guidance and recommended more specificity. In its 2019 Concluding Observations[46], it stated that the UK "*should provide clear presumptions against the use of Tasers on vulnerable groups, such as children and young people, investigate the causes for their disproportionate use against members of minorities and prohibit their use in drive stun mode*" (Paragraph 29). This follows on from the Committee's Concluding Observations in 2013, which stated that the UK: "*should revise the regulations governing the use of such weapons with a view to establishing a high threshold for their use and expressly prohibiting their use on children and pregnant women* (Paragraph 26). Yet, when faced with guidance offering such broad, permissive wording on use, it can be difficult for trainers and others to critique officers for their use of the weapon.

Ultimately, our observations indicated that there is insufficient input in the training that was designed to encourage reflective thinking by officers to discourage discriminatory outcomes. In highlighting these issues, our analysis concords with the findings of previous reports around the content and length of Taser training and, like George (2023), recognises that the classroom and practical sessions should place greater emphasis and be fully-oriented within a Human Rights framework. Finally, our findings also highlight the importance of regular independent oversight of training, capable of bringing about meaningful change where necessary. This is especially salient in a context where the response to previous reports has been mixed, with take up of recommendations inadequate.

[46]https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=CAT%2fC%2fGBR%2fCO%2f6&Lang=en

7. Police officer interviews

7.1. Chapter summary

This chapter outlines an analysis of semi-structured interviews with 97 police officers sampled from d f

officers were then invited to participate and if willing rostered into a single location across the course of the day so that they could be interviewed. Since most of the interviews were conducted face-to-face in police stations it was often possible to supplement our initial sample of participants from each force with other Taser trained officers, dependent on availability and operational demand [iii]. The roles of the interviewees included the following: CID; Disruption Teams; Diversity and Inclusion; Dog Handlers; Firearms; Operational Support Unit; Mental Health Triage; Motorway; Neighbourhood; Response; Roads; Serious and Organised Crime; Taser SPOCs; Traffic. Most of the officers we interviewed were male, White, the rank of Constable,

section below were taken directly from the interview transcripts. These extracts were judged by the research team to be the best exemplars of the final themes presented. For each quotation ‘IE’ denotes interviewee and ‘IV’ is shorthand for interviewer. Where there is more than one interviewer or interviewee within an extract this is demarcated by a number to distinguish the speakers (e.g., IE1, IE2 or IV1, IV2). Each interviewee was assigned a number from 1 to 97. In line with previous chapters, we include this number in parentheses after each extract to demonstrate the fact that quotations were derived from multiple interviewees.

7.4. Analysis

Accordingly, the following analysis is split into three main parts: the police role and the institutionalisation of Taser, benefits, and drawbacks, followed by a section on racial and ethnic disproportionality.

> *from the beginning, raised the probability of Taser being present... I don't know why that then manifests in the disproportionality stat for young Black men.* (Participant 90).

In line with this data, other interviewees also described how being a Taser STO was becoming increasingly necessary to fulfil the roles being ascribed to them as operational police officers. As one officer described about his motivation to carry Taser:

> IE: *I just wanted something additional because I felt that when I was responding to jobs that had a greater level of threat, i.e., a*
>
> *fficer. And I thought, blow that, I want my own so I can actually deal with this.*
>
> *wanted to be the appropriate resource.* (Participant 21).

Thus, given that Taser deployments appear to have institutional level drivers, being an STO offers an important career progression opportunity or milestone because it enables them to fulfil specialist operational gaps. For instance, some PCs we talked to described becoming STOs as part of a broader aspiration toward other more specialised operational roles:

> IE: *So, for me it was a natural progression anyways to go, look, I wanted to achieve Taser. I wanted to achieve becoming a* [Police Support Unit]
> *police..*

IE: *A prime example would be, in* [place name], *there was an example where it should have been a firearms deployment but due to the lack of armed response vehicles, it topped up, and I gave this example the other day. It was a bunch of gangs fighting in the middle of* [place name]. *Knives, machetes, things, CCTV had picked it all up, I was the only available unit as a Taser contingency. As a less lethal option but Taser. So, I think the exposure of those types of jobs came with carrying Taser. Had I not been Taser trained, I would have maybe been sat on the periphery, awaited a Taser unit to turn up. And for them to take the lead whilst I go support them. But as a Taser officer, the expectation is for me to take the lead, regardless of rank because there might be an Inspector on scene or Sergeant on the scene*

expected to

carrying Taser.

officer described the way in which just the sight of the Taser would provide a way of resolving situations much more effectively than would have been possible without it.

> IE: *I found that when you had X2* [Taser] *obviously bright yellow in the UK. And people tend to see that straight away. And that normally would diffuse the situation*
>
> *whoa, okay, I*
>
> *situation nine times out of ten.* (Participant 70).

Indeed, some officers described how they purposefully choose to wear the Taser on their chest rather than holstered to their side in an effort to deliberately enhance the perceived deterrence effect of the device.

> IE: *I noticed when I started carrying it for night*

> *don't walk in, nine times out of ten, with that out because I never have to.* (Participant 58).

Another key advantage expressed by STOs for using the device relative to their other use of force options is that it functions to help them maintain distance from the perceived threat. Accordingly, officers argued that once force was deemed necessary Taser represents one of the safer alternatives, for both officer and subject, relative to other options within their PPE.

> IE:
> *need to be relatively close to use, which then poses more risk to*
>
> *talk about different sorts of weapons, knives, etcetera. I don*
> (Participant 6).

> IV: *Do you think, under those circumstances, Taser might have been a useful tool?*
>
> IE:
> *distance. So, because I was already in close proximity with him,*
>
> *Also, we were in a smaller room than this, in the living room, and*
>
> *used, especially with the prongs and things. And then there was his young son was there in the living room, and there was a danger where that prong could go. If it goes missing and he picks it up and swallows it.* (Participant 66).

Furthermore, some interviewees also described how carrying Taser could accentuate difficulties when dealing with vulnerable people suffering from an acute mental health

relating to the police use of Taser, some interviewees questioned their validity. A key aspect of these arguments was to assume that disproportionality was referring to individual-level isolated interactions and the extent to which use of force specific incidents was proportionate. In other words, the judgement to use Taser was about threat and risk, not race. However, such accounts exposed how these officers' understood disproportionality in terms of a human rights-based definition, focusing attention on isolated events, rather than a

not the issue. The issue being is that you will find a higher usage

IV: *Homelessness?*

IE: *Homelessness or areas of where the mental health service is*

disagree in the fact that the statistics are probably correct. But I

8.5.1. Lack of data availability at the point of data collection

All forces struggled with their existing data infrastructure to provide us with relevant data. An example of this was Cumbria, where thousands of records would have needed to be browsed manually to identify the right observations for the research. In the case of British Transport Police (BTP), their data collection system did not include much of the data that was needed, because the standard use of force forms had not

able to assess whether the emerging associations are similar to each other or are more likely to be force specific.

9.3. Research questions

We had two primary research questions:

Q1. Is there a statistical association between ethnicity and Taser use (compared to other force modalities) across the different forces?

Q2. Can any association between ethnicity and Taser use be explained by other factors, or, to put it another way, does any such association persist even after we control for demographic, situational and other variables?

9.4. Data and methods

9.4.1. Outcome variable

We used one dichotomous outcome variables in this section. Taser use was coded as 1, regardless of how it was used (e.g., drawn, arced, fired, etc.) and no recorded use of Taser was coded as 0. As elsewhere in this report, since we only had the use of force forms for this analysis, we were only able to compare Taser use to *other* uses of force (0, the reference category), rather than to incidents where force was not used at all. We also considered using a second outcome variable for this analysis that considered Taser use *with* other uses of force. Unfortun/F3 12 Tf1 0 g0 G[()-6(d)14(e)-6(re)-6(d)-6(

Officer characteristics:

- Ethnicity: Asian, Black, Mixed, Other, Missing/unknown, and White (which was the reference category).
- Age group: 30-39, 40-49, 50+ years (with under 30 years as the reference category).

Impact factors that officers recorded as having affected their decisions to use force were also included, such as:

- The subject being under the influence of alcohol or drugs.
- Police prior knowledge of the subject (i.e., the subject had a record of prior involvement with police).
- Gender, size, and build of the subject.
- The presence of a weapon.
- Other contextual factors included the three coronavirus lockdowns (first 'lockdown': 26/03/2020 – 23/06/2020; second lockdown: 05/11/2020 – 02/12/2020, third lockdown: 06/01/2021 – 19/07/2021) and the time of day when the force was used (morning, afternoon, evening, night).

9.4.3. Analytic approach

We start with some general descriptive statistics to give a sense of how the various forces differed from each other. This is followed by binary logistic regression analysis, where we pooled the data from seven police forces: Bedfordshire, Derbyshire, GMP, Hampshire, MPS, Surrey, West Mercia, and West Yorkshire. We fitted five iterative statistical models and in each we considered the changes in the association between ethnic minority membership and Taser use. Model 1 contained only ethnicity as the explanatory variable; Model 2 also added other citizen demographics; Model 3 entered officer demographics; Model 4 added police recorded impact factors; Model 5 included other contextual factors; finally, Model 6 incorporated all variables. Technical notes on the analysis and robustness checks can be found in the endnotes of the report.[iv]

9.5. Results

9.5.1. General patterns of Taser use

To better understand how Taser is being used across the UK, we need to have a better sense of which usage is most common: 'Drawn' (1), 'Aimed' (2), 'Arced' (3), 'Red-dot' (4), 'Fired/angle drive-stun/drive-stun' (5). **Table 2.** provides data for each police force, including the corresponding percentages. To account for the relatively low individual counts of Taser use in some areas, the highest level of Taser use, which encompasses discharge uses such as fired, drive-stun, and angle drive-stun, is presented as an aggregated value. The following analysis of levels of Taser usage is discussed in order

of overall frequency across force areas. However, this order may vary when

MPS (11%), Bedfordshire (10%), Surrey (9%), West Yorkshire (8%), Derbyshire (6%), Hampshire (2%), and West Mercia (1%).

The fourth most prevalent category is Fired/Angle Drive-Stun/Drive-stun, encompassing the use of Taser with live cartridges or direct contact with the person's body. The proportions for the fired/angle drive-stun/drive-stun category of Taser usage across the various force areas are as follows: Hampshire (14%), GMP (14%), Bedfordshire (10%), MPS (10%), Gwent (9%), Derbyshire (9%), Surrey (9%), West Yorkshire (7%) and West Mercia (5.%).

(64%), West Yorkshire (61%), MPS (60%), Surrey (57%) and Gwent (54%). In Bedfordshire (48%), West Mercia (45%), and GMP (41%), this was over 40%. In Warwickshire, over a third of Taser use happened on its own (34%) and in Hampshire, over a quarter (26%)

9.5.2.2. Taser with handcuffing

The most common combination of Taser use involves handcuffing. Across the different force areas, the prevalence of Taser and handcuffing combinations, listed in descending order, is as follows: Hampshire (37%), Warwickshire (34%), Bedfordshire (33%), Gwent (29%), GMP (27%), MPS (23%), Surrey (21%), West Yorkshire (18%), Derbyshire (13%), and West Mercia (10%). Again, the range of this measure and some of the others reported here is striking: in Hampshire, 37% of all Taser incidents comprised a Taser use and handcuffing combination, but this figure was only 10% in West Mercia.

9.5.2.3. Taser with UDT, restraints, and improvised tactics

The second most common combination of Taser includes Unarmed Defence Techniques (UDT). Across the different force areas, the prevalence of Taser and UDT combinations is as follows: Hampshire (18%), West Yorkshire (14%), Surrey (13%), Derbyshire (13%), Gwent (13%), Bedfordshire (11%), Warwickshire (10%), GMP (10%), MPS (8%), and West Mercia (2%).

The third most common combination of Taser involves Ground/Limb/Body restraints. These combinations are distributed across various force areas as follows: the highest was GMP (19%), then Hampshire (15%), Warwickshire (8%), MPS (7%), West Mercia (7%), Bedfordshire (5%), Gwent (3%), Surrey (3%), Derbyshire (2%), and finally West Yorkshire (2%).

The fourth most common combination of Taser includes other improvised tactics. Across the different force areas, the prevalence of Taser and other improvised tactics combinations is as follows; West Mercia (32%), Derbyshire (5%), Warwickshire (3%), Surrey (2%), MPS (1%), GMP (1%), Hampshire (1%), West Yorkshire (1%) and Bedfordshire (1%).

9.5.2.4. Taser with spit guard, dog, shield, irritant spray, firearms and baton

The fifth most common combination of Taser involves Spit guard/ Dog/ Shield/ Irritant Spray. These combinations are distributed across various force areas as follows: highest in Warwickshire (3%), then West Yorkshire (3%), Hampshire (3%), Derbyshire (3%), Surrey (2%), GMP (2%), West Mercia (1%), Gwent (less than 1%), MPS (less than 1%), and finally Bedfordshire (less than 1%).

The sixth most common combination of Taser includes firearms. The distribution of this combination across various force areas is as follows: highest was Warwickshire

largely absent in other forces. Two ethnic categories had consistent and robust association with Taser use. These were Asian, with a negative relationship, and missing, with a positive relationship, compared to being from a White background. For Black and Mixed the association was positive, until police recorded impact factors were accounted for, whilst for Other, the negative association disappeared after considering the robustness of the results. These findings indicate that for Black and Mixed other explanatory variables, can more accurately account for the relationship between ethnic minority background and Taser usage. This is perhaps unsurprising because the use of force forms are used by officers to account for their decisions to use force. Our analyses in the next chapters will test several alternative hypotheses why this might be the case, including the possibility that the recorded impact factors may be affected by the ethnicity of the member of the public. In other words, it shoul

10. Demographic match and reporting practices

10.1. Chapter summary

This chapter uses data from Greater Manchester Police (GMP) which provided information on (1) the demographic characteristics of both citizens and officers and (2)

service, and according to the priorities, of the communities they represent (even if they are not from the same community). The two other approaches, passive and symbolic representations, are easier to capture. Passive representation means that the bureaucrats (in our case the police) have the same demographic characteristics as citizens. In the case of symbolic representation, the goal of real or symbolic similarities is to engender trust, engagement, and conflict resolution in the community by building legitimacy. The latter does not necessitate 'police' and 'public' being from the same community. Rather, it envisions sending community-specific signals. The empirical evidence regarding the effectiveness of representative bureaucracy in policing is mixed, with a recent systematic review finding no effect on crime rates, arrest rates, or public satisfaction (Bullock et al., 2017). Notably, however, the study could only review eleven studies at the time, highlighting a huge evidence gap in the literature. A study by Hong (2017) (which was not part of the review) used UK data and estimated that increased diversity in the police between 1999 and 2009 (and, thus, strengthened representative bureaucracy) could have led to a 1.4-3.8% reduction in recorded crime rates.

For the police to be perceived as legitimate, they need to demonstrate to community members that they share their aims and values, and to foster a sense of shared identification. By appearing more similar to people in the community, the police can communicate inclusion and status and foster a sense of belonging, in turn increasing legitimacy and thus the chances that citizens will cooperate with the police and comply with the law (Bradford, 2014; Jackson & Pósch, 2019). This is akin to the core underlying assumption of the theory of representative bureaucracy, which posits that increased diversity enhances the perceived legitimacy of the police within the community, leading to improved police-public relations, because increased diversity strengthens a sense of shared identity, particularly of course among ethnic and racial minorities hitherto excluded from policing. Therefore, when it comes to police-citizen

similarities in gender, age, and ethnicity will decrease the chances of both Taser being used relative to other uses of force in general and more severe use of Taser (i.e., red-dotting or being fired upon) in particular. With regards to the area level differences, we only include an exploratory research question asking whether police-recorded large areas are informative regarding patterns of Taser use. Finally, we will also consider

10.4. Data and methods

This study relies on data from use of force forms and other auxiliary information provided by GMP. From January 2018 to December 2021, 56,954 cases of use of force were recorded, of which 5,293 (9.4%) referred to Taser. Ethnicity data were missing for the officers in 590 of these cases which amounts to approximately 1% of the sample. These were re not included in the analysis, resulting in an effective sample size of 56,004. In this final sample, the share of Taser use remained virtually unchanged, at 5,282 cases or 9.4%. The use of force forms contained information on the gender, age, ethnicity of the subject, impact factors that led to the use of force (i.e., mental health, being under the influence of alcohol or drugs, sex, size, and build, possessing a w

looks at this in detail by comparing the gender and ethnicity of officer and citizen in all uses of force and in the case of Taser, specifically. It is important to note that these results are not merely reflective of the GMP workforce as a whole, as the data are made up only of officers who used force at least once (but also includes some who were more prolific force users). Based on **Table 8.**, the disparity in gender is not that large. However, ethnic disparities are much more striking. When it comes to all use of force, 9.2% of subjects are Black, but only 1.4% among the officers are Black. These numbers are even more uneven for Taser use, where only 0.8% of officers were Black, compared with 11.6% of subjects. For Asians, the difference in the case of all use of force is small (6.3% of officers and 7.3% if subjects), however, for Taser there is a wider gap with 3.7% of officers and 8% of citizens.

Table 8. Proportion of officers using force and citizens with certain demographic characteristics, in subgroups

	All use of force		Taser	
	Officers	Citizens	Officers	Citizens
Gender:				
Female	20.3%	17.4%	9.8%	6%
Male	79.7%	82.6%	90.2%	94%
Ethnicity:				
White	89.2%	77.9%	94%	73.8%
Asian	6.3%	7.3%	3.7%	8%
Black	1.4%	9.2%	0.8%	11.6%
Mixed	1.8%	1.3%	1.2%	1.4%
Other	1.4%	1.4%	0.8%	1.6%

10.5.3. Geographic distribution of Taser use in GMP

The second aspect considered in this study is the geographic distribution of use of force in general, and Taser use in particular. Unlike in the Hampshire deep-dive (see chapter 12), GMP could only provide a limited number of large areas, neither of which was matchable to precise official geographical boundaries (which meant among other things that we were unable to calculate pro-rata figures). Among these 12 areas, presented in **Table 9.**, around a quarter of all use of force happens in the City of Manchester, and around a third of all Taser use. In fact, of all areas, only the City of Manchester and Oldham has a considerably larger share of Taser use compared to their overall share of use of force.

Table 9. Proportion of use of force and Taser use across geographical areas

	All use of force	Taser
Bolton	9.8%	10.4%
Bury	6.6%	5.1%
City of Manchester	26.2%	32.5%
Manchester Airport	0.4%	0.4%
Oldham	5.5%	6.7%
Rochdale	5.3%	5.8%
Salford	12.6%	7.1%
Stockport	7.6%	7.5%
Tameside	8.5%	7.7%
Trafford	6.6%	6.5%
Wigan	10.7%	9.9%
Outside GMP	0.3%	0.5%

10.5.4. Taser use versus other use of force

In these models, it emerged that among the demographic match variables, gender and ethnicity were both relevant, having a negative partial association with Taser use, which suggests that these demographic similarities might lead to fewer uses of Taser compared to other uses of force. Adding the area-variables revealed that the main difference in GMP was between the City of Manchester and other parts of the force, with officers in the City of Manchester having higher odds of using Taser compared to other areas even after controlling for all else. These results are from the five models (binary logistic regression) that we fitted with Taser use as the outcome variable (see **Table 10.,** available in section 1.4.1 of the accompanying ‘r12 Tf1 0 0 1 72.125 508.4 TJETQ E

variable. The results from this test[57] indicated that including the City of Manchester in the model on its own is sufficient to capture the area-level variation in Taser use.

10.6.1. Prior knowledge, sex, size and build, mental health.

The results for this analysis are presented in **Table 12.** (available in section 1.4.1 of the accompanying Quantitative Research Appendix), with a focus on the newly emerging indirect effects. We will start by summarising the results with the technical details to follow in subsequent paragraphs. There are at least three notable findings emerging from the analysis. First, impact factors only transmitted the influence of

White had a positive partial association with Taser use, but these associations disappeared in Models 2 and 3.

Of the demographic match and area variables, only gender match exhibited a weak negative partial association. All else considered, if the subject and officer were of the same ethnicity this reduced the estimated odds of Taser use by between 24-27%. This was only significant on the 5%-level which, again given the high number of comparisons, implies a somewhat tenuous relationship. Match on ethnicity and age, and area (i.e. City of Manchester), did not seem to have a partial association with the outcome variable.

Finally, in Model 3, all other influential variables were introduced. Holding all else equal, carrying a weapon had the strongest positive partial association, followed by prior knowledge, and mental health. Controlling for all else, the second and third lockdowns and having been under the influence of alcohol had the strongest negative association with the outcome variable, followed by being under the influence of drugs. Sex, size, and build and the first lockdown (compared to other time periods) did not show a significant association with this level of Taser use.

10.6.3.2. Red-dotted or fired

Comparing Taser being red-dotted or fired to other uses of force, being a woman and encountering a female officer for an officer from an Asian, Mixed, or Other background all reduced the odds of this level of Taser use in all three models, holding all else equal. Being en-GBqelwed tcoring Ta-159(Mo)-6(g (en-6(i)-6(n)14(5(t)7(i)-6(m)7(i)-6(ce)-6(r)-13(w

of the accompanying Quantitative Research Appendix), the influence of gender match is comparable to the mitigating effect of being under the influence of alcohol; the magnitude of ethnic match to the influence of prior knowledge (albeit, in the other direction); while the estimate for the City of Manchester had a smaller coefficient closer to the partial association of drugs (but in the opposite direction).

Finally, among the other factors added in Model 3 carrying a weapon had the strongest positive partial association with this level of Taser use, followed by mental health, sex, size, and build, and prior knowledge. Conversely, all else equal, the third lockdown had the strongest negative correlation, followed by the second lockdown, being under

We will go beyond the above studies, which were primarily descriptive in nature. Our analysis will distinguish between each individual use of force incident and officer characteristics. To do this, we will use two outcome variables. First, we will reassess the relationship between Taser use and the variables provided by the use of force forms alongside officer characteristics. Multilevel modelling will permit us such an analysis and can partition the effects of the individual circumstances of an incident and the person that used the force (whose characteristics remain constant across incidents). Second, we will also model the frequency of Taser use using the same set of explanatory variables. Here the question will be not whether the individual uses Taser, but rather to examine repeated use of Taser by the same officer.

Crucially, this investigation will be different from the analyses presented in previous chapters where we looked at the association between officer characteristics and Taser

there uelyse6( )-200(u)-e(a)-6(rt)7l(i)14(l)-6(r)-117201(c6(se)-6(r.)7( )-13((w)-6(i)16( )-200(i)1c(o)-6( )76(st)74(d)

The second main outcome variable was the number of times an officer used Taser. The frequency of officer use of Taser was assigned to each officer and associated with each instance of Taser use which meant that if the officer did not use Taser the value was 0, in all other cases it was the number of times they used Taser overall (i.e., 1-25). We primarily relied on use of force forms for the analysis. We extracted the

Figure 3.

maximum of 25 uses over the four years (i.e., there was one officer who used Taser 25 times over the period). The recorded use of Taser among force users in West Mercia was thus heavily skewed, as depicted by **Figure 4.**

We can also compare the use of Taser with other uses of force in the jurisdiction (see **Table 15.**). Officers who had used force were most likely to have used non-compliant handcuffing (mean=4.3, median=2, overall=9,994), closely followed by compliant handcuffing (mean=3.9, median=1, overall=9,108). Firearms were used least often (this included aimed and fired: mean=0.3, median=0, overall=703). Taser use (mean=0.7, median=0, overall=1,552 therefore sits somewhere in the middle in terms of how frequently it was used, but is closer to firearm use than handcuffing. Nevertheless, Taser use was more frequently than firearms, batons, and other uses of force aimed primarily at incapacitating the suspect. It was less frequently used than methods with the primary purpose of restraining the individual such as handcuffing or using ground restraint.

Figure 4. Number of times an officer used Taser in West Mercia (only officers with at least one use are included)

To gain a deeper understanding of the distribution of use of force across officers, we can consider the relative frequency of each modality. As shown in **Table 16.**, within all use of force records Taser was used by relatively few officers, and used more than five times only by around 4% of all force-using officers. In contrast, compliant and non-

- Compliant handcuffing: used at least once by 1488 officers (64% of force users)
- Non-compliant handcuffing: used at least once by 1655 officers (71% of force users)
- Firearm: used at least once by 149 officers (6% of force users)

Table 16. Frequency of force used by officers in West Mercia (only officers with at least one use are included)

11.3.4.3. Frequency versus no Taser use

The model fitted for the frequency of Taser use was a multilevel negative binomial model. As there are no widely accepted model fit estimates for these types of models, we did not include any in the table. This second model is strikingly different from the

many significant findings. Of the officer characteristics, only gender and age indicated a negative and positive partial association respectively. This means that for the frequency of Taser use we can answer the second research question with a no, incident details captured by use of force forms do not seem to have an association with this outcome variable. For the third research question, the answer is a qualified yes, as some officer characteristics, in act oed searny 6,

with larger non-White populations even after controlling for crime, deprivation and inequality.

As noted, the potential mechanisms or pathways that link the socio-demographic and crime-related characteristics of an area to police activity and thus, potentially, Taser use are mutually compatible. People who live in areas with more crime, more deprivation *and/or* larger minority populations may for all these reasons (and perhaps more) be more exposed to police activity and thus, potentially, more likely to encounter officers carrying and using Taser. In this section we explore these issues using data from one force that provided us with (partial) geocoded Taser use data. We combine this data with stop and search, Census and IMD data to answer the following questions:

1. Is Taser associated with other indicators of police activity in local areas?
2. Is police activity in general, and Taser in particular, associated with the ethnic and racial composition of local areas?
3. Is police activity in general, and Taser in particular, associated with levels of deprivation in local areas?
4. Is police activity in general, and Taser in particular, associated with levels of crime in local areas?
5. Does any association between ethnic and racial composition and Taser persist even when crime and deprivation are taken into account?

analysis. However, only 52% of all use-of-force incidents (9,906) could be matched across the two datasets, as geo-data was only available for cases involving a call for service. Therefore, LSOA information is unavailable for incidents where Tasers were used without a call for service (i.e., they were proactive instead of reactive).

The Taser use data that could be coded to the Lower Layer Super Output Area (LSOA) in which the use occurred. LSOAs are a Census-based area classification designed to be similar in terms of population size. There are 32,844 in England, with an average of approximately 1,500 people or 650 households. The datafile provided contained 1,231 LSOAs; however, 81 of these could not be matched to some of the other data used in the analysis and were excluded on this basis (these 81 were distributed across the local authority districts with the Police Force Area). In the period under scrutiny, 833 Taser uses were recorded within the LSOAs included in the analysis (the LSOAs excluded all reported no uses of Taser).

12.3.1. Dependent variables

The main dependent variable is a binary indicator coded one if Taser was used at least once in a given LSOA over the period in question, where ‘use’ covers the full range from drawn to discharge. On this measure, Taser was used in 39% (n=452) of the LSOAs over the study period (or, to put it another way, in nearly two-thirds of areas Taser was not used *at all* between 2018 and 2021).

As an additional dependent variable, we also use the count of Taser use within LSOAs. **Table 20.** and **Figure 5.** summarise the characteristics of this indicator. The distribution of Taser use across LSOAs broadly follows the Pareto Principle (the Pareto Principle or 80/20 rule, states that for many events or outcome, roughly 80% of the effects come from 20% of the causes). Just 17% of LSOAs accounted for 70% of all uses; and while Taser was not used at all in most areas, even where it was used both the modal and median number of uses was 1. This distribution of similar to other measures encountered in criminology, such as many crimes, stop and search, and so on. Crime, and certainly policing, tends to be concentrated in a relatively small proportion of areas.

Table 20. Count of Taser use within LSOAs

	All LSOAs	LSOAs with at least one use
Mean	0.72	1.84
Mode	0	1
Median	0	1
Standard Deviation		

- Health: A household is classified as deprived in this dimension if any person in the household has general health that is bad or very bad or is identified as disabled.
- Housing: A household is classified as deprived if the household's accommodation is either overcrowded, in a shared dwelling, or has no central heating.

For each LSOA *household deprivation* was defined as the percentage of households that met three or four of the criteria above. Two further Census-based measures were used: the percentage aged 15-34 (to account for the inevitable focussing of police activity on younger people); and population density (people per square kilometre), as the latter is highly variable between LSOAs which are designed to be similar in population but not in the size of the area covered. The second source of data was the stop and search data stored at police.uk, which used to generate the average stop and search rate per 1,000 population for each LSOA over the 4-year study period (using the 2021 Census population figure)[61]. We treat this primarily as a proxy for overall levels of police activity in a given LSOA, reasoning that where stop and search is higher (per head of population) so too will be other forms of activity. Third, we used the crime domain index of the 2019 Index of Multiple Deprivation[62] (IMD) to generate a measure of crime at the local level. The 2019 IMD uses crime data from 2016/17 and 2017/18, i.e., before 7/1tt(n)-6(t)7( )-16Sil2017/18, i.e., bef6(8)-ai6(8)-ai6(8)-ai6(8)-ai6(8)-ai6(8)-

Mental health-related hospital attendances, Prescribing data Antidepressants, QOF depression, and DWP Incapacity benefit and Employment support allowance for mental illness) into [63].

We use the 2019 SAMHI index. Higher scores on the index indicate that mental health is worse in the area in question.

12.3.3. Analytic strategy

After first presenting descriptive and bivariate statistics that map the use of Taser across different types of area, analysis proceeds in three accumulative stages. First, we consider the predictors of stop and search and use of force excluding Taser at the local level. Second, we consider the predictors of the binary indicator of Taser use, and third the predictors of higher levels of Taser use in an area (using the count measure described above). This strategy allows us to explore three inter-related questions: in what types of area is Taser used, as a matter of observational fact; what are the area characteristics that seem to attract police activity in general; and most importantly what is the interplay between area characteristics and police activity in predicting the use of Taser.

12.4. Bivariate analysis

Table 21. shows the correlation matrix for the continuous variables used in the analysis. As might be expected there are moderate to strong correlations between almost all of them, which means that deprivation, the presence of young people, large ethnic minority populations, crime and police activity all tend to cluster together. Notably, the number of Taser incidents tends to be higher where stop and search is higher (r=.47):

- in areas with larger Black populations (r=.33)
- in more deprived areas (r=.32)
- where there are more people with mental health problems (r=.24)
- where crime is higher (r=.35).

That said, only one pairwise correlation is at a level that would suggest potential problems with multicollinearity in the regression modelling,[64] that between ethnic diversity and percent Black (r=.80). We address this issue in the models below.

63 https://pldr.org/dataset/2noyv/small-area-mental-health-index-samhi

64

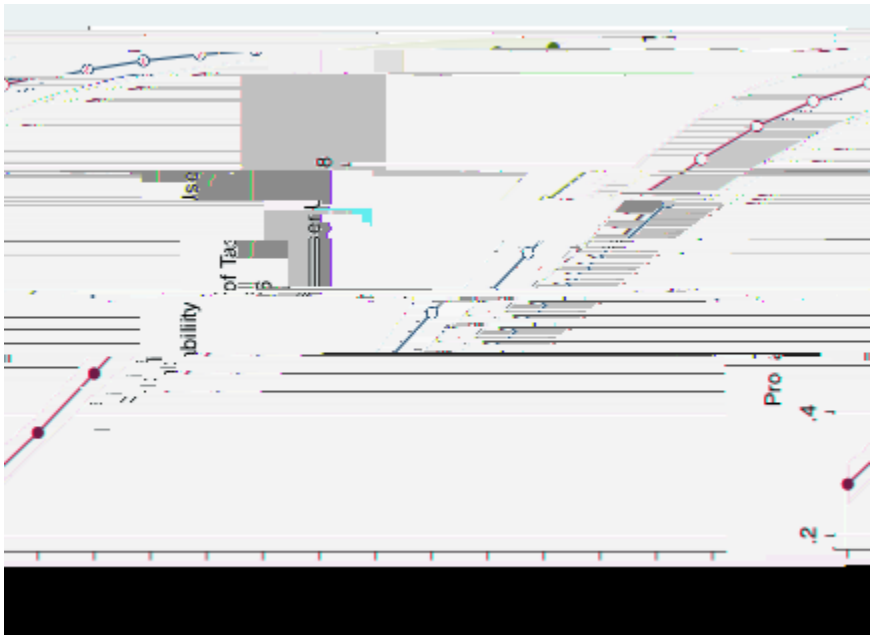

Figure 8. Probability of Taser being used at least once, by % population Black

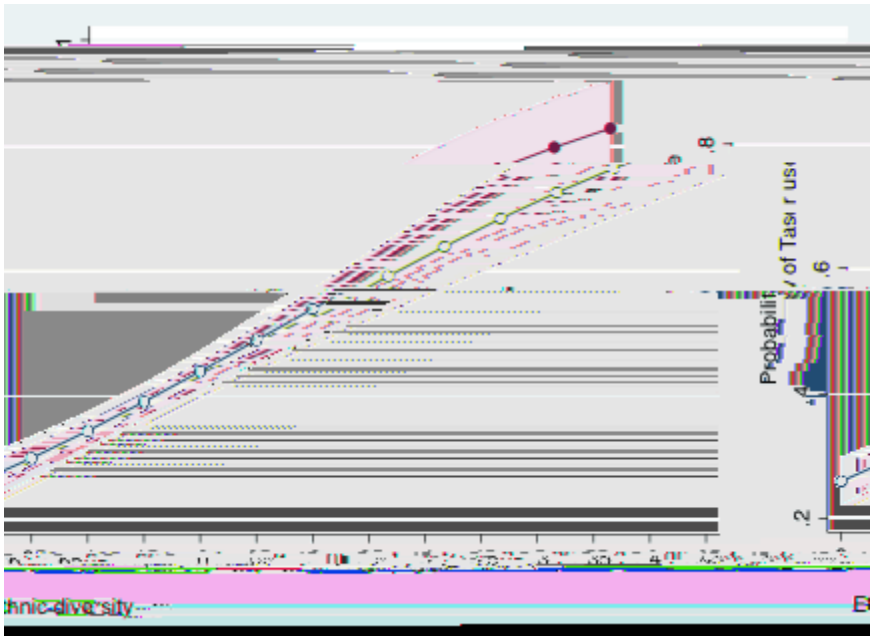

Figure 9. Probability of Taser being used at least once, by ethnic diversity

Figure 10. Probability of Taser being used at least once, by household deprivation Probbser being

in an area or not. **Figures 6. and 7.** show that in the areas where stop and search and

deprivation and with worse mental health. When both percent Black and ethnic diversity are included in the same model, percent Black emerges as the significant predictor of stop and search activity. Finally, when ‘structural’ levels of crime are added in Model 5 we find (a) that levels of stop and search are higher in areas of higher crime but also (b) even controlling for crime, stop and search is higher in areas with larger Black populations, more young adults, and higher levels of household deprivation.

One unexpected feature of these models is that, conditioning on the other variables shown, population density is negatively associated with the stop and search rate (i.e.

Table 23. Linear regression models predicting use of force rate (exc. Taser)

	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4	Model 5
Percent Black	0.18***		0.07	0.06	-0.02
Ethnic Diversity		0.22***	0.17***	0.15**	0.11**
Population Density	-0.13***	-0.14***	-0.14***	-0.16***	-0.09**
Percent aged 15-					

Table 24. shows results from a series of binary logistic regression models predicting the binary (yes/no) Taser use variable. These are again specified in an additive fashion. Models 1 and 2 show that Taser use was more likely in areas with larger Black populations, more young adults, more household deprivation, and worse mental health. Ethnic diversity did not seem to be an independent predictor of Taser use (and we drop it from Model 4 onwards). Both levels of crime (Model 4) and stop and search (Model 5) also predict the probability of Taser use, with use being more likely in higher crime areas and areas with higher levels of stop and search. Notably, controlling for crime and stop and search the proportion aged 15-34 in an area, and household deprivation, remain significant in the model, whereas the coefficient for percent Black loses significance.

Finally, once use of force is entered in Model 6 all other factors lose significance. This suggests that Taser use is more likely in areas with larger young populations, higher deprivation, more crime and higher levels of stop and search because police use of force in general is higher in those types of areas (see **Table 23.** above). To put it another way, the general use of force mediates the association between population characteristics and Taser.

Table 24. Binary logistic regression models predicting probability of Taser use (odds ratios)

	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4	Model 5	Model 6
Percent Black	1.15*		1.12	1.09	1.06	1.03
Ethnic Diversity		3.66	1.45			
Population Density	1	1	1	1	1	1
Percent aged 15-34	1.06***	1.06***	1.05***	1.05***	1.04**	1.02
Household deprivation	1.13***	1.14***	1.13***	1.10*	1.09*	1.05
SAMHI	1.34**	1.36**	1.35**	1.14	1.14	0.99
IMD Crime Decile (1=lowest)				1.14***	1.09*	1.06
Stop and search rate					2.86***	1.39
Use of force rate (esc. Taser)						1.24***

The implications of this are illustrated in **Figures 12. to 14.** We saw above (**Figure 8.**) that Taser use was much higher in areas with larger Black populations. **Figures 12. to 14.** confirm that Black people living in Hampshire are more likely to reside in areas with higher levels of stop and search, more deprivation, and higher levels of crime. This means that they are more likely to be exposed to police activity, including Taser use – although, recall, the danger of the ecological fallacy. At the very least, though, and perhaps B08874 0 5s B08df(en-s6(a)-6(st)7(,)7( )-34(t)7(h)-6(o)-6(u)-6(g)-6(h)-6(,)28( )] TJETQ

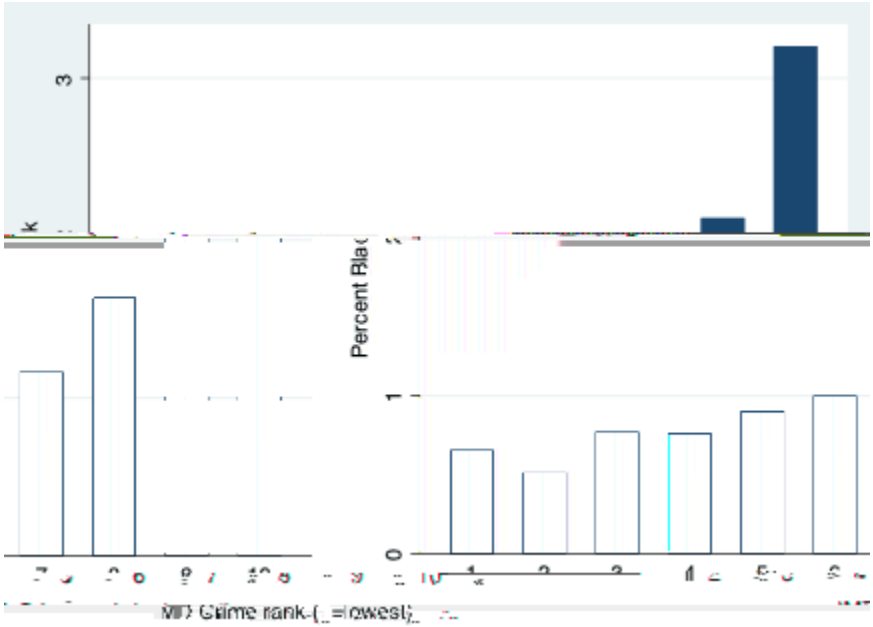

Figure 14. Percent Black by IMD crime

13. Conclusions

This report has presented findings from a programme of research, funded by the National Police Chiefs' Council (NPCC) and the Mayor's Office for Policing and Crime (MOPAC). It was commissioned and managed by the College of Policing and aimed to explore the potential causes of ethnic and racial disparities in the police use of Taser. The report was peer reviewed and our revisions overseen by an Independent

which positions Taser as relatively low risk, highly effective and appropriate for use in a wide range of situations involving the potential for harm. Such a view stands in stark contrast to the perspectives of our affected community members who view Taser as a very high-level use of force with severe physical, psychological and community level impacts. Our observations indicated that there is insufficient input in the training that was designed to encourage reflective thinking by officers to discourage discriminatory outcomes or on the potential for CED deployments to generate significant legitimacy threats to the police.

4. We also identified a notable lack of attention to utilising dialogue, or tactical communications, to handle situations of potential conflict, and in terms of de-escalation strategies more broadly. Not only is limited time dedicated to discussions of the complexities of ethnic disproportionality during Taser training, there also seems to be limited understanding of disproportionality itself.

These findings imply the need to review multiple areas of Taser policy and practice, including guidance, training, deployment practices and community scrutiny groups. In terms of immediate steps, we encourage police forces and the College of Policing to move beyond the minimum standards of time currently recommended for training to enable a greater focus on developing de-escalation skills. Going beyond greater investment in Taser training, the research we present here points toward broader policy considerations based upon a fuller understanding of the drivers of the structural and institutional dynamics of discrimination and racism and how these relate to, and interact with, policing. Policing will continue to occur in a society marked by economic inequality and structural racism. It is this ongoing reality that provokes our emphasis on improving officer skills for de-escalation and engagement, particularly with people experiencing mental health issues. There is also a clear and obvious need to improve the involvement of affected individuals, families, and communities with policing including via scrutiny groups. We are conscious that we are not alone in pointing to some of these issues, and that recommendations from previous reports in this area have not, in our view, been adequately realised. Yet if left unchecked, the ramifications of the issues we have highlighted here are profoundly important, not least of all because of their continuing disproportionate effect on ethnic minority communities and correspondingly upon police legitimacy. This is particularly salient in the context of the stark differences of opinion we identified between the accounts of police and affected community members regarding the level of force inherent in the use of Tasers. ConQq1cu

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(1) demographics only; (2) demographics, demographic match variables, and area variable, and (3) demographic match variables, area variable, and other influential factors (as described above). This approach permits us not only to describe the association between our predictor variables and Taser use in general (vis-à-vis other uses of force), but also permits us to estimate the association between the predictors and the severity of Taser use.

[vi]There are peculiarities that need to be highlighted regarding the data. For some reason, subject and officer gender were not collected in the same way. While for citizens there are three categories: male, female, and other, for officers only male and female were options. There was also a mismatch for the ethnic categories: while there were 16 different options for officers, there were only six for subjects. We ended up using five categories to help with the perfect overlap of the categories. Finally, the officer