

An Investigation into How the Police Disrupt Criminality on the Road Network



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DECLARATION

This work has not previously been accepted in substance for any degree and is not being concurrently submitted in candidature for any degree.

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STATEMENT 1

This dissertation is being submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of BA.

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STATEMENT 2

This dissertation is the result of my own independent work/investigation, except where otherwise stated.

Other sources are acknowledged by footnotes giving explicit references. A bibliography is appended.

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Abstract

The road network has become a heavily used hotspot to facilitate criminal activity ranging from what can be considered as low-level offences to serious and organised crime. The research will look to evaluate the literature surrounding the options and tactics Police forces can use in order to disrupt criminality on the road network. The research will consider the limitations, application and the successes of implementing Proactive Road Safety, the targeting of low-level offenders on the roads, the use of static and mobile speed cameras, individual Officers discretion and the use of Automatic Number Plate Recognition (ANPR). This research study looks further into the use of Automatic Number Plate Recognition (ANPR) and how the technology can support and assist Police Officers in disrupting criminality on the road network.

Challenges around these options and tactics were identified throughout this research. However, the research findings highlight the effectiveness of the technology and tools discussed. This research study uses current serving Officers within the Roads Policing Unit and Divisional Response Policing Units to contribute to the study. This research study aim is to provide an insight into disrupting criminality on the road network and offers a recommendation to support its importance.

Key Words: Proactive Road Safety, Speed cameras, Automatic Number Plate Recognition (ANPR).

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1.0 Introduction

The road network plays a crucial role in the socio-economic development within the UK (United Kingdom). However, the use of the road networks by criminals to conduct illegal activity possess significant challenges for UK Police forces. Criminality on the road network varies heavily from “low-level” traffic offences such as speeding, to organised crimes such as drug trafficking, terrorist activity and human trafficking offences. The National Police Chiefs (NPCC) has identified roads policing as a crucial component of policing strategies to disrupt criminality on the road network (NPCC, 2016). Statistics suggest that there are over 30 million vehicles licenced in the UK (Yurday, 2022). These figures outline a 39.6% increase of licenced vehicles in the UK in the last 25 years (Yurday, 2022).

This literature review aims to explore the different methods used by the Police to deter criminal activity on the road network. Studies have shown a correlation between individuals who commit offences on the road and those who commit and engage in conventional crimes (Bryant and Bryant 2019). As such a policing approach that targets these “low-level” offences committed on the road network, can lead to identifying potential offenders is a viable strategy. Self- Selecting Policing as advocated by Roach (2017) is based on the premise that individuals who commit serious offences tend to engage in minor offences. By Police forces targeting these “low-level” road related offences, Police can heavily disrupt their criminal activities. The College of Policing (2022) puts emphasis on Police use of statutory powers to carry out proactive road safety measures, improve road safety and the seizure of vehicles with no insurance. The disqualification of offenders driving licences, the issuing of points on their licences can lead to custodial sentences which in turn will disrupt their/organised crime group activity on the road network. Further to this the use of speed cameras has suggested to be a good tool for controlling speed enforcement and in turn reducing casualties on the road network.

The road network is a significant component of the UK’s infrastructure, this in turn presents and attractive target for criminals to make efforts to exploit. Police forces have adopted various strategies and tools to disrupt these criminal activities on the road network, this includes the employment of Automatic Number Plate Recognition (ANPR), targeting with use of discretion through a commonsense approach and use of speed cameras to enforce and control vehicle speed limits.

1.1 Aim

This literature review aims to highlight the importance of roads policing and provides insights into the different approaches used by the Police to disrupt criminal activity on the road network.

1.2 Objectives

To provide a critical evaluation of the literature on how the Police disrupt criminality on the road network. To investigate and critically analyse the options and tactics implemented by the Police in order to disrupt criminality on the road network. To explore the importance of how the Police disrupt criminality on the road network. Finally, to evaluate the effectiveness of Automatic Number Plate Recognition (ANPR) when used to disrupt criminality on the road network.

2.0 Literature Review

2.1 Background

The Road Traffic Act 1988 states a road is '*Any highway to which the public has access and includes bridges over which a road pass*'. The National Police and Crime Commissioners (NPCC) Road Policing Strategy 2022-2025 suggests, effectively policing the roads plays a major part in disrupting criminals who abuse the road network in order to conduct criminality. This strategy states that by targeting these individuals using the road network means there will be greater chances of crime detection and persecuting those responsible (National Police Chiefs' Council, 2022). Corresponding with economic growth, it is suggested by an article published by Marinova (2022) states there are 32 million licenced cars in the United Kingdom. In 2019, each household in the United Kingdom is suggested to have an estimated 1.21 cars per household members of the public owning vehicles is increasing (Marinova, 2022). According to Wells (2016) members of public will scrutinise agencies/Police forces targeting road users. As part of a discussion put forward by the Police Crime and Commissioners on enforcing speed limits, it was suggested the results showed a split between members of the public who agree to speed enforcement (80%) as opposed to those who do not agree (20%) (Wells, 2016).

2.2 Aims of Research

Individuals committing crime utilise the road networks to facilitate all levels of crime from minor traffic offences to terrorism (National Policing Improvement Agency, 2007). Road's policing resources contribute to reducing crime on the roads. It is outlined the NPCC strategy that criminals who use the road networks can be effectively deterred through use of targeted disruption enforcement (National Policing Improvement Agency, 2007). The aim of this literature review is to look at the different ways the Police disrupt criminal activity on the road network.

2.3 How the Research Findings Lead to the Dissertation Question

This academic study is being conducted in order to investigate how the Police disrupt criminality on the road network. Bryant and Bryant (2019) postulated there is a link between persons who commit offences on the roads and other forms of criminality. Roach (2017) outlined that past researchers recognised that persons who are serial road traffic offenders are more likely to be committing conventional crime. This research mainly delved into that of the disqualified driver continuing to drive despite having been disqualified Bryant and Bryant (2019). Those who commit volume crimes such as shoplifting, burglaries and road traffic offences will utilise the road networks Bryant and Bryant (2019). Links have been identified between what has been described as "risky" behaviours on the road network and more violent crimes (Bryant and Bryant (2019). It is intended through the investigation of this topic to identify the used in order to disrupt criminals on the road network, recommendations may be made in order to point out the effectiveness of these tactics in everyday/ Divisional Response Policing Units.

2.4 Discussion

What options and tactics implemented by the Police in order to disrupt criminality on the road network?

2.4.1 Proactive Road Safety

Both Roach (2017) and Bryant and Bryant (2019) suggest that members of the public who ignore the lower-level traffic offences are more likely to be involved in the committing of serious offences. It is advocated within the Self-selection Policing methodology drawn out by Roach (2017), 'those who do big bad things, also do-little bad things. This policing approach is made out by means of identifying offenders through investigating the minor offences in which they commit. According the College of Policing (2022) Police carrying out proactive road safety will improve general road safety, ensure the seizures of vehicles with no valid insurance and will remove the ability for members of organised crime groups to use vehicles. The College of Policing (2022) outlines these results through Police Officers effective use of statutory Police powers. The statutory Police powers state minor offences can lead to points issued to an offender driving licence, which will lead to their disqualification (College of Policing, 2022). Driving whilst disqualified could then lead to a custodial sentence that in turn is preventing potential serious crimes (College of Policing, 2022).

2.4.2 Targeting "Low-Level" Offenders on the Roads

Roach (2017) has produced, and article entitled "*Self-Selecting Policing and the disqualified Driver*". This publication considers previous research that suggests that those individuals that commit low-level offences go through the penalty point system and result in being disqualified from driving (Roach, 2017). Roach (2017) suggests that these individuals are most likely to be involved in other types of criminality including violent offences. Effectively this is suggesting that Police Officers should utilise intelligence led policing to target disqualified drivers. The article outlines findings from a study that suggest, men found to be driving whilst disqualified had an average of at least nine non-motoring offences (Roach, 2017). A statistic was cited within this study showing that 37% of drivers who were disqualified were convicted of an offence within the first 12 months of their disqualification (Roach, 2017). Roach (2017) specifies that driving whilst disqualified aptitudes to be one of the most likely trigger offences for disrupting serious criminality. The study carried out by Roach (2017) was using a small sample of 50 disqualified drivers who all reside within the same town in the UK. The information was that of which was provided by the local Police force rather than the Driver Licensing Agency (DVLA). In a brief summary, Roach (2017) research showed that from a small sample size of disqualified drivers, there were '704 convictions with an average of 14 offences per person'. This demonstrates that those who drive whilst disqualified are versatile and frequent offenders. Roach (2017) concluded with the recommendation of Police forces to introduce target hardening towards those disqualified drivers and to challenge the backgrounds and lifestyles of those caught driving whilst banned (Roach, 2017). Roach (2017) outlined the difficulties imposed with Police forces in order to detect disqualified drivers due to the minimal data sharing and processes for data between Police forces and the Driver Licensing Agency (DVLA).

2.4.3 Speed Cameras

The use of speed cameras is considered a competent tool, which is used with the ideology of reducing casualties on the road network. This is considered control through enforcement of the speed in which a vehicle travel (Corbett and Grayson, 2010). A study undertaken by Corbett and Grayson (2010) detailed within an article entitled 'Speed limit Enforcement as Perceived by Offenders: Implications for Roads Policing', it is outlined that as drivers approach the inception of disqualification; they will alter their driving behaviours. Therefore, the implementation of a penalty point system has been the main deterrent for dangerous manners of driving (Corbett and Grayson, 2010). This refers back to the points outlined by Roach (2017), who moved to cite driving offenders are not unlucky members of public, but those

members of public who have a further likelihood to be involved in serious conventional crime. The use of static or 'manned' speed cameras is often scrutinised by the public. Corbett and Grayson (2010) demonstrated that many respondents (within the research methodology), have stated that the use of this tactic is considered as a means of generating revenue a quote used within this study from a participant was: "*Speed cameras should not be used a means of fundraising for Police forces or Government*" (Corbett and Grayson, 2010).

2.4.4 Individual Officer Discretion

Discretion is also a tool used by Police Officers that is removed with static speed cameras. Discretion is said to provide Police Officers with a choice, Lumsden (2013) uses the term selective enforcement or non-enforcement. It is argued that the use of discretion is a way of "peacekeeping" even if a criminal offence has been committed (Lumsden, 2013). This provides the Police Officer a choice between enforcement and discretion when dealing with a road related offence (Lumsden, 2013). This can be related in a way in which the Police Officer can define the act as illegal or anti-social. An example of which can be used under Section 3ZA Road Traffic Act 1988, which involves a person driving a vehicle without reasonable consideration for other members of the public, only if those persons are inconvenienced by the manner of driving. In this instance, a Police Officer can use their discretion. A Police Officer can choose not to prosecute a driver and utilise section 59 of the Police Reform Act 2002, which would be considered as a warning (Lumsden, 2013). The balance of using this tool through a rationalised common-sense approach can be considered invaluable but can be viewed in the coercion of respect from members of the public (Lumsden, 2013).

2.4.5 Automatic Number Plate Recognition (ANPR)

According to the National Police Chiefs Council (2016), Automatic Number Plate Recognition (ANPR) in simple terms is a camera that links to a computer (NPCC, 2016). When motor vehicles pass the camera, the camera obtains an image that is robotically recorded by the computer, at which point the motor vehicles registration number mark (VRM) is stored (NPCC, 2016). Automatic Number Plate Recognition (ANPR) cameras can be both fixed or portable and are said to allow the Police to disrupt, target and combat many different types of crime including burglaries, domestic related offences, drug supply and motor vehicle crime (Rogers and Scally, 2018). Automatic Number Plate Recognition (ANPR) operational process is outlined by a number of sources as a technical analysis (Rogers and Scally, 2018). Kirby and Turner (2007) delve into the idea of two parts to Automatic Number Plate Recognition (ANPR) information, these two parts being "READ" and "HIT". The first of the two parts being "READ" data, data which is simply stored having passed through the camera (Kirby and Turner, 2007; McCahill and Norris, 2002). The second of the two parts being "HIT" data, this can be considered as those motor vehicles of interest of whom Police forces are attempting to locate (Kirby and Turner, 2007; McCahill and Norris, 2002).

As part of a journal published by Kirby and Turner (2007), Kirby and Turner (2007) express the use of Automatic Number Plate Recognition (ANPR) as tool in which can be utilised to assist in investigations (Kirby and Turner, 2007). Within the journal Kirby and Turner (2007) outline the Automatic Number Plate Recognition (ANPR) capability to capture the vehicle registration marks of approximately 3,600 vehicles per hour, in turn with checking the databases within 2 seconds (Kirby and Turner, 2007; Murakami Wood, 2006). In a study published by Tang *et al* (2022), it is outlined that part of the initial tasks within the algorithm of Automatic Number Plate Recognition (ANPR) is identifying where the number plate is within the input image (Tang *et al*, 2022). Further to this, guidance is set out by the Driving and Vehicle Licensing Agency (DVLA) as to how number plates should be displayed on vehicles in the UK (GOV.UK, 2022). The Driving and Vehicle Licensing Agency (DVLA) also states you

must not alter, rearrange the letters or numbers which render them hard to read (GOV.UK, 2022).

Tang *et al* (2022) suggests that through ensuring the Automatic Number Plate Recognition (ANPR) systems knows where the number plate on a motor vehicle is, this will as a result produce greater accuracy in the reads produced. Automatic Number Plate Recognition (ANPR) is also outlined as a proactive tool utilised by Police forces. An example given in a study conducted by (Rogers and Scally, 2018) is that of Dyfed Powys Police, who are utilising a mobile application which Police Officers can download and install to their force issued work mobile phones. This allows Police Officers to monitor real time Automatic Number Plate Recognition (ANPR) activations (Rogers and Scally, 2018). This is said to allow Police Officers to carry out a more reactive and proactive approach when targeting road related offences (Rogers and Scally, 2018). Haines (2009) state Police forces suggest that Automatic Number Plate Recognition (ANPR) was brought in to help in their efforts to control crime, public order by its main means of deterring and detecting document offence (Haines, 2009). Haines (2009) suggests its implementation was also to increase public confidence and assurance, however, little appears to be known about the overall effectiveness of Automatic Number Plate Recognition (ANPR).

2.4.6 What can Automatic Number Plate Recognition ANPR do for the Police?

In a study published by Tang *et al* (2022), it is outlined in terms of the investigative advancements that Automatic Number Plate Recognition (ANPR) data can provide. An example used is in relation to individual driver behaviour. Automatic Number Plate Recognition (ANPR) can show individual driver characteristics through data which includes, route choices, commute patterns and also companion vehicles (vehicles travelling in convoy) (Tang *et al*, 2022). Further to this local Police can implement a marker system through the means of the Police National Computer (PNC) (Tang *et al*, 2022). This in turn, will allow Police forces to nationally create messages against vehicles that require attention or intervention (Tang *et al*, 2022). The Automatic Number Plate Recognition (ANPR) system can then be employed as an alarm that notifies the Police that a subject vehicle has passed a camera (College of Policing, 2022).

Automatic Number Plate Recognition (ANPR) usage is said to help investigators in a number of different ways (Tang *et al*, 2022). Automatic Number Plate Recognition (ANPR) was initially said to be considered as a vehicle interception tool for the Police, however, it can also be deployed as a slow time investigative or intelligence gathering tool (Kirby and Turner, 2007; Murakami Wood, 2006). A journal published by Kirby and Turner (2007), Kirby and Turner (2007) outline examples of Automatic Number Plate Recognition (ANPR) usage, one being by means of analysing Automatic Number Plate Recognition (ANPR) data from a specific camera at specific times to identify potential offenders and witnesses to a crime of which has already taken place. The example used was following a serious assault at Heathrow Airport (Kirby and Turner, 2007). The Automatic Number Plate Recognition (ANPR) data was analysed to establish the registration plate of a people carrier type vehicle that was seen following the victim's car (Kirby and Turner, 2007). An hour following the analysis, the name and address of a suspect, which in turn lead to the obtaining of highly valuable forensic evidence (Kirby and Turner, 2007).

2.4.7 Limitations of Automatic Number Plate Recognition (ANPR)?

Roach (2017) outlines his concerns when considering Automatic Number Plate Recognition (ANPR) usage in his theory of banned drivers. Roach (2017) indicates that the use of

Automatic Number Plate Recognition (ANPR) as an alerting system to identify a motor vehicle is only of use if the information is inputted at the request of the individual Police force. Roach (2017) stipulates that local Police forces may not hold information in which the Driving and Vehicle Licencing Agency (DVLA) hold without request. It is concluded within the literature that an enhancement in cooperation with the sharing of information between both the Driving and Vehicle Licencing Agency (DVLA) and the Police is needed (Roach, 2017). This in turn will increase the effectiveness of Automatic Number Plate Recognition (ANPR) and its use (Roach, 2017). Rogers and Scally (2018) agrees with Roach (2017) outlining the importance of transparency stating this can promote public confidence and that Automatic Number Plate Recognition (ANPR) is only considered an investigative tool to assist Police, not a technological advancement that can solve the core issue.

Corbett (2008) outlines issues in relation to Automatic Number Plate Recognition (ANPR) when considering the legalities when used in tandem with covert surveillance. It is said that at the time the use of Automatic Number Plate Recognition (ANPR) may be challenged in court under human rights or privacy laws if its use is not justifiable, lawful nor proportionate (Corbett, 2008; Campbell, 1999). Tang *et al* (2022) also refers to the inaccuracies in which this system can encounter, this is often caused by low resolution images, or any general source of low-quality input during the initial automated phase of reading. Tang *et al* (2022) suggests means of improving this constraint of accuracy by adopting an existing designed Automatic Number Plate Recognition (ANPR) framework (Tang *et al*, 2022; Salma *et al*, 2012). The literature settles that the United Kingdom has the most documented and complete version of the Automatic Number Plate Recognition (ANPR) framework, and its implementation based on Tang *et al* (2022) research findings (Salma *et al*, 2012). (Rogers and Scally, 2018) suggests the placement of Automatic Number Plate Recognition (ANPR) is potentially diverting crimes to other areas which do not hold this technology. (Rogers and Scally, 2018) then goes onto outline how the placement of Automatic Number Plate Recognition (ANPR) is within surveyed and those locations deemed appropriate with a necessity for Automatic Number Plate Recognition (ANPR), however, then move onto state this is conducted to ensure there is no indiscriminate use of this technology (NPCC, 2016).

3.0 Methodology

3.1 Introduction

The previous chapter of this dissertation reviewed existing literature in relation to the current ways in which the Police disrupt criminality on the road network. This chapter will look at and explore the methodology used to investigate how Police disrupt criminal activity on the Road Networks.

The objectives of this study are as follows:

- To provide a critical evaluation of the literature on how the Police disrupt criminality on the road network.
- To investigate and critically analyse the options and tactics implemented by the Police in order to disrupt criminality on the road network.
- To explore how the Police use Automatic Number Plate Recognition (ANPR) to disrupt criminality on the road network.

Methodology is considered as a collection of techniques, systems, principles or processes to carry out a methodical research process for a dissertation (Saunders *et al.*, 2016). Research methodology is the way in which researchers use research in order to develop the knowledge and understanding of their chosen subject (Saunders *et al.*, 2016).

3.2 Research Philosophy

The most important aspect of any research is the Research Philosophy (Saunders *et al.*, 2016). The research philosophy must take the knowledge presented into full consideration against the research questions, the research methods and the analysis of the findings presented (Saunders *et al.*, 2016).

Research Onion

Saunders *et al.*, (2009) developed the Research Onion as a way in which to describe the different stages researchers pass, when creating an effective methodology. The Research Onion provides the individual researcher with a method of developing their research narrative (Saunders *et al.*, 2009). This in turn will ensure the research remains reliable and valid throughout (Saunders *et al.*, 2009). The Research Onion will be utilised within the research methodology to identify the three main research assumptions, axiology, epistemology and ontology (Hodges *et al.*, 2007; Saunders *et al.*, 2009). The Research Onion takes into consideration the researcher's personal influence on the research methods proposed (Saunders *et al.*, 2009).

Axiology

Heron (1996) claims an individual's personal values, can directly impact research results. This is by potentially inputting biases within research (Saunders *et al.*, 2009). Axiology is regarded as the part of values and ethics within the research study (Saunders *et al.*, 2016). Axiology is linked to the researcher's personal influence on the research method (data collection and data analysis) (Klenke, 2008; Saunders *et al.*, 2016). Axiology outlines that the researcher's personal opinion can have an influential effect on the research method (Saunders *et al.*, 2009; Saunders *et al.*, 2016).

Epistemology

Epistemology deals with sources of knowledge (Norris, 2005; Bryman, 2012). Saunders *et al.*, (2012) proposes three philosophical positions connected with epistemology. These are positivism, interpretivism and realism (Saunders *et al.*, 2012). Epistemology considers positivism, as a scientific method. These can be simply measured with facts (Walliman, 2011). Epistemological realism views historical knowledge, noting that not all research can be directly observed (Bryman, 2012). Interpretivism within epistemology is linked with qualitative research (Creswell, 2014). As outlined above these results within can be viewed as subjective research that includes the individuals' perception (Saunders *et al.*, 2012).

Ontology

Ontology is a theory, which refers to the assumptions of reality (Creswell, 2014). Ontological assumptions widely effect the researchers views on the research subject (Saunders *et al.*, 2016). The researcher needs to be accountable for ensuring the reality is understood, in order to for a true and accurate evaluation on the conflicting arguments (Saunders *et al.*, 2016).

3.3 Data Collection and Analysis – Qualitative and Quantitative Data

There are two main types of data approaches, qualitative and quantitative. As part of this research study a qualitative approach will be used. Qualitative data has been recognised as one of the best forms of research. This is due to its flexibility in which others do not allow (Mack *et al.*, 2005). The qualitative methods that will be conducted for this study are virtual face-to-face semi-structure interviews via Microsoft Teams consisting of open-ended questions. Whilst semi-structured interviews will be used to gather primary data, a qualitative research method looks to discover an in-depth analysis in order to aid the understanding of the interviewee's opinion (Bryman, 1988; Bryman, 2001; Bryman and Bell, 2003; Ghauri and Gronhaug, 2005). Open-ended questions allow the interviewee to answer open and honestly, whilst the interviewer exhibits no limitations to the answers given (Taylor *et al.*, 2015).

In the event that a participant is unable to attend an interview a semi-structured questionnaire consisting of open-ended questions will be utilised. Questionnaires are research tools that can be utilised in order to gather and record information from its participants (Gillham, 2008).

Further to this, thematic analysis will be utilised to conduct the data analysis of the qualitative data collected from the semi-structure interviews and or the semi-structured questionnaire, as this form of analysis is the most appropriate form of analysis when qualitative research has been carried out (Thorne, 2000).

3.4 Sample Size and Technique

The sample size that will be used for the research collection will include ten employees currently working within South Wales Police Force. This sample will be split into five employees working within the Roads Policing Unit and five employees working within the Divisional Response Unit. The evaluation criteria that will be used for selecting the correct participants for this research study will be the interviewee needs to have worked within South Wales Police Force for a minimum of five years or longer and has to have worked within the Roads Policing Unit or the Divisional Response Unit for a minimum of three years.

The technique of sampling that will be utilised within this research study will be purposive sampling due to the small sample size of 10 participants (Saunders *et al*, 2016; Neuman, 2005).

3.5 Ethical Considerations

When conducting any form of research, it is important to consider ethical principles (Batchelor and Briggs, 1994; Orb *et al.*, 2001; McNeill and Chapman, 2005). Bryman and Bell (2007; 2015) suggest there are 10 important ethical principles that need to be considered when developing research that involves participants. These principles will be continually considered throughout the research study. Any data collected for the research study will be used fairly and responsibly ensuring the participants involved will remain anonymous and any personal information processed will be treated official confidential abiding to the data protection act 2018 (GOV.UK, 2018).

4.0 Analysis of Results

The following section of the study will build a critical discussion constructed from the research results that surfaced within the interviews with Police Officers within the Divisional Response Unit and the Roads Policing Unit. The findings and discussion segment looks to connect the aim and objectives presented at the start of the research study.

Interview Questions	Literature Review
1 - 7	2.4.1 – 2.4.4
8 - 14	2.4.5 – 2.4.7

Table 1: A table connecting the interview questions to the literature review.

4.1 Thematic Analysis

As discussed within section 3.3 data collection and analysis, the chosen method of analysis is thematic analysis. This section will present the findings of the research study in consecutive order to consider the aim and objectives.

4.2 Coding

The use of coding will be utilised throughout the analysis of results for ethical purposes and to be compliant with the GDPR (2014) regulation. As per Table 2 all interviewees have been given a code. Coding also provides an analysis in line with the chosen method of analysis, thematic analysis (Saunders *et al.*, 2016).

Interviewee Code	Unit	Years' Experience
Inter 1	Divisional Response Unit	17
Inter 2	Divisional Response Unit	6
Inter 3	Divisional Response Unit	7
Inter 4	Divisional Response Unit	5

Inter 5	Divisional Response Unit	6
Inter 6	Roads Policing Unit	12
Inter 7	Roads Policing Unit	11
Inter 8	Roads Policing Unit	7
Inter 9	Roads Policing Unit	5
Inter 10	Roads Policing Unit	6

Table 2: A list of Police Officers that took part in the interview research study.

4.3 Proactive Road Safety

Level of Agreement	Ranking
Strongly Agree	1
Agree	2
Neither Agree nor Disagree	3
Disagree	4
Strongly Disagree	5

Table 3: Numerical ranking against level of agreement.

Ranking	Inter Number									
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
1			x	x				x		x
2	x	x			x	x	x		x	
3										
4										
5										

Table 4: Interviewee responses in relation to question 1. (Divisional Response Unit Police Officers highlighted yellow, Roads Policing Unit Police Officers highlighted green).

All interviews either strongly agreed or agreed that Disrupting criminality on the road network is important to both Divisional Response and Roads Policing Units. This result back's the Road Policing Strategy 2022-2025 advised by the National Police Chiefs' Council (2022).

All interviews also responded that “Yes”, disrupting criminality on the road network is equally important, compared to other crime disruption methods. Inter 3 stated that disrupting criminality on the road network is equally important compared to other crime disruption methods, with Inter 7 affirming Inter 3 adding disrupting criminality on the road network is extremely important to the Roads Policing Unit. This would back National Police Chiefs’ Council (2022) statement as mentioned in the literature, effective policing of the roads plays a significant part in disrupting criminality, by targeting criminals using the road network means there will be greater chances of crime detention and persecuting those responsible (National Police Chiefs’ Council, 2022).

As suggested within the literature the College of Policing (2022) state Police carrying out proactive road safety will improve general road safety, ensure the seizures of vehicles with no valid insurance and will remove the ability for members of organised crime groups to use vehicles. This statement was back by all ten interviewees both Divisional Response and Roads Policing Unit’s agreeing that proactive road safety plays an important part when policing the road network.

Within the literature Corbett and Grayson (2010) state that use of speed cameras is considered a competent tool, which is used with the ideology of reducing casualties on the road network. This was back by the interviewee results with all interviewees either strongly agreeing or agreeing with the literature surrounding speed cameras.

Lumsden (2013) states within the literature that a tool that is also used by Police Officers is discretion with all ten interviewees both Divisional Response and Roads Policing Unit’s agreeing. Lumsden (2013) also suggests that discretion is arguable a way of “peacekeeping” even if a criminal offence has been committed. Following on to discretion being a tool in which can help disrupt criminal activity. However, although all interviewees stated they use discretion all interviewees also highlighted that ultimately the law is the law and as stated by Lumsden (2013) this tool must be used through a rationalised common-sense approach.

4.4 Automatic Number Plate Recognition (ANPR)

Level of Rating	Ranking
Very Highly	1
Highly	2
Neither High nor Low	3
Low	4
Very Low	5

Table 5: Numerical ranking against level of rating.

Ranking	Inter Number									
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
1	x			x		x		x		x
2		x			x		x		x	
3			x							
4										
5										

Table 6: Interviewee responses in relation to question 10. (Divisional Response Unit Police Officers highlighted yellow, Roads Policing Unit Police Officers highlighted green).

As per the literature the National Police Chiefs' Council (2022) states there are a number of options that can be utilised to help Police Officers disrupt criminality on the road network. The interviewees provided a number of options they have at their use to help them disrupt criminality on the road network, however, noted within the responses from the interviewees was the difference in options available to be used between the Divisional Response Police Officers and the Roads Policing Police Officers. A few of the options noted were the Police National Computer (PNC), local intelligence systems such as NICHE, intelligence submissions, Police National Database (PND), daily briefings, proactive vehicle stops through mobile protocols, pursuit and forced stop tactics, advanced driver training and Automatic Number Plate Recognition (ANPR).

As stated within the literature Rogers and Scally (2018) believes that Automatic Number Plate Recognition (ANPR) is the most effective tool when disrupting criminality on the roads network. Backing this statement all of the interviewees agreed stating that Automatic Number Plate Recognition (ANPR) is one of the most effective tools that can be utilised to disrupt criminality on the road network. This was also solidified by all interviewees both the Divisional Response Police Officers and the Roads Policing Police Officers agreeing that all Officers share the same opinion when it comes to when disrupting criminality on the road network.

Kirby and Turner (2007) states that Automatic Number Plate Recognition (ANPR) is a highly useful tool that can be utilised to back this stating that the use of as tool disrupt criminality on the road network with all interviewees rating the National Automatic Number Plate Recognition Service (NAS) either very highly or highly as a tool to tool to disrupt criminality on the road network. Inter 3 states that National Automatic Number Plate Recognition Service (NAS) allows Officers to maintain intelligence and movement of vehicles of interest. Although the literature and the interviewee results clearly validate that the use of Automatic Number Plate Recognition (ANPR) as highly valuable tool disrupt criminality on the road network, it has been identified within the results that only Roads Policing Police Officers have access to National Automatic Number Plate Recognition Service (NAS) and that Divisional Response Police Officers do not have access to National Automatic Number Plate Recognition Service (NAS). Although it appears that only Roads Policing Police Officers have access to National Automatic Number Plate Recognition Service (NAS) all interviewees agreed that that Divisional Response Police Officers should have access to National Automatic Number Plate Recognition Service (NAS).

5.0 Conclusion and Recommendations

This study was conducted in order to evaluate the aims and objectives outlined at the beginning of this study. The research study aim was to investigate how the Police disrupt criminal activity on the road network. The following objectives were identified to support the research study aim:

- To provide a critical evaluation of the literature on how the Police disrupt criminality on the road network.
- To investigate and critically analyse the options and tactics implemented by the Police in order to disrupt criminality on the road network.
- To explore the importance of how the Police disrupt criminality on the road network.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of Automatic Number Plate Recognition (ANPR) when used to disrupt criminality on the road network.

The research aim was to investigate by means of critically evaluating the literature surrounding the discussed options and tactics implemented. The first two supporting objectives were identified through existing literature which shows that there is a growing number of vehicles on the road network and the fact that criminals use the road network to facilitate all levels of crime. The literature provides valuable insights into the different tactics used by the Police to disrupt criminality on the road network. Proactive road safety is suggested as a means of disrupting criminality as the literature suggests those who commit low level offences are more likely to be committing serious offences. The Self-selecting policing methodology outlined by Roach (2017) advocates that serious offenders can be identified through the means of investigating minor offences. The College of Policing (2022) also supports this concept.

The use of speed cameras can also be considered a widely competent tool in enforcing speed limits and reducing casualties on the road. Corbett and Greyson (2010) study demonstrate that some respondents consider it as a means of generating revenue. All participants who took part in the interviews for this research study either strongly agreed or agreed with this, stating the tool reduces the number of casualties on the road network. The use of discretion as argued by Lumsden (2013) as a positive, however, carries the risk of being perceived as way of Police Officer's demonstrating power over the public. All participants who took part in the interviews for this research study stated discretion is a tool they use and that it can help disrupt criminal activity.

The literature surrounding Automatic Number Plate Recognition (ANPR) technology has several arguments for, however, some concerns raised against its usage have been identified in the literature. Based on the analysis of results, Automatic Number Plate Recognition (ANPR) it is deemed by professionals as an invaluable tool in which both Divisional Response and Roads Policing Unit Police Officers feel supports or would support them in disrupting criminality on the road network. This is supported by Tang *et al* (2022) when outlining the advancement that Automatic Number Plate Recognition (ANPR) technology provides with its usefulness towards investigations and intelligence gather, with a potential to provide further information such as driver behaviour and commute or routes taken by potential criminals. Although the issues outlined by Corbett (2008) in relation to Automatic Number Plate Recognition (ANPR) usage when used in tandem with covert surveillance. The findings collected by both Divisional Response and Roads Policing Unit officers were solely in relation to overt usage of Automatic Number Plate Recognition (ANPR) in order to keep this study measurable between options and tactics used by both Units.

5.1 Limitations

During the course of this research study, limitations were in some cases unpreventable, however, were kept to a minimum. The main limitation identified within the methodology was the noted sample size. A wide research sample of twenty participants was targeted in order to provide a more diverse range of manuscripts. This in turn led to a further limitation, time. As mentioned, twenty participants were requested to contribute to this research study interview, but due to time limitations ten declined to participate. The final sample size included ten employees currently working within the Police Force, which was split into five employees working within the Roads Policing Unit and five employees working within the Divisional Response Unit.

5.2 Recommendations

The literature highlights the importance of proactive road safety, the use of speed cameras, the use of discretion and the use of Automatic Number Plate Recognition (ANPR) technology by Police Officers who are policing the road network. The effectiveness of these tactics depends highly on a range of factors, these include the location of the offence, the circumstances of the offence committed, and the tools available to the individual Police Officer. There are several ways in which Police forces can better disrupt criminality on the road network. By implementing the subject options and tactics cited throughout this study, Police forces can make significant progress in reducing criminal's access to the road network. This in turn will also assist in the reduction of accidents and improve the overall safety of road network. The implementation of these strategies must be effective and sustainable long term to increase public confidence. Further research and investigation will be necessary to determine the most effective strategy for policing the road network and disrupting criminality in everyday policing teams. This research study provides a contribution to the understanding of these options and tactics implemented by the Police when disrupting criminality on the road network, and what challenges the Police face. A gap in the research has been identified in relation to the impacts of Automatic Number Plate Recognition (ANPR) surrounding covert surveillance. This study only compiles the sample of overt Divisional Response and Roads Policing Unit Officers. Further researchers may consider utilising this study as a pillar in which can be developed through further research.

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7.0 Appendix

Appendix A

Research Consent Form:

<u>Research Consent Form</u>	
Dear (Participant),	
I am currently in the process of completing my degree BSc (Hons) Professional Police Practice.	
I am conducting a research study into how the Police disrupt criminal activity on the road networks.	
You are invited to participate within this study. I will ask you to take part in a semi-structured interview. Your answers will remain anonymous and kept confidential. All answers will be corroborated and collected within a small sample group of Police Officers within the Divisional Response and Roads Policing units. The interview should take no longer than 45 minutes, during which you will receive the intended interview questions.	
Your participation is completely voluntary; therefore, you may stop, pause or leave the interview at any time, or decline to answer any questions which you may not wish to answer. You will not be asked any personal information which may lead to others suspecting your identity or pose any risk to everyday life.	
The objectives of this study are as follows:	
• To provide a critical evaluation of the literature on how the Police disrupt criminality on the road network. • To investigate and critically analyse the options and tactics implemented by the Police in order to disrupt criminality on the road network. • To explore how the Police use Automatic Number Plate Recognition (ANPR) to disrupt criminality on the road network.	
(Cut at the line and return the bottom section of this form)	
.....	
I consent to my participation in the study into how the Police disrupt criminal activity on the road networks. I fully understand that my participation is voluntary and that my name will not be disclosed nor associated within my answers. By signing the below, I agree to and acknowledge the above statement.	
Signature:	Date:

Appendix B

Semi-Structured Interview Questions:

Firstly, please provide an insight into how long you have worked within the Police Force, and how long you have worked in your current unit (whether Divisional Response Unit or Roads Policing Unit)?

1. *"Disrupting criminality on the road network is important to my unit".* Do you agree with this statement?
 - ☐ Strongly Agree
 - ☐ Agree
 - ☐ Neither Agree nor Disagree
 - ☐ Disagree
 - ☐ Strongly Disagree.
2. Do you feel disrupting criminality on the road network is equally important, compared to other crime disruption methods?
3. Do you believe proactive road safety plays an important part when policing the road network?
4. *"Static speed cameras help reduce the number of casualties on the road network".* Do you agree with this statement?
 - ☐ Strongly Agree
 - ☐ Agree
 - ☐ Neither Agree nor Disagree
 - ☐ Disagree
 - ☐ Strongly Disagree
5. Is your own discretion something you use often in your current role?
6. Do you feel using discretion can help disrupt criminal activity?
7. What are the main options you have, that help you disrupt criminality on the road network?

8. What in your opinion is the most effective tool, when disrupting criminality on the road network?
9. Do you believe others in your unit share the same opinion as you? If not, Why?
10. On the below scale, how would you rate the "National Automatic Number Plate Recognition Service" (NAS) as a tool to disrupt criminality on the road network?
 - Very highly
 - Highly
 - Neither High nor Low
 - Low
 - Very Low
11. Does your organisation allow Divisional Response Police Officer's access to "NAS"?
12. Does your organisation allow Roads Policing Unit (RPU) Officers access to "NAS"?
13. Can YOU currently access the "NAS" in your current role?
14. How does the "NAS" help you disrupt criminality on the road network? (if no access, how would it help you?)
15. In your opinion, should Divisional Response Police Officers have access to the "NAS"?
16. Is there anything you feel your organisation COULD do, in order to improve how YOU can disrupt criminality on the road network?

Appendix C

Inter 3 –

Firstly, please provide an insight into how long you have worked within the Police Force, and how long you have worked in your current unit (whether Divisional Response Unit or Roads Policing Unit)?

I have worked as a Police Officer for 7 years and I have worked in the Response Unit for 7 of those years.

1. "Disrupting criminality on the road network is important to my unit". Do you agree with this statement?

- ☒ Strongly Agree
- ☐ Agree
- ☐ Neither Agree nor Disagree
- ☐ Disagree
- ☐ Strongly Disagree.

2. Do you feel disrupting criminality on the road network is equally important, compared to other crime disruption methods?

Yes, I do feel that disrupting criminality on the road network is equally important compared to other crime disruption methods.

3. Do you believe proactive road safety plays an important part when policing the road network?

Yes, 100%!

4. "Static speed cameras help reduce the number of casualties on the road network". Do you agree with this statement?

- ☒ Strongly Agree
- ☐ Agree
- ☐ Neither Agree nor Disagree
- ☐ Disagree
- ☐ Strongly Disagree

5. Is your own discretion something you use often in your current role?

Yes, to a certain degree as ultimately the law is the law.

6. Do you feel using discretion can help disrupt criminal activity?

Yes.

7. What are the main options you have, that help you disrupt criminality on the road network?

Police National Computer, NICHE, Intelligence, Police National Database, Briefings.

8. What in your opinion is the most effective tool, when disrupting criminality on the road network?

ANPR and intelligence.

9. Do you believe others in your unit share the same opinion as you? If not, Why?

Yes.

10. On the below scale, how would you rate the “National Automatic Number Plate Recognition Service” (NAS) as a tool to disrupt criminality on the road network?

- ☐ Very highly
- ☐ Highly
- ☒ Neither High nor Low
- ☐ Low
- ☐ Very Low

11. Does your organisation allow Divisional Response Police Officer’s access to “NAS”?

The Response Unit only have access to this by request only.

12. Does your organisation allow Roads Policing Unit (RPU) Officers access to “NAS”?

An app is currently being developed that will allow the Response and Roads Policing Unit Officers access to NAS.

13. Can YOU currently access the “NAS” in your current role?

No.

14. How does the “NAS” help you disrupt criminality on the road network? (if no access, how would it help you?)

NAS allows Officers to maintain intelligence and movement of vehicles of interest.

15. In your opinion, should Divisional Response Police Officers have access to the “NAS”?

Yes.

16. Is there anything you feel your organisation COULD do, in order to improve how YOU can disrupt criminality on the road network?

A quick development and roll-out of the app.

Inter 9 –

Firstly, please provide an insight into how long you have worked within the Police Force, and how long you have worked in your current unit (whether Divisional Response Unit or Roads Policing Unit)?

I have worked as a Police Officer for 9 years. 3 years within the Response unit and 6 years in the Roads Policing Unit.

1. “Disrupting criminality on the road network is important to my unit”. Do you agree with this statement?

- ☐ Strongly Agree
- ☒ Agree

- Neither Agree nor Disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree.

2. Do you feel disrupting criminality on the road network is equally important, compared to other crime disruption methods?

Yes.

3. Do you believe proactive road safety plays an important part when policing the road network?

Yes.

4. "Static speed cameras help reduce the number of casualties on the road network". Do you agree with this statement?

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Neither Agree nor Disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

5. Is your own discretion something you use often in your current role?

Yes.

6. Do you feel using discretion can help disrupt criminal activity?

Yes.

7. What are the main options you have, that help you disrupt criminality on the road network?

Police National Computer and NICHE.

8. What in your opinion is the most effective tool, when disrupting criminality on the road network?

The use of ANPR and intelligence.

9. Do you believe others in your unit share the same opinion as you? If not, Why?

Some Officers do. Some Officers (i.e., Response Unit Officers are not as proactive – different priorities).

10. On the below scale, how would you rate the "National Automatic Number Plate Recognition Service" (NAS) as a tool to disrupt criminality on the road network?

- Very highly
- Highly
- Neither High nor Low

- Low
- Very Low

11. Does your organisation allow Divisional Response Police Officer's access to "NAS"?
No.

12. Does your organisation allow Roads Policing Unit (RPU) Officers access to "NAS"?
Yes.

13. Can YOU currently access the "NAS" in your current role?
Yes.

14. How does the "NAS" help you disrupt criminality on the road network? (if no access, how would it help you?)
It helps in many ways, e.g., monitor vehicles.

15. In your opinion, should Divisional Response Police Officers have access to the "NAS"?
Yes.

16. Is there anything you feel your organisation COULD do, in order to improve how YOU can disrupt criminality on the road network?
Further the use of technology to proactively monitor vehicles.

Inter 5 –

Firstly, please provide an insight into how long you have worked within the Police Force, and how long you have worked in your current unit (whether Divisional Response Unit or Roads Policing Unit)?

I have worked as a Police Officer for 6 years and I have worked in the Response Unit for 6 of those years.

1. "Disrupting criminality on the road network is important to my unit". Do you agree with this statement?
 - Strongly Agree
 - **Agree**
 - Neither Agree nor Disagree
 - Disagree
 - Strongly Disagree.

2. Do you feel disrupting criminality on the road network is equally important, compared to other crime disruption methods?

My main duty as a Response Unit Officer is to respond to calls (999 etc.), but yes, this is equally as important.

3. Do you believe proactive road safety plays an important part when policing the road network?

Yes.

4. "Static speed cameras help reduce the number of casualties on the road network". Do you agree with this statement?

- ☒ Strongly Agree
- ☐ Agree
- ☐ Neither Agree nor Disagree
- ☐ Disagree
- ☐ Strongly Disagree

5. Is your own discretion something you use often in your current role?

Yes.

6. Do you feel using discretion can help disrupt criminal activity?

Yes.

7. What are the main options you have, that help you disrupt criminality on the road network?

Proactive vehicle stops through mobile protocols, PNC, ANPR through trained persons and calls from MOP.

8. What in your opinion is the most effective tool, when disrupting criminality on the road network?

Proactive policing.

9. Do you believe others in your unit share the same opinion as you? If not, Why?

No, some Officers feel as a Response Unit Officer you should only respond to calls from MOP.

10. On the below scale, how would you rate the "National Automatic Number Plate Recognition Service" (NAS) as a tool to disrupt criminality on the road network?

- ☐ Very highly
- ☒ Highly

- Neither High nor Low
- Low
- Very Low

11. Does your organisation allow Divisional Response Police Officer's access to "NAS"?
No.

12. Does your organisation allow Roads Policing Unit (RPU) Officers access to "NAS"?
Don't know.

13. Can YOU currently access the "NAS" in your current role?
No.

14. How does the "NAS" help you disrupt criminality on the road network? (if no access, how would it help you?)
I do not have access to NAS, however, yes, it would help me as an Officer to actively monitor vehicles of interest through intelligence submissions.

15. In your opinion, should Divisional Response Police Officers have access to the "NAS"?
Yes.

16. Is there anything you feel your organisation COULD do, in order to improve how YOU can disrupt criminality on the road network?
I feel Response Unit Officers should have better access to the tools that are available to Roads Police Unit (i.e., NAS).

Inter 7 –

Firstly, please provide an insight into how long you have worked within the Police Force, and how long you have worked in your current unit (whether Divisional Response Unit or Roads Policing Unit)?

I have worked as a Police Officer for 11 years and I have worked in the Roads Policing Unit for 6 of those years.

1. "Disrupting criminality on the road network is important to my unit". Do you agree with this statement?

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Neither Agree nor Disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree.

2. Do you feel disrupting criminality on the road network is equally important, compared to other crime disruption methods?

Disrupting criminality on the road network is VERY important for my department (RPU).

3. Do you believe proactive road safety plays an important part when policing the road network?

Yes.

4. "Static speed cameras help reduce the number of casualties on the road network". Do you agree with this statement?

- ☐ Strongly Agree
- ☒ Agree
- ☐ Neither Agree nor Disagree
- ☐ Disagree
- ☐ Strongly Disagree

5. Is your own discretion something you use often in your current role?

Yes.

6. Do you feel using discretion can help disrupt criminal activity?

Yes.

7. What are the main options you have, that help you disrupt criminality on the road network?

The main options are, pursuit and forced stop tactics, ANPR, intelligence, PNC, locally intelligence systems NICHE and advanced driver training.

8. What in your opinion is the most effective tool, when disrupting criminality on the road network?

Intelligence, ANPR and proactive patrols.

9. Do you believe others in your unit share the same opinion as you? If not, Why?

Yes.

10. On the below scale, how would you rate the "National Automatic Number Plate Recognition Service" (NAS) as a tool to disrupt criminality on the road network?

- ☐ Very highly
- ☒ Highly
- ☐ Neither High nor Low
- ☐ Low
- ☐ Very Low

11. Does your organisation allow Divisional Response Police Officer's access to "NAS"?
I've been told no, at this need to be requested through trained intelligence Officers.

12. Does your organisation allow Roads Policing Unit (RPU) Officers access to "NAS"?
Yes.

13. Can YOU currently access the "NAS" in your current role?
Yes.

14. How does the "NAS" help you disrupt criminality on the road network? (if no access, how would it help you?)
NAS is fantastic tool as it helps monitor movements of specific vehicles and helps us intercept them.

15. In your opinion, should Divisional Response Police Officers have access to the "NAS"?
Yes.

16. Is there anything you feel your organisation COULD do, in order to improve how YOU can disrupt criminality on the road network?
Allow the Response Unit to access more Widley used tools such as ANPR and assist with providing further pursuit tactical options (i.e., stinger).