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**Article:**

Johnston, R. and Pattie, C. (2014) Electing police and crime commissioners in England and Wales, 2012 as second-order elections. *Representation*, 50 (2). 217 - 229. ISSN: 0034-4893

<https://doi.org/10.1080/00344893.2014.911774>

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**ELECTING POLICE AND CRIME COMMISSIONERS IN  
ENGLAND AND WALES, 2012 AS SECOND-ORDER ELECTIONS**

|                  |   |
|------------------|---|
| Journal:         | <i>Representation</i>   |
| Manuscript ID:   | Draft   |
| Manuscript Type: | Original Article  |
| Keywords:        | police and crime commissioners, second-order elections, campaigns |
|                  |   |

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## ELECTING POLICE AND CRIME COMMISSIONERS IN ENGLAND AND WALES, 2012 AS SECOND-ORDER ELECTIONS<sup>1</sup>

*The first elections to the newly created 41 posts of Police and Crime Commissioner in England and Wales were held in November 2012. The results show all the main characteristics of second-order elections. Turnout was low. The two unpopular coalition parties in the national government lost vote share compared to the outcome of the most recent general election, whereas the main opposition party's share increased substantially – as did that of a minor party (UKIP). Labour, Liberal Democrat and UKIP candidates all performed better than expected, the more that they spent on the campaign – although spending was in general low compared to the legal maxima. A number of independents were elected, all in areas where the Conservative party performed well in the 2010 general election: almost all of the independents who reached the second round of the supplementary vote system gained a clear majority of the second preference votes.*

The first elections to the new positions of Police and Crime Commissioner for each of the Police Forces in England and Wales outside London (where the Mayor of London performs that role, among others) were held on 15 November 2012. The positions were created by the coalition government, in its *Police Reform and Social Responsibility Act 2011*, to increase the transparency and accountability of police forces to their local populations. The Commissioners' role is to ensure an efficient and effective local police force through control of the budget (including setting the precept, collected by the local authorities, on which police funding depends), developing strategic plans and setting policing priorities, and ensuring the accountability of the Chief Constables – over whom they have the powers of appointment, suspension and dismissal. Creation of these posts was part of a wider policy goal of increasing local accountability and decision-making. (For introductions to the legislation, see Berman et al., 2012, and Johnston, 2013, 14-17.)

The elections were held using the supplementary vote system, devised for the elections for the mayors of London and the other local authorities that opted (some after a referendum) for that system. Electors have two votes, for their first and (if they wish to indicate) second preference candidates. Candidates who win a majority of the first preference votes are declared elected at that stage. If no candidate wins a majority, all candidates other than the top two on first preference votes are eliminated and their second preferences added to the remaining candidates' first preference totals; those enhanced totals determine the winner.<sup>2</sup>

These new elections joined the increasing number of what are generally known among political analysts as second-order elections (Reif and Schmitt, 1980; Norris, 1997;

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<sup>1</sup> We are grateful to Steve Goodrich of the Electoral Commission for guiding us to the spending data, and to Colin Rallings and Michael Thrasher for an electronic version of the voting data.

<sup>2</sup> For a brief guide to the Supplementary Vote see the presentation by Michael Thrasher available at [http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6\\_giyU4tv7E](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6_giyU4tv7E) – accessed 11 November 2013.

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3 Marsh, 1998). These have lower salience for the electorate than those classified as first-order,  
4 which in most countries include elections to their Parliament and, where relevant, the head of  
5 state (President). In the United Kingdom, second-order elections include those to the  
6 European Parliament, to national assemblies (the Northern Ireland Assembly, the Scottish  
7 Parliament, and the National Assembly of Wales), and to local governments (County and  
8 Borough Councils, County District Councils, Parish and Community Councils). Although  
9 important within their own contexts, these elections have low salience with the electorate, in  
10 part because of the relevant bodies' limited powers relative to the national Parliament and in  
11 part because campaigning to win support for parties and candidates and ensure high turnouts  
12 is much less intense than for the high-salience Parliamentary contests (Heath et al., 1999).  
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16 As well as low turnouts, second-order elections in the UK are characterised by a  
17 further general feature. Although all of the elections are to bodies that have specific (in some  
18 cases fairly wide-ranging) powers, rather than make their choices between candidates/parties  
19 on the basis of the relevant (often local) issues many voters use them as an opportunity to  
20 express their opinion on the national government's performance. Where it is unpopular the  
21 parties involved tend to perform badly, relative to their vote shares at the previous general  
22 election. The main opposition party(ies) usually perform well, although if they too are  
23 relatively unpopular, for a variety of reasons, many electors may either abstain or cast a  
24 'protest vote' for a minor party that normally garners little support at first-order elections  
25 (such as the Greens' success in the 1989 European Parliament elections in the UK, repeated –  
26 alongside that of the United Kingdom Independence Party (UKIP) and the British National  
27 Party – in the comparable elections 20 years later).  
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30 In line with these general trends, therefore, election of the first 41 Police and Crime  
31 Commissioners (PCCs) was likely to attract a small turnout. That situation would probably be  
32 exacerbated by widespread public ignorance about the positions and their roles (in part  
33 reflecting the lack of media interest in them until soon before polling day) plus a perception,  
34 even among those reasonably well-informed, that the positions were an unnecessary change  
35 to the status quo ante in which the Chief Constable had greater powers, answerable to a  
36 largely-appointed (though with indirectly elected members) Police Committee. The British  
37 electorate is generally reluctant to support the creation of more elected bodies and politicians  
38 (as exemplified by Welsh reluctance to vote for devolution in 1979 and 1997, and the weak  
39 support for a regional assembly in North-East England in 2004 which precipitated the end of  
40 that attempt to extend devolution to the English regions). With the PCCs this reluctance was  
41 combined with a widespread feeling that the current system worked reasonably well and the  
42 change had not been justified. Turnout was indeed low – at just 14.7 per cent for valid votes,  
43 varying across the 41 Police Force areas from 11.7 per cent in Staffordshire to 19.1 per cent  
44 in Humberside. (For a full analysis of the electoral data, see Rallings and Thrasher, 2013.  
45 Berman et al., 2013, report a poll showing that 45 per cent of respondents lacked sufficient  
46 information on which to make a case among candidates, 19 per cent said that they didn't  
47 believe police officials should be elected, and 17 per cent just weren't interested: see also  
48 Electoral Commission, 2013a.)  
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51  
52 How did individual candidates perform? In preparation of the legislation and later  
53 promotion of the elections, the government argued that party politics need not play a central  
54 role: the goal was to attract candidates with both the experience and desire to undertake the  
55 Commissioner's role, individuals who could attract local support, irrespective of – indeed  
56 without – any partisan affiliations: in its initial White Paper, the Home Office (2010a, 12)  
57 said that 'The Government wants candidates for Commissioners to come from a wide range  
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3 of backgrounds including both representatives of political parties and independents'.<sup>3</sup> But  
4 there was a major difficulty. The electorates in many of the 41 areas were very large – over 1  
5 million in fourteen cases and averaging 886,000 overall – and the costs of traditional  
6 campaigning for votes there (most money spent on all constituency campaigns in the UK  
7 goes on promotional materials, especially leaflets and posters: Johnston and Pattie, 2014)  
8 were prohibitive for virtually all candidates without substantial financial backing (an issue  
9 raised in the responses to the Home Office's consultation on the proposals: see Almandras,  
10 Ward, Woodhouse and Areas, 2010). Furthermore, whereas at general elections the  
11 government funds sending one leaflet per candidate to every elector through the post this was  
12 not the case with the PCC election so that even if candidates had the resources to cover the  
13 costs of printing leaflets they had no means – other than volunteer labour – to distribute them  
14 widely across the large electorates. All that was provided was a national website on which  
15 candidates could place their election addresses (<http://www.choosemyppcc.org.uk/>); the  
16 government Minister overseeing the legislation argued that it would be difficult to justify the  
17 expense of doing anything more, although those unable to access the website could request a  
18 hard copy to be sent by the post. (Berman et al., 2012: no information is available as to how  
19 many availed themselves of the hardcopy option.)  
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23 This gave candidates of the political parties a substantial advantage. Most of their  
24 candidates had experience as an MP, MEP, Assembly Member or local government  
25 Councillor (33 of Labour's 41 and 25 of the Conservatives' plus 19 of the Liberal  
26 Democrats' 24) – as had 14 of the 62 minor party and independent candidates. (A survey  
27 established that in total 99 of the 192 candidates had experience as elected politicians:  
28 Strickland, 2013.) In addition, 61 of the 192 candidates had been either a police officer or  
29 member of a police authority – including 32 of the 54 independents and 39 of the main  
30 parties' 130 candidates. (Berman et al., 2012, give data on the candidates' backgrounds.) The  
31 political parties, despite their general financial situations, also had access to resources with  
32 which to assist candidates presenting their case to the large electorates (Johnston and Pattie,  
33 2014). Strong local organisations with relatively healthy finances, large memberships, and  
34 available activists could mobilise support, in ways not available to independent candidates –  
35 unless they had relatively wealthy backers or personal funds: many of them, alongside the  
36 election address posted on the national website, had to rely on what 'free or cheap' publicity  
37 they could get, notably through local media.  
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### 41 **Raising Money for the Campaigns**

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45 <sup>3</sup> In its response to the consultation initiated by the White Paper, the Home Office (2010b, 9-10) noted a 'fairly  
46 mixed response to the ... inclusion of both independent candidates and political parties' with fears that  
47 candidates from the latter 'increased the risk of politicising policing' and also that independent candidates would  
48 be disadvantaged 'given their lack of resource and practical support'. In response, it argued that 'the public will  
49 decide who they want as their PCC, and it is inevitable that through the democratic process political parties will  
50 put forward those candidates they believe can best represent those communities' and to encourage independent  
51 candidates 'In partnership with the Electoral Commission we will embark on a programme of activity which  
52 seeks to raise public awareness of PCCs to secure a healthy voter turn out and to encourage independent  
53 candidates to represent their communities (Home Office, 2010b, 14). The only Electoral Commission  
54 publication – Police and Crime Commissioner Elections – was an eight-page booklet  
55 ([http://www.electoralcommission.org.uk/\\_data/assets/pdf\\_file/0014/151133/PCC-booklet-public-info-web-England-English-FINAL-LIVE-tagged-pdf.pdf](http://www.electoralcommission.org.uk/_data/assets/pdf_file/0014/151133/PCC-booklet-public-info-web-England-English-FINAL-LIVE-tagged-pdf.pdf) – accessed 11 November 2013) circulated to all households and  
56 available electronically giving brief information on the Commissioners' roles, where material could be obtained  
57 on the candidates, the Supplementary Vote ballot paper, and the three voting options (in person, by post and by  
58 proxy).  
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3 The Conservative and Labour parties both fielded a candidate in each of the 41 police force  
4 areas, most of them local members with generally low public profiles (especially across all  
5 parts of the largest of the areas). The Liberal Democrats fielded 24 candidates. So did UKIP,  
6 reflecting its performance at the 2009 European Parliament elections, at several post-2010  
7 Parliamentary by-elections, and at the 2013 local government elections held in the shire  
8 counties: it was seeking to establish itself as a 'national party' prior to the 2015 general  
9 election and good performances in the PCC contests would enhance its visibility and  
10 credibility. But the Greens fielded only one candidate and Plaid Cymru did not enter any of  
11 the three Welsh contests.  
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14 The amount each candidate could spend on campaigning during the regulated period  
15 preceding the election (8 October – 15 November, 2012) was legally constrained to a  
16 maximum determined by a formula that took into account the area's number of registered  
17 electors. Those maxima – set out in Clause 35 of *The Police and Crime Commissioner*  
18 *Elections Order, 2012* – ranged from £72,231 in the smallest area (Cumbria) to £357,435 in  
19 the largest (West Midlands). A party fielding a candidate in all 41 areas could spend up to  
20 £6,531,098. Neither of the two parties spent even 15 per cent of that and the Liberal  
21 Democrats and UKIP spent just 2.7 and 2.0 per cent of the maxima across the areas they  
22 contested (Table 1). There were variations around these low overall totals, however; many  
23 candidates spent virtually nothing but a few, including at least one independent, spent over 30  
24 per cent of the legal maximum (Table 2: the Electoral Commission's, 2013b, report records  
25 that 137 of the 191 candidates who made returns spent less than 10 per cent of the maximum,  
26 and only 10 spent more than 30 per cent). The means were low and the large standard  
27 deviations suggest very skewed distributions: a few candidates spent a great deal (though  
28 nothing like as much as they could), and most spent very little. Of the 41 Conservative  
29 candidates, for example, 17 spent less than 10 per cent of the maximum, and only nine spent  
30 more than 25 per cent: the comparable figures for Labour candidates were 26 and 2. Only one  
31 of the 24 Liberal Democrat candidates spent more than 10 per cent, as did only one of  
32 UKIP's 24 candidates.  
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36 At UK Parliamentary elections candidates tend to spend more in the seats where they  
37 have the greatest chances of success (Johnston and Pattie, 2014). Since almost all of the  
38 money spent is raised by the local parties and candidates, the most intensive campaigns occur  
39 where either victory or defeat is possible (i.e. in the marginal seats); little effort is expended  
40 either defending very safe seats or, even more so, campaigning in those where defeat is  
41 certain. Was this the case at the PCC elections?  
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44 We estimated each party's electoral strength in each police force area as its  
45 percentage of the total votes cast in its Parliamentary constituencies at the 2010 general  
46 election. There were some police force areas where either the Conservatives or Labour could  
47 anticipate victory given that performance two years previously, and others where defeat was  
48 almost certain. The Conservatives' combined 2010 vote share in some areas was only around  
49 20 per cent, for example, whereas in a few others it exceeded 50 per cent; Labour polled less  
50 than 20 per cent in 15 areas, but its share exceeded 40 per cent in 15 others. Nevertheless  
51 there was no inverted-U-shaped pattern to spending when graphed against 2010 performance.  
52 (Such relationships are normal for candidate spending at general elections: Johnston and  
53 Pattie, 2014.) Each party tended to spend more, the better its performance in 2010 – and thus  
54 by implication the greater its chances of victory – but those relationships were fairly weak:  
55 the  $r^2$  values from correlating spending in 2012 (as a percentage of the maximum) with 2010  
56 vote share were 0.29 and 0.26 for Conservative and Labour respectively. In 2010, the Liberal  
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3 Democrats won around 20 per cent of the votes in most of the 24 areas they contested in 2012  
4 but there were five areas – all in south-west and south England – where their electoral  
5 foundations were stronger, at over 30 per cent. But the relationship between their spending in  
6 2012 and their 2010 vote share was very weak (an  $r^2$  value of just 0.10); that for UKIP was  
7 even weaker – and statistically insignificant – at 0.03.  
8

9  
10 In general, therefore, three of the parties' candidates raised and spent more in those  
11 parts of England and Wales where they were traditionally strong electorally but spending by  
12 UKIP's candidates – many of whom were standing in areas where the party had little  
13 tradition of vote-winning and may not have contested all of the seats in 2010 – bore no  
14 relation to the geography of its support then.  
15

16 Since they had no electoral base on which to build, similar analyses could not be  
17 undertaken for the independent candidates. Among them, plus the nine candidates of the  
18 'minor parties', 50 spent less than 10 per cent of the maximum and just five more than 25 per  
19 cent; over 40 spent less than 5 per cent.  
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### 21 **Party, Campaign Spending, and Vote Share**

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23  
24 Given that few candidates had access to sufficient finance for them to canvass support widely  
25 across their police area, the general expectation was that those representing the main parties  
26 would triumph in most areas, reflecting the geography of party strength there plus the slightly  
27 larger amounts of money they were able to raise locally to support their campaigns.  
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30 This expectation was only partly fulfilled, however. Of the 41 contests, only 29 were  
31 won by Conservative (16) and Labour (13) candidates: the other twelve were victories for  
32 either independents (11) or the single candidate of the Zero Tolerance Policing (ex Chief)  
33 party – who was, in effect, an independent. Of those twelve, all but one had some policing  
34 experience, either as a serving officer or as a member of a (usually the local) Police  
35 Authority; two had been magistrates and one – a local TV presenter – had worked for the  
36 police authority in the area where he stood. Many had a local public profile within at least  
37 part of the area, therefore, and were running campaigns based on their experience of the  
38 issues the Commissioners would be addressing.  
39

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41 Almost all of those non-party victories occurred in shire county areas – the main  
42 (partial) exception was Avon & Somerset – where Labour was relatively weak in 2010: its  
43 average vote share then in the 12 areas won by independents was 21.6 per cent, compared to  
44 44 per cent for the Conservatives. This pattern is consistent with the arguments regarding  
45 second-order elections. As the major party in the incumbent national government the  
46 Conservatives were relatively unpopular at these mid-term elections (almost half-way  
47 through the Parliament's five-year term) and the independents with a strong policy on the  
48 relevant issues were better able to win support in areas of traditional Conservative strength  
49 (where Labour had relatively weak roots) than in Labour's heartlands, where its candidates  
50 performed relatively well. In part, at least, it seems that the independent candidates with  
51 policing backgrounds benefited from protest votes against the incumbent government.  
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54 There is little evidence that the successful independent candidates were better able to  
55 raise money for their campaigns, however. Three spent relatively large sums of money (over  
56 20 per cent of the allowed maximum) and won – as the graph in Figure 1 shows – but four  
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3 others who also spent over 20 per cent lost. In addition, six won with 20-40 per cent of the  
4 first preference votes but spent less than 10 per cent of the limit.  
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7 Turning to the four large parties, we hypothesised that each would perform better in  
8 the PCC contests the stronger their electoral base as indicated by their 2010 share of the  
9 votes, plus the more that they spent as a percentage of the maximum allowed. This was tested  
10 using a stepwise regression framework. The first step included just the relevant party's 2010  
11 percentage vote share; the second added a variable for the percentage share of the first votes  
12 cast for either candidates of parties other than the main four or for independents, anticipating  
13 that all of the main party candidates would suffer somewhat where these candidates  
14 performed well, having not been present at the general election. Finally, the third step  
15 incorporated spending variables (as a percentage of the area limit) for each of the four large  
16 parties, plus a composite variable for the total spending (again, as a percentage of the area  
17 limit) for all other candidates. We anticipated positive coefficients for 'own party spending'  
18 and negative coefficients for opposition spending.  
19

20  
21 The results for the Conservative party, which contested all 41 areas, are in Table 3.  
22 The insignificant constant term values indicate that on average the Conservative vote share at  
23 the PCC election was neither significantly larger nor smaller than at the general election two  
24 years earlier. The significant positive coefficients for Conservative 2010 vote share show that  
25 as the latter increased so did the party's relative performance in the PCC elections, but not at  
26 the same rate; the coefficient of 0.71 at the second step indicates that for every 10 percentage  
27 points increase in the Conservative general election performance, its candidate's share in the  
28 PCC election increased by only 7.1 points. Counteracting this, for every one percentage point  
29 increase in the PCC vote share won by 'other' candidates, the Conservative share fell by 0.25  
30 points. Finally, the regression for the third step has no significant coefficients for the five  
31 spending variables: the intensity of local campaigning had no impact on the outcome.  
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34 The regression results for the Labour party differ substantially from those for the  
35 Conservatives, not least in the better fit for the model (Table 4); at the third step, the seven  
36 independent variables accounted for 93 per cent of the variation, compared to only 62 per  
37 cent for the Conservative candidates. The positive constant values for the second and third  
38 steps indicate that on average Labour candidates in the PCC elections performed much better  
39 than their counterparts at the general election – by as many as 18.87 percentage points in the  
40 third-step regressions. Labour's PCC vote tally also increased the better its relative  
41 performance in 2010; for every ten point increase in its 2010 vote share, Labour's PCC share  
42 increased by 9.3 points according to the second step model and 7.4 points the third step. If  
43 Labour won 30 per cent of the votes in 2010, on average it won 41.1 per cent in 2012 ( $18.87$   
44  $+ [0.74*30]$ ) according to the final step of the model, and 48.5 per cent if it won 40 per cent  
45 in 2010. As with the Conservatives, this rate of increase was reduced by 0.25 of a percentage  
46 point for every one point increase in the performance by 'other' candidates in the PCC  
47 context. Unlike the Conservatives, however, the amount spent on the campaigns also  
48 significantly influenced Labour's performance. The more its candidate spent the larger the  
49 vote share; the more that each of the three main opponents' candidates spent, the poorer  
50 Labour's performance – with Liberal Democrat spending having the largest influence (much  
51 more, in relative terms, than Labour's own spending: Liberal Democrat spending reduced  
52 Labour's vote share by five times the impact of Labour's own spending).  
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56 The Liberal Democrat regressions (Table 5) indicate that their candidates also  
57 performed better in the PCC elections the larger their 2010 electoral base; on average,  
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3 however, their relative share in the 2012 contest was much lower – as indicated by  
4 coefficients in the three regressions of 0.30, 0.46 and 0.35 respectively. That final coefficient  
5 indicates a much smaller relative increase than for either the Conservatives (0.69) or Labour  
6 (0.74). Liberal Democrat spending did substantially improve their candidates' performance,  
7 however, by 0.72 of a percentage point for every one percentage point increase in  
8 expenditure. But spending by both UKIP and all other parties (including independent  
9 candidates) reduced the Liberal Democrat share of the vote somewhat, however, suggesting  
10 that where there was relatively intense competition for votes not going to either the  
11 Conservative or Labour candidates, Liberal Democrat candidates lost out.  
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14 The results of these three sets of regressions, like those on the performance of  
15 independent candidates, are entirely consistent with the second-order election arguments.  
16 Each party performed best in its traditional areas of strength, but Labour as the main party of  
17 opposition nationally performed much better (as indicated by the large and significant  
18 constants: Table 3) than either of the other two, who were part of the coalition government –  
19 with the Liberal Democrats (as in all opinion polls since 2010) performing worse than the  
20 Conservatives.  
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23 In second-order elections to bodies such as the European Parliament, protest votes  
24 against the party(ies) of government tend to go not only to the main opposition parties to the  
25 national government but also to minor parties which rarely win seats in general elections –  
26 such as the Greens in 1989 and UKIP in 2009. The Greens only fielded one candidate in the  
27 PCC elections, but UKIP – at the time running third in all national opinion polls – fielded 24.  
28 Their performance across the areas contested was not significantly related to the party's 2010  
29 general election performance, when they obtained only a small share of the votes in most of  
30 the constituencies contested, but the significant constant values in Table 6 indicate that on  
31 average the party's performance was much better in 2012 than 2010. Spending also helped  
32 their candidates. For every additional ten percentage points of the maximum that they spent,  
33 their vote share increased by five percentage points. UKIP candidates also gained vote share,  
34 the more that the Conservatives spent opposing them. This somewhat paradoxical finding  
35 might indicate that relatively intense Conservative campaigning in an area increased the  
36 feeling of disgruntlement with the government and encouraged some to switch to an even  
37 more right-wing party. Alternatively, as the Conservatives spent more campaigning in the  
38 areas where they were generally relatively strong there were more potentially disenchanted  
39 Conservative supporters for UKIP to attract. Or it may have been that the Conservatives  
40 fought more intensive campaigns where there was a UKIP challenge, but to no avail – so  
41 did Conservative support just leak to UKIP in strong Tory areas, or did Tory campaigning  
42 there drive them towards UKIP?  
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46 That the PCC contests shared many of the characteristics of second-order elections is  
47 also illustrated by the outcomes in the areas where second preference votes were counted, and  
48 one of the candidates was an independent. (The full results are given in Berman et al., 2012.)  
49 In eight of them the independent defeated the Conservative candidate (having been in second  
50 place after the first preferences had been counted), in every case gaining at least 63 per cent  
51 of the second preference votes: most Labour, Liberal Democrat and UKIP supporters gave  
52 their second preferences to the leading independent rather than to the candidate of the  
53 governing party. Similarly, the three independents who defeated a Labour candidate in the  
54 second round did so by winning most of the second preferences (over 80 per cent in two of  
55 the three).  
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3 Apart from the contest in Lincolnshire – where the second round was contested by  
4 two independents – there were five others where an independent remained in contention in  
5 the second round, but lost (two to the Conservatives and three to Labour). In four of them, the  
6 independent candidate won a majority (at least 60 per cent) of the second preferences: the  
7 exception was in Devon and Cornwall where the independent candidate (a former Liberal  
8 Democrat leader of the county council and still a county and district councillor for that party)  
9 won only 47 per cent of the second preferences.  
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11  
12 Of the 41 contests, all but eight went to the second round because no candidate won  
13 over 50 per cent of the first preference votes.<sup>4</sup> Of those 33 where second preferences were  
14 counted, 16 involved at least one of the Conservative and Labour candidates but no Liberal  
15 Democrat or UKIP candidates reached the second round. In ten cases, the final contest was  
16 between a Conservative and an independent candidate; and in six it was between Labour and  
17 an independent. Of the 16 Conservative-Labour second-round contests, in all eleven won by  
18 the Conservatives they outspent Labour (by as much as 32 percentage points of the maximum  
19 in one case); Labour was the larger spender in three of the five where it won. The  
20 Conservative candidates won in only two of the ten contests with independent candidates,  
21 with Conservative spending greater in both cases. However, the Conservatives also outspent  
22 the victorious independent candidate in the eight seats where the latter won – in most cases  
23 by a substantial margin. In each of the six Labour-independent contests, the winning  
24 candidates (three Labour, three independents) all outspent their opponents. Finally, in the  
25 contest between two independents in Lincolnshire, the winner spent just £394.29 (the limit  
26 was £99,990) and the second-placed candidate (who led in the first round) spent £2,427.46: a  
27 third independent candidate withdrew two weeks from polling day, but reported that he had  
28 spent £19,335.19. In general, therefore, having money to spend on their campaigns did not  
29 significantly assist the independents.  
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33 Most of the candidates fielded by the four main parties were not national figures with  
34 substantial public profiles. A few were, however, and they sought election in the area where  
35 they formerly represented one of the local constituencies: they included six former Labour  
36 MPs – Vera Baird (Northumbria), Jane Kennedy (Merseyside), Tony Lloyd (Greater  
37 Manchester), Alun Michael (South Wales), John Prescott (Humberside) and Paddy Tipping  
38 (Nottinghamshire): all but Prescott were elected. To see if their experience representing part  
39 of their police force area brought them extra support, the regressions were re-run for the  
40 relevant party with an additional dummy variable for the candidate (coded 1 in the area where  
41 they ran and 0 for all others). None of the coefficients approached statistical significance, so  
42 there was no boost to their vote share from their knowledge of and in the area. Nor was there  
43 any evidence that they were able to raise more money locally than their parties' other  
44 candidates.  
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## 47 Conclusions

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49 The first elections of Police and Crime Commissioners in England and Wales are a paradigm  
50 exemplar of second-order elections. Held midway through the 2010-2015 Parliamentary term  
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54 <sup>4</sup> The areas where the result was determined on the first preferences were Durham, Dyfed-Powys, Greater  
55 Manchester, Merseyside, North Yorkshire, Northumbria, South Yorkshire and Staffordshire. Four of these areas  
56 had the widest gap between the Labour and Conservative vote shares at the 2010 election (i.e. they were  
57 Labour's safest seats) and a fifth had Labour's seventh widest gap then; one of the others (North Yorkshire) was  
58 'safe Conservative' territory, and only two (Dyfed-Powys and Staffordshire) were relatively marginal for the  
59 two parties (both had Conservative majorities and were won by the Conservative PCC candidates).  
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3 when austerity was the leitmotif of government policy, many members of the electorate who  
4 voted (turnout was extremely low) took the opportunity to express their negative opinions  
5 against the two governing parties – Conservative and Liberal Democrat. Although both  
6 performed best in the areas where they had been relatively successful in the 2010 general  
7 election, their vote shares were significantly smaller than they were then. The Conservatives  
8 were unable to counter that downward pressure through their campaigning (as either  
9 ‘incumbent’ or ‘challenger’ in an area), even though their candidates spent more than those of  
10 any other party. The Liberal Democrats spent much less in the seats that they contested, but  
11 where their candidate did run a relatively intense campaign (as indicated by the amount  
12 spent) this brought them an electoral return and also restrained the growth in support for  
13 Labour candidates.  
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16 There were three main beneficiaries from this government unpopularity. The first was  
17 the Labour party whose vote share at these PCC elections was significantly larger than it had  
18 been in the same places at the 2010 general election – a performance that was bolstered  
19 where their candidates spent relatively large sums on their campaigns (although very few of  
20 them spent even one-third of the legal maximum). The second beneficiary was UKIP, whose  
21 vote share was also considerably larger than it had been in 2010 – and again that improved  
22 performance was enhanced by relatively high levels of spending on some of the local  
23 campaigns. But – as with the Liberal Democrats – not a single one of their candidates reached  
24 the second round of the Supplementary Vote ballot, let alone won election.  
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27 The third set of beneficiaries was a number of independent candidates, all of whom  
28 had some experience of policing in or close to the police force area where they sought  
29 election. In all of those cases, they benefited from the Conservative party’s unpopularity,  
30 garnering a substantial majority of second preference votes. Where an independent faced a  
31 Conservative candidate in the second round most of those who had voted Labour, Liberal  
32 Democrat, UKIP or for another independent candidate in the first preferences, and expressed  
33 a second preference, opted for the independent candidate rather than the Conservative. Thus  
34 the successful independent candidates were those who had the sort of experience of policing  
35 that the government hoped would stand and were seeking election in the areas that are  
36 normally part of the Conservatives’ electoral heartland. The relative collapse of the  
37 Conservative vote there, reflecting the government’s unpopularity, created room for the  
38 independents’ success.  
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42 The most important influence on the outcome of a wide range of sub-national, second-  
43 order elections in the Great Britain in recent decades has been national government  
44 popularity: an unpopular party, for whatever reason, loses vote share relative to its  
45 performance at the most recent general election, to the benefit of the main opposition party  
46 and/or minor parties. The first elections of Police and Crime Commissioners in 2012 added to  
47 that list of contests at which the main components of second-order elections are displayed,  
48 with one additional feature: a substantial number of independent candidates with experience  
49 in policing and/or police administration were able to benefit from the Conservative party’s  
50 unpopularity and win election. The next contests are to be held in 2016, one year after the  
51 next general election: the government hopes that turnout will be much higher once the  
52 electorate becomes more aware of the Commissioners and their powers. Will they replicate  
53 the 2012 outcome in a situation when a incumbency will be a further influence on voter  
54 choice in those elections?  
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TABLE 1.  
Party expenditure on the Police and Crime Commissioner elections, 2012

| Party                   | NC | Limit (£) | Expenditure (£) | %    |
|-------------------------|----|-----------|-----------------|------|
| Conservative            | 41 | 6,531,098 | 898,545         | 13.8 |
| Labour                  | 41 | 6,531,098 | 527,175         | 8.1  |
| Liberal Democrat        | 24 | 4,342,270 | 115,751         | 2.7  |
| UKIP                    | 24 | 4,372,697 | 86,517          | 2.0  |
| English Democrat        | 5  | 932,670   | 4,697           | 0.5  |
| Green                   | 1  | 76,889    | 1,304           | 1.7  |
| Justice                 | 1  | 260,491   | 21,059          | 8.1  |
| British Freedom         | 1  | 83,681    | 2,289           | 2.7  |
| Zero Tolerance Policing | 1  | 154,401   | 5,383           | 3.5  |
| Independents            | 52 | 8,951,258 | 487,294         | 5.4  |

Key: NC – number of candidates; Limit – maximum amount that could be spent (£) across all police force areas contested; Expenditure – total expenditure by all candidates (£); % – total expenditure as a percentage of the limit.

TABLE 2.  
Variations in spending at the Police and Crime Commissioner elections, 2012, by party

| Party                   | NC | Min | Max  | Mean | SD   |
|-------------------------|----|-----|------|------|------|
| Conservative            | 41 | 0.3 | 47.9 | 15.6 | 12.2 |
| Labour                  | 41 | 0.2 | 34.4 | 8.9  | 7.4  |
| Liberal Democrat        | 24 | 0.1 | 17.0 | 3.6  | 4.0  |
| UKIP                    | 24 | 0.0 | 32.2 | 2.5  | 6.7  |
| English Democrat        | 5  | 0.2 | 1.0  | 0.6  | 0.3  |
| Green                   | 1  | -   | -    | 1.7  | -    |
| Justice                 | 1  | -   | -    | 8.1  | -    |
| British Freedom         | 1  | -   | -    | 2.7  | -    |
| Zero Tolerance Policing | 1  | -   | -    | 3.5  | -    |
| Independents            | 52 | 0.0 | 38.3 | 7.3  | 10.0 |

Key: NC – number of candidates; Min – minimum amount spent by a candidate as a percentage of the maximum allowed; Max – maximum amount spent; Mean – mean amount spent by a candidate; SD – standard deviation of the amount spent.

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TABLE 3.  
Stepwise regressions of Conservative candidates' vote share at the Police and Crime Commissioner elections, 2012 (significant coefficients at the 0.05 level or better are shown in bold)

| Step                     | 1           | 2            | 3            |
|--------------------------|-------------|--------------|--------------|
| Constant                 | 1.07        | 6.76         | 7.35         |
| 2010 Vote %              | <b>0.63</b> | <b>0.71</b>  | <b>0.69</b>  |
| PCC Vote Others%         |             | <b>-0.29</b> | <b>-0.31</b> |
| Conservative Spend %     |             |              | 0.05         |
| Labour Spend %           |             |              | -0.04        |
| Liberal Democrat Spend % |             |              | 0.18         |
| UKIP Spend %             |             |              | -0.18        |
| Others Total Spend %     |             |              | 0.08         |
| R <sup>2</sup>           | 0.50        | 0.65         | 0.62         |
| N                        | 41          |              |              |

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TABLE 4. Stepwise regressions of Labour candidates' vote share at the Police and Crime Commissioner elections, 2012 (significant coefficients at the 0.05 level or better are shown in bold)

| Step                     | 1    | 2            | 3            |
|--------------------------|------|--------------|--------------|
| Constant                 | 1.77 | <b>12.18</b> | <b>18.87</b> |
| 2010 Vote %              | 1.01 | <b>0.93</b>  | <b>0.74</b>  |
| PCC Vote Others%         |      | <b>-0.27</b> | <b>-0.27</b> |
| Conservative Spend %     |      |              | <b>-0.13</b> |
| Labour Spend %           |      |              | <b>0.29</b>  |
| Liberal Democrat Spend % |      |              | <b>-0.66</b> |
| UKIP Spend %             |      |              | <b>-0.24</b> |
| Others Total Spend %     |      |              | 0.02         |
| Adjusted R <sup>2</sup>  | 0.81 | 0.87         | 0.93         |
| N                        | 41   |              |              |

TABLE 5. Stepwise regressions of Liberal Democrat candidates' vote share at the Police and Crime Commissioner elections, 2012 (significant coefficients at the 0.05 level or better are shown in bold)

| Step                     | 1           | 2           | 3            |
|--------------------------|-------------|-------------|--------------|
| Constant                 | 2.66        | 3.32        | 0.02         |
| 2010 Vote %              | <b>0.30</b> | <b>0.46</b> | <b>0.35</b>  |
| PCC Vote Others%         |             | -0.14       | -0.03        |
| Conservative Spend %     |             |             | 0.03         |
| Labour Spend %           |             |             | 0.03         |
| Liberal Democrat Spend % |             |             | <b>0.72</b>  |
| UKIP Spend %             |             |             | <b>-0.17</b> |
| Others Total Spend %     |             |             | <b>-0.24</b> |
| R <sup>2</sup>           | 0.13        | 0.14        | 0.80         |
| N                        | 24          |             |              |

TABLE 6. Stepwise regressions of UKIP candidates' vote share at the Police and Crime Commissioner elections, 2012 (significant coefficients at the 0.05 level or better are shown in bold)

| Step                     | 1            | 2            | 3            |
|--------------------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|
| Constant                 | <b>10.62</b> | <b>13.26</b> | <b>15.60</b> |
| 2010 Vote %              | 0.10         | 0.35         | 0.94         |
| PCC Vote Others%         |              | -0.13        | <b>-0.36</b> |
| Conservative Spend %     |              |              | <b>0.18</b>  |
| Labour Spend %           |              |              | -0.28        |
| Liberal Democrat Spend % |              |              | -1.20        |
| UKIP Spend %             |              |              | <b>0.50</b>  |
| Others Total Spend %     |              |              | 0.26         |
|                          |              |              | (0.14)       |
| R <sup>2</sup>           | 0.01         | 0.08         | 0.34         |
| N                        | 24           |              |              |

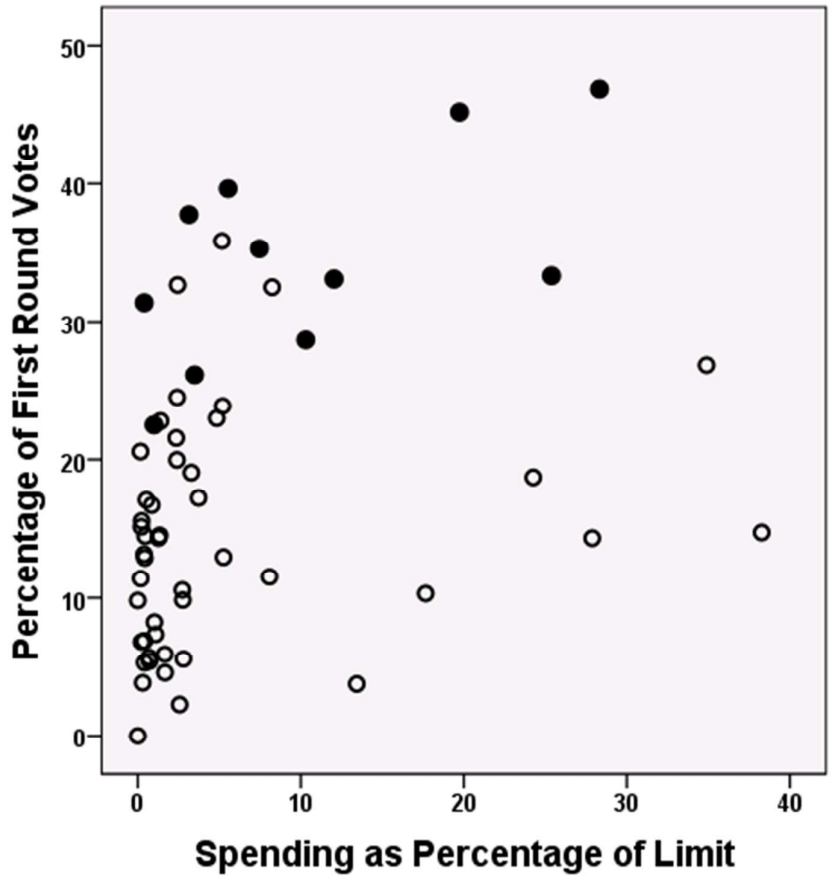


FIGURE 1.  
The relationship between spending by independent candidates (as a percentage of the legal limit) and their share of the first preference votes at the Police and Crime Commissioner elections, 2012: candidates who won their election are shown by dots, and those who lost by open circles