

**A Uniform Not *Uniform*:
An Ethnography of Police Clothing,
Performance, Gender and
Subculture in Neighbourhood
Policing**

A thesis presented

by

Camilla Rebac De Camargo

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Declaration

I hereby declare that, except where otherwise indicated, that this thesis is entirely my own work, and that no part of it has been submitted for any other degree or qualification.

Acronyms

ACPO:	Association of Chief Police Officers
CS:	Corson and Stoughton
FWNS:	Force-Wide Neighbourhood Sergeant
HQ:	Headquarters
NBO:	Neighbourhood Beat Officer
NCRS:	National Crime Recording Standard
NRPP:	National Reassurance Policing Programme
NP:	Neighbourhood Policing
NPIA:	National Policing Improvement Agency
NPO:	Neighbourhood Police Officer
INPT:	Integrated Neighbourhood Policing Team
PC:	Police Constable
PCSO:	Police Community Support Officer
PTC:	Police Training College
SNT:	Safer Neighbourhood Team

Abstract

Police officers are distinct and unique actors in public spaces. They experience a peculiar familiarity with wider society: they often do not personally know the citizens in the areas they patrol but everyone knows that they are part of the police by their uniform. Beyond the visual iconography of the basic clothing that police officers wear, the characteristics of 'the police' are embedded in everything that police officers use to do their job effectively: clothing, equipment (including discretionary equipment) and vehicles. This thesis examines the construction and communication of the police uniform and how this is conveyed through individual roles, ranks and gender.

In recent years the police service has undergone a number of changes with the introduction of neighbourhood policing (NP) being one of the most significant. The arrival of neighbourhood police officers, neighbourhood beat officers and police community support officers have enabled a new position from which to analyse the uniform. Within this context, the thesis utilises an in-depth ethnography to examine the practical and symbolic uses of officer uniforms. The research involved approximately seventeen days on patrol (equating to roughly 140 hours) over a period of four months across four research sites in a northern police force.

The findings reveal the strength of dominant policing discourses linked to the uniform, gender, identity and performance show the ways that these discourses are also infused and subverted by different sets of meanings and behaviours. The police constables (PCs) and police community support officers (PCSOs) involved in the study were seen to manoeuvre and navigate these contested discourses and fragmented nature of policing culture through the lens of their uniforms. Using Erving Goffman as a theoretical framework, along with the complementary work of Judith Butler (1993; 1999) and Malcolm Young (1991; 1992), this thesis contributes to the theoretical debate on the influence of the police uniform on the wearer; provides a gendered analysis of how equipment, vehicles and accoutrements are used to feminise and masculinise 'unisex' police clothing; and it provides an account of how rituals of purification are used in an attempt to avoid the symbolic, moral and physical contamination of the police occupation. The concluding discussion of the thesis presents a number of contributions in relation to contested binaries and polarities present through the use of occupational uniforms in neighbourhood policing.

1.1 Introduction

This thesis examines how police officers manage their identity, their image and their work through the lens of the uniform and its accompaniments. The image of the police has many different aspects and features: it has been designed and re-designed since the inception of the modern police force in 1829 and continues to change year on year. The police uniform is an important part of this image work and image management (Mawby, 2002: 5) and means different things to different ranks and genders: it embodies not only the physical exterior, but also the character of individual police forces. The visual representation and symbolic meanings attached to clothing is constructed, reconstructed, managed, controlled and communicated not only by the uniform designers, but by police officers themselves to make the meaning of their uniform personal. As a consequence, paradoxically the uniform results in a lack of uniformity in style. Findings from the study suggest that officers strive to generate their identity through the wearing of clothing that is already deeply entrenched in police culture. This thesis does not address the reaction or perception of the uniform from the public's perspective; numerous studies have been undertaken on how uniforms are perceived and received (see Durkin and Jeffrey, 1973; Bickman, 1974; Sigelman and Sigelman, 1976; Balkin and Houlden, 1983). This thesis offers a unique insight into their iconic clothing from the perception of the wearer. The broader literature on occupational uniform and clothes as embodiment (Berkowitz and LePage, 1967; Bickman, 1974; Sigelman and Sigelman, 1976; Boyanowsky and Griffiths, 1982; Balkin and Houlden, 1983; Singer and Singer, 1985; Durkin and Jeffrey, 2000; Cooke, 2004) offer an insightful foundation on which to base a study of the uniform. As the police family has expanded so has the need to undertake further research in this area.

The police uniform in the UK has gone through subtle, but significant changes in its design over the years, particularly for women officers. The changes in uniform, for both men and women, suggest that the police are actively engaged in managing their external image via the uniform. It is particularly interesting at this time to explore the image of neighbourhood policing in general which 'clearly conflicts with an increasingly militaristic appearance' (Young, 1991a: 2), which is shown most starkly via what officers wear.

In 2008, the government introduced neighbourhood policing (NP) in all policing areas across England and Wales. Integrated neighbourhood policing teams (INPTs) were

formed, consisting of neighbourhood police officers (NPOs), neighbourhood beat officers (NBOs), and police community support officers (PCSOs). However, this new style of community engagement policing has conflicted with the dominant masculine ethos of the police institution and NP was seen by some as ‘expected to weaken the cultural expressions of the police’ (Loftus, 2009: 2). When PCSOs were first introduced in 2002, there was a great deal of confusion over their role (both among the public and within police forces). There were high levels of uncertainty over how they would fit into the existing policing structure, both practically and culturally. The relatively recent addition of PCSOs, under the Police Reform Act 2002, generated a new dynamic to policing in England and Wales, and compelled the police to address more actively the management of their visibility. Neighbourhood policing shares a great deal with previous community-orientated models of policing and has been described as the ‘new’ community policing (Innes, 2006). This ‘new’ style encouraged PCs and PCSOs to spend more time engaging with the public, to participate in joint-action problem solving with other agencies, and to increase visibility. This style of policing embodies a significant divergence from established understandings of police working practices and culture and has led to NP being described by officers and outsiders as a softer, more feminine form of policing (Davies and Thomas, 2008), placing it in opposition to the masculine gendered organisational practice of the police (Miller, 1999). The conflict between the perceived masculinity or femininity of roles within the new policing ‘family’ holds significant implications for officers’ occupational identity, particularly the way the uniform is used to construct these identities. This thesis argues that the strong establishment of policing styles that dictate how officers should behave, act, and feel has been disrupted and unsettled by the expansion of the policing ‘family’.

The police service is often cited as an interesting site for exploring gendered occupational cultures (Westmarland, 2001). As ‘the police world has always allocated priority and respect to male categories and symbols, finding it difficult to contend with the lurking problems of gender’ (Young, 1991b: 192), the uniform has come to stand as a symbol of the debates around the place of women in the modern police force. As Walklate argues, there has been ‘an absence of a debate around policing as a gendered task’ (2001: 149). This is perhaps much to do with research having previously ‘privileged theorising of “the body”’; bracketed out the individual; and largely ignored the practical experiences of embodiment’ (Watson, 2000: 51). Literature surrounding women’s place and space in

policing has grown over the past few decades and has referred to the highly gendered culture of policing (Young, 1991b; Walklate, 1992; Heidensohn, 1992; Miller, 1999; Waddington, 1999; Brown and Heidensohn, 2000; Westmarland, 2001; Jackson, 2001; Silvestri, 2003). Police officers face different experiences in terms of their uniform based on their gender, and is thus important to focus on men *and* women's experiences in uniform within neighbourhood policing.

This study focuses on how identity is performed through the lens of the uniform within situated interactions and various contexts. In order to assess the impact of neighbourhood policing on officer identity, this thesis will draw on theories of identity performance, as well as those that explore the processes of contamination and purification rituals that wearing a highly symbolic uniform provides. In order to develop an emphasis on interactions and relationships between officers, and officers and their uniforms, the thesis draws on the work of Erving Goffman as the basis of its theoretical approach in attempting to understand how officers within NP construct and reconstruct the dominant discourses in the performance of gendered roles that still pervade policing culture. Many police ethnographers have utilised Goffman's theoretical framework to discuss their findings from the field as Goffman usefully attempts to make sense of interactions within institutional environments. Manning (1997) and O'Neill (2005) broadly applied Goffman's concepts but his work has also emerged in a plethora of other researcher's discussions (see also Rubinstein, 1973; Young, 1991b; Crank; 1998; Mawby, 2014). Using Goffman to analyse policing led Manning (1997: 5) to claim that 'policing was a masterful costume drama, a presentation of ordering and mannered civility, that was also dirty work'.

Goffman's discussions around performance and gender lend themselves particularly well to the work of Judith Butler (1993; 1999) and Malcolm Young (1991b; 1992) and their explorations of contradictory opposites. Butler argued that women, as a separate 'group', reinforces a binary view of gender relations in which individuals are divided into two clear-cut categories – men and women and contends that sex is seen to cause gender. Butler claims that 'there is no gender identity behind the expressions of gender; identity is performatively constituted by the very "expressions" that are said to be its results' (1999: 25). In other words, gender is a performance. A significant part of Butler's and Young's work is the idea that there are certain conceptual and theoretical opposites, which, following Young (1991b), are described in this thesis as 'binary pairs'. These oppositions

are rarely discussed with equal weight and are often arranged in a hierarchical sense, something that Young (1991b) explored in depth. In this thesis, it is important to explore the negative and positive polarities existing within these 'pairs' and examine the dependency of the 'dominant' or 'positive' term on its apparently 'subservient' opposite. For example, Young (1991b: 72-3) observed that separation and hierarchical binary pairs emerge amongst different police areas particularly distinguishing between officers that are 'properly uniformed' versus those who are 'variously (un)dressed' (for example, detectives, undercover officers and other support staff). Butler's (1993; 1999) binary pairs on the other hand, primarily references gender and the contested notion of 'masculine' versus 'feminine'. The only way to approach these divergences is to deconstruct the assumptions and knowledge system embedded in policing culture that, on the surface, claims equality. The distribution of a 'unisex' uniform and increasing the recruitment of women does not result in equality.

Goffman's (1959) dramaturgical approach concentrates on the way that people make sense of their 'worldview' and this framework is thus sensitive to how challenges and resistance works within the dominant gendered views of policing culture. Drawing on this approach the research also focuses on the front and back regions (Goffman, 1959) of neighbourhood policing and examines the performances and relationships between discourses in context. Poststructuralism (to which Butler is mostly related) and Goffman's dramaturgy both provide very different insights into the identity performances of police officers and yet deliver a complementary understanding of the world that officers occupy. Poststructuralist understanding of hierarchies of power, often shown in binary polarities (see also Young, 1991b) enables an enhanced understanding of the struggle against dominant discourses within policing (Butler, 1999). Dramaturgical theories are also heavily incorporated to explore the findings through the contextualised micro-interactions that officers routinely engage in. Using both these approaches will afford a more insightful lens to examine how the police construct their identity performances in neighbourhood policing through interaction with the occupation and their uniform with the various audiences. This study adopts an ethnographic methodology using participant observation to examine three integrated neighbourhood policing teams (INPTs) and a police training college (PTC). The analysis focused on the front and back-region contexts of policing through the lens of the uniform, and how aspects of gender, moral, social and physical contamination and a uniform *not uniform* can be examined within these contexts.

The findings reveal the prevalence of police dominant discourses linked to gender, subculture and the uniform and illustrates the way that officers view policing through different types of meanings and identities. The police staff involved in the study were found to navigate their way around the ideas of ‘what it means to be a police officer’ within neighbourhood policing which conflicts with the traditional masculine dominant discourses. The findings and subsequent discussion of the thesis present a number of contributions about the construction of identities through the lens of the uniform, the influence of gender and, how contamination and the effects of ‘dirty work’ (Hughes, 1951, 1962) are dealt with, together with an appreciation of the challenge of integrating neighbourhood policing and PCSOs into the wider police family.

1.2 *Aims, Objectives and Theoretical Framework*

The aim of this study is to consider the role that uniforms play in neighbourhood policing as understood primarily by the officers who wear them and how they may be used as a tool to construct identity and performance. It will consider the role of gender and how variables can affect the wearer’s experiences of a largely ‘gender-neutral’, ‘unisex’, and highly symbolic uniform. Similarly, how officers negotiate and renegotiate their identity within the new policing family will be explored. These considerations are borne out of in-depth observations from an ethnography of the police uniform and involved intense periods of shadowing PCs and PCSOs several times a week for four months. Undertaking the full shifts (often nine or ten hours) with individual officers offered unique insights to a study of the uniform, identity and performance. This study adds to both the literature that discusses the semiotics of clothing and particular uniforms and also to classic police ethnographies (see Rubenstein, 1973; Holdaway, 1983; Manning, 1997 as examples). This is the first study of its kind to explore the role of the uniform in policing culture from a grass-roots level and provides evidence of occupational culture as manifested in the uniform through complex contradictions and gendered differences.

The research objectives of this study are to:

- To explore the role the uniform plays and the social meanings it holds in the experiences and working practices of police officers.

- To explore the gendered identity performances of officers within neighbourhood policing and how this is connected to the uniform.
- To address concepts of 'dirty work' and 'contamination' in relation to the uniform.

Using the data gathered via the four-month period of ethnographic fieldwork these objectives are examined using Goffman's (1959) dramaturgical theoretical framework. This thesis suggests that identities are established through everyday social interactions and examines how different roles, experiences, contexts, and working practices produce a wide range of distinctive performances (Goffman, 1959). In order to understand the way in which individuals construct their identity performances through the uniform, this thesis will also combine a post-structural analysis of police subculture in which binary contradictions are present (Young, 1991b; Butler, 1999). Goffman's sociology, particularly his earlier works, provide valuable analytical tools for exploring the relationships between police officers and their uniforms.

Interestingly, Goffman did not develop a distinct theoretical approach that would explain how the social world works but instead analysed the social situations 'in which two or more individuals... who are, at the moment, in one another's presence' (1963b: 18). These face-to-face interactions involving others are situations in which we spend most of our lives, and thus the importance of them cannot be stressed enough. In his book, *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life* (1959), Goffman seeks to explicate how individuals, through everyday interactions with others, construct and sustain their identity. Goffman (1959: 114) was the first modern sociologist to make central the idea of performance, employing the metaphor of the theatre to approach the performance or presentation of the self.

Goffman's later 'popular works' (Smith, 2011: 140), including *Stigma* (1963b) and *Gender Advertisements* (1976, republished in 1979) (and arguably the most famous *Asylums* (1961), employed some of his most prominent ideas about the interaction order to particular topics. These books, 'seen from Goffman's distinctive interactional vantage point' explored 'normal social conduct by examining its abnormal forms' (Smith, 2011: 140).

Whilst examining police officer's personal and social identities may be problematic, it is important to be mindful of Goffman's notion that there is no one 'true' self; instead, we all manage and organise several 'selves' and look for the best way to present the one an individual considers is the most appropriate for a situation (Smith, 2013). Goffman (1959)

makes significant assertions about the nature of the ‘self’, and argues that the self is created by an individual’s outward claims that they possess certain traits or characteristics but these are wholly reliant on social structures for validation. Goffman’s early ideas were developed into a performative theory of gender difference that can be usefully applied to the sociological understanding of the gendering of police uniforms. This thesis explores the construction and identity of performance for police officers in neighbourhood policing, which is unique in the way in which it analyses how the uniform and accoutrements are embodied through policing occupational culture.

1.3 *Thesis Structure*

The thesis is structured into ten chapters. **Chapter One** introduces the thesis and thesis structure. **Chapters Two to Four** provide critical reviews of the literature in relation to the brief history of the ‘golden age’ of policing, the introduction of neighbourhood teams, the integration of female police officers, and the management of identity and performance in policing subculture respectively. **Chapter Five** discusses the research process. **Chapters Six to Nine** detail the research findings and analysis, and **Chapter Ten** concludes the thesis.

Chapter Two details the emergence and development of neighbourhood policing. The chapter analyses the decline of public trust and confidence and how neighbourhood policing and the introduction of police community support officers has attempted to mend the fragile and fractious relationship between the public and the police since the 1950s ‘golden age of policing’ (Reiner, 2000; Loader and Mulcahy, 2003). In doing so, it considers the demise of police legitimacy and public support and reviews the emergence of community-oriented policing. Within this lies the focus on reassurance and increased visibility policing within which police constables (PCs) and police community support officers (PCSOs) play a crucial and central role in its on-going and future success. It also discusses the problematic introduction of women’s integration and their effect on modern policing and how their uniforms have changed significantly since women were first introduced into the service; current ‘unisex’ uniforms have replaced kitten heels, handbags and skirts. More recently understanding the socio-political context in which PCSOs have emerged in neighbourhood policing is vital in order to recognise their role within the wider

policing structure. The reception of PCSOs and policewomen in general by the media, public opinion, and levels of colleague acceptance have been mixed and thus a discussion of how this affects performance and morale is examined.

Chapter Three is concerned with what constitutes a ‘uniform’ and how uniforms are characterised through different working organisations. It details the history of the UK police uniform specifically and how colour, design and perceptions have changed since their inception. The chapter analyses how different clothing and uniform is embedded with authority and discusses previous studies on authoritative uniform and how these can be used to cement certain ideas about the power and influence of certain clothes. The chapter also looks at how clothing is gendered, particularly looking at the distinctly ‘masculine’ uniform of the police. A discussion of the introduction of police community support officer’s uniforms follow, (which are similar in many respects to that of police constable attire) and how this affects public perception and perceptions amongst policing staff.

Chapter Four explores how clothes are a crucial element in appearance and how this plays a significant role in impression formation. In modern society, where brief social contact and communication with the police is the norm, clothing for officers has become an important indicator of status, authority and power. The chapter details how impression formation is important for the police and looks at how impression management is used (Goffman, 1959) in terms of officer performance, masks and fronts to manage a sense of self in and out of work. The notion of officers distancing themselves from their work role is considered, particularly in regards to Erving Goffman and Judith Butler and their discussions surrounding gender. In line with the work of Goffman (1961; 1967; 1971; 1972), the chapter then assesses the interactions that take place in the back region, where officers are exempt from public scrutiny. The chapter will concentrate on the dominance of macho and archetypal discourses associated with canteen culture (Waddington, 1999) and how these can regulate the gendered identity performances of PCs, PCSOs and the police more generally. The chapter will then examine the way in which these discourses can be reconstructed and contested allowing officers to construct performances which fall in line with alternative discourses.

Chapter Five explores the research process and methodological approach undertaken for this study, paying particular attention to a focused ethnography, how the data were

collected and analysed and research difficulties experienced during the time in the field. The chapter will also focus on the discussion of the role of the researcher in collecting ethnographic data and the importance of reflexively considering how I accessed the research setting and what happened within it.

Chapters Six to Nine present the findings of the study. **Chapter Six** discusses how the police uniform for BlueCorp is not actually uniform in style and what effect this has for officers and public perception of the police in general. While the government is keen to roll out a national uniform and have already implemented some changes to the visible insignia, the chapter shows how individual officers are sensitive to changes in individual and force identity and resist these modifications. The chapter also examines the notion that police community support officers, in light of their perceived 'lesser' role status, make alterations to their uniform in order to look more similar to police constables and how this is identified and comprehended by various ranks. The geographical dynamics of policing has changed to include the increased use of vehicles which as well as having obvious practical uses, allowing for extra (and free) publicity when they are operated. Although the government's positive spin on 'free publicity' has its advantages, the idea that too much patrolling can actually undermine reassurance and confidence is examined.

Chapter Seven considers how the police uniform is perceived by female officers. Though female officers now have the same sworn powers as their male colleagues and can effectively perform the same job roles, the strive for total equality within the police institution has resulted in a 'unisex' uniform, which is perceived to be predominantly masculine in style, cut and material (in line with the discussion in **Chapter Three**). The chapter also examines how female police officers take steps to feminise their uniform, and do so at varying levels contravening BlueCorp's uniform rules and regulations. The chapter concludes by discussing observations of male police officer's attempts to further masculinise their uniform and how these differences highlight the masculine culture of the police.

Chapter Eight explores how the acceptance of the police community support officer has changed significantly since their inception in 2002. When they were first introduced, there was considerable confusion over their role and how they would fit into the existing policing structure, both practically and culturally. The first PCSOs did not feel accepted by the policing family, both at a national and local level (Johnston, 2005; 2006; 2007). The

chapter explores how and why changes in terms of PCSO role acceptance have occurred in the eyes of the public and police colleagues. The chapter also discusses how the stigma attached to the PCSO role as ‘plastic policing’, ‘second-rate police officers’ (House of Commons, 2008: 92) and ‘pink and fluffy policing’ (Davies and Thomas, 2008: 634) have led to the role to become somewhat ‘feminised’ and how personal and colleague perceptions of this can negatively alter the view of the PCSO job role.

Chapter Nine considers how ‘contamination’ in the context of policing refers to how the occupation and the uniform of police officers causes polluting effects into the lives of officers and their families, often termed ‘spill-over’ (Crawley, 2004: 227). The police occupation and the police uniform are extremely difficult to disentangle as they are both deeply embedded in each other. The chapter examines how certain ranks deal with ‘dirty work’ (Hughes, 1962: 9) and use modes of purification to tackle these effects. This chapter will also further discuss the body territory, how the uniform can be construed as a contamination ‘vehicle’, and also how types of contamination are experienced in different ways for BlueCorp officers.

Chapter Ten presents the conclusion of the thesis. The aims and objectives of the original study were used as a guide to direct my observations and the fieldwork in general, but as with most ethnographic studies, other themes and ideas emerged. This allowed a much broader scope for the thesis to develop in terms of how the uniform is perceived by officers and how equipment, clothing, accoutrements and vehicles are enmeshed under the umbrella term of the ‘police uniform’ and policing culture in general. The thesis concludes with a discussion of the implications of the findings of this study.

*2.1**The Move Toward Neighbourhood Policing*

Public surveys which gauge opinion on the police (Skogan, 1990; 1994; Home Office, 2012) often presume that there is an 'entity' termed the 'image of the police'. The police institution, public and the mass media regularly make reference to the police image and how it may be affected by changes in legislation, incidents, scandals, and modifications to the uniform and equipment as though this 'image' is a clearly defined entity and accepted as a fundamental part of the police. While the police image may have been carefully constructed during the introduction of the police forces, the multi-dimensional structure of the modern police today questions the idea of how a single, orthodox appearance can be constructed at all:

'The media and even soap operas have changed the public face of the 21st-century police officer. The image of the bobby on the beat clutching a bicycle and wearing a tunic adorned with war service ribbons is long gone, replaced by officers wearing body armour. This change is a welcome one, with the war on terrorism and fear of violent crime altering the way people want to perceive the police. Perhaps the public are more reassured by the sight of martial, belligerent-looking, uniformed police officers.'

(Stoddart, 2011: 10)

Image construction is not just manufactured by the mass media. It includes increasingly complex methods of producing a particular image through various mediums of communication. In modern policing, departments have very different roles, activities and expectations and thus have very different 'customers'; as a consequence, policing staff generate significantly different impressions, feelings and reactions. For example, the criminal investigations department (CID) and regular police officers have different, yet complementary functions. They both focus on crime and yet the two roles portray very distinctive images; and 'in contrast to the very high esteem in which patrol officers are held by the public, working a beat is close to the bottom rung of the police status ladder and is widely regarded as unpopular postings' (Audit Commission, 1996: 42).

Community policing was seen as part of an ideal societal condition and was reminiscent of what was referred to as 1950's 'golden era' of policing and was epitomised by the image of the 'bobby'; the officer patrolling the streets:

'The public continues to cry for the return of the beat policeman. That rotund, middle-aged, non-mechanised, non-computerised figure... This imaginary figure has a powerful hold on the public's imagination, as strong as a pacifier's hold on a baby's attention.'

(Bahn, 1974: 341)

Cooke (2005: 229) ruminates that this 'rosy image' of the police was where the local police officer would be a recognisable character within the community, and would have considerable knowledge of the area and its inhabitants. Reiseg and Parks (2000) undertook research on public confidence in the police from Indiana and Florida and used it to show that confidence was considerably higher for those who knew a police officer by name or by sight; research findings that are also echoed by Tuffin et al., (2006) in the UK and Pate et al., (1986) in the United States. Some police forces have also adopted a familiarity approach: in Staffordshire, high-visibility clothing embroidered with the officer's name and collar number were issued to all front-line officers in order to encourage friendly relations with the public; 'the personalised vests will help communities get to know their officers' (*Police Review*, 2009: 12) and can be achieved by seeing the same policing staff (namely PCs and PCSOs) 'week in and week out' in the community (Home Office, 2005: 5).

It is in these memories of and 'in mourning for' the socio-moral authority of the local bobby that has cultivated a strong desire to return to an 'ideal' state of policing (Loader and Mulcahy, 2003: 313) where a community could justifiably claim their local officer as 'their own' (Loader and Mulcahy, 2003: 81). In the past, police authority was integrated within a comprehensive community umbrella of informal, socio-moral domestic control. The connections and boundaries between families, neighbours and the police were blurred; the bobby used both as a 'civic parent' and 'moral guardian'. This additional style of parental discipline kept order on the street 'either by informing parents of their children's misdeeds or by physically marching them home' (Loader and Mulcahy, 2003: 76). The public gradually became less respectful, especially the young, and the police no longer held the position of 'enforcing standards generally acceptable to the majority' (Weinberger, 1995: 197).

These previous conditions were largely grounded around the societal structure that was relatively static at this time where generations of families stayed in the same areas indefinitely. However, the 1970s and early 1980s saw mounting inflation, mass unemployment and social conflict leading to fractured relations between the police and socially excluded communities in particular (Jackson et al., 2012). Loss of social morals and more geographically mobile family units led to a decrease in community spirit and respect for authority (Jones and Newburn, 2002) and certain aspects of public policy (originating from the political-right) suggested that a major concern was moral decline which needed to be addressed through highlighting the importance of family values: ‘the most powerful counteracting force to the negative influences... is a strong, loving, “decent” family, committed to mainstream, pro-social values’ (Duncan-Smith, 2008: 9). Lack of parental control in modern times and the reduction in ‘bobby on the beat’ policing has affected attitudes towards the police: ‘It is frequently claimed that parents today can no longer be relied upon to accept – or back up – police efforts to regulate the behaviour of the young, or even to feel the appropriate sentiments should their offspring be apprehended by the police’ (Loader and Mulcahy, 2003: 91). Police officers became ‘absent guardians’ and a focus of blame for social decline and anxiety about the fractured condition of society; ‘the bobby-on-the-beat is no longer there to monitor and admonish, and so, gradually, the order he maintained, the communities he sustained, and the nation he exemplified, become more fragile entities’ (Loader and Mulcahy, 2003: 95).

The introduction of intelligence-led policing, advances in technology (and in turn, the influence of the mass media and ‘easier’ international crime), increasing amounts of ‘pen-pushing’ and the introduction of panda cars have pulled the police off the streets and out of public view: ‘A motorised officer with personal radio could now be dispatched to most incidents, and response times became a crucial factor – and remain a primary measurement of efficiency’ (Young, 1991a: 40). With the growing use of motor vehicles, both by the police and the public, Girling et al., (2000) claim that the public, particularly the middle classes, experience feelings of outrage and anger when they are accused of ‘menial’ traffic offences for example, insisting that the police should not be working ‘against’ them; instead using their powers to ‘protect’ them from the more ‘serious’ crimes of the lower classes. The use of panda cars enabled officers to patrol territories much larger than the traditional beat of their policing predecessors. As a consequence, officers became ‘much less familiar with their “patches” and spent more of their duty time driving from

one incident to another' (Audit Commission, 1999: 10), thus 'break[ing] the keenly-felt sense of place they had created for their own territories' (Young, 1991a: 41).

The public's perception is that the police have been 'withdrawn' from the streets and officers no longer 'identify with communities' (Home Office, 2001: 41). The informal nicknames given to the police during the 1950s; 'Bizzies, Bluebottles, Plods or Flatfoots' (Partridge, 1972: 710) were used in a 'semi-affectionate way' (Young, 1991a: 31) to describe the abundant presence of 'bizzy-bodying flies who plodded and perambulated'. It was during this time that there were 'large numbers' of patrol officers covering beats and the public would see up to 'twenty-four men in each division, during each eight-hour period, plodding the beat' (Young, 1991a: 38).

It is claimed that the disappearance of these beat officers, who were a visible symbol of order, left some members of the public disgruntled and encouraged feelings of estrangement from the police: the police institution was perceived to be no longer part of the community and no longer interested in tackling problems that were important to citizens; targets based on performance, objectives and financial management had shifted the focus (Girling et al., 2000). Policing had become 'police-orientated' when it was once perceived to be 'community-orientated' (Savage, 2009: 206): a government survey found that 58% of people disagreed that there are 'more police on the streets than there used to be' (only 17% agreed) and 50% did not think there were more police personnel than in 2000 even though there has been an influx of nearly 20,000 new police officers between 2001 and 2010 (Boyd et al., 2011: 12), so 'even though police numbers [have risen], the ubiquitous visibility of officers [appears to have] simply vanished' (Young, 1991a: 41).

While still 'visible' through the presence of police cars and the media regularly depicting images of officers 'doing their job', it seems that this type of visibility does not reassure the public in the same way:

'A police officer in uniform on an unhurried foot patrol suggests that "all is well with the world". However, a marked police vehicle with blue light and sirens activated sends out a different message. This is currently visible policing but we would suggest it is far from reassuring.'

(Home Office, 2001a: 23)

The political stance of Home Office literature asserts the importance of police presence and reassurance as it provides a 'sense of security and symbolises authority' (Home Office,

2001a: 22). Due to economic problems, employment issues and spending cuts, thousands of police officers are losing their jobs (and a further 34,000 police jobs are in line to be cut) (Travis, 2012). However, the Home Office stipulates that there is a large gap between what the public desire and what the government can actually provide; ‘currently a gulf exists between the level of patrol which the public wants, and what can be realistically delivered’ (Home Office, 2001a: ix). Central to this argument is the view that the public want to see more uniformed officers on the streets. Therefore, the introduction of the new policing ‘family’; neighbourhood policing (NP) and the creation of police community support officers (PCSOs) became the government’s solution to the fractured relations between the public and the police. Although the government have attempted to push the idea that the introduction of NP and PCSOs was to increase visibility and reassurance to the public (Cooke, 2005) there are indications that it is no more than a cost-cutting strategy - ‘policing-on-the-cheap’ (Merritt, 2010: 734).

One of the most influential scholars to write about police reassurance was Charles Bahn (1974) who focused on the meanings people attached to seeing or meeting a police officer. Bahn (1974: 340) described reassurance as ‘the feeling of security and safety that a citizen experiences when he sees a police officer or patrol car nearby’. For Bahn, the police convey visible meaning that link positive characteristics associated with the police such as reassurance, authority and trust. The importance of public reassurance was examined in a Her Majesty’s Inspectorate of Constabulary (HMIC) report in 2001 (Home Office, 2001a). Furthermore, the police officer acts as a ‘control signal’ and ‘the reassurance function of policing recognises and seeks to harness the dramaturgical power of formal social control’ (Innes, 2007: 133). In other words, by being a signal of control, the officer represents the wider police institution and ‘performs’ the role of reassurance for the public. Bahn (1974) suggested that fixed-post officers who would be allocated to a particular location, where the public knew where to find them, would offer a function of high visibility. Though Bahn made a strong argument about the links between visibility and reassurance, he used some curious examples to illustrate his case. Bahn (1974: 343) suggested that fixed-post officers (standing on a podium) should wear ‘a special symbol, a distinctive epaulette, or be ‘outstandingly conspicuous’, either ‘very tall, strikingly red-haired, or otherwise memorable’. However unusual Bahn’s suggestions, having officers stand on podiums as a fixed point of reference was actually trialled in 2003 by a London National Reassurance Policing Programme (NRPP). Nicknamed ‘posh podiums’ by other rank and file officers,

they elevated officers eighteen inches off the pavement. *The Evening Standard* interviewed a PCSO assigned to the project and he admitted he was subject to ridicule: ‘people do laugh. I get people asking if I have failed the height requirement for the police’ (Harris and Keeley, 2003).

A perceived desire for increased visibility and reassurance has led to an expansion of the policing ‘family’. More recently this expansion has included the introduction of neighbourhood teams, under which the new roles of NBO, NPO and PCSO have changed the face of modern policing. However, much earlier the ‘face’ and culture of the police radically transformed with the introduction and problematic integration of female police officers which will be discussed in the next section.

2.2 *Women’s Integration*

The introduction of female police stemmed from both economical need but also as a means to formally control women during the war and regulate their behaviour (Brown and Heidensohn, 2000). The National Union of Women Workers had launched their own policing institute known as Voluntary Women Patrol (VWP) and in 1916, 40 of these women were used by the Metropolitan Police. A similar organisation named the ‘Women’s Police Service’ (WPS), formerly Women Police Volunteers was established in 1914. These women wore their own uniforms and patrolled the streets to assist with crime prevention (Heidensohn, 1992). However, women’s involvement in law enforcement was met with hostility from men within the organisation and it has been documented extensively over the last few decades that women’s integration into the police has been troublesome (Heidensohn, 1992; Walklate, 1992; Westmarland, 2001; Silvestri, 2003). Regardless of the previous and current typologies and discourses surrounding women’s acceptance, the separate departments and gendered roles within policing are, in practice, formally gone and ‘women police *are* now integrated into the mainstream of policing’ (Heidensohn, 1992: 56 – emphasis added). Heidensohn’s and Walklate’s research on women police has been based on previous sociological analyses of gender (Heidensohn, 1992; Walklate, 1992) and Heidensohn in particular, highlighted the ways in which the way women work within policing is controlled by the institution at the higher levels and male colleagues at lower

levels. Heidensohn (1992) recognised the importance of understanding police occupational culture as a gendered territory within which specific discourses of masculinity persist. In line with Heidensohn (1992) and Holdaway and Parker (1998), this thesis argues that it is important and necessary to take both male and female officers views into account when analysing their place in policing through the lens of the uniform and also how their ‘experience is moulded and controlled’ (Holdaway and Parker, 1998: 42).

Walklate (1995) discussed the beliefs surrounding police organisational culture which establish that ‘proper policing’ is reserved for men. Walklate (1995: 118-20), considered how female officers are ‘used’ for women and children’s issues in line with what is most ‘appropriate’ for their gender. This consideration however, does not take into account how neighbourhood policing, with its softer and feminine perceptions, may also be a nod towards a reinvention of policewomen’s departments. Heidensohn (1992) argued that women ‘are now integrated into the mainstream of policing... [but] their acceptance... by their male colleagues’ is challenging. She also noted that while women now have a more ‘general’ occupational role, ‘there are signs, however, of [women’s specialist work] re-emerging elsewhere’ (Heidensohn, 1992: 56). Though Heidensohn was not specific in where ‘elsewhere’ is, it can be argued that the high concentration of female officers within neighbourhood policing (in comparison to other departments) is an example of female segregation towards what is most appropriate for their gender, perhaps a return in all but name of policewomen’s departments (Walklate, 1995). The number of women in police forces are at the highest ever level, but still, ‘cop culture... and what counts as “proper policing”’ (Walklate, 1995: 118) remains, and ‘leaves many policewomen with a choice of either embracing the male culture as their own, or fulfilling the more traditional expectations associated with their role’ (Walklate, 2004: 160). The struggle for ‘equal opportunities’ is of course more than just ‘getting the numbers up’, but Heidensohn (1992: 101-2) noted that the policies surrounding the recruitment of women impacts policing in a number of ways: ‘keeping the law’, ‘achieving a representative bureaucracy’, bringing a source of change into policy’, ‘feminising policing’, ‘undermining police tradition and “proper policing”’, and ‘increasing opportunities for individual women and for women’. ‘Feminising policing’ Heidensohn (1992: 103) argued, is an ironic way to claim equality through their ‘supposed differences’ from their male counterparts, because ‘either they should be recruited because they have unique or superior abilities, such as interpersonal

skills, which the police are in particular need of today... or policewomen are seen to be the solution to the crises of modern policing’.

Several authors have noted that ‘soft’ policing activities have been conventionally considered as feminine and inferior forms of police work compared with more authoritarian, dangerous and male associated tasks. In line with a poststructuralist framework, there is an abundance of literature that details typologies of women. A few of the most notable typologies tend to use the same polarities: policewomen who are traditionally feminine (termed ‘conventional’ by Hunt (1984); ‘traditional’ by Jones (1986); ‘Hippolyte’ by Brewer (1991); ‘feminine’ by Berg and Budnick (1986); ‘deprofessionalised’ by Hochschild (1973); and ‘policewomen’ by Martin (1980)); and policewomen who identify as ‘one of the boys’ (termed ‘Rebel’ by Hunt (1984); ‘modern’ by Jones (1986); ‘Amazons’ by Brewer (1991); ‘pseudo-masculine’ by Berg and Budnick (1986); ‘defeminised’ by Hochschild (1973); and ‘*policewomen*’ by Martin (1980)). Heidensohn (1992) did not use this method of typology but acknowledged that the policewomen she interviewed recognised that they were often cast into stereotypes by their male colleagues:

‘Whatever you are they’ll neatly categorise you from one extreme to the other to diffuse and deny what you’re doing. There are two stereotypes for women; the hooker and the dyke. There is no good stereotype for women and both are sexual.’

(Interviewee cited in Heidensohn, 1992: 140)

The majority of policewomen do not slot neatly into one or the other typologies, and Martin’s (1980) classic distinctions were on a continuum scale, and ‘many women will demonstrate some characteristics of both these role adaptations’ (Jones, 1986: 172). Writing nearly two decades after her original study, Martin (1999) revisited similar themes to explore the different ways male and female officers undertake their responsibilities in line with the emotional dynamics of encounters. It is again highlighted that the traditional masculine systems still pervade the hierarchical allocation of labour, even when policing is now more community-focused:

‘Neither the rise of community policing nor the growing presence of women in policing has led to explicit discussion of the emotional component of the work. Male antipathy for the social services aspects of police work continues, and women either share the men’s views or adapt to the fact that crime control rather than social service persists as the central occupational image.’

(Martin, 1999: 121)

Westmarland (2001) explored the ways in which female officers are not always marginalised by the dominant masculine culture of the police, but find niche specialisms that are associated with the old women's police departments, such as working with children and domestic violence victims, which are more likely to offer them promotional prospects. The masculine interests of 'action' and 'crime-fighting' still operate as integral dominant discourses for male officers, to the detriment of current neighbourhood policing styles. According to Westmarland (2001: 87), the niche specialisms that women more readily occupy appear by assigning 'a certain 'role' to one group of workers and not others is to demarcate them as being "suitable" for certain tasks and duties, whilst others are not'. Westmarland's (2001) ethnographic study of the police critiques some of the early assumptions of women's roles. She found that work involving children was 'not regarded as a specifically female domain' (Westmarland, 2001: 39) and the overrepresentation of women in Child Protection Units may have been a result of women choosing to work in these specialised departments, rather than their male colleagues passing work on to them that involved children. However, men pursued more masculine roles such as the firearms division and shunned more 'caring' specialisms. Westmarland (2001: 183) argued that 'men in the police use their power as law enforcers to reinforce their own heterosexual identity' by embracing responsibilities that fit comfortably with the perception of 'real' policing.

Grass-roots female officers, particularly within neighbourhood policing, make it difficult for women (and willing men) to force any type of reform *upwards*. Silvestri (2003) argues that senior policewomen 'doing' and 'championing' transformational and holistic leadership styles challenge indoctrinated ways of thinking and allows the weakening of the culture to filter down to the grass-roots (see also Loftus, 2009). This is ambitious considering that women still only occupy 21.4% of senior roles (Home Office, 2015), and it seems that men, ironically, are still perceived as the 'change champions' (Dick et al., 2013: 144). Silvestri (2006: 276-7) argues that as much as senior policewomen are aware of practices of marginalisation from the institution, they are actually more driven by a desire to 'fit in' and achieve a sense of 'organisational belongingness'. Rather than actively struggling against the status quo they thus 'play a central role in sustaining the male organisation logic of police work and culture', something Silvestri (2007) termed 'the new smart macho'. The senior policewomen that Silvestri (2003: 41-2) interviewed admitted they had to adopt a 'corporate' masculine attitude in order to succeed, and while this may

be different to the attitudes adopted by the rank and file, it is no less ‘macho’. Similarly, Dick and Cassell (2004: 68) reasoned that in creating identity performances that closely align with their male colleagues and the masculine culture, women can obtain an ‘additional subjective advantage: acceptance by [her] male colleagues’. Female police officers now occupy 28.2% of the total officer workforce (currently 207,140) and reflect a ‘long-term upward trend’ (Home Office, 2015) and while this is up quite substantially from 15% in 1997 (Berman and Dar, 2013) when Brown (1997) suggested that women will transform the workforce when they reach critical mass, it is still far from a tipping point that would result in an ‘impact on the nature of policing’ (Silvestri, 2007: 41).

Women as potential ‘transformers’ of the workforce is a difficult concept as women do not fit comfortably in gendered roles; the binary pairs that have been detailed are different in the ways that they are assigned. For example, Martin (1980) personally allocated the typologies to her research subjects but Brewer’s (1991) participants constructed their *own* gendered roles. Also in a slightly different approach, Heidensohn’s (1982) interviewees admitted that it was *male colleagues* who stereotyped them. Women are not passive subjects however, and ‘developed ways to construct “presences” and demonstrate them in challenging situations... women seem remarkable for the consciousness and for the effort which they put into constructing their “presence” and “voice”’ (Heidensohn, 1994: 300-1).

The typologies that women are regularly categorised into seems to be a general theme for every activity associated with policing; every action and performance within situational contexts is semantically generated into ‘rigid dualities’: ‘Masculinity/femininity’, ‘hard/soft’, ‘logical/emotional’, ‘rational/irrational’, ‘scientific/instinctive’, ‘force/service’, ‘centrality/marginality’, ‘defining/defined’, ‘revered/rejected’, ‘inside/outside’, with the male ‘version’ of each pair at the beginning (Young, 1992: 209). While the police organisation claims to be equal, the existence of these polarities prove that women still have a ‘different “place”’ and ‘they are not full members’ (Westmarland, 2001: 87). Westmarland (2001: 187) argues that these ‘conceptual gender characteristics’ that Young (1992) detailed for example, do not ‘recognise deviations from “normal” gendered behaviour’. Young (1992: 192-3) argued that the ‘lurking problem of gender’ is because ‘masculinity has historically held the prime position and is deferred to and understood’ and women who do enter the policing world can ‘only ever be partially successful’ and will have to adopt “male characteristics” to achieve even a limited social acceptability’ (as

detailed in the binaries above by Martin, 1980; Hunt, 1984; Jones, 1986; Berg and Budnick, 1986; and Brewer, 1991). The policing world is entrenched with ‘male categories and symbols’ (Young, 1992: 192) and therefore the introduction of female police officers and what it represents is at odds with these historically masculine discourses.

2.3 *The Introduction of Neighbourhood Policing and PCSOs*

The introduction of a new ‘policing family’ was seen as the only viable option in responding to the public’s demand to see more police on the streets. In two government papers ‘*Policing a New Century*’, and ‘*Open All Hours*’, a diverse range of ‘quasi-police’ was planned to undertake the many roles and functions of the traditional officers, including the visibility of patrol (Cooke, 2005). It has however been questioned whether the presentation of ‘hybrid’ police may actually ‘heighten anxiety in the community’ (Cooke, 2005: 233). In another response to the public’s desire for the ‘bobby-on-the-beat’ the government developed integrated neighbourhood policing teams (INPTs) (or safer neighbourhood teams (SPTs) as they are sometimes referred). These were introduced nationally to all police forces in the UK in 2008 and every area was broken up into ‘neighbourhoods’ which have their own team responsible for a particular area or community and its primary goal was to increase confidence in the police (Mason, 2009). They involve a small team of police officers (usually one sergeant and two constables), and these are further supported by a larger group of PCSOs (NPIA, 2008).

The original plan was to encourage the interactions between the police and public, increase visibility and dispel the fear that there is no longer police presence on the streets; they were tasked with implementing intelligence-led, problem-solving tactics to facilitate tackling local problems (Home Office, 2005). In addition to increasing confidence in the police, it was anticipated that the introduction of NP would increase collective efficiency between agencies, build relationships between the police and the public, and decrease perceptions of crime and fear of crime and reduce levels of crime and anti-social behaviour and disorder (Home Office, 2005; Home Office, 2010a; Home Office 2010b).

Trust and confidence can be defined in regards to the police institution as the judgements and conclusions that the public make about the aptness of what the police do and how they undertake their roles (Skogan, 2005). While the government may recognise that the evidence of demand for more patrolling uniformed officers is overwhelming, the Home Office (2001a: ix) warns that putting more police on patrol needs ‘careful handling’ as it not just *visibility* that reassures, but the *type* of visibility; ‘a police car speeding by with lights flashing and sirens blaring signals trouble. The “feel-good” factor comes instead from officers who are known and accessible – preferably on foot patrol – and who are skilled at engaging with local communities and their problems’ (Home Office, 2001a: ix). Following the introduction of PCSOs in the Police Reform Act 2002, the governments’ 2004 White Paper ‘*Building Communities, Beating Crime: A Better Police Service for the 21st Century*’ proposed that, in response to public demand, ‘people will see a more visible, accessible police presence on the streets’ (2004: 8) and the public should be aware of who their local PCSO is and how they can be contacted (2004: 24). As Reiseg and Parks (2000) suggested, if the public know their local police officers by name or by sight, their confidence in the police increases.

While the government has responded to the public’s desire for a more visible and reassuring police presence, the question of legitimacy has been consistently raised as the public are fully aware that PCSOs do not hold the same powers as police officers. The press has attacked the implementation of ‘policing on the cheap’ and ‘it is not hard to find negative press coverage, which tends to focus on what PCSO’s are *not* able to do’ (Merritt, 2010: 734 – emphasis in original). Constant reference to the ‘plastic police’, ‘second-rate police officers’ (House of Commons, 2008: 92) and ‘pink and fluffy policing’ (Davies and Thomas, 2008: 633) inevitably reduce perceptions of their authority. It is seemingly not just the public that affect the morale of PCSOs but other policing staff as well; PCs have been known to describe them as ‘walking around like a gaggle of lost shoppers’ (Caless, 2007: 188). The success of the PCSOs as an integral part of the police force is ‘dependant’ on the ‘cooperation’ and ‘support’ of wider society (Home Office, 2004: 48). Some PCSOs however have questioned their own usefulness:

‘If [a member of the public] see a uniformed person in the street . . . and something happens in front of them “Johnny smashes a window” they want that person in uniform to arrest [Johnny] and if we can’t do that then that’s when the public turn around and say “what is the point of these people?” A crime has just happened,

what can they do apart from go on their radio which I could have done on my mobile phone and ask for a police officer to come.'

(PCSO, focus group no. 14; cited in Merritt, 2010: 744)

As made evident by Reiner (1992) and Loader and Mulcahy (2003) the police institution's endeavour for legitimacy is ever-present, as is the desire to return to the favourable public perceptions of the 1950s. The areas where police mistrust is high are also tellingly areas of disadvantage and economic hardship (Gallagher et al., 2001) and it is these areas that most need the cooperation and support of the police and vice versa. When the public feel that they can trust the legitimacy of community support officers, and police visibility in their area is high, they are much more likely to obey the law, comply with officers and help with enquiries (Sunshine and Tyler, 2003). While these areas are a target to improve relationships between the police and the public, it is important to build a 'general climate of [positive] opinion' which the public need to have of the police (Tyler, 2004: 89). Even though the full impact of neighbourhood policing and the introduction of the policing family has yet to be fully experienced, in a recent government survey almost 46% of people thought that the service provided by the police 'had got[ten] worse' (Boyd et al., 2011: 12) which suggests that a lot more needs to be done to improve their image.

It is important to note at this point that the 'image' of the police is contested; there is a fine line between public reassurance and 'being policed' which surveys such as the Crime Survey for England and Wales (formerly the British Crime Survey) do not differentiate between. Within the umbrella terms of public reassurance and visibility the government tends to combine striving for legitimisation, reassurance, visibility, effectiveness and efficiency under the question of 'how good a job the police are doing' (or something similar). The contested terms of 'public' and 'police' are treated homogeneously, which of course, they are not. The police institution as a whole is comprised of many different departments, divisions, ranks and similarly, to conceive it as a singular entity is a misnomer. Therefore, the reactions and effectiveness-monitoring of the introduction of NP and PCSOs are largely based on the increased levels of intelligence gathering and results are used to 'dramatize the *appearance* of control of crime and maintenance of social order' (Manning, 1992: 139 – emphasis added) to generate the perception that an increased visible presence is the driver behind amplified communication between the public and the police.

If the public desire a visible, uniformed presence on the streets, it is important to consider the symbolic meaning of police dress and what it means for future legitimacy of both male and female officers. Unfortunately, the issue of demand for a more visible police force is something that has been a reoccurring theme throughout the years of policing and this is not something that has been restricted to the UK (Cooke, 2005). There has always been an importance centred on the strong associations between the police uniform and the ‘maintenance of personal and public moral standards’ (Cooke, 2004: 6) and this is highlighted in Cooke’s thesis in the following New York police department address by General Superintendent Amos Pilsbury in 1859:

‘The uniform you wear should be a perpetual “coat of mail” to guard you against every temptation to which you may be exposed, by reminding you that no act of misconduct, or breach of discipline, can escape public observation and censure. By exemplary conduct and manly deportment, you will command the respect and cordial support of all good citizens.’

(cited in Cooke, 2004: 6)

While the introduction of the new policing family, INPTs and PCSOs may be the modern government’s answer to the desire for a more visible and reassuring institution, it has long been criticised that the onset of many “police-like” officers is likely to result in devaluation of the image of the police, together with a loss of trust, respect and authority’ (Cooke, 2005: 237). Furthermore, if the perception of the public is that the introduction of PCSOs is nothing more than ‘policing on the cheap’ (Merritt, 2010: 734), morale of these officers is likely to be low. This issue has been exacerbated by budget pressures and rumours that PSCOs will be phased out; ‘it is possible they might not introduce more PCSOs in the future and we have heard that the [government] do not like us [PCSOs]’ (PCSO Ballard, cited in Prissell, 2009: 11).

As well as the loss of a contested ‘positive’ police image, there is also the issue of the identity struggles of PCSOs. This new style of policing conflicts with the dominant masculinity culture of the police institution and is often described as a softer, more feminine form of policing (Davies and Thomas, 2008). Due to the nature of NP, they require employees to possess a different set of personal competences that are not seen as a prerequisite in the more ‘masculine’ side of policing; communication, interpersonal skills and the ability to successfully network have been recognised as crucial traits for the success of NP (Cooper et al., 2006). These attributes however, have often been interpreted

as feminine (Steinberg, 1990) further exacerbating already contested gendered identity within the masculine culture of policing.

2.4

Conclusion

Similar to the problematic integration of women into the police which served to highlight the differences between 'suitable' male and female roles, the government introduced neighbourhood policing to build bridges and reduce the reassurance gap following periods of upheaval and the development of a somewhat fractious relationships between the public and the police. With neighbourhood policing came the introduction of purposely built integrated neighbourhood policing teams (INPTs) and the establishment of a new community role; the police community support officer (PCSO). Following a shaky reception, like the first police women, the public have gradually come to accept a return to the 'local neighbourhood bobby'-style of policing. Heidensohn (1992: 56) argued that women 'are now integrated into the mainstream of policing... [but] their acceptance... by their male colleagues' is challenging, much like the expansion of the police family to include PCSOs, NBOs and NPOs. Waddington (1984: 91) however, discussed that 'community policing' is a romantic delusion, not for the society we have lost, but for the one we actually never had; Manning (1997: 15) concurs that community policing is 'yet [just] another "presentational strategy"'. It is, in fact, possibly an agreeable utopia where the local 'bobby' was everyone's friend and part of the extended family. Waddington, however, was concluding this nearly twenty years before neighbourhood policing and the modern local bobby, the PCSO, were introduced. Police visibility on the streets, which declined rapidly with the influx of patrol cars, has enjoyed a 'comeback' with the introduction of PCSOs and neighbourhood PCs, and is reminiscent of the (mythical?) golden age of policing. Increased visibility and reassurance is embedded in the fact that the police uniform is highly recognisable. If the relationship between the police uniform and perceived levels of authority is important as evidenced, it is necessary to examine the history of the uniform for both genders and how this has affected differing degrees of policing authority since the initial creation of the police. A general overview of the police uniform is discussed in the following chapter.

*3.1**Introduction*

Clothes convey meanings in society that go far beyond the clothes themselves, performing and presenting certain connotations and denotations to the perceiver and the wearer. Messages about clothes are constructed and re-constructed through design, style and colour and through the power relations they create between various groups. This ‘power’ was noted by Mark Twain long ago:

‘There is no power without clothes. It is the power that governs the human race. Strip its chiefs to the skin, and no State could be governed; naked officials could exercise no authority; they would look (and be) like everybody else – commonplace, inconsequential. A policeman in plain clothes is one man; in his uniform he is ten. Clothes and titles are the most potent thing, the most formidable influence on earth... No great title is efficient without clothes to support it.’

(Twain, 1905: 322)

In public at least, a significant part of the body is hidden by clothes. As a consequence, the clothes themselves are a major component in the judgment of appearance. Clothing has become a vital index to status, power and authority, and individuals, who wear the same clothing as part of a uniform, express the corporate identity over that of their own personal identity. Solomon (1987) suggested that the uniform of the organisation embodies the group’s ideals and features allowing its wearer unique authority to transmit the dominant values of the company: ‘A uniform can help minimise role confusion and lowered performance by defining employees’ roles and reminding them of their primary allegiance’ (Solomon, 1987: 31). The attire indicates the individual’s right to represent a particular group, and does so by a ‘vertical continuity of fabric, a generalised unity from head to toe’ (Rubenstein, 2001: 83).

Scholars have debated what actually constitutes a ‘uniform’. Simply, ‘(it is) a distinctive dress worn by members of the same body’ (Randall and Gray, 1995: 16). Examination suggests that a uniform is: ‘a prescribed set of clothes which enables the observer to identify the wearer’s organisation or affiliation’ (Bhugra and DeSilva, 1996: 393). A uniform ‘displays a public persona and clearly writes the script for the role’, and the

expectations for the performance of the role are ‘explicit – for example, the clothing worn by police officers’ (Rubenstein, 2001: 83). Society learns to distinguish members from non-members of different groups through their uniforms and the attire informs the actor and the audience what to expect from the individual and the organisation. By requiring the donning of a uniform, and thus suppressing personal choice of clothes, the police institution ‘binds the individual to his or her peers, underscores common membership, and encourages a sense of loyalty among members and faithfulness to the same rules’ (Rubenstein, 2001: 87). If an officer does not abide by these rules, the alienation from the group is clear: if the transgression is serious enough, police officers are required to remove (and return) their uniform and accompanying accoutrements that are similarly embedded with the organisation’s authority. While police officers are in uniform, ‘indicators of all other statuses of a citizen are suppressed’ (Joseph and Alex, 1972: 722) and thus ‘uniforms tend to standardise behaviour as well as appearance’ (Goldberg et al., 1961: 36). The police institution’s failure to roll out a national standardised uniform is due to managers not ‘buying into the concept’ (*Police Review*, 2007: 4) and negates the notion that a uniform is actually *uniform* in style across constabularies. The ACPO head of procurement continues by claiming that the ‘initial cost of a switch in uniform and a desire to maintain the identity of local forces are some of the factors discouraging people from the national uniform’ (Davies, cited in *Police Review*, 2007: 4).

The image of the police has changed since the ‘golden age’, not just perceptions of their ‘positive’ or ‘negative’ reputations but also how they are presented to the public in terms of what they wear and carry: ‘an increasing use of firearms, riot shields, CS spray and the introduction of longer, side-handled truncheons... all impinge upon the public vision at every turn’ (Young, 1991b: 34). There is an ever-present predicament through the perceived public demand for a more visible uniformed presence on the streets, coupled with the requirement of accommodating a wider range of policing roles and challenges since the 1950s. These different roles host a varying range of policing staff and agencies carrying various degrees of authority and power. As Young (1991a) explains:

‘...amalgamations of the various police units and changes in their organizational, social and technological formats have been constructed, reveals how the body of the police has been dressed and presented as a primary cultural reflection of these same underlying changes in police modes of thought, belief and practice.’

(Young, 1991a: 35)

While different police agencies wear varying modes of dress, the difference does not just apply to units, divisions and roles. British police forces are split throughout England and Wales (with Scotland managed independently), with further sub-units divided by regional authorities located around some county borders. The police uniform, though essentially similar between different forces, has never been exactly the same in detail, colour or insignia nationally. These dissimilarities also apply across ranks and divisions due to the presiding chief officer's preferences for each force and their access to different supply chains locally, and their individual budgets.

The 1934 Dixon Committee on uniform consistency advised that 'all police should be capable of turning out, in both garments and head-dress, approximating *closely enough* to a uniform pattern as to respects to material and style' (cited in Clark, 1991: 16 – emphasis added). Although the police uniform is symbolic and highly recognisable, it is debatable whether not having a set standard uniform for the same ranks causes questionable legitimacy (though similar in 'uniform pattern'). If the police uniform *is* so iconic and important in regards to perceptions of power and authority, is it not crucially important that all the police forces in England and Wales wear exactly the same uniform? According to Young (1992: 33) 'the uniform and bodily image of the police reflects the cultural meanings and symbolic power which the police maintain'... how can this be achieved if the standards are not upheld? On the other hand, it is difficult to ascertain whether it is the perceptions of the uniform or the public's attitude towards the police that is most important:

'It is both reflective and causative of philosophical changes in the department, the community, and the officer. It is difficult to sort out which perceptions are caused by the uniform, by the department it represents, by the officer wearing the uniform, or by the citizens' attitude about law enforcement.'

(Gunderson, 1987: 193)

3.2 *Clothes as Embodiment*

Clothes convey meanings in society that go far beyond the clothes themselves, performing, portraying and creating power relations between different people. Clothes allow meaning

to be communicated without speaking, and are constructed and confirmed (or denied) through interactions with people and situations on a daily basis. As Van Dijk (1996: 86) observed, ‘much “modern” power in democratic societies is persuasive and manipulative rather than coercive’. Certainly, the social construction of power principles is more powerful in its subtlety, messages about clothes are learned, re-learned, and re-constructed in society (and people’s) consciousness, often without realisation. The ‘communication is so dramatic in that it involves openings and closings, conflicts, purpose, persuasion and the negotiation of meanings’ (Manning, 1997: 6).

A further rationality for looking at the semiotics of clothes (and indeed uniforms) lies in the ‘meaning-compression principle’ where ‘the effect of the interaction of smaller-scale semiotic resources on high-scalar levels where meaning is observed and interpreted’ (Baldry and Thibault, 2006: 19). That is, when a man appears on television in a white coat with a stethoscope around his neck, the audience needs no explanation to his role in medicine. Similarly, when men in camouflage clothing are seen, perhaps carrying weapons, the audience at least have an indication that they are part of the armed forces. If no other clues are given, the audience, while maybe unaware of their allegiance to a particular country or exact branch of the military they belong to, will, at least on some level, know that they are soldiers. Likewise, the highly-recognisable features of the police uniform offer no confusion as to what the wearer’s occupation is. As such, this ‘meaning compression’ (Baldry and Thibault, 2006: 19) exploration of clothing semiotics shows that clothes and uniforms allow a high level of communication consciously, and subconsciously.

Visual clues depict hierarchy as well: in the corporate world, the Chief Executive Officer usually wears an expensive designer suit, while lower down the company ladder, cleaning staff often wear dull, non-descript uniforms; the power relations between the two are unmistakable and requires no clarification:

‘Clothes are not just body coverings and adornments, nor can they be understood as metaphors of power and authority, nor as symbols; in my cases, clothes literally *are* authority... Authority is literally part of the body of those who possess it. It can be transferred from person to person through acts of incorporation, which not only create followers or subordinates, but a body of companions who have shared some of its substance.’

(Cohn, 1989: 312-3, emphasis in original)

Uniforms can communicate very different messages: for the cleaning staff, their powerlessness in the hierarchy is palpable, whereas for a police officer their uniform means something very different. A uniform is an archetype of clothing by which standardisation is based on either ‘formal’ or ‘quasi/informal’ sanctions. The former is usually protected by legal support (military or police) which legitimises the clothing worn by these types of groups. The latter is generally led by conventional properties (uniforms worn in organisations/companies) and does not possess the same legitimising functions as the former. It is in this distinction that lends itself to the levels of authority and symbolic status that the clothes (and therefore the people wearing them) emit. Twain (1905) revealed that it is the clothes that people respect, not the person, and without them, a man is ‘nothing’:

‘No one could worship this spectacle, which is me. Then who is it, what is it, that they worship? Privately, none knows better than I: it is my clothes. Without my clothes I should be as destitute of authority as any other naked person. What would any man be – without his clothes? As soon as one stops and thinks over that proposition, one realises that without his clothes a man would be nothing at all; that the clothes do not merely make the man, the clothes are the man; that without them he is a cipher, a vacancy, a nobody, a nothing.’

(Twain, 1905: 321-2)

Roach and Eicher (1973: 127-9) claim that uniforms can be distinguished in terms of their functions and detail three types of occupational uniforms: functionally *mandatory* (clothing necessary to perform their role, i.e. firefighter), functional *utilitarian* (convenience clothing, i.e. chefs, nurses) and functionally *symbolic* (easy identifiable, i.e. soldier, police officer). Roach and Eicher (1973) found that the differences between these occupational uniforms are what the actual role is and the attributes of the wearer fulfilling that role. Craik (2005) gives the example of a policeman and a lawyer:

‘In the case of the immediate expectation of action by a policeman called to an emergency, one would be reassured by the sight of a symbolic uniform; whereas in the case of a lawyer who legal opinion was sought by a client, the emphasis would be on the quality of the opinion offered rather than what they were wearing.’

(Craik, 2005: 104)

Many uniforms, including that of the police, ‘combine the practical and symbolic’ (Steele, 1989: 66), which have been explored through various experiments. There have been many studies on the effect of the uniform on the perceiver. The aspect of ‘trust’ in the police and

their uniform is ingrained from an early age. Children are taught to respect authority, and one influential symbol of this power is the uniform of the police. Durkin and Jeffrey (2000) investigated the level at which children's understanding of police authority to arrest is dominated by visual clues (namely their uniform). They presented children aged between five and nine with illustrated pictures of a person who is not a policeman but is wearing a police uniform, a policeman out of uniform and a civilian wearing a uniform (non-police clothing) and asked them to identify who could carry out an arrest. It was concluded that correct answers increased with age and the majority of mistakes were made with the picture of a non-policeman in police uniform indicating that, at least in a child's mind, the power of arrest resides in the uniform itself not the person wearing it. As Merleau-Ponty (1983: 170) noted, 'it is clear that a child who had never seen an article of clothing would not know how to act with clothing' – children absorb information, as we all do, what everything 'means', and what they are used for through engaging and using 'things' within culture.

These superficial aspects of appearance support the idea that it is the uniforms themselves that hold the authority, regardless of who wears them although it is important to note, as illustrated by Bickman (1974) that it is the *type* of uniform that carries social power not the mere presence of it. Bickman (1974) explored the influence of different kinds of 'uniforms' on people's behaviour. In his experiments he discovered that people were half as likely to return 'lost' money to someone who was poorly dressed than to someone who was well dressed. One of Bickman's (1974: 48-50) hypotheses was that 'the uniform symbolises authority' and focused on whether 'uniformed persons acting outside their accustomed roles still have greater power than non-uniformed persons'. He dressed his participants in one of three uniforms – sports jacket and tie (civilian), milkman (carrying empty milk bottles) and guard: Bickman (1974: 50) supposed that the guard, superficially at least, would 'appear to be a policeman, even though the badge and insignia were different'. From setting up three (seemingly ludicrous) situations, Bickman found that people were much more likely to comply with the guard's requests and equally likely to disregard the civilian and milkman. In this experiment, the uniforms were being 'read' in terms of occupational type and perceived status. While the milkman was a specialist role (accentuated by the carrying of milk bottles), and was thus functionally mandatory (Roach and Eicher, 1973), the role had no authority. Bickman does not detail the clothing worn by the 'guard', nor does he explain what a standard 'guard' wears, but the

insinuation was that the more a uniform resembles that of a police officer, the higher the level of compliance.

Interestingly, when Bickman (1974) asked members of the public to approximate whether uniforms would affect their compliance in situations prior to the experiment, they denied it, indicating that people's internalised unconscious and learned responses to uniform authority are so ingrained, people do not fully realise a uniform's significance. Raven and Kruglanski (1970) considered that compliance to requests have 'ought-to' features: that is, the person reasons that the 'instructor' has a *right* to tell them what to do and they are doing it because they told him or her... therefore the policeman (or guard in Bickman's case) occupies a role that 'specifically vests such legitimate power in him' and thus compliance will increase (Raven and Kruglanski, 1970: 75). In conclusion of his research, Bickman (1974) reflects the degree of legitimacy that is associated with a uniform and not the role itself:

'When a civilian approaches someone on the street and orders him to give someone a dime, the person given the order is likely to dismiss the civilian as a crackpot... and thus not comply with the order. Someone in a guard's uniform, however, is likely to be taken more seriously. This is someone who has a responsible job, who is doing something beneficial for society, and who is usually trusted.'

(Bickman, 1974: 58)

It is in these roles and in wearing a uniform, that people expect the occupier to 'look the part' and 'to look a particular way' (Craik, 2005: 120). When Fussell (2002: 157) visited a hospital for example, he was annoyed that the nurses were not dressed appropriately and felt 'cheated when assigned a nurse visibly not qualified':

'The nurses appeared not in their traditional uniform... but dressed any old way, including blue jeans, as if they were ashamed of any sign of education or distinction, let alone simple identification... I wanted to see a nurse now and then and the only caregivers I could raise looked like charladies.'

(Fussell, 2002: 156).

It is anticipated that the more analogous the clothing is to that of a police uniform – perceived legitimate authority – the likelihood of compliance increases. It is evident that although Bickman's research was a significant contribution in the theory that the uniform influences compliance, he does not assess the effect his research would have in different areas. Police trust varies largely between areas, societies and countries (Kääriäinen and Sirén, 2012), and the levels of compliance and authority will undoubtedly vary as well.

Bickman also failed to consider the effect gender has on compliance; he enlisted male research assistants only: this indicates a significant gap in the research, and for further study it would be suggested to investigate the effect a female ‘guard’, ‘milk-women’, and female ‘civilian’ would have in a similar experiment. In the same sense, the experiment was conducted during the week with over three-quarters of the data being collected in the afternoon: actions and interactions with the police vary significantly on weekend evenings compared to say, a Monday afternoon and thus people’s reaction to someone who looks like a policeman at the time of the experiment may have differed significantly on a Saturday night in a city centre for example.

Considering there are many variations of the policing uniform in Britain today it is important to consider that the levels of compliance and obedience will vary and other visual clues must play a part in determining social reaction. While other aspects need to be taken into account, Bickman presumed that obedience to authority is the exclusive explanation for compliance. It does not take into account learned social understandings of what is expected of a certain uniform (and occupation) which vary between individuals and is initially a result of primary and secondary socialisation.

Aside from the influences the uniform has on the *perceiver*, uniforms have been found to also have different effects on the *wearer*, which is the focus of this study. The Stanford Prison Experiment was undertaken in 1971 by Haney, Banks and Zimbardo (1973). The research involved simulated incarceration designed to observe behaviour in individuals that were subjected to power variances. Male volunteers were assigned arbitrary roles as guards and prisoners in a mock prison setting. These roles were underlined with gender disparity, what constituted masculine and feminine behaviour in the environment. As noted by the researchers:

‘For the guards, the uniform consisted of: plain khaki shirts and trousers; a whistle; a police nightstick; and reflecting sunglasses which made eye contact impossible. The prisoners’ uniform consisted of a loose fitting muslin smock... Since these “dresses” were worn without undergarments, the uniforms forced them to assume unfamiliar postures, more like those of a woman than a man... [It] also made them look silly and enabled the guards to refer to them as “sissies” or “girls”’.

(Zimbardo, 2004: 24-5)

Haney, Banks and Zimbardo’s study is particularly interesting because it demonstrates the binary distinction of masculinity and femininity (irrespective of the gender of the

participants), something that Butler (1999) researched extensively. As demonstrated in the Stanford Prison Experiment, to ‘act like a man’ is thus to assume a certain authority and control, and to ‘act like a woman’ is to submit to a certain passivity (Butler, 1999: 18).

In other research, respondents graded individuals wearing a police uniform much more highly in terms of reliability, intelligence, and general helpfulness compared to when the models were wearing civilian clothes or other blue-collar uniforms (Singer and Singer, 1985). In a similar study participants rated twenty-five different occupational uniforms by the feelings and instant reactions it caused them to have when shown pictures. Overall, the police uniform was consistently positioned as the clothing most likely to provoke feelings of protection and safety (Balkin and Houlden, 1983). This research is interesting because of the unique experiment (up to that time) that involved the uniform *alone*. While it is natural to conclude from the research explored that it is the isolated uniform itself that emanates authority and power, it is important to consider that other factors may be influential such as race, gender, and age (perhaps a perceived higher level of ‘experience’?). While this is a suitable approach to assess the effects of the uniform expelling any potential variables that usually (subconsciously) affect judgement, perceiving a certain item of clothing as ‘authoritative’ or ‘trustworthy’ for example does not necessarily mean that those descriptions are ascribed to the wearer automatically although this may be useful in policing. It may be that items of clothing, or the outfit as a whole, work as an initial definition of the situation that is then revised during the course of events. If the police uniform *is* automatically ascribed with meanings does it actually not matter who is wearing it? This powerful ‘skin’ can have positive and negative effects on the wearer (Goffman, 1959).

Boyanowsky and Griffiths (1982) examined if presence of a firearm and mirrored sunglasses can facilitate an aggressive response in the perceiver. In their research they explored the effect of wearing a holstered gun and wearing mirrored sunglasses would have on members of the public by police officers. Boyanowsky and Griffiths found that respondents reported feeling more aggressive and expressed anger in circumstances when the weapon was exposed. The wearing of the sunglasses did not result in an increase in aggressive feelings but the police officers wearing them *were* perceived more negatively. Similarly, Berkowitz and LePage conducted an experiment in 1967 to investigate how

weapons can be aggression-eliciting provocation. They asked participants to choose how many electric shocks to give to colleagues in the presence of an aggressive stimulus (a gun), non-aggressive stimulus (a badminton racquet) or no stimulus. Berkowitz and LePage (1967: 206) found that participants who had been angered beforehand (half of subjects were given electric shocks themselves) and then shown the aggressive stimulus, resulted in more electric shocks to their colleagues and concluded that ‘many hostile acts which supposedly stem from unconscious motivation really arise because of the operation of aggressive cues’. While police ‘accessories’ and equipment are not included in the discussion of clothing semiotics as a rule, they greatly contribute to the overall image of the wearer, and thus everything police officers wear (functionally or decoratively) further influences how their image is portrayed. In a noteworthy study on traffic violations, Sigelman and Sigelman (1976) found that even when an ‘officer’ was not displaying a badge, collar number or indeed anything that represents a particular aspect of the police force (they were dressed in a security officer’s uniform minus any insignia), drivers tended to commit less driving violations when they could see an ‘officer’ standing at the corner of a junction.

Cooke (2004), for her PhD thesis, undertook a student survey on police and police-like uniforms. Cooke’s (2004: 44) main findings were that the clothing that people wear, and the ‘many symbols’ that are used as ‘identifiers’, are ‘strong cues’ which resulted in nearly all of her respondents (99-100%) successfully recognising a British police officer. Even when ‘symbols from the hat and utility belt were removed’, recognisability remained remarkably high at 92%. Interestingly, and in line with the objectives of this study, Cooke (2004: 121) looked at the general patterns of response for male and female officers. Male officers were given ‘greater respect and authority’ and the highest descriptors for this group were ‘intimidating, threatening and aggressive’, female police officers, on the other hand, were perceived to be more ‘approachable, helpful, trustworthy, reassuring and fair’, and were equal with men in terms of the ‘professional, competent and disciplined’ constructs. Crucially in terms of the context of this study, the ‘bobby’ uniform which is described in Cooke’s study as the traditional ‘bobby-on-the-beat’ clothing, that is, the formal ‘professionalised’ image, for BlueCorp at least, this standard of dress (white shirt, tie, trousers, traditional helmet) has become ‘eroded’ (Booth, 2009: 17) and is no longer used for beat policing. This formal attire, according to Cooke (2004: 106) is an ‘idealised view of the modern police’. Currently in BlueCorp, as discussed previously, the uniform

has become more militarised, or as Cooke (2004: 246) puts it, ‘subject to a process of casualisation’ and ‘may result in a downgrading of authority’. It is interesting that Cooke (2004) connects ‘casualisation’ with clothing that is ‘militarised’ as they are often considered part of a contradictory pair (further explored in Chapter 6.2). Respondents also suggested that the ‘smarter and more presentable the uniform, the greater the perception of seniority and authority they had for the wearer and the greater level of respect they had for the organisation’ (Cooke, 2004: 194). Cooke’s (2004: 243) empirical data was, perhaps crucially, collected just one year prior to the widespread implementation of police community support officers and she acknowledges that the introduction of PCSOs may result in a ‘disengaging’ with the public by ‘not having their own distinctive uniform’.

Police community support officer uniforms are designed to look like they are part of the policing team but ‘visibly distinct’ from police officers (Neighbourhood Policing Programme, 2007: 36). Since there is no set uniform for PCSOs there has been increasing criticism that suggests the police institution is trying to ‘dupe’ the public into a purposeful misperception about the distinction between a PCSO and police officers; ‘how can the public tell the difference between the two and is this a purposeful blurring of the lines to make the public think there are more police officers on the streets?’ (Police Federation, 2009: 1), much what Cooke (2004) said might happen. Cooke (2004: 243) envisioned that the use of very similar uniforms would ‘lead to confusion’ and sceptically wondered whether the introduction of ‘police-like’ officers would be merely an ‘optical illusion’ (See *‘Open All Hours’*: xi), something the Home Office was keen to dismiss at the time.

Although there is no ‘agreed’ uniform for the PCSO, the national trend is for ‘differing blue epaulettes, hat bands and signage bearing the words ‘Police Community Support Officer’ (NPP, 2007: 36). According to the Police Federation, this is simply not enough. PCSOs still wear the same clothes as police officers, significantly highlighting the word ‘police’ ‘in much larger letters’ (PF, 2009: 1). This suspiciously ‘deliberate’ blurring of the distinction between the two is confusing for the public:

‘Some community support officers can be indistinguishable from a police uniform at a distance. The public – and even some regulars – cannot tell them apart. It is a con to give the impression that there are more police officers than is the case. We have to distinguish between the two and it is something that we have to keep chipping away at.’

(Police Federation, 2001: 1)

As discussed by the Police Federation, distinguishing between police officer's uniforms and PCSOs uniforms is very important as the public's current fragile trust may be eroded further if they feel they are being deceived by the 'plastic police' (see House of Commons, 2008: 92; Davies and Thomas, 2008: 633). Furthermore, the suggestion implies that the government would be in effect, 'tricking' the public into thinking that there are more officers on the streets increasing visibility and in turn (falsely) increasing confidence; a clever 'ploy to con the public' (Craig, 2011: 4). Cooke (2004: 239) herself, raised significant questions about police-like officers, such as PCSOs, on concluding her research. She queried whether the transfer of significant police identifiers, such as the 'police badge', to other uniforms would 'diminish its power, authority and wider significance' and cause a 'watering down effect'. Young (1991a: 35) also argued that changes at an organisational level (to neighbourhood policing as a current example) could cause support for the police to be 'diluted, even destroyed' and history 'reveals how the body of the police has been dressed and presented as a primary culture reflection of these same underlying changes in police modes of thought, belief and practice'.

To summarise, it is clear from the above studies that the uniform communicates many things to the perceiver and the wearer themselves. It is a vehicle in which messages are sent back and forth, allowing certain assumptions to be made about the wearer's occupation and indeed, their permitted behaviour for that role. These messages are often subconscious and occur subtly: learned through primary socialisation, reinforced through secondary socialisation and strengthened through societal conditions that embed clothes with certain messages.

3.3 *Implications of Uniform Colour*

One of the main functions that police uniform designers are keen to encourage is its highly recognisable iconic nature to the public. Uniform design is regarded as a significant aspect in the occupational self-image of police officers and its interpretation by the community. It is within this perception that officers gather important clues about what their role entails (Fussell, 2003). Choice of colour has played a crucial role in being able to define the individual and collective identity of the police; similarly, certain patterns, embellishments

and badges adorn the uniform to reiterate its symbolic meaning. The social construction of colours has been prevalent in how colours are perceived; 'lightness tends to be associated with goodness, purity and innocence while darkness suggests evil and death' (Nickels, 2008: 79). Similarly, in Harvey's (1995: 10) research on the significance of black clothing, he highlights the historical and ongoing association of black with death, mourning and sadness in Western European societies. While these associations still stand in modern society, these connotations have evolved to include representations of power and authority, and a black uniform looks particularly threatening 'perhaps alluding to the all-black uniform of the Nazi SS and Fascist Italian Black-Shirts as a sign of intimidation, power and menace' (Fussell, 2003: 23). Young (1991b: 67), during his time as a police officer, argued that himself and his colleagues 'presented an avenging image, clothed in the symbolic colour of death and darkness... The dark uniform of the police symbolises not just the force identity, but also the presence of the avenger, who purifies through retribution rather than cure'. It is this 'eternal dichotomy between good and evil; the use of highly symbolic black uniforms is an indicator of anonymous evil that predominates' (Young, 1991b: 68).

Frank and Gilovich's thesis (1988) was an investigation of how darker uniform colour in professional sports may influence social perceptions and effect interactive behaviour between players. They discovered that players in black uniforms were penalised at a significantly higher rate than those wearing white uniforms. This finding was further reinforced when players switched from wearing white to black clothing as the rate of penalties for aggressive play rose exponentially. Interestingly, the theory that colour can have an impact on aggressiveness has been contentiously deliberated in Australia (Craik, 2005: 137), as private security firms have 'adopted a police-like uniform' which has resulted in 'security officers assum[ing] an inappropriate mantle of authority and unwarranted exercise of force'. The implications and application of Frank and Gilovich's research to the police uniform today is important as it could help explain public-police relations and the possibility of dark clothing subconsciously encouraging aggression in officers wearing them. Johnson (2001: 30) suggests that in applying these sport-aggression studies, 'a dark police uniform may subconsciously encourage citizens to perceive officers as aggressive, evil, or corrupt and send a negative message to the community'. Johnson also proposes that police departments should consider changing police uniforms because of this public perception and the theory that it encourages aggression in officers. While this

may be a reasonable suggestion considering the research on colour connotations there must be a very good reason for the 'boys in blue' to be in blue (this phrase is still used today but is less relevant with most police officers uniforms being black now); the stereotypical 'face' of policing not to have changed significantly for almost two centuries. Though most police officer uniforms are black, Rosselli (2000: 1) reasons that: 'when you think of police uniforms, the colour blue ultimately comes to mind... Perceived as authoritative, the colour conjures up images of professionalism and competency, making it a natural colour for police uniforms.'

For the armed forces especially in the Napoleon era, as aforementioned, bright peacock-display colours were the rule as these bright choices have connotations of power, masculinity and sexual desire (Elliot et al, 2010). The first police forces chose blue-black uniforms to distinguish themselves from the armed forces, these shades make officers look trimmer and cleaner (Krauss, 1994). In 1972, New York established a change from the standardised blue-black uniform of old to powder-blue shirts; this led to a frank, and almost comical, admission from the *New York Times* that '[the shirts] all too often showed stains from the jelly doughnuts officers ate for breakfast and the pizza they ate between patrols' (Krauss, 1994). The standard blue-black colours, favoured by most police departments, are also useful for concealment in dangerous situations and camouflage at night when searching for and apprehending criminals. These reasons are documented as early as the beginning of the twentieth century when officers hid in the shadows to 'surprise criminals', a concealment made easier by their dark clothes (Broady and Tetlow, 2005: 39).

The symbolic meaning of clothing and colour appears to operate automatically in people's minds rather than intellectually (Meier et al., 2004). This would suggest that the role of primary and secondary socialisation is the intention behind learned understandings and the meanings attributed to the police uniform. As indicated in Haney et al's research with children's perceptions (Meier et al., 2004), these social understandings are acquired from a very young age. Would one know the difference between the binaries of purity and evil, good and bad, the connotations and denotations of black and white (and indeed all colours) if they were not learned understandings? People perceive the uniform of the police as a symbol of power, authority and something to be feared because that is what we have been *taught* to respect and fear, not as an innate knowledge of what they are instinctively

Even before the beginning of the First World War, glamorous military uniforms had an uncanny ability to lure men into the armed forces. During the process of turning recruits into fully-blown servicemen, the uniform changed with it, and thus the clothing worn symbolised their gradual separation from civilians into part of a greater group cause (*esprit de corps*). Indeed, Bourke (1996: 128-9) has pointed out that by 1914, visually-pleasing uniforms ‘that enhanced men’s masculine appearance’ had long been an important factor in attracting men to the armed forces while the attire of many soldiers were designed in a way that was ‘admirably suited to the rather sexually explicit display of men’s bodies’ (Craik, 2003: 131; see also Hollander, 1993: 228).

As far back as the Napoleon era, which was around the time that the first official police uniform came into existence, many men who were not involved in the war efforts adopted the embellished styles of the military; some even purchasing second-hand officers’ uniforms ‘to cut a dashing figure’ and parade the streets (Myerly, 1996: 149). Myerly observed in his research that the uniforms from the Napoleonic era turned the male upper torso into a seemingly muscular (even if they were not) exhibition of colour and power. Even more erotic than this ‘peacock display’ of the torso was the tight white animal skin trousers which drew attention to the crotch area: ‘the crowning aphrodisiac feature was the fly-front of their trousers. More than one of my friends has swayed about in ecstasy describing the pleasure of undoing this quaint sartorial device’ (Garber, 1992: 57). The uniform was designed primarily to ‘shape the physique’ (Roche, 1996: 229) and display masculine attributes that were deemed important at this time: bravery and sexual prowess. Men in uniform had become sex objects (McDowell, 1997) and ‘there is a good deal of evidence to show that a handsome uniform exerts a devastating effect upon the opposite sex’ (Bell, 1976: 43). Indeed, there were few types of clothing that could ‘compete with the visual impact and sexual allure of the officer’s full-dress uniform’ (David, 2003: 16).

Although the history of the military uniform encompasses strong symbolic meaning of the clothes worn by soldiers, society’s acceptance of the uniform did not just end with the military, but was adopted by police forces as well. Even before Napoleon, uniforms were recognised as an essential part of powerful institutions and represented what the collective were striving to achieve. The uniforms became not just body coverings but influential metaphors for power, authority and lust. Cohn (1989: 313) remarked that clothes are not

actually metaphors for power or authority; but ‘literally *are* authority’ (emphasis in original). Following the introduction of neo-Gothic fashion in 1825, uniforms began to tone down in colour to avoid the preceding ‘peacock displays’. Red, white and gold cloth adorned with intense decorative features were replaced with blacks, greys and blues to avoid what had become known as ‘fancy dress’ (Garber, 1992: 55).

Emsley (1991) noted that in response to the level of resistance to the idea of the police in the late eighteenth century, substantial attention was paid to the image and style of officers before they officially made their first public appearance. Young (1991a: 76) argued that clothes are used to separate ‘institutions of control’ and thus uniformity and ‘bodily constructs [are] built up as series of organising principles, so that the other regiment or unit is perceived to operate in some kind of polluted time and space, and its aberrant nuances of uniform styling used as a marker of significant difference’. The police institution was sensitive to the public opposition of an ‘at home’ army and constabularies chose their uniforms based on a gentry appearance rather than military. Their uniforms were ‘top hats, uniforms of blue, swallow-tail coats with the minimum of decoration, in contrast to the short scarlet tunics with colours, facings and piping of the British infantry’ (Emsley, 1991: 25).

Loader and Mulcahy (2003: 73) observed the striking ‘aura’ of the earliest Metropolitan police officers that afforded a portrayal of authority through their physical presence. The focus on the police uniform further reinforced the idea of authority as it was the ‘trust inviting visual marker’ of the institution (Offe, 1999: 74), and it was respect for the uniform that encouraged compliance. The second half of the twentieth century saw copious amounts of change within the police forces through the establishment of new policing agencies undertaking different roles and units, completely altering the structure of the organisation. This diversification of the police role, along with greater mobility and specialised units initiated a change in police clothing too. By the mid-1960s, heavy overcoats and Victorian-style capes were discarded for more lightweight and flexible work-wear. It became more common-place to see police officers wearing NATO-style jumpers and fluorescent jackets, making them even more identifiable. This was a sharp change from the desire for concealment at the beginning of the twentieth century: ‘at night [officers] were instructed to walk in the shadows to catch criminals by surprise. [Their] black helmet plates (and uniform) helped them to become invisible’ (Broady and

Tetlow, 2005: 39). In most areas, the traditional and iconic helmets were now considered unworkable, impractical and reserved only for formal engagements, and were replaced with flat-caps displaying the chequered band and insignia for each particular force.

Specialist units, such as the firearms department wore uniforms that were influenced primarily by operational effectiveness. For total efficiency, the firearms officer required ‘complete freedom of movement, and whilst not standing out as targets themselves, must be readily identifiable as police officers’ (Clarke, 1991: 18). Similarly, public order units wore specific uniforms encompassing individual components, comprising of ‘a flame-proof suit, heavy protective boots, helmet, visor and shield’ (Clarke, 1991: 18). The debate over police equipment was highlighted in the 1980s when the forces requested suitable apparatus to originally deal with the mainland riots. Further to this, debates have been fierce over recent years whether to regularly provide the police with long-handled batons and CS gas. While aggressive equipment may be necessary for certain departments, this ‘imagery [is] associated with a visible drift to a militaristic domain’ (Young, 1991a: 34), something that the police originally wanted to avoid.

It was expected that as more functionally individual policing units, agencies and divisions developed, and as crimes advanced and changed, different specialist police uniforms would be seen in public. It is now inevitable that the public experience a variety of representations of the police for different circumstances and scenarios. The rosy image of the traditional bobby is less likely than ever to appear; the attire of the time-honoured tunic and helmet is now reserved mainly for formal occasions, funerals and courtroom appearances.

3.5 *‘Beauty as Duty’*

‘Is it a glass ceiling or do we wear these glass helmets ourselves? Female officers may think that... only men can really do it, and that the uniforms are for men.’

(Inspector Jaqueline McIlwrath, cited in Bebbington, 2008: 8)

The maintenance of masculine dominant discourses in policing has not only been controlled by the ways in which women are ‘allowed to manoeuvre’ but also ‘by controlling the physical body and appearance of women’ (Young, 1991b: 205). Being a

police officer was initially referred to as the very embodiment of the 'ideal male character' (Gorer, 1955: 310). Therefore, it is perhaps understandable that the first police uniforms for women were traditionally masculine in style. Conventional uniforms were designed to be erotically masculine since they typically tried to highlight big, strong (male) shoulders (Fussell, 2003) and the first police departments hired only men for a number of years. Not only was it classed as a 'male profession' but also one in which a masculine physique was seen as prerequisite to be a successful police officer (Martin, 1980).

Women were initially sworn in as 'unofficial' police officers and were given stereotypical 'feminine' control; cases of missing women, domestic abuse (men against women) and with no powers to arrest (Broady and Tetlow, 2005: 56), and they 'might think certain roles are not for women because there is a certain mystique about them' (Bebbington, 2008: 8). It is clear that, during the early years of female police officers at least, their welcome into 'male police space' was 'reluctant' and came fraught with envisioned problems: 'the female loose in the depths of male territory is provocative and offensive, producing something of a spiritual and conceptual problem for male prestige' (Young, 1992: 267).

The earliest images of women's policing were personified in the 'manly' figure of Mary Allen who was regularly photographed in breeches with cropped hair and an eyeglass (Doan, 2001). The use of makeup was prohibited for years 'in many forces by written order' and 'a heavily made-up policewoman was derogatively nicknamed 'the painted lady', while another who wore a rather pervasive perfume and had visibly dyed hair was dismissed as 'the peroxide hoer [whore]' (Young, 1992: 276-7). Men complained that women who joined the police were 'built battleship-style', with 'upside-down legs', or had 'faces like a bag of chisels or a bag of hammers' (Young, 1992: 271). This 'stereotypical' image of the female police officer was further exacerbated by the 1932 film *Looking on the Bright Side* starring Gracie Fields. Gracie was portrayed as an anomaly; an unconventional policewoman. Being an ex-manicurist, she was depicted in a slap-stick humorous form, essentially concluding her incompetence for the job. Her female colleagues in the film were shown as being portly, unattractive and masculine, the general representation of women police officers at this time (Jackson, 2006). These representations were further exacerbated in the pages of *Punch*, *Police Review* and other media outlets, describing these officers as unnatural and manly in order to de-professionalise women and keep them in their place. Brown and Heidensohn argued that despite labour shortages

being one reason for the recruitment of women as police officers, a further motive was to regulate women's behaviour whilst men were at war; 'Women were unsupervised by brothers, fathers, and husbands who were away fighting [...]. Women might not only sell sex but give sexual favours away for free' (Brown and Heidensohn, 2000: 47).

'The original uniform of the Metropolitan Women Police, modelled on male police dress, arose from assumptions about the masculine derivation of the authority of law and of citizenship; indeed, women gained police power of arrest before entitlement to vote. Women had had to prove that they could act as sensible and stoical officers rather than feminine hysterics and the donning of the "masculine" uniform could be seen, metaphorically, as part of the test.'

(Jackson, 2006: 87)

This 'donning' of the uniform proved to have other effects. As a consequence, it became evident that the oppressed and undesirable feminine personality traits would require an intense amount of performance and the sustainment of a near-constant front (Goffman, 1959). There were anxieties that women police officers, in wearing the uniform, may find it difficult to distinguish between their socially constructed gender roles due to the masculine connotations attached to police dress:

'It was feared that legislating women's dress, by equipping them with practical uniforms in order to unify them, might have the power to disguise, alter, or even reconstruct their real selves. The connotations of male strength attached to a uniform might permanently empower a female wearer.'

(Lant, 1991: 107)

The styling of the first police uniform for women, while being traditional masculine in design, combined a macho top half (similar to what male police officers wore) with button-down coat, silver buttons and a high neck and tie, and a touch of femininity on the bottom half; a long heavy skirt. After a few years, as a salute to the 'new womanhood', these skirts were replaced with shorter, more 'occupation-friendly' versions designed with pleats to help boost recruitment (Heidensohn: 1992; 1998). The tunics were also styled with lapels for a more womanly-figure, and kitten heels replaced clunky boots. While the shorter skirt might have helped the ease of crime-fighting on the streets, the heels presumably did nothing but hinder. Twenty or so years into women's service, police powers were underlined by traditionally feminine 'roles' and not nearly as role-powerful as their male counterparts. The main emphasis was not on their ability to combat crime, but on 'beauty as duty', and their desire to be glamorous did not disappear (Kirkham, 1996:

154). Through appearing glamorous on duty, women were regarded with suspicion for their ‘Medusan charms’ (Young, 1992: 281) as they could be easily ‘swayed by emotion’ because ‘they can’t help it: it is their nature, and they have been known to fall in love with the man they have been sent to watch’ (May, 1979: 359). Policewomen, even if they did not succumb to their emotions, merely by their presence, ‘risks becoming labelled as either an icy virgin if she resists male approaches, or becomes something akin to the “scarlet woman” if she shows any inclination to respond positively to those approaches’ (Young, 1992: 271). It is not entirely their fault however, it is ‘their very appearance in uniform [which] is imbued with sexual frisson and erotic possibilities’ (Craik, 2005: 99).

The shift towards increased female officer recruitment was driven more by post-war gaps in male labour supply than proactive feminist influences. Women were quickly introduced as the vast quantity of men enlisted for the war depleted the number of available police officers; essentially women were initially used to serve ‘for the duration only and related to a feminine duty to serve the nation’ (Jackson, 2006: 17). What was regarded as ‘feminine duty’ controlled the policing powers given to women. Their introduction occurred before the feminist movement and gendered roles were still at the forefront of a patriarchal organisation’s mind. Gendered thinking was explored by Schulz (2004: 16); ‘not only does the work world segregate jobs by sex, but parents, schools, guidance counsellors, and the media send messages about what is an appropriate dream for members of each sex’. This reinforces the idea that regardless of the enlistment of female police their gendered roles governed their responsibilities within the force and their primary function in life; nurturer and homemaker. One can only imagine that this was the main reason why for the first thirty years at least, ‘officers had to be either unmarried or widowed’ (Broady and Tetlow, 2005: 57) and were expected to leave if their circumstances changed, to presumably adopt their ‘natural occupation’ as wife and mother. With the feminist movement in full swing, the marriage bar was removed in 1946. With this removal however, the dual role of women (as workers and homemakers) was still generally perceived to be unnatural and many women still left the force upon marriage (Jackson, 2006).

The threat to the hierarchical structure of the patriarchal police force, (they could not avoid promoting women forever), generated bad press. Opinions of career women by unemployed women were that male occupations inhabited by females were a fatal error that feminism propagated. In the 1956 Christmas issue of *Life* magazine, it was stated

that one career woman became ‘so masculinized by her career that her castrated, impotent, passive husband is indifferent to her sexually. He refuses to take responsibility and drowns his destroyed masculinity in alcoholism’ (Freidan, 2010: 41).

Despite this damaging representation of women as they struggled for recognition, their strength in numbers and acceptance was growing. By the early 1960s the images of policewomen were portrayed as ‘pretty but tough’ (Lock, 1968: 187) and this led to a restyling of uniforms a few years later. While the masculine styling of the first police uniforms was symbolic of a time when women were a begrudgingly-accepted necessity during the war, twenty years on and the change in women’s uniforms, designs influenced by air hostesses’ clothing (a notoriously eroticised uniform), were influenced by 1960’s fashion and the years that followed. This image was implemented based on women’s fashionable interests and were ‘a focus of male desire’ (Jackson, 2006: 55). Although significant attempts were made to ‘feminise’ themselves and the uniform, some women officers still rejected the clothing as being ‘too masculine’. Officer Wyles experienced feelings of distaste and anxiety whenever she saw herself in her uniform and thought that ‘the uniform was unspeakable... designed surely by men who had a spite against us’ (Wyles, 1952: 44). Wyles envisioned ways she could go about ‘prettifying’ her uniform:

‘When, at last, I stood before the mirror clad from head to feet in police-provided clothing, I shuddered, and for the first time regretted my choice of career... I thought, if only I could wear a pair of earrings, and run a piece of white frilling along the top of the hard stand-up collar of my tunic, how much better I would feel.’

(Wyles, 1952: 42)

Originally, policewomen’s uniforms attempted to ‘neuter’ femininity by promoting traditionally masculine military-style uniforms; even more recently the ‘retain of tension between versions of male uniforms... and feminine embellishments’ remains (Craik, 2005: 140). The pressure of ‘dressing for success’ (Molloy, 1977: 101; Mauro, 1984: 42) can be applied to the police uniform as it was from this popular phrase from the 1970s that women were fashioned towards more masculine roles in the workplace. It was this ‘masculine style’ of dress, with ‘their cropped hair, uniform and build [that] has earned them a partial right to manoeuvre in male social space’ (Young, 1992: 273). This was particularly difficult to achieve as the wearing of makeup was banned and ‘hair had to be severely dressed’ (Wyles, 1952: 44).

It was feared that women wearing a ‘man’s’ uniform would promote cross-dressing and homosexuality; ‘What would be the effect of the uniform on the “real” women underneath? Would it promote lesbian relations among women?’ (Lant, 1991: 107). New York’s superintendent addressing the NYPD in 1859 stated that ‘by exemplary conduct and *manly deportment*, you will command the respect and cordial support of all good citizens’ (cited in Cooke, 2005: 234 – emphasis added) and in this insinuation it is suggested that only by being a *man* or at the very least portraying a *masculine demeanour*, only then is it possible to achieve respect and compliance from citizens and colleagues.

3.5.1 *Problems with a ‘Unisex’ Uniform*

Some female policing staff cannot comprehend that having women as an integral part of the police force for the past century has not changed the way they are undermined on a daily basis by the wearing of a uniform that is designed with men in mind and it ‘is frequently a major issue, notably in the UK where it is not unisex’ (Heidensohn, 1998: 220; see also Heidensohn, 1992).

Constant complaints to their managers and media attention highlights the fact that women ‘hate’ important parts of their uniforms including trousers, stab vest, shirts, polo shirts and boots which have all been under the spotlight in recent years. The biggest problem with women’s uniforms has been claimed to be the fit of the trousers; ‘quite often it is the style: they might be too narrow-legged, waist bands do not always fit and lots of women find them uncomfortable or too tight around the thighs’ (Julie Nesbit, Police Federation Women’s representative, cited in Clemence, 2011: 8) and the uniforms generally are largely unflattering (Gammell, 2008). The introduction of trousers for female police officers after the First World War was a welcome change and it was this item of clothing in particular that had been a topic of contention as the distinguishing factor between men and women. Luck (1996: 141) discovered that up to the late nineteenth century, most of the public felt that it was crucial to ‘maintain an extreme distinction between the clothing of the sexes in order to safeguard “natural” gender relations and to keep society in a state of moral equilibrium’. Luck (1996) added that trousers embodied *masculinity*, while skirts embodied *femininity*: trousers were strongly associated with the

male business world, and became a symbol of domination, and more specifically, men's domination over women. Though it is now accepted practice for women in the UK to wear trousers (inclusive of policewomen) and has been for the past hundred years, it was only three years ago (2013) that France overturned a law that prohibited women from wearing trousers unless they asked the police's permission to 'dress as men' (Lauter, 2013).

Furthermore, the standard white shirt that is issued during police training is available in the same style to both men and women but it appears that the designers have only men in mind; 'when women join the force, they are asked for their collar size, as the shirt is worn with a tie. But asking women for their collar size is like asking a man if they are a size ten or twelve' (*Company Clothing*, 2008: 24-25). On the other hand, tight-fitting black polo shirts supplied are often 'too tight' and 'revealing' and do not send out the right image (Clout, 2008). A police constable who had been working as a dog handler since her first post in 1991 was only issued with a woman's shirt in late 2006; '[it] still does not fit properly because they are issued by collar size. It sends out the wrong message. It reminds you every day you get dressed that you are in a man's job' (PC Chapman, cited in Haynes, 2007: 4). Young (1991b: 210) argued that 'the uniform... seems to have been designed to allow [women] more easily to become surrogate men, by denying their feminine form'.

3.6 *Conclusion*

This chapter has attempted to examine the role that the uniform plays in organisations. It has endeavoured to highlight the role that clothing and the uniform plays in not only established dominant discourses of policing culture but also in framing the changes that has led to the introduction of neighbourhood policing and the police community support officer role. The chapter also explored the uniform of female police officers and how and why its styling, design and cuts have changed over the years.

The introduction of neighbourhood policing not only reflects an attempt to satisfy public demand for a police service that focuses on community relations and the needs of the local populace, but also the strive for increased visibility through the lens of the uniform, equipment and vehicles that are adorned with highly recognisable police insignia. Both of these have attempted to allay the fears and criticisms that the police have become an

institution where discrimination, prejudice and injustice are rife; something which has resulted in the highlighting of (previously attempted concealment) of the domination of white, middle-class, masculine and heterosexual forms of working. In the next chapter evidence of the dominant discourses which examine how officers behave in the ‘front’ and ‘back’ regions of performance within the occupation (Goffman, 1959) will be discussed. It also looks at how gendered police roles, and the working structure of the police institution in general are constructed and maintained through identity management, hegemonic masculine thinking and forms of behaviour.

*4.1**Introduction*

A large proportion of the body is hidden by clothes, by most people, for the majority of the time. Consequently, clothes themselves are a crucial element in appearance and therefore play a significant role in impression formation. They are the component most clearly distinguishable at a distance, whereas tones of voice, perceived attractiveness, age, facial features, amongst many other things, require closer examination. The particularities of bodies beneath uniforms (gender, ethnicity or age for example), produce varying ambiguities for different people which are also masked by, and managed through, the lens of the uniform. In modern society, where brief social contact and communication is the norm (including contact with police) clothing (and more specifically uniforms) have become an important indicator of status, authority and power. This chapter details how impression management is important for the police. Given the emphasis that is placed on performances in context, the chapter will examine the contexts in which performances are given. Organisational cultures, like the police, provide a variety of different contexts in which these performances can be presented, each with a wide range of dominant (and weaker) discourses that can constrain and control how individual officer identities are managed. Attempting to understand the performances that officers' display in their role means recognising and acknowledging the influence of police culture (and sub-culture). In light of this, how job roles and individuals can become contaminated by moral, physical and symbolic taint is discussed. Cultural expectations within the police allow certain actions and behaviours to become normalised within these contexts to conform to organisational expectations of what it means to be a police officer and how contamination may be embedded in the uniform. However, dominant thinking is not always determined and the way the cultural and gendered expectations are resisted and rejected will be explored.

First impressions are crucial as it is on the foundations of these first encounters that other individuals will gauge the appropriate ‘responsive action’ (Goffman, 1959: 22). The term impression formation usually suggests that the fragments of information gained about people are incorporated into a general impression about what that person is about and is based on the ‘collected knowledge one person possesses about another’ (Park, 1986: 907). Previous clothing research, as detailed in Chapter 3, shows that wardrobe cues act in a similar way as physical appearance characteristics especially when the fashion clues are relevant to the type of judgement obtained (easily recognisable uniforms being a useful example) (Lennon and Miller, 1985).

Overall, psychological research of the social perception of clothing has found that what is significant about visual clues is what is actually observed by the perceiver (subconsciously influenced by learned behaviour). A large proportion of this research has investigated the effect of visual features (categories of clothing) of the person wearing it on impression formation (see Lennon and Miller, 1985; Frank and Gilovich, 1988; Hollander, 1993; Kirkham, 1996; McDowell, 1997; Durkin and Jeffrey, 2000; Johnson, 2001; Craik, 2003; Fussell, 2003; Elliot et al, 2010). It remains the element used most frequently in generating a first impression of someone and sets the standard for all interaction between the social object and the perceiver thereafter:

‘The sight of an approaching uniformed man stirs unease inside almost everybody, awakening ambiguous intuitions of submission and disquiet, reassurance conflicting with guilt, deference coupled with hostility. Some people’s temperaments naturally identify with authority and are ever ready to kiss the rod, as a release from the cares of personal responsibility.’

(Whitaker, 1982: 7)

The way the police uniform is ‘received’ by the observer is wholly dependent on the context of the situation. Clothing as a form of significant non-verbal communication is ‘context dependent’; the meaning obtained by visual clues depends on the social situation in which they are recognised (Kaiser, 1985: 123).

The ‘dramaturgical’ approach that Goffman (1959: 240) employs in the *Presentation of Self in Everyday Life* mostly concerns the mode of performance or presentation used by the

individual 'actor' and its implication in a broader social context. The actor's 'performance' is constructed to provide others with 'impressions' that are likely to evoke a 'specific response he is concerned to obtain' and can sometimes be undertaken in a 'calculating' way (1959: 17). The process of performance becomes closely connected to the concept of the 'front' which is described as 'that part of the individual's performance which regularly functions in a general and fixed fashion to define the situation for those who observe the performance (1959: 22). The front therefore acts as a medium of normalisation and consistency, allowing for the audience to understand the actor on the basis of expressive characteristics. This region of behaviour establishes the correct 'manner', 'appearance', and 'setting' for the role adopted by the actor, bringing together behaviour with the personal 'front' as a 'collective representation' (1959: 35), and in order for this to be reasonably believable or persuasive, the communication of the performance has to be consistent. Goffman (1959: 30) argued that an individual 'typically infuses his activity with signs which dramatically highlight and portray confirmatory facts that might otherwise remain unapparent or obscure'. This 'infusion' process, termed 'dramatic realisation' (1959: 30) is established through 'impression management' and is dependent upon the endeavours of control (or lack thereof) and communication of salient information through the performance (1959: 208). This performance is made more believable as the 'idealised' version is "socialised", moulded, and modified to fit into the understanding and expectations of the society in which it is presented' (1959: 35).

Another significant contribution made by Goffman (1959) was his concept of the front and back regions of performance that actors sometimes adopt within social settings. Goffman (1959) suggested that individuals use impression management to help support a performance that assists the requirements of certain social situations. As though the individuals are actors on a stage, Goffman (1959) discussed performance of a particular role within face to face interaction and the two elements that are incorporated: the front region and back region. Front region is where the police officer (actor) performs a character and exhibits certain elements of behaviour to assist this performance to the public (audience). The back region is referred to as a place where the 'front' can be relaxed in the view of colleagues or at home; other 'performers' in the same 'play' are present but the audience, for which the presentation is intended, is no longer in attendance. Region behaviour refers to the inconsistencies found between an individual's behaviour and different kinds of audience:

‘When one’s activity occurs in the presence of other persons, some aspects of the activity are expressively accentuated and other aspects, which might discredit the fostered impression, are suppressed... there may be another region – a “back region” or “back stage” – where the suppressed facts make an appearance.’

(Goffman, 1959: 114)

Although these performances may differ in execution between police officers, it is generally based on a pattern of fundamental assumptions to cope with external adjustment and internal incorporation into the ‘group’:

‘[Policing culture...] is invented, discovered, or developed by a given group as it learns to cope with its problems [...] – that has worked well enough to be considered valid and, therefore, to be taught to new members as the correct way to perceive, think, and feel in relation to those problems.’

(Schein, 1985: 375)

In order to discuss the performances used by officers in relation to their uniforms, I will use Goffman’s (1959) concepts of personal front. Goffman (1959: 22) argued that the ‘front’ in an actor’s performance ‘regularly functions in a general and fixed fashion to define the situation for those who observe the performance’. Goffman separated the front stage into ‘personal front’ and ‘setting’. The setting involves the background items found at the location of the interaction, furniture, layout, furnishings and so forth, which ‘supply the scenery and stage props for the spate of human actions played out before, within or upon it’ (Goffman, 1959: 22). In policing, there is no ‘main’ setting for interaction. It is on and off the streets, inside police stations and vehicles, and performance in the setting can be to one audience member or hundreds. Thus the setting for the police is not fixed and inactive, but comparable settings are encountered across all front-line roles in all police forces. The personal fronts of officers are similarly a combination of consistency and fluctuations, which Goffman (1959) divided into ‘appearance’ and ‘manner’. Appearance is the stimuli that tells the audience about a performer’s status and ritual state, that is, ‘whether he is engaging in formal social activity, work...’ and so on (1959: 24). For police officers, these stimuli are referred to more broadly as ‘sign vehicles’ (Goffman, 1959: 1) which are ascribed characteristics. These physical markers are usually gender, age, ethnicity, and race, but these individualities are always embodied within ‘elastic’ physiognomies: jewellery, hairstyles and clothing from which we gather information. Consequently, a police officer’s clothing and accompanying accoutrements serves as a vehicle through which power relations and

gendered roles become reflected in society. Generally, their ritual state is one of being at work, present in whatever setting that their job dictates.

A principal concern of Goffman's was 'how human conduct was responsive to the immediate situation' (Smith, 2011: 136) and the elements in the concept of performances are attempts to articulate how human conduct is responsive in this way. In *Behaviour in Public Places* Goffman (1963a: 24) distinguished between 'unfocused interaction', which is information that may be gleaned from glancing at a person, and 'focused interaction' in which individuals have 'a single focus of attention' by engaging in a conversation for example. Goffman (1963a) made an interesting observation that as 'a general rule', 'acquainted' individuals would need a reason *not* to enter into interaction with each other, and 'unacquainted' individuals *require* a reason to do so. He continues by discussing how each social position is unique in terms of how 'exposed' individuals are to interactions and proposes that 'policeman and priests are especially interesting, since they may be engaged by strangers merely initiating a greeting as opposed to a request for information' (1963a: 125). Goffman also pointed out that none of these social positions (police officers, priest, the very young or old) 'has the kind of uniform that can be taken off; none can be off duty during part of the day. Here, then persons are exposed... they are "open persons"' (1963a: 126). But there is a distinction between these 'open persons'. Just as the intentions of those individuals who approach *them* are not questionable, so, in some cases, their intentions in approaching *others* may not be questionable either. Using the illustrations offered by Goffman, priests provide one kind of example, and the police provide another. It is the commonality that wearing an occupational uniform that affords individuals an 'open person' status, not just merely individuals in an exposed social position.

The subject of manner however is more difficult to ascertain with the police. Goffman (1959: 24) expressed that 'manner' is the stimulus that informs the audience of the role the performer expects to play in any forthcoming interactions, that is, a 'haughty, aggressive manner' suggests the performer will take a leading role in exchanges, while a submissive and mild manner suggests the performer 'will follow the lead of others'. Differences exist when one considers the distinctive roles of police constables and police community support officers. If the expression of 'masculinity' is defined as real police work (Holdaway, 1983; see also Hunt, 1984; Miller, 1999), and '[policing] is potentially a legitimate outlet for aggression at work' (Westmarland, 2001: 5), then it would suggest that the more

masculine roles of police constables would take the 'lead' in interaction, while police community support officers, with their emphasis on the building of community relationships, would be submissive in interaction. This is of course wholly dependent on the interaction between the police officer and the member(s) of the public in question. So while the appearance of PCs and PCSOs are similar, the manner any particular officer adopts can vary according to the situation. Goffman (1959: 25) discussed that appearance and manner may contradict each other, but the audience will always try to make a link between the two, seeking some consistency between what they are seeing and experiencing in the interaction. With varying ranks, roles and genders, consistency between appearance and manner cannot be found, and must instead be looked at as small units, separated by the solidarity found between police officers in different contexts. Even within these smaller units however, fluidity of personal fronts makes it even more difficult to make connections between appearance and manner.

While the idea of performance and behaviour is based on what a certain occupational culture expects or generates subconsciously, the culture of the police is not unchanging or immune to the pressure of societal expectations. Perspectives and outlooks vary greatly between police forces, departments, countries and of course, individuals. Informal rules about role playing are not clear-cut but are 'embedded in specific practices and nuanced according to particular concrete situations and the interactional processes of each encounter' (Reiner, 1985: 86). Therefore, police officers have to gauge their own personal role-playing individually, unsure whether this is the 'correct' performance for each singular encounter. The uniform as a role-playing symbol of their performance can be viewed as a significant prop in attaining full 'actor' status; it is interesting to consider whether one without the other would experience the same audience reactions (see Bickman, 1974).

Goffman also examined the idea that the body is no more than a 'peg' with which to hang certain aspects of our identity; 'we might ask: do bodies wear uniforms or do uniforms wear bodies?' (Craik, 2003: 128). 'Uniforms seem to wear the body and to produce certain performances – the body becomes an extension of the uniform (Craik, 2005: 106), and the body risks being 'devoid of its power without the uniform that covers it' (Hirtenfelder, 2015: 6). In considering this, it supports the idea that the uniform is, in reality, a role-playing symbol and a question to consider, in reference to Goffman's view of the body, is

‘to what extent is the police uniform the actual power? Does it not matter who is wearing the uniform since the body is just a peg with which to hang the authoritative image?’ In society the body is manipulated, fashioned, crafted and adorned with elements directly related to what the individual wants to portray. In short, it is in communicative action that the body comes to ‘be’:

‘While this image is entertained concerning the individual...this itself does not derive from its possessor, but from the whole scene of his action, being generated by that attribute of local events which renders them interpretable by witnesses. A correctly staged and performed scene leads the audience to impute to a performed character, but this imputation this is a product of a scene that comes off, and is not a cause of it.’

(Goffman, 1959: 252-3)

It can be concluded then that the body is, in fact, always in performative action. As Goffman (1959: 208) also referred to an aspect of an individual’s impression management which is at times, subconsciously uncontrollable: impressions ‘given-off’. These behaviours are those that others take to be non-communicative on the part of the actor and consequently, unintentionally exposing their ‘true character’. Goffman (1979: 1) also discussed how humans ‘display’ themselves, and argues that present in every culture are actors who engage in ‘indicative display events’ which are a ‘distinctive range of indicative behaviour and appearance’. Furthermore, appearance becomes more specialised so as to more routinely and perhaps more effectively perform this informing function; this informing coming to be the controlling role of the performance.

The communication to others of a particular social self depends wholly on the cooperation of the actor and the audience; affirmation and reciprocity of individuals reacting to each other’s expressive display of social action. These attempts by the individual to control and define situations in the way that is intended, needs to have others accept and validate it through their individual response. While verbal clues may be more telling, socially sanctioned symbols (the police uniform and accoutrements) are more easily recognisable and accepted as the master status of that performance above nearly all others.

Fronts and performative action were also discussed at length by Hochschild (2012). Although Hochschild’s research was focused on hospitality (namely flight attendants) and bill collectors, her work can be applied effectively to the police occupation. While a hospitality workforce has a definite ‘back stage’, for example their staff room where they

can relax their performance, managing what Hochschild (2012: 7) termed ‘emotional labour’ for police officers is somewhat problematic. Police work is ‘a backstage drama... for secrecy, lies, teamwork, and information control are essential for a successful public performance’ (Manning, 1997: 5). Waddington (1999: 295) warned that while the police canteen is the ‘repair shop’ of policing where officers can relax, tell jokes, and relieve their stresses of their often physically and mentally draining role, it is in here that that role playing continues, albeit in a different way; ‘[it] does not mean that the officers are not staging performances [in there as well]’. It is an opportunity for officers to ‘engage in displays... to re-tell versions of events that affirm their worldview’ (Waddington, 1999: 295). The ‘repair shop’ is then a location that is simultaneously a front and back region in which is it hard for police officers to disentangle the two. Goffman however, was more concerned with the process of *creating* a performance and less with how *real* the performance is for the audience:

‘There are many individuals who sincerely believe that the definition of the situation they habitually project is the real reality... I do not mean to question their proportion in the population, but rather the structural relation of their sincerity to the performances they offer.’

(Goffman, 1959: 77)

While the front stage performance of the officers may be manufactured in whatever way they choose, the back stage is just as likely to generate performances; a display of machismo is mentioned as one of the most ‘performed roles’ in male-dominated occupations (Burke, 1994: 196); ‘it is here [the back stage] that the capacity of a performance to express something beyond itself may be painstakingly fabricated; it is here that illusions and impressions are openly constructed’ (Goffman, 1959: 112). ‘Backstage behaviours can be thought of as behaviours that a generation ago would have been considered private and in bad taste for the media to portray or report’ (Surette, 1992: 19). With the eruption of the mass media, where every police scandal, complaint and misconduct is scrutinised for the absorption by the public, is the ‘backstage’ ever an option for police officers today, or even in existence at all?

Bolton (2001) also explored the relationship between front and back region routines examining the emotional labour of nurses whilst at work. The nurses viewing the front stage as an area controlled by formal organisational discourses and the back stage as an area where performances are respite from manipulated acts in the front. The research

found that nurses identified a set of ‘faces’ and behaviours to be used in the front regions (dealing with awkward people, patients and relatives of patients). It was reported that nurses found it easier to cope with the emotional stresses of their work by putting on a ‘smiley face’ and ‘professional face’ in order to give off the impression of delivering a high quality service. In the back stage however, a ‘humorous face’ was adopted for friendship and familial relationships, to relieve stress and anxiety and to convey their resistance to their management’s organisational demands (Bolton, 2001: 95). Similar to the canteen culture of the police where humour, banter and crude jokes have been seen to be an antidote to the stress of the occupation, Bolton (2001: 85) found that nurses were skilful and practiced in ‘changing faces’ and supported each other through humour in the back stage; so quickly were these facial expressions seen that they became ‘emotional jugglers’ coordinating their mood to the appropriate face.

Having discussed the validity of the concepts of an interactionally-produced ‘self’ and the theory of front and back regions of performance as part of the theoretical framework, it is important to understand how these theories have been embraced by other researchers in the exploration of *gendered* identity performances. Goffman (1977) himself devoted time to examining the structure of gender and argued that the nature of men and women is nothing more than the capability of reading and learning behaviours that have been labelled ‘masculine’ and ‘feminine’. A discussion of playing these different roles and performances within a dominant masculine discourse is presented in the next section.

4.3 Butler and Goffman on Gender

Goffman’s principles of performativity are explored at length in *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life* (1959) and he defines social interaction as ‘the reciprocal influence of individuals on one another’s actions when in one another’s immediate presence’ (1959: 15). Goffman’s interpretations of acutely observed analyses of everyday social practices pays careful attention to interactions of the self and the body. The way in which actors position themselves on public transport or in lifts for example is discussed in terms of the adornment and deportment of bodies is needed for applicable presentation of the self (Goffman, 1963b). This concern with bodily action and performance lends itself to both

men and women as both are equally embodied. In his Presidential Address to the American Sociological Association, Goffman (1983) presented the observation that face-to-face interaction can be interpreted as a social institution and thus a site of systematic sociological inquiry. He explained that conventions arise as techniques of social management of both body and self-expressive personal risks present in interaction. He termed this 'the interaction order' and argued that these conventions 'can be viewed... in the sense of the ground rules of a game' (1983: 5). It is not only about our appearance and manner, according to Goffman, but 'the line of our visual regard, the intensity of our involvement, and the shape of our initial actions, [that] allow others to glean our immediate intent and purpose' (1983: 3). Goffman (1983: 11-2) discusses that the roles of women and junior executives are 'critical' and individuals have to formulate a role that belongs 'analytically to the interaction order', thus it is necessary to explore in more detail how Goffman perceives the role of women in *Gender Advertisements* (1979) and 'The Arrangement Between the Sexes' (1977) and its relationship to Judith Butler's significant discussions on gender. In using Goffman's example of women and junior executives it is interesting to view women and lower ranked officers (and the perceived lower rank of police community support officers) in policing through these analytical frameworks.

Understanding gendered embodiment requires paying close attention to both femininity and masculinity and the recognition that 'men' and 'women' are social categories and any 'sex differences' are actually social and cultural practices. Butler's (1993; 1999) discussion of the ways in which bodies are gendered revolves around a 'heterosexual matrix' which connects the binary divide of normative heterosexuality with gender. In her book *Gender Trouble* (1999), bodies become gendered through a consistent performance of gender and identity 'is performatively constituted by the very "expressions" that are said to be its results' (Butler, 1999: 33). Thus, the problem (which is where the title of Butler's book comes from) is not whether we can avoid doing gender as West and Zimmerman (1987) postulated, but what varieties of performances can be presented and whether any substitute performances is able to alter society's 'gender order' and thus adjust binary understandings of 'femininity' and 'masculinity'. However, in *Bodies That Matter* (1993), Butler's views on performativity are different. She discussed dialectical performances and how speech affected how individuals are gendered. For example, the pronouncement of 'It's a girl!' at a baby's birth produces a girl into 'being', a process Butler refers to as 'girling the girl':

‘This is a “girl”, however, who is compelled to “cite” the norm in order to qualify and remain a viable subject. Femininity is thus not the product of a choice, but the forcible citation of a norm, one whose complex historicity is indissociable from relations of discipline, regulation, and punishment.’

(Butler, 1993: 232)

Sex is therefore materialised through complex normative and regulative practices and is thus coercive and constraining. For Goffman in *Gender Advertisements* (1976), ‘the central analytic unit... is the ethologically-intoned “gender display”’ which are the ‘gestures and postures signifying sex-class membership that people produce and recognise while co-present with others’ (Smith, 2010: 168). In his book, Goffman analyses over 500 photos and describes how masculinity and femininity is displayed in advertisements by assessing the positioning of the body, clothing, adornments and so on. He argues that acts that are already manipulated as ‘displays’ of performance are altered further by their advertising frame as a fanciful pretence; this twofold makeover is a ‘hyper-ritualisation’ and thus ‘not a picture of the way things are but a passing exhortative guide to perception’ (1979: 3), much in the way that police officers ‘perform’ certain roles. People as embodied vehicles authorise an appropriate schedule of gender display and these displays cannot be treated as superficial: in the hierarchical relationship between the sexes they are ‘the shadow *and* the substance’ of gendered social life (Goffman, 1979: 6 – emphasis in original). Gender displays confirm and sustain cultural and social arrangements and are infused with language and behaviour that is typical of child-parent relationships which serves as a general model of the treatment of women by men. Therefore, ‘ritually speaking, females are equivalent to subordinate males and both are equivalent to children’ (1979: 5), and whenever men have ‘dealings’ with these two groups ‘some mitigation of potential distance, coercion, and hostility’ is needed (1979: 5). Goffman uses an interesting example of a subordinate woman seeking help from a superordinate man:

‘Those [policewomen] who are there already have provided a devastating new weapon to the police crime-fighting arsenal, one that has helped women to get their men for centuries. It worked well for diminutive Patrolwoman Ina Shepard after she collared a muscular shoplifter in Miami last December and discovered that there were no other cops – or even a telephone – around. Unable to summon help, she burst into tears. “If I don’t bring you in, I’ll lose my job,” she sobbed to the prisoner, who chivalrously accompanied her until a squad car could be found.’

(*Time Magazine*, 1st May 1972: 60)

Building upon this in the companion article ‘The Arrangement Between the Sexes’ (1977) Goffman argues that ‘gender, not religion, is the opiate of the masses’ (1977: 315) and the ‘ideals of masculinity and femininity... provide a source of accounts that can be drawn on in a million ways to excuse, justify, explain or disapprove the behaviour of an individual’ (1977: 303). Similarly, ‘the belief is that women are precious, ornamental, and fragile, uninstructed in, and ill-suited for, anything requiring muscular exertion... or physical risk’ (1977: 311), much like the day-to-day work of police officers.

Smith (2010: 170) contends that it is ‘becoming commonplace’ to view Goffman’s discussions on gender as a precursor to the gender conceptions of performativity associated with Judith Butler (1993; 1999). Smith (2010: 170) notes that there are ‘striking similarities’ between Butler and Goffman’s ideas on gender, which is evident when comparing the language of the two:

‘What the human nature of males and females really consists of... is a capacity to learn to provide and to read depictions of masculinity and femininity and a willingness to adhere to a schedule for presenting these pictures, and this capacity they have by virtues of being persons, not females or males. One might just as well say there is no gender identity. There is only a schedule for the portrayal of gender... There is only evidence of the practice between the sexes of choreographing behaviourally a portrait of relationship.’

(Goffman, 1979: 8)

‘Gender is a “doing”... though not a doing by a subject who might be said to pre-exist the deed... there is no being behind the doing... the deed is everything... there is no gender identity behind the expressions of identity... identity is performatively constituted by the very “expressions” that are said to be its results.’

(Butler 1999: 25)

While they are similarities between the two, Smith (2010: 171) has highlighted that the ‘expressive conception of gender’ that Butler aligns herself with, is exactly what Goffman’s ‘reflexivity theory criticises’. In the context of this thesis, Goffman gives the instruments to analyse actor’s performances while Butler provides ‘the theoretical and philosophical contexts’ (Smith, 2010: 173):

‘Plainly, their respective theories are inflected in differing ways. Compared to Goffman, Judith Butler emphasises the consequences of departures from gender codes and shows the philosophical underpinnings of a performative conception of gender. However, Goffman’s articulation of genderisms and gender display provides a suggestive conceptual scaffolding for further sociological research.’

While Butler's discussions include various important contributions, insights from Goffman's publications on the exploration of gender, social arrangements and self-presentation can help strengthen analyses of masculinities and femininities. While Butler uses the notion of a performatively represented subject with a changeable position for action, Goffman's emphasis is on the self. Goffman's self is never something that exists outside of or before social processes. Butler however, uses the expression 'self' aside from using the concept to emphasise the problems with the idea of the 'true self', a feature of an 'authentic expressive paradigm' (Butler, 1999: 22) and both Butler and Goffman reject essentialism, concurring that natural sex differences do not precede gender-constructing processes. Therefore, it is these gender-constructing processes that are so important in the performativity located in policing. As Smith (2010: 180) points out, Butler and Goffman provide a 'conceptual scaffolding' for research. Butler (1993: 5) suggested that it is crucial to outline a 'feminist genealogy of the category of women'. In this sense it can be argued that women always *become* women by reworking and revisiting pre-established cultural interpretations of femininity (in the same way that men rework interpretations of masculinity) so that all performances become located within an overlapping history of what it is to be male or female. This is evident in policing culture as the 'pervasive cult of masculinity' (Waddington, 1999: 298) allows for reinforcement of these pre-established understandings of gender and a support for the adherence to gendered norms.

4.4 *Adherence to Gendered 'Norms'*

A way to combat the effects of the occupation on the officer's identity and home life is to adopt what Goffman (1961) termed 'role distance'; the ability to reject the behavioural expectations of the job-role in order to avoid the blurring of work and home identities. Goffman (1961: 110) explained it as a technique of withdrawal, that is, 'to actions which effectively convey some disdainful detachment of the performer from a role he is performing', while at the same time embracing another role temporarily. *Policemen* may find role distance 'easier' as the training to officer is just a man 'doing men's work' (Martin, 1980: 185). *Policewomen* on the other hand face a conflict of role expectations between behavioural prescriptions of being a 'woman', and being a 'police officer'. As a

result, women are forced to choose between two behavioural types: ‘deprofessionalised’ and ‘defeminised’ (Hochschild, 1973: 181) which could make role distancing easier to adopt. Women on police patrol are continually pressed to ‘think like men, work like dogs and act like ladies’ (Martin, 1980: 219). To succeed in a patriarchal institution such as the police, and in overcoming the limitations posed by societal expectations of a gendered ‘role’, women must unlearn many habits and have considerably more to prove than their male counterparts:

‘It is not simply that professional women must be more dedicated, reliable and productive than men to get the same recognition: it is that she must be *more* dedicated, reliable and productive than what people in general and employers in particular expect other women in the professions to be.’

(Hochschild, 1973: 181, emphasis in original)

As aforementioned, Waddington (1999: 295) referred to the canteen as the ‘repair workshop’ of policing where officers tell jokes to relax, amongst other things; humour is said to be the most effectively used tool to aid disassociation from the status position (Coser, 1966). Humour makes a more effective role performance and by engaging in comedic displays with colleagues it ‘unifies through consensual laughter, role-partners threatened by the dissociation of contradictory expectations’ (Coser, 1966: 178). Martin (1980: 192) argues that policewomen, anxious to avoid isolation, must seem to be undeterred by ‘men’s sexual jokes and crude language’ which can often feature in police humour.

Susan Martin distinguished between two types of women police officers. *Policewomen*, choosing a defeminised role, ‘resist the pressure to perform, refuse to exert extra effort, and protest discriminatory treatment’ (1980: 195), while *policewomen* do *recognise* themselves as women and they ‘closely adhere to predominant police norms’ (1980: 186) and ‘strongly embrace the role conception prevalent among the male officers’ (1980: 187). While some women police officers choose to adopt the male role expectations and become allies with their male colleagues, *policewomen* struggle to become accepted on the same level as *policewomen* in striving to have the two distinct roles of ‘woman’, and ‘police officer’. This could further exacerbate their isolation in a predominantly male force: (in 2015 there were 35,738 female police workers out of 207,140 in the 43 forces of England and Wales (including central service secondments), representing 17.3% of the total) (Home Office, 2015). What Martin (1980) does not consider is the role conflict of *male*

police officers. More recently, Martin (2006) developed her theories of gender in the workplace by claiming that people do not practice gender *intentionally*. While on occasion this may be the case (while getting dressed for instance – donning high heels, skirts and makeup), Martin claims that once this process is complete, it is largely forgotten and it is then the expressions, actions and behaviours that are judged upon, which suggests an intentional selection to conform to societal (and occupational) expectations. Martin (2006: 262) discusses the problem of employees ‘practicing gender’ and illustrates that ‘men rescuing women’ was an all-common problem; an example from her own research was that of a female worker who would regularly discuss problems with her superior, only to discover later that he had ‘rescued her’ and solved the problem; heartfelt intentions aside, in doing so he diminished her status within the organisation.

While women might be undertaking ‘men’s work’, the constant pressure to be ‘act tough’ rather than ‘be tough’ (Uildriks and van Mastrigt, 1991: 161) it seems, is also a *performance*, as opposed to behaving in their natural characteristics. Brown and Heidensohn (2000: 128) have argued that the *policewoman* typology does not really exist anymore and was more suited to the police’s early years of departmental-role gender segregation. The gendered nature of the police force often compels men and women to adopt certain behaviours that are appropriate to that workplace. As a consequence, women who work in occupations that are largely male-dominated have to often walk a fine line between engaging in overtly masculine behaviours to correspond to appropriate work norms whilst at the same time not alienating their male colleagues by being *too* masculine, thus adopting feminine norms as well. The conflict is a significant aspect of gendered relationships in the workplace; West and Zimmerman (1987: 140) conclude this approach to gender by claiming that a person’s gender is not simply what they are, but more ‘something that one *does*, and does recurrently, in interaction with others’ (emphasis in original). Policing, as a masculine organisation, assumes that there are ‘socially gendered perceptual, interactional, and micro-political activities that cast particular pursuits as expressions of masculine and feminine “natures”’ (West and Zimmerman, 1987: 126).

As the research suggests, it is evident that as well as women performing a particular character that is ‘unnatural’ to societal constructions of gendered roles, it is clear that men are also performing their roles in some way as well in order to ‘keep up appearances’ in

front of colleagues. With undeniably so much role ambiguity, role conflict and a strive for role distance, performances for police men and women is not set out in an ‘actor’s’ script in training; it is subject to individual interpretation and ambiguity is commonplace, potentially causing extra pressure to fulfil the occupational expectations of their police officer ‘character’. For the purpose of this thesis, it is understood that identity is constructed and observable through the different performances that actors execute within various situations. Within this construction, there are no standard and stable aspects of the self, but rather identity *themes* that are situation specific changing constantly depending on the context of the situation (gender, ethnicity, class, occupation) which form the person’s individual sense of self and identity (Alvesson and Due Billing, 2009). These persistent presentations of self, fronts and individual and team performances (Goffman, 1959) can have negative polluting effects into officer lives. Pollution or ‘contamination’ in this way is not limited to individual selves, but also their home lives and the uniform operates as a contamination ‘vehicle’, within which symbolic, moral and physical contamination can permeate.

4.5 Contamination

Crawley’s research (2004) on prison officers investigated how ‘contamination’ of the occupation can lead to a negative infection of the officer’s home life. Crawley discovered that workers are meticulous in their efforts to avoid ‘contamination’ between their occupation and household as it could damage ‘the relative purity of the home with talk [about work]’ (2004: 235). Her study can be similarly applied to the police force as emotional and psychological stress have been known to ‘spill over’ (2004: 227) into their home lives as well; this spill-over stress has been cited in many occupations (Grzywacz and Marks, 2000; Small and Riley, 1990; Williams and Alliger, 1994), particularly in the police force where stress is caused by the institution’s extreme demands on its employees (Graves, 1995).

It has been suggested that it is ‘almost impossible’ for police officers to leave their work *at* work and some men resort to ‘driving around to cool off’ before going home (Martin, 1980: 199); ‘A police officer is a police officer twenty-four hours a day’ (Milton, 1972: 26). Coser (1974: 4) introduced the concept of ‘greedy institutions’ which refers to an organisation or

group that enlists demands on an individual that sometimes requires an intense dedication. According to Coser (1974: 4), greedy institutions ‘seek exclusive and undivided loyalty and they attempt to reduce the claims of competing roles and status positions on those they wish to encompass in their boundaries. Their demands are omnivorous’. The police institution makes great demands on its workers in terms of loyalty, time, energy and commitment and the competing roles and being an officer ‘twenty-four hours a day’ ensure individuals *are* working for a ‘greedy institution’ (Segel, 1986: 9).

These competing roles can cause an inter-role conflict, which may occur when the participation in one role (police officer) interferes with the involvement in another (husband, father, and friend). Greenhaus and Beutell (1985) distinguish three causes of conflict for ‘spill-over’ (Crawley, 2004: 227);

‘*Time* devoted to the requirements of one role makes it difficult to fulfill requirements of another; *strain* from participation in one role makes it difficult to fulfill requirements of another; and *specific behaviors* required by one role make it difficult to fulfill the requirements of another.’

(Greenhaus and Beutell, 1985: 76 – emphasis added)

Furthermore, Kondo (1990) suggests that the various moulds which people fit into within an inter-role conflict such as male, female, husband, wife, employer and employee, may further reduce the dissention in people’s interpretation and understanding of themselves, and any ideas of a structured and cohesive identity is actually just an illusion. As requirements of their occupation, police officers are trained to be suspicious in order to ‘perceive events or changes in the physical surroundings that indicate the occurrence or probability of disorder’ (Skolnick, 1975: 267). Due to the levels of mandatory authority they must convey to citizens, this suspiciousness tends to be persistent and habitual (Chan, 1997). Reiner (1985:113) warned that this causes ‘a hard skin of bitterness to develop’ which worsens the more years spent in the occupation. This hardened, ‘bitter’ view of what they perceive to be social reality causes their home lives to become tainted; ‘a kind of vicarious contamination’ (Finch, 1983: 37).

‘Contamination’ has both material and symbolic meaning. Crawley (2004: 140) proposed that wearing a uniform ‘makes certain acts more permissible’ and suggests that the uniform is not only an authoritative symbol, but as ‘psychological protection’ to the officer’s themselves. Douglas (1970) suggested that the boundaries between work and home need to be clearly defined and certain procedures need to be followed in order to

limit the negative effects of the occupation polluting other aspects of their lives. Douglas (1970: 44) referred to this as ‘ritual purification’. Crawley’s (2004: 245) research participants supported this theory in insisting that the most important purification ritual was the elimination of clothes contaminated by the work environment, and involved ‘the immediate removal of the uniform’. The maintenance of boundaries between work and home was essential to avoid the ‘polluting effects of symbolic contact with “profane” individuals’ (Crawley, 2004: 245).

There is evidence to imply that the inter-role conflict between work and home is even higher for female officers because the domestic responsibilities of wife/mother/policewoman are larger than that of husband/father/policeman and women get ‘less support’ (Martin, 1980: 200) as the domestic roles are expected and therefore not taken into consideration. Research on gender and work has highlighted the struggle of women regarding the expectations that workers should be as unencumbered as possible. Workers are divided into two categories: the *ordinary* worker and the *universal* worker. ‘The ordinary worker is a man, an abstract person who has few obligations outside work that could distract him from the centrality of work’ (Acker, 1998: 197), and the universal worker is unencumbered, with no home duties that divide his time, energy and focus (Halford et al., 1997). The universal worker is also recognised as a ‘zero drag’ employee:

‘Imagine the perfect, zero-drag worker. We might envision a young, single, childless male wanting to make good in a first or second job. Maybe his sister takes his mother to the doctor, and his mother, when she’s well, looks after his grandparents. Or perhaps the term calls to mind a forty-year old man married to a homemaker who assumes full responsibility for their young children and elderly parents.’

(Hochschild, 2001: xix)

The police institution, under Hochschild’s distinctions, house a combination of universal (male) and ordinary (female) workers in the simplest terms. Through these occupational distinctions and general obligations, it can be increasingly hard for officers to construct a ‘positive sense of self’ (Ashforth and Kreiner, 1999: 413). As a consequence, they can become easily stigmatised by the character of their job role and having to cope with potential contamination; ‘People who must deal with pollution – who perform dirty work – tend to become ‘stigmatised’ – that is, society projects the negative qualities associated with dirt onto them so that they are seen as dirty workers’ (Ashforth and Kreiner, 1999: 415).

Hughes (1951: 319) first invoked the phrase 'dirty work' to refer to occupations, and the responsibilities within these occupations, that are perceived to be repulsive or demeaning by other members of society: 'it may be physically disgusting; it may be a symbol of degradation, something that wounds one's dignity'. Hughes (1962: 9) justified that in order to sustain the effective functioning of society, 'dirty workers' must handle the unpleasant aspects of their role for others to continue to consider themselves 'clean'. These workers and occupations, who deal with these tasks on others behalf, are then stigmatised by society and therefore 'disqualified from full social acceptance' (Goffman, 1963b: preface). Members of these groups are seen to characterise and personify these tasks and 'literally become "dirty workers"' (Ashforth and Kreiner, 1999: 413). Police officers are often left to deal with individuals that wider society is usually able to keep an appropriate social distance from; 'the greater their social distance from us, the more we leave in the hands of others [the police], a sort of mandate by default to deal with them on our behalf' (Hughes, 1962: 9), and people who do not undertake dirty work are 'glad that it is someone else' (Ashforth and Kreiner, 1999: 416). While dealing with stigmatised individuals may be a routine part of policing, 'it hardly brings personal dignity to anyone involved' (Ericson, 1982: 206).

While attempts may be made to continually sustain the boundaries between work and home, an identity crisis can become commonplace as the police personality may become a combination of both social worlds. Mead (1964) famously discussed the fragmented parts of the private and public self and insists that it is a natural human condition that has always existed, regardless of occupation. In support of Goffman and Mead, Rojek (2001: 11) insists that the public self is always a staged activity in presenting a 'front' to others while 'always leaving a portion of the self in reserve'. This private and public split for the police officer becomes increasingly difficult as time on the job increases, and essentially being a police officer eventually becomes part of their 'working personality'; the way they view the world changes along with their standards of right and wrong (which are distinguished by their training and reinforced on the job) (Skolnick and Fyfe, 1993: 92). This confusion of identity and the oppression of adopting a 'new' personality can cause officers to retreat under the 'safety umbrella' of other members of the police force (Rojek, 2001: 11).

Police officers are often so intensely affected by some negative aspects of their working personality and occupation in general that it is perhaps unsurprising that their ‘unexpressed hostility overflows into their home lives’ (Waters and Ussery, 2007: 177). As aforementioned, work spill-over does not just affect the police officer, but contaminates their home lives as well; spouses, children and friends all bear the brunt of the occupation. As well as an officers’ off-duty behaviour having to be exemplary, so does their families’; they are ‘tied, un-paid to the job’ (Whitaker, 1982: 237) and higher than normal standards are expected. As a consequence, family members sacrifice and ‘surrender their own identity’ (Kirschman, 2000: 247). Thus, when a family member (or friend) ‘is related through the social structure to a stigmatised individual’, society may then ‘treat both individuals, in some respects, as one’ (Goffman, 1963b: 30). Goffman’s book *Stigma* (1963b) explored the disapproval of an individual or group on characteristics that distinguished and perceived by other members of society. Social stigma can result from the perception of physical and mental disabilities, education, religion, nationality, ethnicity, sexual preferences and gender identity amongst other things. These vary from culture to culture and vary significantly based on laws, norms and values of different societies. Policing holds significant connections between the ‘stigma’ and ‘courtesy stigma’ (stigma by association) related to the occupation which forces marginalised people into ‘discredited’ or ‘discreditable’ groups, based on the nature of the stigma (1963: 57). The importance of the performance and impression management is most critical with these individuals, for in order to successfully partake in interactions with others, they are forced to mask their discrediting stigma and often communicate characteristics of a non-discredited person. Stigma can be applied to any person or occupation that encompasses personal or occupational characteristics that are at odds with cultural norms or even when they do not. Some groups of people, as detailed in Goffman’s book, are frequently and habitually stigmatised, but this does not mean that people who adhere to ‘normal’ behaviours, appearances and characteristics do not find themselves occasionally in stigmatising situations, when police officers undertake ‘dirty work’ for example (Hughes, 1951: 319; see also Hughes, 1962). So while individuals may be ‘disqualified from full social acceptance’ (Goffman, 1963b: Preface), integration into the ‘us versus them’ (Kappaler et al., 2015: 83) mentality (whether desired or not) is exacerbated. It is important to note at this point that discreditable individuals, roles, or ranks can appear

within the fold too, more specifically the introduction and reception of police community support officers for example (see Chapter 6 and 8 for further discussion).

The research discussed above suggests that contamination of the police occupation is ‘uniform-deep’, thus undressing should be enough to control the contagion of work spill-over. While they might be free of a contaminated uniform once undressed, it has been indicated that policing can leave a ‘moral taint’ on its officers as it causes workers to ‘employ methods that are deceptive, intrusive confrontational, or that otherwise defy norms of civility’ (Ashforth and Kreiner, 1999: 415), thus going much deeper than the removal of the uniform. It was therefore important in the fieldwork to explore whether removing work clothes does in fact lessen the chance of ‘spill-over’ (Crawley, 2004: 227).

It is also important to try to disentangle aspects of contamination within the police *occupation* and the police *uniform*. They are so closely intertwined, you do not get one without the other, and thus it is problematic to investigate whether the job itself is the source of the contamination or that the uniform represents the job (and is therefore the vehicle for the ‘contagion’). If contamination from being a police officer is just ‘uniform-deep’, then removal of the uniform should, in effect, cease contamination spilling into home life. Furthermore, occupational contamination is a difficult concept to define as it can have physical, moral or social aspects to it (or a combination of all three).

Physical taint is where occupations are directly associated with dirty or dangerous conditions. Social taint refers to an occupation where workers have regular contact with people who are stigmatised themselves, what Goffman (1963b: 30) referred to as ‘courtesy stigma’ (i.e. stigma by association). Moral taint occurs when an occupation is of debatable morality, or ‘where the working is thought to employ methods that are deceptive, intrusive, confrontational, or that otherwise defy norms of civility’ (Ashforth and Kreiner, 1999: 415). Using these definitions, it is clear, that on some level, police officers can be affected by a combination of all three, thus cementing their occupation to be regarded as ‘dirty work’ (Hughes, 1951: 319). Work defined as ‘dirty’ however, is of course, a social construction, in that it is only deemed ‘dirty’ through the subjective opinion of others. Contamination reduces the social standing of occupations; working as a police officer is particularly interesting as it is viewed as a ‘relatively high prestige’ job (Ashforth and Kreiner, 1999: 416). By insisting on the dramatic symbolism of their profession, the police are guaranteed short-term occupational prestige (Jermier, 1979). In this sense, they *do*

hold a ‘status shield’ (Hochschild, 2012: 163) to cushion the effects of social, moral and physical taint, and to protect themselves from ‘other’s emotional onslaughts’ (Stenross and Kleinman, 1989: 436), more so than say an undertaker can.

4.6 *Uniformity and Solidarity*

The pressure of behaving in a representative fashion on the job and at home (as discussed in Chapter 4.5) can cause significant repercussions. A police officer’s whole life has to be ‘exemplary’ (Whitaker, 1982: 237) and the potential of danger and life-threatening situations makes them ‘less desirable as a friend’; often causing levels of isolation from the rest of a potentially dangerous wider population (Skolnick, 1975: 265). This isolation is both instigated by the police officers themselves to eliminate problems and from the public who have established that the police/public divide is too wide to establish the usual relationships enjoyed. This divide can result in social isolation and internal solidarity (Westley, 1970; Brown, 1988).

The uniform itself is a distinctive and unique barrier between the public and the police (exacerbated by its highly recognisable nature). It demonstrates the obvious separation between the individuality of civilians and the culture of control, where the police have virtually no personal identity aside from their occupational numerals. Any expression of individuality is suppressed within the police institution as they strive to create a uniformed perception of standardisation. In the 1980s, ‘an attempt to remove the one remaining individualising feature – the “collar” number was rejected by civilians’ (Young, 1991b: 67): Sergeants and PCs are required to display their collar number at all times when at work; however, it has been uncovered that 45% of officers admitted that they have at one time or another, not worn their collar number on duty (*Police Review*, 2009). Additionally, some PCs have been admonished for wearing sergeant’s epaulettes ‘having no qualifications in the rank’ because that particular force ‘does not have enough trained sergeants’ (Blain, 2009: 6). Although the general public are unlikely to know the difference between PC and sergeant insignia, negative publicity of this sort can only serve to further exacerbate the public’s distrust of the police if some forces are seen to be using controversial tactics.

This depersonalisation of donning collar numbers can generate aspects of a working subculture that are hard to release at the end of the working day. While ‘police subculture’ has been explored extensively, the term itself is difficult to outline. As Chan (1996: 111) suitably notes ‘the concept of police subculture in criminological literature is loosely defined’, broadly speaking however, it is aspects of the internal and external environments that encompass the police officer role (Reuss-Ianni, 1983) and certain beliefs that shape the officer’s view of the world (Sparrow, et al., 1990). Although there are differing views about a solid definition of police culture, it is evident that there are a number of common themes – chiefly based around how officers respond to their occupational environment, internally and externally. More traditional accounts of policing culture describe the coping mechanisms that officers practice to overcome the obstacles and strains that are part of their working life; and it has been cited that there are two principle outcomes of police culture: social isolation and internal solidarity (Westley, 1970; Brown, 1988).

Becoming a police officer can lead to an occupational personality which will consequently cause the divide between the public and the police to become more pronounced resulting in further isolation. It has been comprehensively documented that the police have one of the highest levels of solidarity of any job, and is a central feature of their personalities (Westley, 1956: 254-7). The training process heavily emphasises the element of occupational danger and implies that the police officers’ colleagues are their only protection against a threatening society (Caplan, 2003). Training is designed to discipline the body to generate order and uniformity in behaviour; that is, a carefully controlled outer appearance should inspire strong self-control and a disciplined personality. Brodgen (1991: 19) argues that this police training and the wearing of a uniform is as much about ‘a transformation of identities’ as about the gaining of skills and ‘totalitarian regimes worldwide quickly recognised the value of the discipline of uniforms to transform thugs and riff-raff into disciplined and obedient teams’ (Craik, 2005: 38-9). Through learning to sever ties with their previous life and being re-socialised into the police institution, recruits gradually acquire a permanent feeling of solidarity with their colleagues, what Kappeler et al., (2015: 83) referred to as an ‘us against them’ mentality. This pronounced internal solidarity causes them to become a ‘beleaguered minority’ (Reiner, 1985: 92), unable to form and maintain ‘normal’ relationships with people outside of the force:

‘Many police officers report difficulties in mixing with civilians in ordinary social life. These stem from shift-work, erratic hours, difficulties in switching off from the

tension engendered by the job, aspects of the discipline code, and the hostility or fear that citizens may exhibit to the police.’

(Reiner, 1985: 92)

Constant contact with the us/them mentality initiates views that people who are not police officers should be viewed with suspicion. Their world becomes more black and white, more ‘insiders and outsiders’; essentially the police versus the public (Kappeler et al., 2015: 83). Internal solidarity is not just about regarding the public with suspicion; it is an unspoken reassurance that fellow colleagues will ‘pull their weight’ when supporting other officers and they will ‘defend and back up [each other] when confronted by external threats’ (Goldsmith, 1990: 93-4). This occupational defence and camaraderie is further emphasised by officers all wearing the archetype of police clothing; though style and dress differs between police departments and locations, most are instantly recognisable as part of the police institution and consequently internal solidarity runs deeper than feeling comradeship amongst friends; it crosses barriers of culture, units, departments and space and is embedded in the recognisability of the uniform. This membership in an exclusive ‘club’ further exacerbates their isolation from wider society and reinforces the idea that their colleagues are their comrades and the public are always a potential enemy, ever-present to threaten the police institution.

4.7 Conclusion

Identity and gendered identity performance have been shown to be complex and multifaceted concepts when applied to police work. A number of conclusions can be drawn from the variety of discussions in this chapter: the presence of internal solidarity, symbolic, moral and physical contamination, impression formation, and the presence of front and back regions all contribute to a theoretical framework that allows for examination of the gendered identity performances of police officers through the lens of their uniform and equipment. Part of this dramaturgical theoretical framework and its cohesion with anti-essentialism is to focus on the way in which gendered identity performance, and performances in general, are constructed through work, and colleague and public interaction. It is by looking at the details of performances, interactions, and the symbolic meanings behind them that identity performances can be explored (Martin,

2006). The symbolic meanings of 'things' was termed 'dramaturgy' by Manning (1997: 6). Manning (1997: 6) identified 'environments', 'organisations', and 'technologies' within dramaturgy and highlighted that it 'focuses on social control' and can appear at any level of the police organisation. As dramaturgical sociology presumes that action (and interaction) are symbolic in the way that everything relays messages and explores how they are interpreted, it is important to look at whether police officers do have the option of retreating to a back stage region where their public front can be relaxed. If symbolic communication occurs at an environmental, organisational, and technological level (Manning, 1997), it affords officers no respite from the 'masterful costume drama' that is policing (Manning, 1997: 5). The construction of appearances in this way requires 'dramatic discipline' (Manning, 1997: 44). The presence of dramaturgy and the construction of appearances will be explored in depth in the analysis of the fieldwork data.

*5.1**Introduction*

This chapter is concerned with detailing the research process and methodology used to develop an understanding of the working practices and culture of PCs and PCSOs and how the uniform is worn and understood within the wider context of BlueCorp, the UK police service and the social organisation of policing more generally. This chapter contains the foundation of the study, the reasons for adopting a focused ethnography as the chosen methodology, sampling and negotiating access across the research sites, data collection procedures, ethical dilemmas and researcher reflections in undertaking a qualitative study on the police.

*5.1.1**Introducing the Research Setting*

The police service, anonymised as ‘BlueCorp’, sampled within this study serves a population of nearly three million people and covers various areas safeguarding 5,000 square miles. It currently employs approximately 8,000 police constables, 500 special constables and 800 police community support officers as well as nearly 2,000 non-uniformed roles. The area that it polices is split into twelve geographical divisions, with each borough allocated an integrated neighbourhood policing team (INPT) with the exception of the city centre which has three divisions covered by one large INPT due to its size and higher levels of criminal activity.

The INPT that covers the city centre is, unsurprisingly, much larger in staff numbers to accommodate the size of the area and levels of crime it polices. However, while BlueCorp enjoyed a reduction in crime for a decade, rates have been gradually increasing since 2013, and the Crime Commissioner for BlueCorp recently expressed his alarm at the increase and blamed the government’s ‘reckless cuts’. Since 2010, the budget for BlueCorp has been lowered by a quarter and as a consequence, BlueCorp has lost more than 1,200 police officers, and yet the areas the INPTs cover are increasing in size. Each division houses a

grouping of neighbourhood policing units which all have specific roles and responsibilities depending on the area and within these, contain smaller, focused integrated neighbourhood policing teams (INPTs) which include local police constables (PCs) and police community support officers (PCSOs). This study focused on three INPTs (identified for the purpose of this study as Areas A, B and C), though within the city centre INPT (Area B) which is split into six different areas, I observed two areas out of six. It also focuses on the Police Training College for BlueCorp, identified as Area D.

The distribution of PCs and PCSOs across the twelve divisions within BlueCorp is largely unequal, ranging from between two and fourteen PCSOs, and four and twenty PCs (including neighbourhood beat officers (NBOs), neighbourhood police officers (NPOs) and response PCs) essentially dependent on the nature and extent of crime and disorder troubles within each area. Whilst one area chose to place their entire allocation of PCSOs within one sector (Area A), another chose to target PCSOs within smaller teams throughout (in Area B) to cover smaller townships. These allocations are by no means static and are flexible to change in line with local priorities and current operational needs.

Note: The ranks of neighbourhood beat officers (NBOs), neighbourhood police officers (NPOs) and PCs were used interchangeably between areas, though their roles are rather similar (though PCs patrolled primarily by panda car). A neighbourhood beat officer (NBO) is responsible for a specific geographical area and community tensions. They routinely patrol the small area, attend community meetings, and investigate crime in that area once recorded, offering reassurance. They work alongside the council, anti-social behaviour officers and social services to protect vulnerable people who live in that catchment. They represent in northern parlance 'the local bobby who knows everyone'. Neighbourhood police officers (NPOs) on the other hand, look after a collection of areas grouped together (for example, a city centre may have several 'beats'/patches but is one neighbourhood) and they deal with non-emergency crimes and enquiries. They also conduct warrants at addresses and often do pro-active police operations in plain clothes to counter problem crime in areas.

These men and women, along with PCSOs, make up the heart of neighbourhood policing and are assigned to a designated neighbourhood for up to three years and thus spend most of their shifts on foot. They are not generally required to answer radio dispatch calls to

their areas; rather, they are permanently posted there to react to local needs and build relationships with their ‘patch’, along with crime-fighting and prevention.

5.2 *Negotiating Access*

Obtaining access to research sites in order to conduct interviews and observations is often difficult. Issues arising with negotiating access is not limited to the social sciences, because whatever is being studied researchers have to get to a physical position from which they can observe and interview the research subjects and this usually involves being allowed access into a group; particularly difficult with the police who tend to be suspicious of ‘outsiders’. It is the norm within these realms that there is a gatekeeper (and often more than one) who regulates and controls what the researcher is allowed to access. This issue has been extensively documented by police researchers (Skolnick, 1966; Punch, 1979) who noted that access and cooperation only tends to increase the longer is spent in the field. But that does not assist in acquiring the access in the first place; ‘for ethnographic research in particular, it remains an issue throughout data collection as entry to sub-settings [in this case, various INPTs] within the overall setting [BlueCorp] has to be continually negotiated, and sometimes renegotiated, as the research progresses’ (Foster, 1996: 64).

Initial contact with BlueCorp was facilitated via professional associates at the University of Salford. Once initial contact was made and emails were exchanged verifying the scope of the research, the proposal was taken to a senior management meeting for BlueCorp to discuss the potential merits of the proposal. After the research proposal was approved, a meeting between me, the thesis supervisors and two senior policing staff was organised to discuss in detail what the research would entail in terms of observations, interviews and confidentiality. Before fieldwork commenced a copy of the informed consent form and information sheet was sent to the research administrator of BlueCorp to ensure that they were fully aware of scope of the research planned. This is not unusual as ‘top managers need to know what the project will require and how the agency will be asked to depart from its routines’ (Matrosfski et al., 1998: 14). This allowed them the opportunity to express any concerns or amendments to be made to the fieldwork plan if they deemed it

inappropriate in any way. A confidentiality agreement was also signed and dated to acknowledge the responsibilities of the research and that any data obtained purposely or otherwise (by unintentionally overhearing conversations for example) would be kept confidential and anonymous (see Appendix C).

There is evidence to suggest that researchers, especially at the first meeting with the gatekeepers, use self-presentational techniques to fit in (Foster, 1996; see also Goffman, 1959). Both thesis supervisors accompanied me to the initial meeting with the force-wide neighbourhood sergeant (FWNS) and research facilitator from BlueCorp at the headquarters, where I was dismayed to discover they were both dressed professionally in formal suits. I had evidently been naïve to presume that this was an informal chat about my research and was dressed as such (I was not exactly dressed down but informally enough that it made me feel slightly uncomfortable); I had obviously read the situation incorrectly, and then spent most of the meeting trying to present myself in a way that attempted to rectify my mistake; the amusing irony being that I was researching the connotations and symbolic meaning of clothing, the way people dress and impression formation; the experience caused me to consider more carefully how I would dress for the actual fieldwork.

During the initial meeting it was negotiated that a combination of observation and interviews would be required. Initially only interviews were offered and it took a little convincing that observations were to be an integral part of the research. It was proposed to management that a combination of day and night shifts, and a mix between urban, rural and suburban areas was preferable but not essential. It was established that the gatekeeper would be gathering volunteers by distributing the invitation letter (see Appendix B) and willing participants would contact him (my email address was also provided should there be any additional questions).

It was therefore important to emphasise that the research plan was designed to target place, time and settings, *not* individual officers as the researcher must observe police work as it would be undertaken normally. Though the information sheet summarises the purpose of the project, it was crucial to not give away *too much* information, increasing the risk of a self-fulfilling/ self-negating prophecy and/or the Hawthorne Effect (Payne and Payne, 2004). This could give them reasons to behave or speak in a certain way in accordance to what they think the researcher wants to know:

‘On one hand I wanted to be as open as I could in order to earn the officer’s trust; on the other hand, I did not want to be so specific about my expectations that I encouraged the officers simply to do what they thought I wanted and expected for my benefit.’

(Pepinsky, 1980: 227)

There is a significant difference between being allowed access to the subject matter of the research and being permitted access to the actual realities of the environment. As previously suggested, researchers have noted that access and cooperation tends to increase as more time is spent in the field and confidence and rapport is gained (Skolnick, 1966; Punch, 1979). However, this can consequently raise several ethical dilemmas (see Chapter 5.9). For example, police researchers in the past have allowed themselves to be introduced as police officers and even aided arrests (Skolnick, 1966; Punch, 1979). This forces the researcher into usually alien territory and compels the researcher to (re)consider their position within the research (see Chapter 5.6).

5.3 *Self-Presentation*

Advice on what to wear and how to present yourself in terms of identity in the field is not something that is widely discussed in research literature but is touched upon (see Whyte, 1943; Goffman, 1989), and yet these decisions may actually be quite significant if my discussion on clothing, impression formation and colour connotations are anything to go by (see Chapters 3 and 4). Delamont (1984: 25) ‘always wore a conservative outfit’ when meeting the gatekeepers of her research in a high school. However, for her research subjects (in this case, school pupils) she wore a dress or skirt ‘of mini-length to show the pupils [she] knew what the fashion was’ (Delamont, 1984: 25). Davies suffered similar issues in her research in a women’s prison;

““Lesser” concerns were related to a fear of the unknown: what to wear? What to take with me? Whether I should arrive on time? Whether [they] had been informed of my arrival and my business. Whether there would be any obstacles going in and getting on with the interviews. How I would manage to conduct myself appropriately and credibly with the staff and [participants].’

(Davies, 2000: 87)

While I believed I was dressed appropriately following my experience from the initial meeting at headquarters, one detective disagreed. I wore a similar outfit on every shift; smart shirt, trousers and boots. On reflection I was probably dressed more appropriately for an office environment (in wanting to appear professional), rather than police patrol, but what are you supposed to wear when not in a uniform? The detective fitted me into her stab vest forcefully and ignored my protestations reasoning that she ‘*couldn’t be bothered with the paperwork*’ if I were to get shot or stabbed on patrol. Though she scolded me for not being clothed ‘appropriately’ as it ‘*wasn’t a fashion show*’, she did not elaborate on the unsuitability of my clothes: ‘appropriate’ is of course, ambiguous and subjective, and no one had commented previously. The motives behind her *re-dressing* me (by putting me in police clothing and admonishing me for wearing earrings and having my hair loose) can be speculated: there might have been significant gender issues at play, (mis)use of her authoritative position, or even distaste toward what she perceived to be my ‘erotic ranking’ (Zetterberg, 1966: 134, see Chapter 5.10 for further discussion). Similarly, O’Neill (2002: 390), in her ethnography of Scottish football policing, found that female officers either related to her as a woman and spoke about ‘lad culture’, or ‘would barely talk to me at all and seemed resentful of my place among them and the attention I was getting from the men’.

Performative identity work (Goffman, 1959) refers to the way that researchers must attempt to present themselves in a certain way, not just for the benefit of their participants but also to themselves. Goffman (1979: 2) argues that individuals must ‘style themselves so that others present can immediately know the social (and sometimes the personal) identity of the one who is to be dealt with; and in turn he must be able to acquire this information about those he thus informs’. Goffman (1979: 1-2) had earlier referred to these presentations in *Gender Advertisements*, and termed them ‘indicative events displays’ where ‘by intent or in effect... displays seem to be specialised... in the case of gender, hair style, clothing and tone of voice’. Researchers are, therefore, the audience to their own display of identity (Butler, 1999) and within this are tasked with elements of ‘emotional labour’ (Hochschild, 2012: 7). It may be necessary for researchers to conjure feelings of confidence, sociability and competence and minimise overt shyness, embarrassment and awkwardness in the research setting (Tangney and Fischer, 1995) thus performing emotional labour for the participants *and* themselves. This was evidenced in the field research upon entering each new research site:

‘I was pretty nervous during the first couple of hours and kept anxiously picking at a loose thread on my sleeve. But I knew I couldn’t show I was nervous, I wanted to look professional and competent. I smiled at everyone and recited the same paragraph I had memorised to everyone who asked what I was there for – less for consistency, more for a show of aptitude. There were always lots of homemade cakes, muffins and other delicious snacks around the office which I (perhaps quite cheekily) helped myself to when everyone else was. I thought that in doing so it would look like I felt at home and was trying to fit in. After a few shifts, I had, to my dismay (perhaps unsurprisingly), put on a couple of pounds.’

(Fieldnotes Excerpt: March, 2014)

‘It’s the start of the second shift and I’m feeling more confident. I walked into the hub and smiled and said hello to officers that I recognised from the other day. Some of them even know me by name now which is a nice feeling.’

(Fieldnotes Excerpt: March, 2014)

As detailed by the above fieldnotes excerpts, I felt mostly awkward and uneasy on the first shift at each new research site. After maybe an hour or so, I began to feel considerably more relaxed, due to the fact that most officers were friendly and accommodating. However, after a couple of weeks of fieldwork, I found the many emotions and feelings I experienced (and the flitting back and forth between them) were exhausting and I remember wishing that I had selected just one research site to avoid feeling ‘new’ repeatedly.

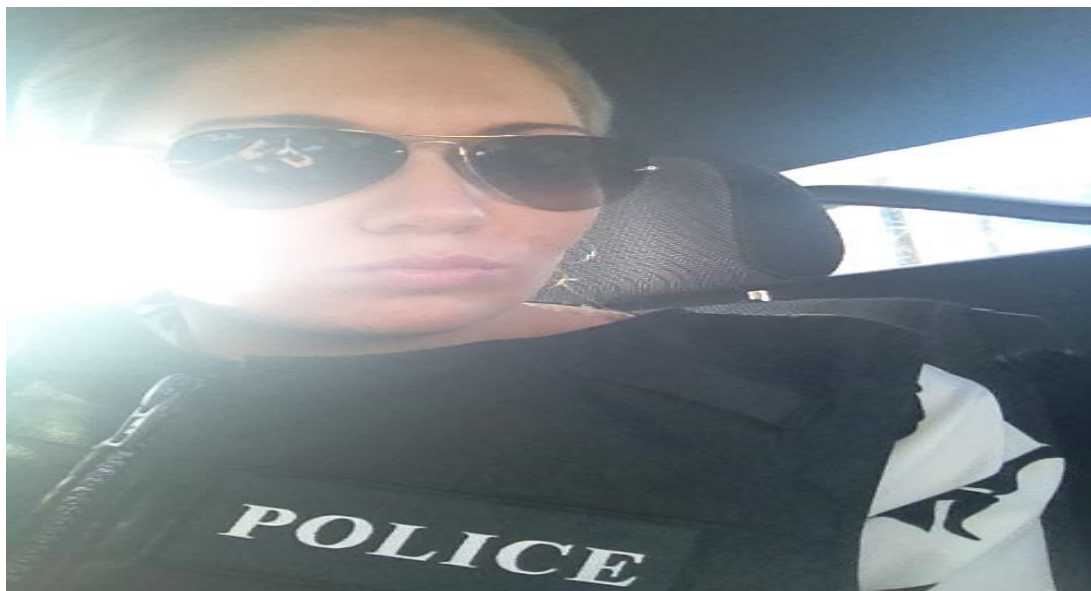


Figure 1: CRDC wearing Detective Silver’s stab vest. I found, even in partial uniform, that wearing it was seductive, and taking the role of the police, however briefly, afforded me more legitimacy to ‘be there’ in situations where we encountered the public. Though I

did not necessarily crave 'public acceptance' in these situations, it made me feel that I had more of a right to be there. Maas (1972: 58-9) documented something similar in his research: 'Serpico asked him if he could look at his [badge]. He managed to slip in another room with it, and he held it up in front of his chest and posed in front of a mirror, experiencing a new sense of identity, thrilling to it'; a feeling I experienced myself.

5.4 Gatekeeper Relationships

Once the force-wide neighbourhood sergeant (FWNS) had contacted each area, an inspector or sergeant contacted me directly in order to organise fieldwork timescales. Below is a brief description of the relationship between myself and each gatekeeper at the different research sites.

Area A

After initial contact with Area A, it was arranged that I would accompany officers on three shifts the following week. I had not negotiated shifts further along than that as I was cautious not to overwhelm them with demands on their time. Once the three shifts had been completed I emailed the sergeant (gatekeeper) thanking him and the officers for their time and requested another three shifts. While my access had been unfettered whilst at Area A and they were more than accommodating, it was made very clear in his reply that they had '*fully fulfilled*' my original request and could not possibly arrange more shifts unless headquarters '*insisted*' upon it. I was disappointed and frustrated by his answer: their hospitality only stretched so far it seemed. Reluctantly, I moved onto Area B.

Area B

Area B was the largest research site that I observed. It was a large purpose-built building that housed a number of departments that other research sites did not have the space for. At Area A there was one large central room that housed the hub, but in Area B there were several hubs separating neighbourhood teams for each area and response PCs. On the second floor there were at least ten different neighbourhood teams (consisting of one sergeant, a few NBOs, NPOs or PCSOs (or a combination of both for each area). While this meant there were quite a few options available to me in terms of shift times, areas and accompanying staff, there was no main gatekeeper for this site. Once access had been

granted to Area B via the FWNS, an inspector's contact details were given to arrange fieldwork. Upon arrival at the start of each shift the inspector introduced me to the relevant gatekeepers for the shift that day (Detective Silver, Sergeant Beige and Sergeant Indigo - Sergeant Beige was the gatekeeper for three of the shifts with response) and the respective gatekeepers would arrange who I would be accompanying on shift that day within their neighbourhood team).

Area C

Officers at Area B had conversationally queried what site I would be researching next. When I informed them I was going to Area C (a suburban division), they laughed and told me to be '*prepared for a bore-fest*' as '*nothing happens there*'. I thought their opinions were interesting; very much in line with what has been previously documented – that 'action' is what is defined as 'real police work' (Holdaway, 1983) – these comments, perhaps tellingly, came from response PCs whose line of work is centred around adrenaline, action and 'blue light runs'. As before, original access was facilitated by the FWNS and contact details were given for Inspector Lilac. Upon arrival I was introduced to the NPO Peach and NBO Grey who I would be accompanying on my two shifts there that week. Following the shifts, both provided me with personal contact details should I ever '*need anything*' though I had not requested them.

Area D

Through a personal police contact at the university, access to the police training college was straightforward as the contact worked as a police trainer (and completed his Masters at the university). Access to this site worked very differently to the previous three areas due to my personal contact with the trainer. Similar to Punch (1993: 183) and O'Neill (2005: 12), the link between policing and academia was advantageous as he anticipated the best way for me to navigate any problems with access. By being 'friends', it allowed me unfettered access to his office, his colleagues and all the classrooms where teaching took place. After being introduced to the trainer's colleagues in the office and receiving a stiff welcome, the atmosphere soon relaxed when they realised the personal relationship between myself and the trainer, presumably through the way we spoke to each other (he inquired if my family were 'well'). The setting visibly relaxed, and banter, jokes and candid opinions soon followed and I was allowed to roam the site freely, something I was

aware would have taken a lot more time (if at all) to achieve should I have used professional contacts. My research was particularly enriched by using ‘newbies’ i.e. student police constables, as it is the first time they will experience being in uniform for that role, if at all. Around half were ex-PCSOs and the others were mostly new to policing: their experience in a more authoritative role (and uniform) led to interesting conclusions about public and personal perceptions and their own sense of self (discussed in Chapter 8.4)

5.4.1 *Gatekeeper Relationships: A Reflection*

Reflecting on the fieldwork, the extremely fragile nature of researcher-researched relationships became apparent to me. While access may be initially granted, it is wholly transient and can sour at any time. Perhaps I was a little naïve to presume that being granted access from BlueCorp headquarters afforded me unfettered access throughout the duration of the fieldwork: relationships had to be negotiated and re-negotiated as time went on, much like what Foster (1996) suggested might happen. Follow-up emails were always sent immediately after shifts thanking the gatekeeper and the officers that I had spent time with for their cooperation and hospitality. Some acknowledged the gratitude. Some did not. In Area B in particular, there were a couple of gatekeepers who replied saying it was not a problem and offered me as ‘many shifts’ as I required. This however, turned out to be a premature offering. While they might have been willing to offer me more shifts, when this proposal was run past the FWNS (a prerequisite to the research) I was unfortunately informed that ‘*due to the large number of requests [BlueCorp] receives*’ they could not grant me permission to further revisits and would have to ‘*make do*’ with the research already gathered. Though I was disappointed, it emphasised that access cannot be taken for granted, and the hierarchical system is firmly in place. While a sergeant within the hub may have granted me permission to return, the original gatekeeper proved his superior position by rejecting the request. I was grateful to have gathered the extensive fieldnotes from my time in the field and the FWNS made it clear that I was in fact ‘*fortunate*’ to have been able to do so in saying that ‘*[there is] no doubt that it is more than what other forces could have offered*’. This was further emphasised during a conversation with the research facilitator for BlueCorp at a conference. She queried how

my research was progressing and informed me that I was ‘*very lucky*’ to have been granted access considering the times of austerity and the sheer volume of requests they receive from universities for access to BlueCorp. During the fieldwork the conditionality of my role became invisible. Only when I attempted to extend my fieldwork was I reminded of my temporary status within a hierarchical organisation.

5.5 *Sampling*

Prior to the research I expected that I would ask various PCs and PCSOs to volunteer for participation in the study but in reality, staff were ‘handpicked’ by the sergeant/inspector (contacted initially by the FWNS) and then asked (minus my presence) if they minded me accompanying them on shift. There is always the potential issue of gatekeepers/management specifically selecting certain policing staff in accordance with their own preferences (or the officers’ preferences) or put the researcher with an officer that will not disgrace the unit (Matrosfski et al., 1998) and therefore it was necessary to inform the gatekeeper that subjects were not to be specifically chosen by them, but from a group of willing volunteers.

Before each shift started, I was introduced to the PC(s) or PCSO(s) I would be working with for the day and they were each given a written outline of the rationale, aims, objectives and proposed methodology of the project (see Appendix A) and were given the opportunity to ask any questions relating to their participation in the study. By selecting a volunteer PC or PCSO, the gatekeeper essentially ‘chose’ the area in which the research would take place, as generally policing staff work the same areas every day. Each PC and PCSO were given a consent form to sign to confirm their willingness to take part in the project. All consented to being involved in the study and fieldwork did not commence until I had verbal and written consent from each member of policing staff I would be working with on that particular shift.

Table 1 below details the policing staff characteristics I observed by area. Names have been changed and ethnicity and INPT area omitted to protect anonymity (specific dates have also been excluded from fieldwork observations). The fact that the female officers encountered made up just over 38% of the total officers observed perhaps interestingly

reflects the overall sex makeup of BlueCorp's INPTs (28.2% of all policing roles, and 44.9% of PCSOs are women) out of a total of 207,140 workers (Home Office, 2015):

Table 1:

<i>Officer</i>	<i>Sex</i>	<i>Time Served</i>
PCSO Amber	Female	7 years
PCSO Aqua	Female	3 weeks (special for four years)
PCSO Bronze	Female	12 years
PCSO Cerise	Female	8 years
PSCO Lemon	Female	7 years
PCSO Maroon	Male	In training (Custody staff for 5 years)
PC Red	Male	5 years
PC Cream	Female	6 years
PC Pink	Male	5 years (PCSO for two years)
PC Yellow	Male	13 years
PC White	Male	Unknown
PC Orange	Female	Unknown
PC Lavender	Male	10 years
PC Crimson	Male	17 years
PC Mahogany	Male	7 years
PC Mauve	Male	9 years
PC Moss	Female	6 years
PC Mint	Male	4 years
Sergeant Indigo	Male	18 years
Sergeant Beige	Male	20 years
NBO Grey	Male	28 years
NPO Peach	Male	14 years
Inspector Lilac	Male	24 years
Detective Purple	Male	15 years
Detective Green	Female	18 years
Detective Silver	Female	Unknown

5.5.1 Fieldwork

The study involved approximately seventeen days on patrol (full staff shifts) equating to roughly 140 hours split between four research sites over a period of four months beginning in February and ending in May 2014. Periods of observation varied in duration and context: PCs, PCSOs, NBOs and NPOs were observed whilst on patrol (in cars and on foot), when in the station, when dealing with episodes of crime and disorder, and during encounters with civilians. Although full shifts were undertaken with various PCs and PCSOs, sometimes an incident would happen on shift where my accompanying officer would be 'caught up' in a case; when booking someone into custody or being called to a

sensitive case for example. The option of staying with them (waiting in the van/car/station) was always given, but it was always suggested by them that they ‘pass me on’ to another officer on the same shift who could ‘take over’. For this reason, sometimes full shifts (nine/ten hours) would be split between two or more officers and thus the periods of observation varied greatly (from between one hour to nine hours). Whilst waiting for ‘jobs’ to be entered into their crime case writing system back at the station, which could vary between ten minutes and one hour, it gave me the opportunity to get impromptu interview data from officers sat near me, in the kitchen on ‘brew duty’ (discussed in Chapter 5.6.1), or around the office. While I was always aware I might be interrupting important work at the station by asking questions, it seemed to be a welcome break for them to talk to me about their job. While efforts were made to make the split between day and night shift and urban, suburban and rural areas and gender entirely equal, it was just not possible to do so. Although I was asked what I ‘wanted’ in terms of gender and rank during my initial conversation with the gatekeeper of each INPT, shifts that were chosen were at the discretion of the gatekeeper within each force and whoever I was paired with for the day determined the location and environment that that the officer(s) beat area dictated. Although most of the officers I accompanied were in full uniform, some were advised by their sergeants to drive unmarked vehicles whilst I was with them. This happened on every shift at Area A and as it was my first research site I was disappointed to think that this would always be the case. If I was researching the image of the police, what would the limitations be of their ‘police image’ being semi-hidden in an unmarked car? I understood it was a necessary part of the operation when I was double-crewed with PCs looking for a sex offender on one particular shift, but I wondered why being in an unmarked vehicle was important. I asked the sergeant about it on the second day when we had been allocated another unmarked vehicle: *‘well, I don’t really want you guys being flagged down whilst you’re with them [if we’d been in a marked car]. It’s not as conspicuous and people don’t notice you as much’ (Gatekeeper, Sergeant)*. I was disappointed with his response, but accepted his reasoning; hoping that on future shifts at other INPTs it would be a noticeable comparable difference travelling in a marked vehicle.

This thesis is suited most appropriately to qualitative research methods including ‘shadowing’ as a mode of observation to obtain personal experience data primarily from police constables (PCs) and police community support officers (PCSOs).

‘Observation is fundamental to all forms of data collection. The forms differ primarily in how techniques of investigation are organised, how observations are made and recorded, and in their own validity and reliability.’

(Reiss, 1971: 3)

While there are many ways to conduct observation of a certain social setting or social actors, participant observation became a popular method of researching the police in the 1960s and 1970s (Matrosfski et al., 1998). To obtain the most authentic accounts of qualitative methods is to ‘get the seat of your pants dirty in real research’ (Park, cited in Holdaway, 1983: 3). Early ethnographers emulated the work of the Chicago School sociologists observing police officers in their work environment to find out what really happens (Rubinstein, 1973; Manning, 1978; Van Maanen, 1978) and it was through the desire to study police work that researchers were nicknamed ‘wannabe cops’ and the ‘outside outsiders’ (Brown, 1996: 184). ‘Scholars have long recognised that the view of police work through a car’s windshield offers much richer information about police work than the statistical analysis of arrests or crime reports’ (Maxfield and Babbie, 2012: 211). Observations that are obtained at the scene are ‘fresh’ and thought preferable to the official reports and records of the police institution that are ‘suspect because those who record the data make intentional or unintentional misrepresentations of what happened’ (Matrosfski et al., 1998: 2). Merely ‘being there’ gives the researcher unequivocal access to events, aspects of police behaviour, and situational dynamics not recorded in police reports (Ferrell, 1998: 27).

Brown (1996) detailed the different categories that police researchers fall into: ‘insider insiders’ – usually in-house researchers that collate statistics for example for ‘time-and-motion’ limited studies (1996: 181); ‘outsider-insiders’ which are former police officers-turned-academics such as Holdaway (1983) and Young (1991b). This group can also include current officers who are seconded in ‘outside’ organisations such as the Home Office (Brown, 1996: 181-3); ‘insider-outsiders’ are usually qualified civilian researchers

who undertake 'in-house' studies or are outside consultants hired to research a nominated area of policing. Brown (1996: 181-3) argued that the latter group may feel particularly constrained about what they can and cannot explore because of principal 'management' agendas. The fourth category, 'outside-outsiders' are the most common and come from universities or other research bodies, and enjoy a large amount of freedom. This 'freedom' however is limited through access and making a convincing case to initial gatekeepers (see Chapters 5.2 and 5.4.1). According to Young (1991b: 104), those who identify as 'academics' are considered as 'potentially dangerous and polluting because of their limited understanding of the "polis's" real world; for they never stay long enough to experience the depth and complexities of the activities which lend him his "special knowledge"'. Under these categories, I fell under 'outside-outsider'. As the level of involvement the researcher takes is dependent on the response of the research subjects (and as a consequence, to what extent they are afforded outsider or insider status), it is important to stress that these levels are not an accurate evaluation of the quality or value of the resulting data. There is a delicate balance between having insider and outsider status and the degree of success can be measured by how comfortable the researcher feels in the field, and to what extent those researched forget about the researcher's outside position. Indeed, through the fieldwork, PCs and PCSOs would reveal stories of officer misconduct (though they were careful never to reveal names – perhaps always conscious of my outsider status), ways they had been mistreated by fellow officers, their personal lives, and complaints about shift patterns, the public and higher ranks were commonplace, thus securing, at least for a time, my status as more insider than outsider. These recollections were, perhaps tellingly, revealed after a couple of hours out on patrol, indicating that some level of rapport had been achieved, and continued to improve over time (Spano, 2005).

To summarise, it was difficult at times to know where I stood between insider, outsider, participant and observer, as I could move from one to the other quickly and without notice. These roles were enormously transient and could change at any time dependent on the situation and officer(s) I was accompanying. The inconsistency between roles was apparent even after my very first shift and I realised quickly that whilst I might adopt one (or more) roles with an individual officer or research site, the roles could change at the start of every shift, during a shift, or upon entering a new situation or research site. The role distinctions discussed by Brown (1996) do not fully take into account the realities of fieldwork. While the distinctions are useful as provisional mapping of what role the

researcher is planning to adopt (and/ or adopts in situ), they are heavily interchangeable. For example, Brown's (1996) four categories depicting how 'inside' or 'outside' a researcher is, offered a good starting point. As a university researcher I *was* categorised as 'outside outsider' but the participatory nature of some interactions allowed me to feel more 'inside', regardless of what category I 'fitted' into. Goffman explored this issue, and referred to it as 'footing' (1981: 128). Changing between roles alters the structure of how simplistic a situation or communication is; for example, whether a conversation between myself and the accompanying officer was to be taken as formal or informal talk (serious or 'banter'). That is, 'a change in the alignment we take up to ourselves and the others present as expressed in the way we manage the production of reception of an utterance' (Goffman, 1981: 128).

Observation is at the core of ethnographic study as the researcher is immersed in the living and working experiences of the culture they wish to characterise. By placing myself directly into the field to observe those under study, my observations aimed to obtain the native's point of view, and gather my 'own interpretations of what our informants are up to, or think they're up to' (Geertz, 1974: 317). It is this close interaction between the researcher and the researched that enables us to attempt to understand certain cultures or institutional settings, especially ones we are not normally privy to, such as the police. The main challenge for most researchers is to become accepted (to a certain extent) within a working culture that is being studied since the participation in the field (and resulting fieldnotes) is the principal way of verifying researcher's accounts (Ellen, 1984). By undertaking observation and trying to interpret the police's decision making and behaviours (through my own understandings and some clarification on their part at times) is a crucial element in considering how PCs and PCSOs in particular give meaning to their role, their relationships with each other and their uniform and their interactions with the public. It is important to note however, that datum gathered 'are themselves interpretations, and second and third ones to boot. By definition, only "natives" make first order ones; it's [*their*] culture. They are thus, actions, fictions, in the sense that they are, "something made", "something fashioned"' (Geertz, 1974: 317).

Remaining merely as an observer within my 'outside-outsider' status (Brown, 1996: 184), was deemed the most appropriate approach to the research, and enables me to accompany officers on their duties without requiring direct involvement with the public or raising

potential ethical issues. However, at all research sites I was either introduced by officers, or presumed to be, one or more of the following roles: ‘*researcher*’, ‘*police*’, ‘*officer*’, ‘*she’s one of us*’, ‘*university student*’, and/or ‘*CID*’, something that Loftus (2007: 25) experienced by being ‘frequently mistaken for a police officer and... a number of other identities’. Skolnick (1966: 259) wondered whether it is ever ‘justifiable to deceive’ people into ‘believing [you] are a police officer by not identifying [yourself] otherwise’? It is well documented that researchers have allowed themselves to be introduced as policing staff and sometimes even assisted with policing duties (Skolnick, 1966; Punch, 1979; Norris, 1993). When I was introduced as ‘*researcher*’, and ‘*university student*’, members of the public merely nodded warily and carried on their conversation with the officer. However, when introduced as ‘*police*’, ‘*officer*’, ‘*one of us*’ (all when wearing a stab vest) and ‘*CID*’ when I was not, it interestingly opened up the role in a way that allowed members of the public to speak freely as if I was a police officer, and ‘a suspect who believes you are a police officer may attempt to say things to you that will aid his or her cause’ (Skolnick, 1966: 259-260).

While my accompanying officer was otherwise engaged, civilians at the scene would ask me various questions about whatever situation we were attending, they would query if I was ‘important’ as I was in civilian clothes. This was interesting because in occupations ‘where uniforms are required, only those with the highest rank can avoid wearing the attire’ (Rubenstein, 2001: 86). Two known prolific male offenders informed me I was ‘far too good-looking to be one of *them*’. I was unsure whether this was a question or a statement so did nothing to confirm or deny their (or anybody else’s) claims, nervously staying mute, hoping they would get distracted by the situation or something (anything!) else. I wondered whether the officers that introduced me as part of the police, or did not deny it when someone asked them, felt it was important that the public perceive me as an officer since this perhaps strengthened their legitimacy, especially among younger civilians. These interactions caused me to reconsider my position in the research as merely an observer, much like Loftus (2007: 24) when she reflected that ‘the word “observer” implies that [you] are somehow separate from the scene, it [is] not always the case’. Although it was not *participant observation* in the sense that I was actively participating in the interactions, communication with the public, and indeed officers asking my opinions on various things means that in some way, there were some instances of *participatory activity* within the role as observer.

As documented by Van Maanen (1978), the roles within participant observation are not static, but flexible depending on different situations. As trust and rapport developed after hours of constant contact and conversation, there were times when officers would ask me my opinion on certain situations or people that we encountered (though often it was to test my moral stance on the ‘*shitbags*’ – the term frequently used to describe offenders). Questions such as, ‘*so, what did you think of him/her?*’, ‘*what was your view on that guy?*’ usually followed with a smirking smile indicating that they thought my opinion would be aligned with theirs, i.e. that I thought they were ‘*shitbags*’ too. I was reluctant to comment on individuals, in an attempt to maintain researcher neutrality – laughing seemed the most appropriate response. In some contexts, I was aware that laughter may have been construed as agreement however, but I concluded it was the lesser of two evils by not agreeing or disagreeing either way. This attempt at neutrality would imply that once a level of rapport and trust had been attained, an element of participation surfaced (sometimes unwillingly when they introduced me as an officer for example) whereas on return to the station, in front of other officers or higher ranks, the blanket of professionalism was (re)assumed, detaching me from participation, often then leading me to resemble the original role of complete observer. In summary of my role, while my position of observer within ‘outside outsider’ status (Brown 1996: 184) was dominant throughout the fieldwork, my researcher roles and identities shifted and became adaptable dependent on the context of the interaction and who was involved within those interactions.

Ethnography has the capacity to provide unique insight in the field if the researcher becomes accepted and entrusted within the research site (although these levels are merely speculation and researcher perception and it is even harder within the ‘outside outsider’ category). The atmosphere within the first hour on the first day at each new research site was stiff, controlled. Curious stares were commonplace and I experienced the ‘observer is observed’ experience (Schatzman and Strauss, 1973: 62-65) as the policing staff attempted to assess my motives and personality. Despite the attempts to blend in, the researcher still ‘sticks out like a sore thumb’ (Polsky, 1969: 134) and it is hard for the female researcher in particular to form ‘part of the scenery’ (Westmarland, 2001: 10). It seemed once staff ascertained I was not a journalist from *The Daily Mail* (a joke heard often) and I had been ‘fully vetted’ from headquarters before embarking on the research (this was asked frequently), the atmosphere visibly relaxed. While superficially said in jest, this indicated

that officers will never completely forget that an outsider is nearby. This is especially prevalent in the context of policing since ‘there is a skill officers are likely to have in tactics, for covering up what they do not want known. Police researchers, after all, are investigating subjects whose job it is to investigate the deviance of others’ (Reiner and Newburn, 2000: 219).

5.6.1 *‘Brew Duty’: The Importance of Making a ‘Good’ Brew*

Within Area A I was often put on ‘brew duty’ (the process of making teas and coffees for PCs and PCSOs in the station). One officer told me that *‘only trusted people get put on brew duty, ‘cause you could be poisoning us or anything [laughs], the “newbies” always make the brews’*. I thought his use of the word ‘newbie’ was interesting, implying my role as a researcher was similar to a new member of staff. Similarly, Westmarland (2001: 92) noted in her ethnography that new staff are ‘expected to make the tea for their colleagues... as “junior man”’ and ‘acceptance of this without question is regarded as sign of their acknowledgement of inferiority or “fitting in”’. Likewise, O’Neill (2002: 387-8) remarked that men may treat women as ‘go-fers’ and thus ‘women ethnographers are accepted into the culture, but only so far and in a gender-specific way’. Although making ‘brews’ is not particularly my favourite pastime, I felt it was my way to endear the staff to me and I performed it with gusto (and was often met with light-hearted complaints that my brews were *‘not up to scratch’*, *‘weak as piss’* and lightly-veiled threats that if I did not improve I would be a *‘station cat forever’* (local vernacular for someone who never leaves the office). While this made me feel an accepted part of the team for the limited time I was there, it also made me wonder whether ‘brew duty’ was hierarchical and steeped in gender connotations. I was informed that ‘newbies’ are usually assigned brew duty more often and as it is a stereotypical domestic activity, I speculated whether their friendly banter was actually in fact, putting me in my *place*, both as a woman and as a temporary visitor cementing my role as a ‘brief insider’. Although I was a guest, it did not stop them from ‘jokingly’ requesting a 20p contribution to the ‘brew fund’.

The success of fieldwork is largely determined by the ability of the researcher to manage impressions in a way that aids making observations and understanding the action of officers, and I believe my first job as a newbie on brew duty eroded some barriers to social

access (Walsh, 1988). This initial acceptance was crucial as the researcher role is not automatically accepted just because the gatekeeper had allowed me access; denying their significant role in allowing initial access would be foolish, eroding the social barriers in the hub (the term ‘hub’ was used by officers to describe the office space where teams could use computers to aid with police work). I did not know at this point who I would be paired with on shift and breaking down these social barriers within the hub was the next critical stage – more so because once I had been shown to the hub, rarely was the gatekeeper seen again.

Impression management and demonstrating friendliness, joviality and a ‘team spirit’ is particularly vital as a means of avoiding suspicion from officers, who are occupationally trained to be suspicious of outsiders. Foster (1996) suggests that researchers use;

‘Consciously or unconsciously many self-presentational techniques to convey an impression of themselves that will maximise their chances [of being accepted]. They dress and conduct themselves in ways that give the impression that they will “fit in”’.

(Foster, 1996: 68)

5.6.2 *Parading On*

At the start of every shift (usually about half an hour in) a meeting would take place in a conference room for everyone who was on shift with the neighbourhood teams that day. These would consist of a ten-minute PowerPoint presentation detailing the current crimes, crime ‘hot-spots’, wanted offenders, and any other useful information led by at least one inspector. These tended not to change significantly from shift to shift though the odd slide would be added to update the offender ‘wanted’ list and anything that had happened significantly since their last shift. In Area A I was actively encouraged to attend these meetings to get a *‘better feel of what [they] do’*. At all research sites I was allowed into the meetings and then allocated an officer afterwards. At the start of one shift at Area B, I sat at the back as per usual to avoid drawing any unnecessary attention to myself – which was probably fruitless as they often introduced me as *‘the Ph.D. student’* – cue all eyes on me. An inspector that I had never seen before was leading the meeting, and before it started, called me out of the room. A collective *‘oooooooooh’* ensued (the petulant noise that

school children make when someone is in trouble) and I sheepishly smiled at everyone and followed him out wondering what he wanted. He said: *'I don't think you should be sat in these meetings, they provide very sensitive information and I don't know what clearance you've had or anything.'* I replied boldly (and a little indignantly) that I had been allowed access to all of the previous meetings and I had signed confidentiality agreements with BlueCorp headquarters. He paused and seemed to think about it for a moment and told me to go back inside warning me half-jokingly that I *'better not disclose anything'* because it will be *'[his] ass on the line'*. I did not encounter this problem again. I queried later why it was called 'parading on' as I did not observe any 'parading'. An inspector explained:

'Years ago, when I was an officer, we used to actually have to "parade on", as in, we used to stand to attention in a line, in the station, with one arm raised horizontally across the chest with our handcuffs draped over the hand. The inspector would then walk down the line and inspect our uniforms, and that we were clean-shaven and what-not, and as he passed us we would salute. We used to salute if we saw him in the street as well, and if we stopped for a chat he would say, "save me a line in your notepad", which meant we would write "brief with Inspector". It was all about respect back then.'

(Inspector, personal communication)

'Parading on' or 'roll call', now known as the 'daily briefing', 'is a remnant of the decaying military tradition used to discipline the police' (Rubinstein, 1973: 54). Officers during roll call were instructed to line up and stand to attention so inspectors could inspect their uniform and equipment before a shift. The present-day daily briefings now consist of officers slouched in chairs watching a PowerPoint presentation. Officers observed were mostly half dressed as it is just before they go out on shift that they put on their stab vests, jackets and equipment. Once dressed, they will leave immediately from the changing rooms, away from the watchful eyes of superior officers: the autonomy of 'kitting up' allowed much room for manoeuvre in terms of personal presentation.

5.7

Fieldnotes and Using Research Aids

As important as observation and levels of participation is the process of recording fieldnotes. The researcher's time at any research site is transitory, and it is therefore vital that experiences and understandings are preserved comprehensibly in fieldnotes; '[they] are accounts describing experiences and observation the researcher has made while

participating in an intense and involved manner' (Emerson, et al., 1995: 5). During observations with the selected research participants, it would have proved too intrusive and impractical to record every word, every situation and every interaction that was witnessed. Hall (2003: 12) experienced similar problems: 'I couldn't keep up with events and conversations if I was simultaneously recording these with paper and pen and even if this had been possible I would have been uncomfortable doing so'. Although my original proposal to the university ethics committee, to the research facilitator and FWNS at BlueCorp HQ, detailed the use of a recording device to document interviews, in reality I realised quickly that recording anything formally was not a viable option. On the first shift I asked PCSO Lemon if she would answer some interview questions and would consent to being recorded. She visibly baulked and replied '*Erm, no, I don't think so. I'm happy to talk to you like, right here face-to-face but I don't think I want anything formally on record. You try'na get me sacked? [laughs]*'. As it turns out, she did not disclose anything that would have resulted in formal sanctions (in my opinion) but it nevertheless showed me how uneasy some of the officers did feel about being recorded in a formal manner for fear of repercussions.

I wondered whether it was just officer preference but every other officer I asked at Area A gave me a similar response: that they were happy to talk to me informally (even though they were aware I was making hand-written notes during conversations) but all said they were 'uncomfortable' recording in the formal manner. I quickly abandoned the interview sheets that I had prepared for Areas B and C (along with forlornly storing an expensive Tascam recorder I had purchased for the occasion – later used for personal note-taking; see Chapter 5.7.1) and wrote the questions I wanted to ask at the back of my small notepad. I tended to include the odd question into the context of the conversation to avoid sounding like a structured interview when I was out on observation with them, surprisingly covering all of the queries from my interview schedule during my time with each officer.

5.7.1 *Writing Fieldnotes*

Fieldnotes are often written in short-hand to assist recall at a later date as lapses in memory could distort the data; 'notes should be preferably made as soon as possible after the observation. The longer this is left the more is forgotten and the greater the chance of

inaccuracies and biases creeping in' (Foster, 1996: 84). Obtrusive short-hand note-taking can cause participants to be nervous or self-conscious, but most understand that it is part of the researcher's job 'likening it to the reports that officers are required to complete' (Matrosfski et al., 1998: 4). While it is important not to be seen taking notes constantly, if surreptitiously done it potentially provides enough information to be relied on for full expansion later that day; it is simply impossible to rely solely on human recollections. Even so;

'To put it bluntly, fieldnotes are gnomic, shorthand reconstructions of events, observations, and conversations that took place in the field. They are composed well after the fact as inexact notes to oneself and represent simply one of many levels of textualisation set off by experience. To disentangle the interpretive procedures at work as one moves across levels is problematic to say the least.'

(Van Maanen, 2011: 223-224)

In light of this, and the fact that I did not have the luxury of digitally recording conversations, I had to ensure that my fieldnotes were rich in detail and written up in full shortly after leaving the field for that day. During fieldwork, researchers must identify certain social phenomenon that are personally interesting and worthy of comments and must therefore exercise their own discretion and preferences as to what should be documented and what should be omitted. Note-taking in the field is a precarious practice and can vary hugely depending on the situation. While it may cause some social reactivity, the process of taking notes in the moment is strongly advocated by the ethnographers (Goffman, 1989; Lofland and Lofland, 1995; Emerson, et al., 1995).

I had a small notepad and two pens with me at all times. Officers I would be accompanying on shift were fully aware that notes would be taken but every effort would be made to avoid doing so in front of members of the public. Out on shift with my first officer, PCSO Lemon, I began surreptitiously taking notes in the car while we were driving around. It is, however, very difficult to be inconspicuously making notes when you are sat less than one foot away from someone in a vehicle. I had originally planned to disappear to the bathroom every so often to make notes, but this proved only possible when we were back at the station on meal-breaks ('refs' - refreshment) or at another station. On the first occasion when I did go the station bathroom to record verbal notes into my Tascam recorder (under the pretence of *actually going to the bathroom*), somebody entered the stall next to me and I panicked and pretended to be on the phone to my mother. Upon

reflection, it was an interesting dilemma. Staff knew I was an observer, but I felt that that was all I could be *seen* doing. By recording notes as unobtrusively as possible, or better still, not being seen to record notes *at all*, afforded me a level of rapport that may have been affected otherwise. I am still unsure which is a bigger sacrifice; less rapport or less comprehensive notes? Nevertheless, I continued with my frequent bathroom trips to record when I could (so much that I am sure officers suspected I had a bladder problem). This mode of note-taking was also undertaken by Loftus (2007: 26) who ‘made notes in private settings including toilets’. This can come with its own hazards however, as Reiner and Newburn (2000: 224) found; ‘frequent visits to the toilet to jot down very brief reminders for subsequent report writing can be helpful – but may raise concerns about the researcher’s health’.

Taking notes as often as I could in the car without making the officer feel uncomfortable was a delicate balance. When PCSO Lemon said something particularly interesting I felt the need to instantly write it down, something which at first, halted the conversation abruptly; ‘*what are you writing?*’, ‘*I hope you’re not writing anything bad*’, ‘*why was what I said noteworthy? Can I see?*’ I was unsure how much to reassure her that what I was writing was not ‘bad’ or ‘damning’, but merely observation. I reluctantly offered her my notepad but as it turns out, she did not actually want to look. I found myself being rather economical with the truth on occasion, telling her I was merely making notes of something I had witnessed outside the car to make her feel less conscious. Other officers also asked what I was writing, and instead of becoming irritated by their intrusion, I attempted to adopt a blasé demeanour to avoid threatening participant rapport. While I may have acted nonchalant, I felt far from it, but as Goffman advised, ‘social structure gains elasticity, the individual merely loses composure’ (1967: 112).

Note-taking from then on tended to be cursory, hurried abbreviations, sometimes referred to as scratch notes (Emerson, et al., 1995; Lindlof and Taylor, 2002) when I thought she was not looking. These abbreviations, key words, and the odd full sentence were used as valuable memory prompts for the more detailed writing up of observations following the shift. The notes are therefore completely subject to the discretion of the researcher, and what I considered to be worthy of note-taking. In the first couple of shifts, I found myself taking notes on anything and everything: things that I thought at the time were not directly relevant to the research but might come up again later on in the field. Making a

conscious effort to notice and record everything was very tiring, physically and mentally, but at the time it was deemed important to record the mundane and trivial as it could have been crucial in later analysis. As recognised by numerous researchers, the focus of the observations inevitably shifted the longer I was in the field, from the wide-ranging to more focused, specific themes of observational data (Ely, et al., 1994; Walsh, 1998). I was however, conscious of the changing note-taking process and concerned myself that in not recording what I thought was insignificant at the time would prove fatal to my research later, so I continued making frequent notes of banal situations. Whenever possible, if I was unsure about the interpretations and understandings of an event, I would seek clarification from the officer, primarily to fathom the situation fully, but also to compare their experienced interpretation of certain events parallel to mine; though experience may have played a part in their advanced understanding of a situation, it is important to note that every situation is different, and previous understandings of an individual or circumstances does not assume them complete understanding of a similar event in the present or future.

Accompanying a double-crewed team (twice during fieldwork) afforded a different type of note-taking. With PC Cream and PC Pink I was sat in the back of an unmarked car, which allowed me to make notes as freely as I pleased (which was a welcome change). It was however, very noticeable that they would often talk amongst themselves and answer my questions with one-word answers. I felt that the situational dynamics had shifted negatively and it felt childish to keep leaning forward through the seat-gap to talk to them. Accompanying a double crew felt strongly like ‘three’s a crowd’, and the feeling of invisibility in the back was uncomfortable. While it proved fruitful to make full notes without fear of making them feel self-conscious, strongly sensing exclusion in the backseat hugely outweighed the positives of more coherent fieldnotes. This was further compounded on my next shift with PC Crimson who informed me that *‘we don’t really like being single-crewed. I understand it’s about saving money a little bit but it’s really isolating, not having anyone to chat to. I’m glad you’re around today so I can just talk to someone. Nine hours is lonely on your own’*; when double-crewed officers had the option to talk to me, the researcher, or another officer in the car or van, they (understandably) talked to their colleague. I asked PC Crimson about this after my experience on the previous shift and he advised me to *‘not take it personally. We [officers] are all in it together, so we understand what each other is having to deal with. Some people may be cautious what they say around you*

as well so they probably just don't wanna screw up and say something they shouldn't.' On the second double-crewed shift during fieldwork, I accompanied two response PCs (PC Mint and PC Moss) on a Friday night shift in the city-centre 9pm to 6am. I was required to wear a stab vest and sit in the back of the response van opposite the cage. Not being a good traveller at the best of times, facing backwards and hurtling around corners on blue light runs resulted in me feeling extremely nauseated. As there was enough room in the front for two passengers (the driver's seat was next to a double passenger seating area) I requested that I sit up front with them. PC Mint however politely refused and reasoned that *'the public get nervous if they can see three coppers, they think something is going on, it puts people on edge. They are used to seeing one or two of us but not three so I'd prefer it if you'd stay in the back'*. I nodded, silently dismayed but found it hard to understand why this would be a problem driving around; when we arrived at incidents or were out on the street, there were three of us, seemingly the 'over-presence' was only a problem in the vehicle.

Talking to them proved to be more of a problem with me facing backwards as well; I was constantly turning around sitting on my heels and peering over the gap between the head-rests (much more difficult than in a car). Both PCs however seemed much more receptive to my questions and as we were not in the vehicle for long periods (there were plenty of 'jobs' to stop at) which afforded me more freedom to talk when they were not busy. While on the previous double-crewed shift sat in the back of a car afforded me the opportunity to write full notes, it was nearly impossible to do so in the van. When I was concentrating on not vomiting from the motion-sickness, it was pitch black in the back (it was also the middle of the night) and when I tried to make notes I stabbed my hand with my pen on numerous occasions, as well as accidentally scribbling off the pad onto my trousers when we went over a bump in the road.

To summarise, although I was disappointed originally that I would not be able to use digital recordings, the informality of surreptitious note-taking proved fruitful. Officers seemed relaxed and only a few asked at times *'what are you writing?'* As aforementioned, the amount of notes I took in situ of the officers depended wholly on the shift. For example, very detailed notes were taken during double-crewed shifts because being in the back of the car or van afforded me a level of privacy to write freely. Similarly, during busy shifts when the officer was distracted at jobs we went to, it also gave me time to write

extensive notes. However, on some quieter day shifts when we literally did not get out of the vehicle for hours (just driving around on patrol) I was more careful how often I took notes because I was aware that the officer may think I was writing about our conversations with each other. This was frustrating at times because it was during these long periods of driving around that I gleaned the most interesting data from our conversations, probably because the officers had fewer distractions. To combat this I ensured that what I did record during this time would be useful memory-joggers when I wrote the notes up later that day.

5.7.2 *Photographs*

‘Images can be used to capture the ineffable, the hard-to-put-into-words... images can make us pay attention to things in new ways... they are likely to be memorable... images can be used to communicate more holistically, incorporating multiple layers, and evoking stories or questions.’

(Weber, 2008: 44-5)

For the purpose of this research project, overt photography was used and full consent was sought before any photographs were taken. Using my personal high-definition camera, up-close photographs were taken of the subject’s uniform and permission was granted in each case to use the images in data analysis. When each photograph was taken, clarification was sometimes sought – officers sometimes chose to attach non-regulation equipment and miscellaneous items (pens, hand sanitiser, gloves, amongst other things) to their uniforms, and were therefore asked to explain their choices in each case.

This method was used to discover participant’s feelings and opinions on aspects of the uniform and how it related to their own uniform and any recognisable features (of location or the individual) were cropped and/or pixelated to ensure anonymity (including any distinguishing tattoos/scars/piercings). Less than half of the officers (eight out of twenty) I accompanied on shift consented to picture taking, but rejection and rebuffs are practically universal features of the interactions between researchers and the researched (Howton and Rosenberg, 1965). Sometimes it was inappropriate in the presence of other officers to ask for pictures, or if the timing was wrong (if we were headed out urgently on response for example). Some officers politely declined and stressed that they were uncomfortable with

being photographed even though it was assured that there would be no recognisable features included (similar to the reaction of recording interviews discussed in Chapter 5.7):

‘Oh, I dunno about that. I really don’t think so. What if you kept my [collar] number on by accident? Or didn’t blur out my name badge? No, I don’t think so [shakes head]. Also, some of the stuff we wear is our choice, but other things we get bollocked for, like sometimes I forget to check out a [CS] spray so I don’t want that picture out there. You trying to get me in trouble? [laughs]’

(PC Red)

In recent years, photo elicitation has enjoyed a surge in popularity in the social sciences (Bryman, 2008) and is now a widely accepted technique in qualitative research (Johnson and Weller, 2001). ‘Images in general can and should be used in social inquiry – as information-rich data for extending scientific investigations or as evocative artefacts for challenging or stepping away from a science too narrowly conceived’ (Wagner, 2001: 7). Introducing photographic elements into an interview presents ‘core definitions of the self to society, culture and history’ (Harper, 2002: 13) and are ‘charged with psychological and highly emotional elements and symbols... [which] allows the native reader to express his ethos’ (Collier, 1967: 118).

A few officers allowed me to take pictures of their uniform, and I then used these photos to ask them questions about certain aspects of their clothing and equipment throughout the course of the shift by pointing certain elements out on the photograph of themselves. It was interesting to see how officers attributed social and personal meanings to the different aspects of clothing, and it often differed to what I thought I saw on the photograph (explored further in Chapter 6). Photographs have the potential to evoke understanding of the way in which police officers experience their world through the lens of their uniforms and equipment. Furthermore, photographs of officers, (especially of their own uniform taken only hours before), helps extend the limitations set by verbal narratives and allows a more nuanced understanding of the lives of police officers.

Photographs are ‘read’ in a certain way. Goffman (1979: 11-12), in discussing gendered advertisements, argued that in considering photographs, ‘it is necessary... to consider the question of perception and reality, and it is necessary to control somehow the systematic ambiguities that characterise our everyday talk about pictures’. Photographs can provide useable and consistent points of reference ‘allowing the view to make relatively reliable

inferences as to what had led up to the activity represented and what was likely to have followed' (Goffman, 1979: 13-14).

5.8 *'Study and Snitch': Ethical Dilemmas*

The thesis is interested in the point of view of front-line policing staff, and in gaining access to the research sites researchers may feel certain obligations not to disclose information that may discredit the participants. In collecting field data, it would be 'ungrateful' for researchers to use the knowledge gathered to 'expose weaknesses or foibles' of those under observation (Pepinsky, 1980: 224). While this may be honourable and ethical conduct on the researcher's behalf, there is always the risk that the people under observation may engage in what can be categorised as questionable and unacceptable behaviour. Furthermore;

'The people being studied may even ask the researcher to participate in or help cover up the wrongful activity. The moral dilemma this presents is especially strong if the people being studied, such as police officers, hold a public trust.'

(Pepinsky, 1980: 224)

The occupational subculture instils the notion that only other police staff are their protection against a threatening society (Caplan, 2003) including, presumably, the prying eyes of researchers. Anybody outside of the police force does not 'share membership' in this social group (Miller and Glassner, 2004) and are regarded as 'outsiders' (Kappeler et al., 2015: 83; see also Brown, 1996). For the police, there is a risk that researchers may publish exposés and highlight problems that may be impossible to deny. To combat this, gatekeepers may strategically put forward potential participants in accordance with their own preferences or 'put an observer with [an] officer least likely to discredit the unit' (Matrosfski et al., 1998: 6).

'As a researcher, it is not uncommon to hear stories... One example involves comments from senior police officers with regard to a researcher... who is now commonly known as the "study and snitch" researcher since she seemed to them friendly during the research and then produced what they thought was a damning written report.'

(Hughes, 2000: 241-242)

While observation, by its very nature, is not as directly intrusive as interviewing, it is in this setting (their natural occupational locale) that an element of rapport would be established before any interviewing takes place to enable as much free discussion as possible. This can cause problems in itself. Overfamiliarity with the officers that you are observing may cause reproachable behaviour on the researcher's part; while 'going native' may be a bit strong in this sense, Pepinsky (1980: 231) noted that he felt 'embarrassed' by witnessing police conduct that was unacceptable (both legally and morally) and keeping quiet about their behaviour. Pepinsky (1980: 231) justified his ignorance of the matter by rationalising that his objections would not have affected the situation and compensated his ignorance by 'exaggerating [his] feelings of admiration for the good things [he] saw the officers do'. Rugg and Petre also experienced these issues:

'What would you do when it came to writing up your results, and those results included unpleasant truths about a group you had come to like? It's possible to end up feeling strong social bonds with the most unlikely sounding individuals after getting to know them well, and this can lead to deep emotional and moral dilemmas, when you're torn between telling the full story on one hand, and being tactful to people you like on the other.'

(Rugg and Petre, 2006: 112)

Researchers *could* ignore or misrepresent undesirable or unethical behaviour ultimately leading to the collection of worthless data (Gans, 1982) since 'our assumptions define and limit what we see... even if this involves distortion or omission' (Johnson, 1953: 79). Participant observation, in any setting, has its risks and hazards. Situations may be quite dangerous especially in observing the police; the threat of danger is an accepted part of their occupation. Lee (1995: 1) notes that 'researchers often work in settings made dangerous by violent conflict or in situations where interpersonal violence and risk are commonplace'. Though it is necessary to become 'immersed' within the group to gain reliable data, it is important not to become *too* submerged; this is particularly crucial 'if you are observing criminal behaviour or dangerous activities... it could seriously disturb and even invalidate your findings' (Wisker, 2008: 204). Though I did not observe any activities that would be considered particularly 'dangerous' or 'criminal', it was important to be aware of how 'thorough-a-member' (Wisker, 2008: 204) I was prepared to be. In all honesty, if I had witnessed such behaviour I cannot say with any conviction what my reaction would have been: I do not think any amount of preparation can fully 'train' a researcher how to *be* or react, should a situation arise.

While researchers may attempt to remain objective, it is advised that when undertaking research, our ‘personal and political sympathies’ will naturally intrude:

‘...the question is not whether we should take sides, since we inevitably will, but rather whose side are we on... in the greatest variety of subject matter areas and in work done by all the different methods at our disposal, we cannot avoid taking sides.’

(Becker, 1967: 239)

Though we may not be able to avoid ‘taking sides’, it is the responsibility of the researcher to remain as impartial and detached as possible to give an accurate representation of the data gathered. One of the greatest difficulties of researching insider institutions is making the findings available for public view, and this is often the most compromising aspect of researching the police (Holdaway, 1983). Having developed some levels of trust and relationships during fieldwork, the researcher does not want to break confidences by exposing negative or damaging issues about their participants or the company as a whole. Loyalties to the individual participants (and even the police service as a whole) may emerge (as experienced by myself) and attempting to report findings without a positive or negative ‘spin’ to protect subjects is difficult. Young (1991b: 10) observed that researchers ‘find it hard to bite the hand that feeds’, especially when it may damage potential access for researchers in the future and Westmarland (2001a: 527) warned that ethnographers ‘tread a thin line... in “blowing the whistle”’. Illuminating ‘dirty information’ can have grave consequences which can include criminal charges, ruined careers and social stigmatisation (Thomas and Marquart, 1987: 81). While researchers may have a duty to report as they find, and produce reliable, truthful data, ethical codes and regulations which they are required to stringently follow do not always provide the answers to morally compromising situations (Punch, 1986). As demonstrated in later chapters, some officers were particularly candid but by assuring them of their anonymity in the research, the proverbial flood-gates opened, and some admitted instances of maltreatment, bullying and distaste for their job and senior management. Though I did not gather ‘dirty information’ (Thomas and Marquart, 1987: 81), like officer misconduct for example, the opinions of the research subjects will undoubtedly have had consequences should their opinions been ‘aired’ and names revealed: in light of this, it is perhaps fair to say that it is *because* of their anonymity that afforded the research to gather such candid accounts.

As discussed, being a 'non-member' of the police organisations can present problems with the establishment of rapport and issues with observer bias. One common criticism of observational data is reactivity (Crank, 1998), the process by which those under observation react to the presence of the researcher by changing their behaviour. While researching the police is more commonplace today, and the modern police may be familiar with being scrutinised by colleagues and management, but they are still understandably cautious with having their occupational decisions and day-to-day behaviours analysed by an 'outsider'.

In spending approximately two to three days per week with different policing staff and up to ten hours a day with them on shift, Skolnick (1966: 259) suggested that researchers who only shadowed police officers for a day or two would get a superficial 'whitewash' tour. The implication is those being researched will only give what they believe to be social acceptable answers when questioned or act in what they believe to be a socially acceptable way; as a consequence, 'sheltering' researchers from the more truthful accounts of police work especially during the early stages of field observations. Similar to O'Neill (2002; 2005), I was not with a particular INPT or police officer long enough to establish the bonding enjoyed by Holdaway (1983), Westmarland (2001) and Norris (1993). My opportunities were limited and although I undertook what Holdaway (1983: 11) labelled a 'smash-and-grab' ethnography, in spending up to ten hours a day with individual officers (sometimes double-crewed) allowed them time to open up, hopefully avoiding 'socially desirable' data. It was obvious at the beginning that officers were rather courteous, polite and informal. But after a couple of hours, most seemed to be chatting away uncensored which quietened my fears of a 'superficial whitewash tour'. While Skolnick (1966) and Holdaway (1983) may have had a point about 'whitewash' and 'smash-and-grab' ethnography, I had nothing to compare it to, and the fieldnotes I gathered were extensive and rich in detail.

To help combat the effects of researcher 'sheltering', the establishment of trust and rapport was essential to gain access to 'the hidden dimensions of the subjects' world' (Hunt, 1984: 283). While it is important immerse oneself into the research environment, immersion into an unfamiliar environment can be an intense and unsettling experience.

Furnham and Bochner (1986: 112) called researchers in this environment ‘sojourners’, defining them as temporary visitors in a new and foreign environment. While it was definitely a change from my day-to-day routine, I found the process exciting and exhilarating, allowing me to experience situations and conversations that not many people are privy to outside of the police service. To aid the (temporary) transition, an unobtrusive and discreet working relationship with the research subjects must be established quickly to attempt to gather reliable data that would be the same if it were collected at the start of the fieldwork as it would at the end.

In many occupational environments, field researchers have admitted feeling like ‘helpless children’ because of the inability to communicate effectively with those they are observing due to their feelings of disorientation and the ‘technical jargon’ used by their research subjects (Spano, 2005: 594). The occupational terminology and slang used between policing staff was sometimes unfamiliar. Countless abbreviations were used, especially in the daily briefings. It was inappropriate to interrupt the meeting to question them and I always sought clarification afterwards, though to keep up with the abbreviations and slang used during conversations was hard work until I became accustomed to hearing them; I often felt that they were speaking a different language – for example ‘A/P’ for aggrieved party. During my first shift with PCSO Lemon, I was interrupting the conversation every couple of minutes to clarify an abbreviation she had used. Although it helped me understand fully what she had been referring to, I noticed after the third time of elucidation she let out an exasperated sigh. I was disappointed in her impatience but understood why it was frustrating to explain everything. I pondered the fine line between letting the conversation flow naturally and trying to piece together the context without further interpretation requests. It became clear that one prevailing officer’s opinion about civilians were that they ask ‘SFQs’: ‘*stupid fucking questions*’ (NBO Grey). He said it was usually during night shifts in the town centre and inebriated women would slur ‘*is it true that if I was preggers you have to let me pee in your hat?*’ (an urban myth). I laughed and secretly hoped that they did not think I was always asking ‘SFQs’(!) This shows that while they may have formal police abbreviations for commonly used terms, it is also widely acknowledged amongst officers that personal informal abbreviations were commonplace – noticeably similar between research sites within BlueCorp – one possible explanation of this is that officers may move to different areas and cover different beats, passing this ‘insider’ information between themselves, or perhaps just using the

abbreviations on a regular basis forced them into common usage. In seeking objectivity and reliability, researchers are often encouraged to distance themselves from the research they are undertaking.

Van Maanen (2011) described a huge variety of ethnographic writing that seeks to pass on objective descriptions of a research site that is lacking any political motivations and researcher bias. He termed this type of ethnography as ‘realist tales’ which ‘provide a rather direct, matter-of-fact portrait of a studied culture, unclouded by much concern for how the fieldworker produced such a portrait’ (Van Maanen, 2011: 7). However, a poststructuralist methodology would argue that self-perception and a sense of self is the result of challenging subjectivities but nevertheless plays an important part in the interpretation of meaning. In the absence of a fixed researcher position, as detailed in earlier sections, researchers are ‘always already tangled up... in a second-hand world of meanings and have no direct access to reality’ (Denzin, 1997: 246). By adopting components of a poststructuralist methodology, researchers acknowledged that data, data analyses and subsequent discussion is constructed by the researcher and heavily impacted upon by their own subjectivity, commonly known as ‘reflexivity’. Reflexivity in ethnographic research refers to the ways in which the outcomes of research are affected, at various levels, by those undertaking the research and the process in doing it. In its broadest sense, reflexivity means ‘a turning back on oneself, a process of self-reference’ (Davies, 1999: 4). Thus, the relationships between researcher and researched, which result in data that is analysed and conclusions made from this, are ‘made’ through the social interactions in the field; that is, ‘ethnographers help to construct the observations that become their data’ (Davies, 1999: 5). Researchers therefore, become *part* of the research. In acknowledging the part the researcher plays in the resulting data, it is then important to consider the effects of researcher demographics.

Relationships in the field are more easily established with some individuals than others; for example, belonging to the same gender, class or ethnic background as the subject might generate more *natural* rapport resulting from the familiarity with that person’s life experiences (Collins et al., 2005). A common misinterpretation is that cultural differences between people are usually termed researcher *bias*; ‘much of what we call interviewer bias can be more correctly described as interviewer *differences*, which are inherent in the fact that interviewers are human beings and not machines and that they do not work

identically' (Selltiz et al., 1965: 583 - emphasis in original). Thus it cannot be presumed that because the researcher may belong to a certain category that is the same as the researched does not necessarily mean that it will encourage higher levels of rapport. In fact, levels of perceived social belonging to the interviewees can be disrupting; 'when the interviewer has a negative [or positive] reaction to what the narrator is saying or is distracted by some interpersonal chemistry, he or she must consciously keep in mind the purpose of the interview' (Yow, 2005: 179). I was a 26-year-old Caucasian female researcher. While I may have *belonged* to the same categories as *some* of the participants, the majority of the officers I accompanied were male and one or two decades older. Marks (2004: 881) also found that her 'personal "identifiers"... and the social constructs which frame these identities... are likely to shape the relationships that result in the field'. For Loftus (2007: 22), also being a 'young female researcher in a male dominated environment [was] advantageous' (see also O'Neill, 2002). As a female researcher, it will often be potentially problematic to interview males in a predominantly male and masculine occupation; women currently only make up 28.2% of the police force around the country, though PCSO gender splits are considerably more equal at 44.9% (Home Office, 2015). Interestingly, I found males considerably easier to gather information from. Perhaps as a young woman, I was perceived as less threatening. Most of the male officers and gatekeepers I encountered could not do enough to help me. Zetterberg (1966: 134) referred to the perception of feminine influence as a person's 'erotic ranking', which is 'defined as a privately kept probability that [s]he can induce a state of emotional overcome among persons of the opposite sex'. Though I cannot be sure of my exact 'ranking' and it would be naïve and perhaps a little vain to presume that my womanly 'Medusan charms' (Young, 1992: 281) would sway officer's treatment of me, it has been noted by Loftus (2007: 22) that as a female in a male dominated environment I was possibly seen as "'naturally" trustworthy and empathetic' and it cannot be ignored that my gender may have 'smoothed' interactions with men. Similarly, O'Neill (2002: 388-9) noted that she used her gender to her 'advantage at times', with 'elements of flirting' and 'accepting the image of a naïve blonde to get more information'. O'Neill (2002: 389) concluded that she must have either come across as 'very trustworthy or as rather harmless'. Similar to when policemen were not particularly accustomed to policewomen's presence in the early years, where 'policemen would simply gaze at them all the time and not do their work' (Leonard, et al., 1991b: 146), a female researcher may also cause unwanted disruption. If the

researcher is not a member of the social group under study, a level of performance from the research participants is to be expected; ‘...if you’re not already a member of the group, then you’re likely to be shown the front version of how the group behaves (i.e. the sanitised version for public consumption, as opposed to behind-the-scenes reality)’ (Rugg and Petre, 2006: 111-2). Furthermore;

‘When an individual plays a part he [sic] implicitly requests his observers to take seriously the impression that is fostered before them. They are asked to believe that the character they see actually possess the attributes he appears to possess, that the take he performs will have the consequences that are implicitly claimed for it, and that, in general, matters are what they appear to be.’

(Goffman, 1971: 28)

Even though some level of rapport was hopefully established, it is still difficult to differentiate between exaggerated ‘story-telling’ and actual accounts, especially if the researcher does not know the participants’ personalities well. Data cannot be omitted because the researcher has suspicions that the interviewee is exaggerating or being deliberately deceitful; ‘...they may not be truthful or tell you half-truths, and the motives for this are likely to be both multiple and elusive, sometimes even for the participants themselves’ (Litoselliti, 2003: 23). While all presented findings are open to criticisms of researcher interpretation, it is no longer expected nor feasible to claim authority in presenting the *truth*; more an analysis of what we *believe* is the truth; ‘we deal with ambiguous representations of [the truth] – talk, text, interaction and interpretation’ (Riessman, 1993: 8). This was evidenced throughout the fieldwork:

‘On finishing the shift, I thanked PCSO Lemon. She said “Did I do okay? I hope I didn’t swear too much. Did I swear too much? The sergeant had me in his office yesterday and said I better not say anything bad or act inappropriately! He also told me to take my red nail polish off. He’s never said that before, you must be special! [laughs]”’

(Fieldnotes Excerpt: March, 2014)

‘On finishing the shift, I thanked NBO Grey. He asked me if I’d got “everything I needed”. I smiled and nodded non-committedly. He breathed a sigh of relief and said “Well I’m glad it all went okay and we got on great didn’t we, we’ve had a laugh. Inspector Lilac told me that I better bloody behave myself, be serious but not too serious, be truthful but not too truthful [laughs], or else he’s gonna make sure I don’t get my pension. He was only joking though... I hope!”’

(Fieldnotes Excerpt: March, 2014)

Upon finishing the shifts, PCSO Lemon and NBO Grey pleaded reassurance that they had both ‘*done okay*’ and that they had ‘*behaved*’ themselves (under instruction from their respective sergeant and inspector). I was surprised to learn they had both been under strict instructions and I felt uneasy that while I had spent nine hours with each of them, it may well have been just a front. Upon reflection on this, and whilst reading my fieldnotes later, I realised that there were a considerable amount of ‘uncensored’ comments. There were admissions of maltreatment, dislike for fellow officers and the occupation in general on occasion, and a candid account of an officer being bullied. These admissions reassured me that while they may have censored *some* of their thoughts on their job, truthful accounts slipped through the net and I feel I got, for the most part, a true reflection on the whole. However, it must be considered that Young (1991b: 116) observed that a researcher in his unit ‘left after two weeks delighted with the information he had been allowed to record, while the officers were happy that the despised sociologist had got nowhere near the truth, or the real meat of what goes on’.

Matrosfski et al., (1998: 6) warned that gatekeepers may strategically put forward potential participants in accordance with their own preferences or ‘put an observer with [an] officer least likely to discredit the unit’. While gatekeepers may have had little control over what officers told me, nearly every officer admitted to me in one way or the other about having received a ‘pep talk’ before our organised shift to try to ensure that their attitude was in line with official authority before I asked them any questions. While PCSO Lemon was occupied by paperwork, the sergeant (gatekeeper) asked if I wanted to go and speak to the criminal investigations department (CID) in the adjacent room. I agreed and he (perhaps tellingly) suggested that I talk to Detective Purple. I made the following fieldnote following our conversation;

‘[His conversation] felt to me very rehearsed and formal, although he did try to inject humour into his opinions to make them appear less serious. After a few minutes Detective Green, who had been listening in, called him out on this, exclaiming that he was a “bullshitter” and implored him to “tell the poor girl the truth” about office politics. He laughed, replied that he “didn’t know what [she] was on about” and then winked.’

(Fieldnotes Excerpt: March, 2014)

Men are sometimes tarnished as research participants for their propensity to perform masculinity (Watson and Shaw, 2011) and within the police force where approximately

72% are male (Home Office, 2015), the tendency to ‘perform’ in this way may be considerably higher than other occupations. The police as a masculine occupational culture has been discussed by many scholars (see Skolnick, 1975; Reiner, 1985; Goldsmith, 1990; Heidensohn, 1991; Westmarland, 2001; Miller, 1999; Waddington, 1999; Brown and Heidensohn, 2000; Jackson, 2001; Silvestri, 2003). While these performance levels are impossible to prove, it is acknowledged in research literature that whilst interviewing men, ‘boasting’ and ‘bragging’ is frequent (Richardson, 2010: 749). As aforementioned, Goffman (1959) referred to the ‘front’ and ‘back’ regions of performance. Front-stage is where the ‘actor’ (male police officers) performs masculinity to the ‘audience’ (the researcher and police colleagues). While I was keen to observe evidence of masculine performances for my benefit, I noticed it only on occasion throughout the fieldwork:

‘PC Crimson is a large, imposing figure with a wife and two teenage daughters. While his personal circumstances may not have made any difference to his protective demeanour towards women, I noticed that on occasion when we had dealt with a particular unsavoury male civilian, he kept asking if I was “okay”, and if it had “upset me”. I assured him it hadn’t but I was touched that he felt the need to ask. I wondered if he had been double-crewed if he would have asked his fellow colleagues (male or female) the same questions. I suspected not.’

(Fieldnotes Excerpt: March, 2014)

According to Goffman (1959), relaxation of an officer’s personal ‘fronts’ enables them to neglect social rules of politeness and decorum. Once backstage, ‘the performer can relax; he can drop his front, forgo speaking his lines, and step out of character’ (Goffman, 1959: 115). However, ‘most people will try to maintain a consistent version of what they are like... which can be misleading, given that the same person typically does different things at different times and for different purposes’ (Litoselliti, 2003: 23). But if the presence of other staff and/or a researcher causes the performance to be sustained, there is always a chance of being ‘outed’, resulting in a performance ‘slip’. If this occurs and a male officer displays ‘feminine’ characteristics such as an emotional display for example, within the observational work setting or interview they risk acquiring what Goffman (1963b) termed a ‘spoiled identity’, particularly if these displays are shown repeatedly. Events such as these can ‘discredit or otherwise throw doubt’ on an individual’s self-presentation (Goffman, 1959: 23). On my first shift, I was sat waiting with PCSO Lemon at her desk waiting to be called to the briefing and it is here that I met Detective Purple for the first time;

‘Detective Purple walks over and exclaims loudly that PCSO Lemon said yesterday that he looked like Rick Astley [1980s pop star] and asked my opinion on this. I trusted this was a rhetorical question so just laughed. His body language was very exaggerated and he placed both hands on his hips and thrust his crotch forward at PCSO Lemon, humming what I presumed to be a Rick Astley song. PCSO Lemon tells me later that they were told that I was conducting a study on police body language and he was “putting on a show” for me. I found this hilarious. It also made me reflect on how much of a performance officers would put on for me to give me what they thought was “good data”. But I felt touched that he thought that dancing around waving his arms singing Rick Astley songs and thrusting his crotch at us would give me something interesting to write about.’

(Fieldnotes Excerpt: March, 2014)

Later on in the shift, we observed Detective Purple walking down the corridor. PCSO Lemon did not hesitate to inform him that I was *not* actually doing a ‘body language’ study. She was laughing hysterically and he looked really embarrassed. While she might have ousted a level of his ‘spoiled identity’ in terms of what he tried to perform for me earlier in the day, he quickly recomposed himself, stuck out his bottom lip and informed me that he was ‘*only trying to help*’.

On another shift, Sergeant Beige who was running the morning briefing left the room momentarily. Banter quickly ensued, and one male PC was being teased about a girl he had dated ‘*for one night*’ (commonly referred to as a ‘one-night stand’). Crude language and sexist jokes followed which I and the two female staff present found amusing and laughed along. Interestingly, Chan et al., (2010: 432) argues that in these types of situations, both men and women are ‘doing gender’; ‘in relation to sexist jokes: male officers were consciously doing gender by telling these jokes while female officers were unconsciously doing the same by ignoring these jokes or laughing along rather than taking offence’. The inspector re-entered and presumably caught a snippet of the conversation. Following the brief, he asked me to stay behind. He looked concerned and asked if I was able to ‘*cope*’ with the conversation I had overheard and in doing so, he had presumed that I had been offended by what I had heard (seemingly as a woman I *should* have been). I assured him it was tolerable but the gender dynamics were clear in this instance; ‘while [men] think they’re being helpful, such help [is] predicated on men’s lack of respect for women... and reifies the notion of female weakness’ (Prokos and Padavic, 2002: 451). Sergeant Beige’s ‘boundary heightening’ remarks reaffirmed my status as an outsider (Kanter, 1977: 206-242; see also Brown, 1996). While I presumed a display of masculine

culture was the reason for his need for reassurance that I was not offended in this instance, it could equally have been a display of exaggerated courtesy to me as a visitor, regardless of gender; though I doubted that he would have asked the same question of a male researcher.

Gendered ‘performances’ within the research setting may have been present with women as well, albeit in a different form. Aside from the fact I was a female researcher; policewomen may also be under pressure to perform their occupational performed identity, even without the presence of men. The shame of presenting inherently ‘feminine’ characteristics within the force may cause some women to guard their true feelings and be unwilling to give factual accounts of their experiences; to succeed in a patriarchal institution, women must overcome, what are sometimes regarded as *feminine limitations* – their gendered role in society. Women must be appear undeterred by ‘men’s sexual jokes and crude language’ (Martin, 1980: 192) in their occupational day-to-day life and so to give a truthful account of how female police officers really feel about their treatment for example, would ensure a performance ‘slippage’, something that could never be regained in the eyes of their colleagues; the danger of this causes the front to be sustained even on a one-to-one basis with the researcher (Goffman, 1959).

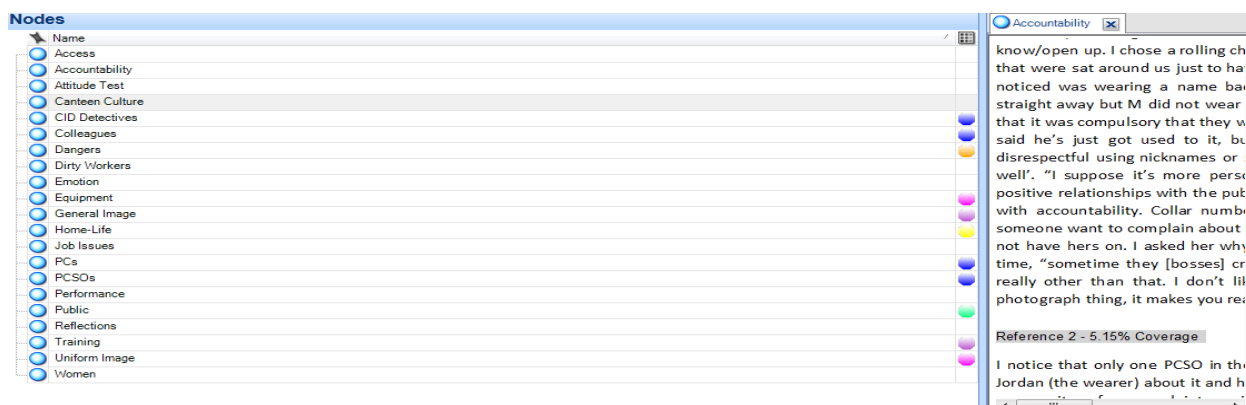
To summarise, it is problematic conversing with participants and determining the use of fronts and performance in observations, and indeed the effects of a researcher presence. Similarly, to what level of performance was I ‘putting on’ to appear professional and competent? Some of my decisions may not have been conscious at all, what I wore for example may have been the subconscious decisions between wanting to look like the ‘professional researcher’ and 26-year-old unashamed fashion follower.

5.10 *Data Analysis*

The approach to data management and analysis consisted of using the popular qualitative software program NVivo to gather all the fieldnotes electronically in one place. This allowed individual observations and interview data to be separated into various nodes under topic headings (core categories and subcategories). The fieldnotes needed to be ordered in line with the research objectives of the project, and NVivo was used with initial

collation of ideas and analysis. Coding in NVivo is most appropriate for ‘studies that prioritise and honour the participant’s voice’ (Miles et al., 2014: 74). Further to this however, the use of NVivo in this project was discontinued, as I realised I preferred manual data analysis as it helps to immerse deeper into the fieldnotes. *Figure 2* details the draft original nodes that were created to separate the many different themes that officers recounted:

Figure 2:



These many different nodes detail the first rough draft of thematic coding. For example, the nodes of ‘access’ and ‘reflections’ were personal accounts of my experiences in the field and thus were included in the research methods section (but irrelevant for participant data analysis). It became obvious when viewing the full list of nodes that some themes were too broad (for example, ‘general image’) and others were too narrow or not directly relevant (for example, ‘attitude test’) and therefore had to be re-evaluated as potential themes and chapters for the thesis. Therefore ‘uniforms’ became a core category and this umbrella node opened into sub-categories about how certain pieces of equipment and accoutrements are used as part of the police identity. The categories were developed with the thesis research objectives in mind. In light of these, the themes have been established to attempt to fulfil the original aims of the project.

5.11 Conclusion

To conclude, the methodology chapter is extensive for a reason. It was during the research process that the many different ways of managing the researcher identity became clear, as well as the plethora of issues to consider when dealing with not only research participants

in general, but participants in the police force. Researching individuals is always going to present challenges, but researching police officers within a notoriously secretive institution was a double-edged sword. No amount of training could prepare for how the process unfolded; it is, of course, different for every researcher in every setting. The procedure of negotiating (and renegotiating) access, establishing (lasting) relationships and attempting to see through initial interpretations of conversations and observations was frustrating, exhausting and exciting. If it was not for this difficult process however, which is unique to this project, the resulting data would look very different. Though I had anticipated problems with researching the police through the many scholars who have written extensively on the subject (for example, Rubinstein, 1973; Manning, 1978; Van Maanen, 1978; Punch, 1979; Holdaway, 1983; Norris, 1993; Pepinsky, 1998; Matrosfski, 1998; Westmarland, 2001; O'Neill, 2005; Loftus, 2007), it never fully prepares you for what you may experience. After a short duration in the field, my loyalty towards the police was apparent and I felt reluctant to recount any 'damning' information (Hughes, 2000: 241-242) that would destroy the fragile researcher-researched relationship that had been achieved. After being abruptly informed by the force-wide neighbourhood sergeant (FWNS) that my access was limited and I had to 'make do' with the research already gathered, I sadly realised that while I may have mustered an impression of being an 'insider' (Kappeler, et al., 2015: 83), I was quickly reminded of my status as a temporary visitor and a perpetual 'outside-outsider' (Brown, 1996: 184). It was evident that this fettered access was ranked. While most of the rank-and-file ascertained they were more than happy to accommodate more fieldwork should it be needed, the gatekeeper had other ideas. It was interesting that while 'dramaturgy' is used to refer to how the police 'convey impressions to an audience' (Manning, 1997: 316), I was actually also partaking in elements of dramaturgy. In researching the police and managing my own role and identity, I was similarly participating in a 'masterful costume drama' myself (Manning, 1997: 5).

Analysis and Conclusions

Chapter 6 Uniform, Vehicles and Equipment

6.1 Introduction

The previous five chapters have detailed the process of the research project and discussed how the uniform holds certain significances for both the wearer and the perceiver. The chapters discussed the implications of the dominant discourses in policing and how this is experienced through the lens of the uniform and its accoutrements. The following four chapters detail the findings of the research and discuss the conclusions from the fieldwork. The arguments from researchers in this area have already been briefly introduced, but are tested further against the empirical data collected in the fieldwork in order to assess the strength and adequacy of their views.

BlueCorp, like every police service in the country, has set rules and regulations regarding staff equipment and clothing: their force document was used for reference but not cited in the reference list to avoid anonymity issues. In setting out their individual dress code, BlueCorp recognise that uniformed and non-uniformed staff can have a ‘major positive or negative impact on [their] ability to influence others and thus carry out [their] work’ (2010: 4). If they fall below the standards of presenting a ‘smart and reassuring image to the public’ (2010: 4), then ‘supervisors are responsible for making sure all staff comply’ with the uniform dress code (2010: 7). Cooke (2004: 199) also found that ‘maintaining the level of smartness [previously] associated with the British police’ was important, as ‘the public perception of officer competency, authority, respect, and trust were directly related to the officer’s overall physical presentation’. In this chapter, using the fieldwork data, analysis of BlueCorp’s document will be referred to, in order to evaluate to what level officers follow the rules and regulations set out by their ‘Uniform Dress Code’.

The first police uniforms were carefully and deliberately designed to avoid comparisons with the military. The police were unarmed and the truncheons and handcuffs they carried were positioned out of view under their clothes (Waddington, 1996). It is only in the last twenty or so years that the police have moved from a ‘professional’ image of white shirt, black ties and bootleg trousers for operational staff, towards a ‘militarised’ look of combat pants, black polyester tops and pullovers, and thus conjures up images of ‘faceless, menacing-looking thugs dressed as for war’ (Young, 1991a: 46), something that the police originally aimed to avoid. Young (1991a: 46) suggested that policing was suffering from a ‘psycho-social malaise’ and a form of ‘social schizophrenia’ in which the institution looks to strike a balance between being a police ‘force’ and a police ‘service’. Although he was writing a quarter of a century ago, this balancing act of fusing the two ‘conflicting elements’ together in order to quench the desire for an ‘integrated “community policing”’ is something that is still prevalent today within BlueCorp (Young, 1991a: 46). Their current community-focused style of neighbourhood policing ‘clearly conflicts with an increasingly militaristic appearance in which bodily symbols of power and control are increasingly presented for the public gaze’ and sits somewhat ‘uncomfortably with the symbols, rituals, and imagery associated with a visible drift to a militaristic domain’ (Young, 1991a: 34).

The ‘casualisation’ of the uniform in BlueCorp, appearing to be ‘increasingly relaxed in style (e.g. fleece jackets)’ has fallen in line with Cooke’s (2004: 200) respondents’ suggestions that the ‘shirt and tie’ is unnecessary. However, this ‘casual’ look of all black clothing is also perceived as militarised, perhaps due to colour connotations (as discussed previously in Chapter 3.4). Furthermore, Cooke (2004: 246) recommended that ‘overly casual’ uniforms should not be issued, as ‘it is likely to reduce the degree of authority that the police should maintain’ – though what constitutes the fine line between ‘casual’ and ‘overly casual’ was not explored. As touched upon previously in Chapter 6.2, Cooke (2004) attributes militarisation with casualisation. In exploring the categories of perceived authority she connects looking ‘casual’, that is, not *professional*, through lack of the more formal shirt, tie and helmet. The findings from this study on the other hand, argues that a ‘casual’, relaxed style is far from informal and nonchalant; the militarisation of the

uniform as evidenced by officers in BlueCorp is *formalising* policing and causing officers to be perceived as trained, equipped and battle-ready, paradoxically at odds with what integrated neighbourhood policing set out to portray. Doran (2002: 1) considered that in adopting a more *military* style of dress, people ‘wear safety’:

‘There won’t be subtlety in security uniforms anymore, or casualness. Because of the current war effort, the military influences will show up more and more in uniforms across all industries. At least part of the rationale for a military trickle-down is emotional. When we wear these details, we are wearing safety: we wrap ourselves in a little bit of that military security and feel more protected somehow.’

(Doran, 2000: 1)

Though the new style uniforms appeared to be more practical for physical exertion such as cycling as ‘*there’s much more room*’ (PC Bronze) and the black tops are more comfortable and never need ironing which makes them ‘*sooo much easier*’ (PC Yellow), many officers felt that the new uniforms were too ‘*scruffy*’. It has been evidenced through research undertaken on seven forces, that ‘protection’, ‘recognisability’, ‘practicality’, ‘comfortableness’ and ‘public perception’ were ranked the top uniform priorities for officers (Hooper, 2000: 127).

When management informed lower-ranked officers about the topic of my research (in my presence), ambiguously that it was ‘*about the police uniform*’, officers were never shy airing their opinions on the practicalities (or lack thereof) of the current uniform. The common descriptions were that the new uniform was ‘*crap*’, ‘*shit quality*’ and they had in fact been ‘*duped*’ as the uniforms were not ‘*what it had said on the tin*’:

‘When the prototypes of the new shirts came to the office they were very good quality, and looked really good but when they were eventually rolled out, it wasn’t what it said on the tin – crap quality, bobbed after a few washes, just looks really scruffy. [He kept playing with the zip on his collar] ...and the top of the bloody collar isn’t long enough to fold down, but when it is zipped up it’s too short at the back and too long at the front of the neck to be comfortable and look decent.’

(PC Lavender)

This view was similarly expressed by a number of officers across all three areas and officers hoped that ‘*BlueCorp HQ [will] take [your research] findings seriously*’ because they were ‘*sick of looking so shit*’ (PC Orange). Officers insisted that whomever I spoke to would ‘surely’ have the same consensus about the quality of the uniform, while at the same time emphasising the important of a ‘good’ uniform for their personal and public

image. General comments about the uniform being ‘scruffy’ were frequent but some specific comments about certain items of clothing became apparent too. As well as numerous remarks about the new black zipped polo-shirts, the new combat trousers were mentioned regularly too:

‘PC Lavender said that my research should be taken seriously by BlueCorp, especially officers’ comments about the quality. He said he was “sure all of us would have some gripe or another about the state of our uniform. These pants [gestures] used to be black [they were erring on the side of grey – something that I noticed with the majority of the PCs and PCSOs which apparently happened after only a few washes]’”.

(Fieldnotes Excerpt: March, 2014)

As well as practicality, the government are particularly concerned with the public’s perception of the police. Emsley (1991) notes that in response to the level of resistance to the idea of the ‘police’ in the late eighteenth century, substantial attention was paid to image and style of officers before they officially made their first public appearance. The police institution was sensitive to the public opposition of an ‘at home’ army and constabularies originally chose their uniforms based on a gentry, rather than militarised image. However, the contemporary move towards a more militarised look has caused a dilemma:

‘There’s been a lot of debate surrounding the uniform over the years. I mean I’ve been here for twelve years and it’s changed quite a lot. But mostly they [government] are concerned with how [uniforms] look to the public. Apparently these new black shirts have made us look “unapproachable”, harder, more militarised, you can’t win. They want us to “fight crime” [uses air quotations] and get criminals locked up but then we have to “look friendly” doing it? [shakes head] It beggars belief.’

(PC Lavender)

‘I like it; it looks more bad-ass. You need that with some of the lunatics we deal with. You can’t be throwing your weight around in a pink tutu and expect some hard-nut guy to be compliant.’

(PC Mint)

As expressed by PC Mint, (who gave a short demonstration of a ballerina twirl to support his comment), it was important to look more militarised (i.e. more ‘bad-ass’) in order to encourage the compliance of ‘hard’, (synonymous with masculine), men. Intriguingly, it was indicated that the colour of the current uniform (black) was important in compliance; a fact noted by Meier et al., (2004) and also by Manning (1992: 139; 2001: 316) who

observed that the ‘appearance of control’ is ‘conveyed through symbols’. PC Mint, by using the example of a ‘*pink tutu*’, indicated that the farthest thing from a masculine appearance would be clothing commonly associated with *ballet* and thus the façade of the uniform is important in encouraging cooperation and obedience with the public; as explored previously by Bickman (1974). As revealed by PC Lavender, there is an ongoing conflict between the uniform dress code and what the government claims it is trying to achieve. It was anticipated that the introduction of neighbourhood policing teams would help to (re)build relationships between the police and the public (Home Office, 2005, 2010a, 2010b). However, if the new militarised uniforms make officers look ‘unapproachable’, it will not aid the already fractured relationships with the public. Tenzel and Cizanckas (1973) argued that the adoption of a non-militarised uniform only assisted with police-public relations for eighteen months and then returned to normal levels. Tenzel and Cizanckas’s findings are particularly controversial as they suggest that the uniform may only affect first impressions and the influence and significance of uniform alterations do not have lasting effects. Similarly, Young (1991a: 41) argued that ‘the technocratic warrior-image means the officer himself vanishes, and thus become synonymous with an offensive profile, so that he (and the images are always masculine), literally, symbolically and metaphorically presents an appearance and potential for death and destruction’.

6.2.1 *A Uniform Not Uniform*

Due to procurement costs, when new uniforms are rolled out across BlueCorp, officers reported that it can be up to a year before every officer is wearing the same equipment and clothing. Though it was quicker with the standard items such as pants and tops, the more expensive items (for example, ballistic vests) that needed to be individually fitted were much slower.

About half the officers I observed wore the old style body armour (smooth and plain black – see *Figure 3*). The other half had the same body armour but with new mesh vests that fitted snugly over the top (see *Figure 4*). During conversations with officers it became clear that the old vests were impractical due to their lack of ‘attachment potential’. With nothing to clip equipment on to, it only gave officers the option to carry equipment on a

utility belt around their waist, which in the past has come under inquiry for the uneven weight distribution. The new vests (as seen in *Figure 4*) allow officers to distribute weight evenly around their front and attach as many discretionary items as they desire.



Figure 3: PCSO wearing old-style body armour (identifiable insignia has been blurred).



Figure 4: Old-style body armour with new mesh vests worn over the top. Equipment shown in Figure 4 (clockwise from bottom left): mobile phone, handcuffs, personal name badge, GPS radio, baton, two pens.

‘I noticed whilst walking around the office that some PCs had varying amounts of equipment attached to their vests. Some had only a radio. PC Crimson approached and when I asked him what they were ‘allowed’ to display, he showed me his vest which had handcuffs, a Taser, four pens, radio, a large karabiner holding keys, two torches (including one personal torch), a baton, two extra Taser cartridges, alcoholic hand gel, medical gloves, leather gloves, and a body-worn video camera. It was the most I had seen by far on any PC and I wondered whether his length of service (seventeen years) caused him to carry equipment for every eventuality (because he had probably experienced nearly every eventuality during his service). I asked him about it, but he just laughed and said “I don’t know why they [other operational staff] all don’t carry all this, I definitely need it all! Maybe the new ones don’t know what they can come up against yet so they probably only think they need a torch [laughs]”’.

(Fieldnotes Excerpt: March, 2014)

As demonstrated by PC Crimson, his length of service was directly related to the number (and type) of detachable and discretionary equipment. The visibility of all the accoutrements was an emblem of his ‘experienced operational staff’ status, for colleagues and for the public.

Figure 5 shows PC Crimson’s vest with discretionary equipment:

Clockwise from bottom left:

- Black leather gloves
- Torch
- Spare Taser cartridges
- Taser
- Handcuffs
- Body-worn video device
- Police GPS radio
- Personal torch
- Karabiner holding police car keys
- Medical gloves and hand-sanitiser
- Baton
- Mobile phone (attached with a spiral tidy)
- Four pens



Figure 5: PC Crimson's vest with discretionary equipment.

BlueCorp's uniform rules and regulations are strict. However, in regards to discretionary equipment (which is not referred to in the document), PC Crimson admitted, '*[supervisors] aren't really bothered what you have on your vest as long as it's within reason and won't cause any danger to you or anybody else*'. While this was concurred by all of the officers I spoke to, it made me wonder where the line was drawn at 'within reason', particularly as it caused each individual officer's clothing to look very different from the next; a uniform that was actually not *uniform* in style. As stated by BlueCorp, 'managers are expected to monitor and enforce the standards, and in doing so, have the discretion to challenge staff as necessary regarding unacceptable standards of appearance' (BlueCorp, 2010: 15). These 'personal effects' (are identified with the self and are arrayed around the body) are thus acknowledged as 'possessional territory' (Goffman, 1971: 62). It is also argued that dress codes and discretionary equipment are subject to personal modification as police uniform policies do not circumscribe optional accoutrements. Similarly, school policies typically do not restrict student use of jewellery, backpacks, and cars which also convey status (Isaacson, 1998).

Cooke (2004: 230) noticed that there seems to be 'a growing trend to adopt American style uniforms with the display of accoutrements by all elements of public and private police', and she did not recommend the continued practice for front line officers as it was 'unlikely to improve relations with the community'. While the uniform may not be *uniform*, on close inspection within BlueCorp (and also in comparison to other forces), Young (1991a: 47) interestingly argued that the police had progressed to 'dress in a uniform which is so uniform that it is now completely interchangeable with those worn by other paramilitary units across the world'. Though Young makes a valid point in terms of the similarities that are present with militarised units which conflicts with the desired images of neighbourhood policing, this is a very generalised observation and does not take into account individual force preference or the frequent changes between 'professional' and 'militarised' presentations and up-close dissimilarities. Young (1991a: 72) however does contend that the police world does, unsurprisingly, 'value uniformity', and as the language suggests, 'it embodies the essentials of a system obsessed with physical and ideological concepts of order and discipline', which is 'massively symbolised by the uniform'.

This section discusses the implications of individual forces having identifiable insignia to separate them from other police services. To avoid breaching confidentiality, no pictures have been provided of the individual insignia of BlueCorp.

As discussed in earlier chapters, the uniform is a ‘distinctive dress worn by members of the same body’ (Randall and Gray, 1995: 16) and in wearing one ‘indicators of all other statuses of a citizen are suppressed’ (Joseph and Alex, 1972: 722). ‘Uniforms tend to standardise behaviour as well as appearance’ (Goldberg et al., 1961: 36) and thus for the police force it is essential that strict rules and regulations are followed in terms of similarities of the uniform amongst forces. Police services across the UK have, in the past, avoided standardising the uniform completely. Senior managers did not want to ‘buy into the concept’ of an identical uniform for all forces (*Police Review*, 2007: 4), as they wished to maintain the identity of local forces. The particular uniform and insignia of each force does vary significantly, and it is through these individual defining features that embodies the force’s ideals and values. This allows its wearer unique authority to transmit the ‘dominant values’ of a particular force (Solomon, 1987: 31), thus implying that while clothing and equipment varies between forces, so do rules, regulations, and attitudes.

It was an interesting finding from the fieldwork to discover that most officers, while united by force values, roles and clothing, still wanted to maintain some level of individuality within their force, though ‘individuality’ is perhaps determined by a *collective* force identity as opposed to individual *personal* identity. In reference to the following quotes, officers often referred to ‘they’ and ‘them’ ambiguously, explaining that the terms represented the ‘higher powers’, that is, superior officers and/or the police organisation overall. Though the differences between these two bodies are vast, there was a general consensus that ‘they’ referred to *anyone else* that was not their rank, role or department. In demonstrating their opinions on their uniform however, *they* and *them* implied the uniform decision makers. The disdain towards the *they* was never personal; criticism was directed at something of a non-entity, a decision-maker that they had never met.

‘They are talking about replacing all the uniforms to just “police” on it. They’ve already done a few of them but it takes a long time for everyone to be wearing the same thing and by the time everyone gets around to it, [the uniform] has changed again!’

(NPO Peach)

‘They’ve given us these new stab vests with the big PCSO lettering on them, still probably hard to tell us apart [from PCs] but we are all pretty pissed off that they’ve taken [BlueCorp] off the uniform now. I know it’s about money; they claim it’s about making everyone the same, but it’s definitely more about being able to buy in bulk’.

(PCSO Amber)

‘They took away the [BlueCorp] sign [on the tops] and replaced it with just “police” which we all hate. I don’t know if you’ve noticed but they’ve started doing that with all the pandas as well. The only distinguishable feature is the [chequered] band on our hats. We don’t wanna be just “police”, we are part of [BlueCorp].’

(PCSO Aqua)

‘They are talking about doing the same with our hats, like keeping the chequered band but having your force’s badge on it but very small, so if all the forces in the country were together lined up you’d hardly be able to tell who belonged where. We hate that. We all hate the thought of that. It’s not just about individual identity but about the force as a whole and that’s very important to us.’

(PC Yellow)

In line with Goffman (1959) and Manning’s (1997) dramaturgical discussions, it is indicated by the above quotes, for PCs and PCSOs, keeping their individual force identity was an important source of identification. Their uniform communicated what areas and force they belong to: to each other, and to the public. ‘Dramaturgy emphasises the use of symbols to convey impressions to an audience’ (Manning, 2001: 316), and thus symbols, i.e. insignia, within their standardised uniforms allowed officers little manoeuvre in terms of individual identity. It became clear that officers were not so much concerned with their personal identities as they were with a *social identity of BlueCorp*. What that meant to officers collectively was falling in line with the ‘us versus them’ and ‘insiders and outsiders’ mentality (Kappeler et al., 2015: 83; see Chapter 4.6). However, the fieldwork data suggests that this internal solidarity is largely limited to their job role inside BlueCorp. While they may identify with other officers in different forces, internal solidarity is largely based on their individual force identity and thus standardising their uniforms, equipment and vehicles to just general ‘police’ is something that generates feelings of displeasure and a loss of identity for officers within BlueCorp. So while

Kappeler et al., (2015: 83) referred to ‘insiders and outsiders’, and us versus them, and an unambiguous interpretation of the *police versus the public*, it is clear that this distinction is far from black and white. It is a complex set of identities which prioritises their identity as an *officer in BlueCorp*, thus extending Kappeler et al., findings by being also a level of ‘officer in BlueCorp’ versus ‘other forces’ and the public. This strong desire for individuality goes much farther than what Kappeler et al., (2015) envisioned in 1994.

6.2.3 *Differentiating between PCs and PCSOs: ‘They wanna be us!’*

Police community support officer uniforms are designed to look like they are part of the policing team but ‘visibly distinct’ from police constables (Neighbourhood Policing Programme, 2007: 36). There have been disparagements that suggest the police institution is trying to *dupe* the public into a purposeful misperception about the distinction between a PCSO and police officers: ‘how can the public tell the difference between the two and is this a purposeful blurring of the lines to make the public think there are more police officers on the streets?’ (Police Federation, 2009: 1). It was reported in 2009 that PCSOs wear the same clothes as police officers, significantly highlighting the word *police* ‘in much larger letters’ (Police Federation, 2009: 1) (see *Figure 6*). However, this signage has been slowly phased out nationally, though some officers in BlueCorp are continuing to wear the outdated versions. Replacement signage in recent years have words all the same size (see *Figure 3*), the similarities demonstrated when officers are stood side by side have been highlighted (see *Figure 7*). However, it is unclear whether these changes reflect the criticism that the old signage faced about trying to ‘dupe’ the public:

‘It is all to do with trust. It has taken us 200 years to build the British policing model to something that people understand. If there are people wearing uniforms very similar to those of an officer without the same powers and unwittingly deceiving the public that is something that needs to be looked at.’

(McKeever, Police Federation of England and Wales, cited in McDermott, 2012)

This signage however (shown previously in *Figure 5*) is now classed as ‘old uniform’ too: mesh vests with ‘PC/PCSO’ sewn in to overlay the body armour is now current uniform (shown on the open vest in the top right of *Figure 5*).



Figure 6: PCSO high visibility jacket showing the word 'police' in much larger letters.



Figure 7: A PC and PCSO stood side by side to demonstrate the similarities (and differences) in their uniform.

PCSOs wear similar uniform to those worn by PCs in order for members of the public to recognise them as part of the police institution, as opposed to mistaking them for private security firm staff for example. Whilst there is variation across forces, all PCSOs are required to wear a royal blue zipped polo-shirt (as opposed to black for PCs). This colour variation is the main identifying feature for distinguishing between a PC and PCSO in BlueCorp. Despite the colour difference, PCSOs bear a striking resemblance to PCs,

especially in low light or from a distance. This colour variation appeared to be a cause of contention within BlueCorp:

Neighbourhood Beat Officer Grey: ‘PCSOs have to wear the blue shirts to differentiate but it’s a bit ridiculous when we are all wearing the high vis jackets over the top anyway so you can’t see it. Some of the younger PCSOs choose to wear the black tops to look like PCs.’

CRDC: ‘If that isn’t part of their uniform, how are they getting hold of black tops?’

NBO Grey: ‘Well they have the black tops, because they’re their cycling tops, but they are choosing to wear them every day, it’s ‘coz they wanna look like us [laughs], one actually told me that. Said he got more respect if people thought he was a PC. Bless ‘im.’

Several PCs and detectives agreed that it *was* a general consensus and a ‘running joke’ that PCSOs often strived to disguise their PCSO status by actively ‘going out of their way to hide the PCSO markings on their uniforms to look more like us’ (PC Mauve), and consciously wearing their black cycling tops or black fleeces to do regular patrol work to make their uniform more similar to PCs as previously discussed (also shown in *Figure 8* and *Figure 9*). While not technically lower in ranking, PCSOs do hold less power than their PC colleagues. PCSOs have standard powers, stemming from the Police Reform Act 2002, but discretionary powers vary between forces and are designated by the chief constable or commissioner of the respective force. The non-confrontational purpose of their role has resulted in PCSOs being non-attested constables, and therefore do not have the same powers of arrest under section 24 of the Police and Criminal Evidence Act 1984. While they can still carry out a ‘citizen arrest’ it is this main distinguishing feature that lends legitimacy to the ‘banter’ from their PC colleagues.



Figure 8 (left): Front-view of PCSO wearing black fleece.

Figure 9 (right): Rear-view of PCSO wearing black fleece.

These running jokes amongst PCs, detectives and sergeants, whilst dismissed as banter, had an underlying derogatory tone to them, further enhancing the PCSO status as ‘plastic police’, and ‘second-rate police officers’ (House of Commons, 2008: 92). As evidenced, the uniform that officers wear is a ‘sign vehicle’ (Goffman, 1959: 1) that contain physical markers. They are always embodied within ‘elastic’ physiognomies, clothing being the case in point, is used by officers to ‘give off’ information to others. According to Goffman, when two or more actors are in direct presence of each other, they are involved in a mutual expressiveness, regardless of how much interaction actually takes place. Within this mutual expressiveness, there is a distinction between expressions *given* and expressions *given off*. Expressions ‘given’ involves ‘verbal symbols or their substitutes’ (Goffman, 1959: 2) and are primarily intentional. Expressions ‘given off’ can be both deliberate and unwitting and incorporate ‘a wide range of action that others can treat as symptomatic of the actor’ (Goffman, 1959: 2). Expressions that are ‘given off’ comprise non-verbal communication such as body language, facial expressions, gesticulation, physical appearance and are of a ‘more theatrical and contextual kind’ (Goffman, 1959: 4). As individuals intentionally and unintentionally ‘give’ and ‘give off’ expressions they subsequently present their ‘selves’ and how so far this is accepted by the audience is dependent on the performance of an individual or group of individuals.

As it is obvious to the trained (policing) eye, it appears that the attempt to disguise the PCSO status is merely to dupe the public, albeit momentarily, into thinking they are police constables, perhaps to boost their questionable authority in light of the negative press that has surrounded PCSOs. Undoubtedly, misidentification has likely deterrent benefits but can also serve to heighten public expectations, confuse and dupe the public, and even put PCSOs in danger (Cooper et al., 2006).

Though it was never openly admitted; when questioned PCSOs brushed off purposely misidentifying themselves as merely ‘banter’, and justified that *‘[his] blue top was just in the wash that day and they haven’t let it drop since’ (PCSO Bronze)*, it was a running joke amongst other ranks that PCSOs ‘wanted to be PCs’. However, PCSO Bronze, who had joined BlueCorp when PCSOs were first introduced, identified that PCSOs who identify as PCs on a regular basis can cause problems:

‘It’s all very well, ‘cause I think the government wanna make it look like there are more PCs around anyway but the trouble is if there is a fight in the street and a PC has to get involved and a PCSO is stood there in a black top and can’t do anything then the

public are gonna get pissed off and be like “why isn’t that copper doing something?” It won’t look good.’

(PCSO Bronze)

‘If they aren’t identifying themselves properly or like if they’re in the wrong top or something, [a civilian] can easily get away with assault because they just say in court that we didn’t identify ourselves or weren’t easily identifiable or whatever, or that they didn’t know we were police [shakes head], ridiculous really.’

(PCSO Cerise)

The role of the PCSO, within the new policing ‘family’ conflicts with the dominant masculinity culture of the police. Communications, interpersonal skills and the ability to successfully network have been recognised as crucial traits for the success of PCSOs; however, these attributes are often interpreted as feminine (Steinburg, 1990). It was highlighted from the research that the ‘banter’ regarding PCSOs altering uniforms to disguise their role and present it as something else, was directed predominantly at *male* PCSOs. The role of the PCSO conflicts with the dominant masculinity culture of the police institution and is often described as a softer form of policing (Davies and Thomas, 2008), which might explain why it seemed to be only *male* PCSOs disguising their role by altering their uniforms. On the other hand, it should be considered that banter directed towards male PCSOs may have been an example of the differences between back and front regions of teasing behaviour (Goffman, 1959). Fielding and Fielding (1992: 205) for instance, considered how lewd and insulting comments male police officers have for their female colleagues were mostly restricted to ‘backstage’ areas so women do not experience them. Thus the mockery may not be limited to men, it may just take place in a different *area* of performance.

It became clear from the data that other ranks making sweeping assumptions that *all* PCSOs ‘*wanna be PCs*’ was directed towards *male* PCSOs, postulating that PCSOs were ‘*hiding*’ from their ‘*feminine job role because they must be embarrassed*’ (*PC Moss*). These comments undoubtedly highlight the masculine undertone still very relevant and present within BlueCorp. Whether their claim that PCSOs ‘*wanna be PCs*’ is true or not, or just for some PCSOs, their jokes on the subject undeniably cement the idea that the PCSO job role is ‘*feminine*’ and of a lesser standing than that of PCs.

These findings clearly indicate what Cooke (2004) envisioned might happen upon completing her quantitative study a year too early to include PCSOs. She queried whether the transfer of police power through ‘key symbols’ would ‘diminish its power, authority and wider significance’ and whether this would have a ‘watering down effect’ (Cooke, 2004: 239). Writing one year later Cooke (2005: 235) stated that ‘PCSOs wear a uniform that identifies them clearly as police staff... [and] the naming of these officers as “police” community support officers is very interesting... the introduction of PCSOs clearly blurs traditional established boundaries’. Findings from Cooke’s (2004: 243) original study suggested that the existence of PCSOs could have ‘detrimental effects on the relationship between the community and the police, unless better distinctions are made between PCSOs and traditional public police’. The findings from this study clearly show that PCSOs themselves were involved with the public mistaking them for police officers. What Cooke (or indeed any other writer) did not envision was the *purposeful deception* that some PCSOs in BlueCorp would undertake; actively concealing their PCSO markings/insignia and wearing black tops to look more like their police officer counterparts. This finding supports Young’s (1991b: 72-3) observation that separation and hierarchical binary pairs emerge amongst different police areas (and in my research, different policing roles), particularly distinguishing between officers that are ‘properly uniformed’ versus ‘variously (un)dressed’. It can be suggested that the PCSOs who were identified (visually or hearsay) as altering their uniforms to look more like their PC colleagues were attempting to optimistically categorise themselves as a ‘positive’ group member (‘properly uniformed’) instead of a ‘negative’ group member (‘variously (un)dressed’ and ‘unreal policemen’) using Young’s typology (1991b: 72-3). This behaviour was observed with a small number of PCSOs and it was difficult to distinguish elaborate banter from actual levels of uniform dissent. O’Neill (2014b: 19), argues in her recommendation report on PCSOs, that actually ‘not all PCSOs would like to be police officers’ including those who ‘initially joined as a PCSO with a view to becoming a PC later’ as the ‘PC job is no longer appealing’ in reality. While this may be the case for some PCSOs in this study, those who chose to alter their uniforms to look more like their police constable counterparts may not necessarily want to take on the practicalities of the *role* of a PC, but rather take presentational steps to enhance their legitimacy through imagery and presentation (Goffman, 1959).

'Squad car[s]: there's the uniform and it's almost like you're a centaur, you know, with a head of a human and the body of a squad.'

(Former NPO, quoted in Miller, 1999: 99)

More crime occurs in private spaces than occurs on the public street, and thus the 'deterrent value' of the police patrol vehicle is limited at best. Therefore, it is a 'convenient myth' to use (Bahn, 1974: 338-9) when police commissioners are faced with the question 'what are you doing about crime?' The use of vehicles enables officers to patrol areas much larger than the traditional beat of their policing predecessors, and they were originally used as a 'semantic coup', allowing patrol cars to connote 'ever-present watchfulness close at hand' (Bahn, 1974: 342).

However, as police beats have increased in size, and the number of officers available to cover these beats has *decreased*, officers have become less familiar with their 'patches' and 'spend more of their duty time driving from one incident to another' (Audit Commission, 1999: 10). The public's perception is that the police have been 'withdrawn' from the streets (Home Office, 2001: ix) and although police vehicles are a familiar sight in some areas, it is not visibility that reassures, but the *type* of visibility. A police vehicle speeding through areas on blue light runs with sirens blaring is 'far from reassuring' (Home Office, 2001a: 23).

PCSOs were originally employed with the idea that they would be more visible to the public, on pedal-bicycle or on foot, and it is set out in their job description 'to patrol the neighbourhood community on foot or cycle patrol as directed and in uniform as provided' (BlueCorp, restricted document via personal communication). However, the sheer size of the beats to be covered, within Area B in particular, meant that some PCSOs had the use of cars for the duration of their shift. While this was not common practice, vehicles were often enjoyed to get from one place to another, or simply to avoid bad weather. There was an indication that younger, less experienced officers were more inclined to *expect* the use of a car or van, especially PCSOs, which caused some animosity from older colleagues. One of Holdaway's research participants noticed a similar practice:

'The blokes here just don't know how to walk a beat. They never get out and meet anybody. They don't know how to talk to anyway. I think it's terrible. They just

want to ride around in Panda cars, and they don't want to get out and walk around, meet and talk to people. They just haven't got a clue.'

(Holdaway, 1983: 90)

'Well they frown upon it [vehicle usage] but we can have one if we want to. We are allowed to drive from A to B because to get to the beginning of our beat would take a fair bit of walking which is wasted time in their eyes I suppose. But we don't mind. The young ones push the boundaries a lot; they take the piss and drive most places.'

(PCSO Bronze)

PCSO Bronze indicated that the age of the officer determined whether they preferred being on foot or not and was more to do with what officers determined as 'real policing' (Holdaway, 1983; Hunt, 1984; Miller, 1999). It was ascertained that it was not due to 'laziness' but more what officers insisted were essential; having the use of a vehicle meant relishing 'crime fighting', that is, the more 'exciting' aspects of police work. PCSO Cerise and Bronze (who are female) also concluded that the desire for vehicles was associated with 'crime fighting' and driving was more '*bad ass*' and thus '*suited more to the young guys*', therefore suggesting that fast panda cars suited the masculine nature of young officers. A certain masculine status was achieved and attached to being able to drive a patrol vehicle, especially models that were regarded as the 'better' cars (that is, faster, newer and more *macho* models). The meanings attached by officers to different types of patrol vehicles draws on dominant discourses of male supremacy and machismo. By insisting on being assigned certain cars or vans, male officers were able to use it as part of the construction of a macho performance (Goffman, 1959) whereas the female officers either were '*not bothered*', or just accepted that they would be given '*whatever vehicles were left*'. On one shift, NBO Grey 'got left' with an old marked police van which was nicknamed the 'Postman Pat' van due to its comical shape (see *Figure 10*).

When NBO Grey had the use of this vehicle, he was unable to demonstrate (at least for the duration of the shift) an image of himself that reflects the macho discourse of policing culture; something he referred to as '*fucking embarrassing driving Pat's shat*'. NBO Grey assured me that he was, due to his length of service, '*owed a least a year patrolling in a "proper" machine*' (See *Figure 11* - reprinted with permission from NBO Grey's personal photos on his phone. This vehicle is not BlueCorp property and the comment was perceived as 'tongue in cheek'). In the satire book, 'The Rules of Modern Policing – 1973 Edition', Hunt and Adams (2007: 17), note that officers should 'never underestimate the

importance of [their] car', as it 'shows [their] status; you see me pull up in my Mark III Cortina and you immediately think I'm the business don't you?'. For police officers, vehicles are used as 'possessional territory' and 'use space' (Goffman, 1971: 59-63). Uniquely for the police, and perhaps taxi drivers, the symbolic space is temporary, used perhaps only for the duration of the shift and thus it affords workers little claim over its space as a safe retreat.



Figure 10 (left): Ford Transit Connect, a.k.a. 'Postman Pat van', a.k.a. 'Pat's shat'.

Figure 11 (right): NBO Grey's 'dream' police vehicle (Source: NBO Grey).

Being given the use of a police vehicle however, had its advantages regardless of the 'masculine' or 'feminine' model of it;

'It's raining outside and I notice two PCSOs in the refs room are dry. I ask them how it's been on shift in the horrible weather. They reply that they've both been in a panda today. "We've both done our police driving courses so we're okay to be out in the cars. Because of staff shortages our beats have got much bigger, much bigger than we could possibly do on foot or on bikes. We can't possibly get everywhere and go everywhere they want us to physically go because there's not enough of us to cover that patch if we're walking around. They do prefer us to be on foot but they don't really say anything. We sometimes park and walk around but maybe it doesn't matter if they see us, like walking around because we're in a marked car so I don't think it matters if they see a car or a person, it's still a visible presence isn't it?"'

(Fieldnotes Excerpt: March, 2014)

Using marked vehicles as ‘extra visibility’ were even used by civilian personnel in BlueCorp:

‘[The government] is trying to kid people into believing there is more of a police presence definitely. Our delivery guy, he has no powers or equipment or anything, well he carries a radio actually, but he drives one of the marked [panda] vans, with full livery, to just deliver stuff. The bosses choose to make him drive this because it is an extra opportunity for public visibility. Free publicity if you will!’

(Detective Green)

While Detective Green may recognise the advantages of BlueCorp utilising ‘free publicity’ opportunities, there is a questionable morality to this. A deliberate façade may actually cause problems: if the delivery man was flagged down at an incident that required police assistance for example, what would the consequences of that interaction be? Mildly speaking, members of the public might feel confused and angry upon realising that the van driver is merely a delivery man or even worse case scenario wasting potentially vital minutes at a crime scene. Upon querying this with Detective Green she shrugged and admitted that it had ‘*never happened*’, and ‘*suppose they’d cross that bridge when they came to it*’. The continual movement of police (in police vehicles) is perceived to be the *wrong type of increased visibility*. Officer ‘dispersal’ across their patches, while perhaps necessary in times of austerity, has caused every police vehicle and every member of visible patrol staff to become ‘anonymous ciphers’ to the public: ‘alike, unfamiliar, and unrecognisable’ (Bahn, 1974: 342).

6.3.1 *Too Much Patrol? Does Increased Visibility Actually Reassure?*

It was clear that officers did not differentiate between the varying types of ‘visibility’ that the Home Office (2001a: 23) highlighted in their white paper ‘*Open All Hours*’. All types of visibility (on foot, in vehicles, different ranks) were referred to generally under the umbrella term of ‘public reassurance’. Yet it must be emphasised that the different types of visibility send out very different messages: ‘unhurried foot patrol suggests ‘all is well with the world’, versus the ‘far from reassuring’ blue light runs (Home Office, 2001a: 23). Some officers did ascertain that in ‘*some areas*’ (identified as the crime ‘hot-spots’)

residents could feel more reassured with a police presence, while other more affluent areas could feel ‘*unnerved*’ with increased visibility though it was merely officer speculation. From the fieldwork data, it became clear that wearing the uniform provoked different reactions and responses dependent on the time of day or night, weekday or weekend, and area the patrolling officer(s) were in. I was alerted to this pattern by officers on numerous occasions:

‘There are very different reactions to our uniform for day and night and in different situations. I think in the day it is probably a deterrent, when everything’s calmer. But at night, especially in the city centre, the [police] presence actually makes people play up. Like they know they can have a fight and won’t get hurt, like they can throw the first punch and then we will step in and they won’t have to get the punch back if you know what I mean.’

(PC Mauve)

Although this public reaction was cited as ‘*unusual*’, and limited to a small demographic (namely young inebriated adult males in the city centre on a Friday or Saturday night), it nevertheless indicated that a uniformed presence acted as a deterrent only in certain situations, and encouraged violence in others. Although these instances were few and far between, it was a consensus among officers that their uniforms could cause this unusual effect, therefore putting an interesting spin on previous findings that suggest the police deter criminal activity with their mere presence: ‘officers... intimidate persons and thus deter offences’ (Manning, 1979: 46). To further illustrate this, a PC and sergeant recalled testing the ‘playing up’ theory over a number of weeks:

‘We actually wanted to test the theory out didn’t we? [Sergeant Indigo nods]. We were in the city a few weeks ago and we were watching two groups of lads sparring outside [the nightclub] and we thought “ah, I wonder what they’ll do if we leave”, we got back in the van and drove around the corner. We went back after a minute, and surprise surprise they’d gone. No problems. It’s really strange, it’s like they act up because they can see you’re there. You’d think it’d be the opposite way around, wouldn’t you?’

(PC Mauve)

One significant difference in visibility that the public has seen in the last few years, is the regular use of high-visibility jackets. All front-line officers are required to wear them when they are out on patrol to make them easily identifiable to the public. In contrast, at the beginning of the twentieth century officers dark (blue/black) uniforms aided ‘invisibility’ to ‘catch criminals by surprise’ (Broady and Tetlow, 2005: 39). The use of high visibility uniforms and vehicles certainly help to increase perception of an increased police presence

on the streets, something the government is keen to encourage. However, accountability may also play a part:

‘I don’t know if it’s about visibility, maybe it is, they say that’s what the public want and they can all certainly see us from a distance with the garish yellow!’

(PC Mint)

‘It helps people see us more easily, especially from a distance. Whether they actually need our assistance or not, they probably feel reassured that they can see us, that we’re just there.’

(PC Moss)

‘It’s definitely to do with ‘elf and safety [mocking tone used] to make sure we’re not hit on the road or anything maybe. Can’t have any compensation culture going on [laughs].’

(Sergeant Indigo)

‘They [the public] are always trying to fuck us over. If we weren’t wearing it at an incident or something I can just bloody imagine them attacking us and saying “oh well I didn’t recognise him as a copper” and getting off with it.’

(PCSO Amber)

Previous research suggests that public reactions to seeing police officers are considerably more complex than just visibility. In a visibility survey in 2006, 50% of respondents thought that high visibility jackets were necessary to make officers more visible, but an equal number of those interviewed disapproved of the jackets because the luminous yellow colour had emergency-situation connotations (Innes, 2007). Furthermore, there was an almost unanimous negative reaction when pictures were shown of three or more officers in the high-visibility jackets indicating that too much police visibility conveyed messages that it must be a crime hot-spot to warrant a larger police presence.

It is therefore indicated that for some sections of the population, increased police presence ‘will increase insecurities rather than reassure’ but this is also dependant on other variables (such as prejudices and prior contact with the police) (Millie, 2010: 227), and confusion over who is doing what. Across many UK cities, the public has to make clear distinctions between PCs, PCSOs, special constables, private security, street wardens, city-centre night marshals, environmental crime officers... and this list is far from exhaustive. This presentation of ‘hybrid’ police may actually ‘heighten anxiety in the community’ (Cooke, 2005: 233). It could be just that there is actually too much patrol

(Millie, 2010), and thus it may not be about increased or decreased police presence; it is quite simply a question of *who* is being reassured.

6.4 *Conclusion*

The contradictions that exist in policing are extensive. The binary distinctions that emerged in this chapter are the basis for a much wider and deeper set of conflicting pairs in a vast number of different contexts in police work. Firstly, ‘wearing safety’ by ‘wrapping’ officers in ‘military security’ (Doran, 2000: 1) offers some sort of psychological protection. This psychosomatic ‘protection’ is, at best, unrealistic. The occupation is, by its very nature, dangerous and unpredictable and wearing clothing that is more militarised than its previous counterparts is more ‘emotional’ than anything else (Doran, 2000: 1). Officers suggested that there is a contradiction between ‘*looking militarised*’ and then carrying out their duties with ‘*friendliness*’ and it is increasingly challenging. Similarly, high visibility, shown by the wearing of illuminous jackets versus the invisibility of police individuality through uniformity and muted colours offers a complex binary. Young (1991a: 67-68) argued that it is ‘no accident that the politics of the times seems to parallel the growing toughness of the police image, or that the police have taken on an increasing resemblance to the black-clothed enemies of goodness who sprinkle the popular science fantasy films such as Star Wars, Superman and the like’.

Secondly, the fieldwork data suggests that the police uniform is actually not *uniform* in style. While the overall clothing and equipment is instantly recognisable and contributory to the collective force identity, it is clear that wearing the uniform is a very personal affair. This is interesting in terms of developing a contradictory pair; the uniformity, that is, the expected homogeneity of a uniform, is deviated from in the way in which officers personalise their uniforms through the addition of discretionary equipment and embellishments. Officers were keen to discreetly eradicate elements of a collective identity: they amended and modified elements of their clothing and equipment to personalise and individualise. Some police community support officers in particular went out of their way to actively disguise their status in wearing black cycling tops and concealing their PCSO markings to look more like police constables which invited ridicule from other ranks.

These adjustments seemed to temporarily increase PCSO morale. Similarly, when new tops were recently issued to Hampshire police officers with the word ‘police’ mistakenly stitched upside down, officers were allowed to keep them ‘to boost morale... because it’s funny’ (Hickney, 2015: *Police Oracle*), indicating that personal modifications to clothing (mistaken or otherwise) can boost self-esteem, albeit temporarily. While some of these alterations were conscious personal choices, around half of officers were wearing (noticeably) outdated versions of uniform, demonstrating another example of a uniform not uniform in style.

Lastly, the types of visibility that the police offer is dependent on a considerable number of variables. The fieldwork shows that police presence is often perceived differently dependent on the area, previous dealings with the police and various other things and ‘the uniform is instantly recognisable and fraught with a complex of ingrained stereotypes’ (Gunderson, 1987: 192). It is difficult to separate the police uniform and police presence in general within the binary pair of reassurance versus anxiety (see Millie, 2010: 227). Similarly, officers recalled varying reactions to their uniform depending on the time of day and had undertaken informal ‘tests’ to prove their hypotheses and therefore day versus night effects offers its own contradictions of how officers ‘use’ their uniform. As aforementioned, the binary of visibility versus invisibility is complex in the sense that another binary pair emerges within this context; reassurance, provided by an increased police presence, versus anxiety, where ‘too much’ police presence results in unease and disquiet is perhaps more dependent on who is being reassured (see Millie, 2010).

Goffman’s (1959) concept of dramatic realisation is a useful tool to explore the aspects of the police uniform discussed in this chapter. Goffman (1959: 30) stated that an actor ‘typically infuses his activity with signs which dramatically highlight and portray confirmatory facts that might otherwise remain unapparent and obscure’. He astutely notes that in some cases, such as the ‘roles of prize-fighters, surgeons, violinists, and policemen’, dramatic realisation ‘presents no problem’ as these roles allow for such high levels of ‘dramatic self-expression’ their performances become ‘famous’ (1959: 30-1). The appearance and manner of police officers (as described in Chapter 4.2 and throughout this chapter) ultimately supports this. The image of a police officer in uniform, and indeed their vehicles and many accoutrements, act as visible symbols of authorised use of force and power (Westmarland, 2001). Reiner (2000: 170) argued that the ‘historical and

sociological evidence should have made clear that crime-fighting has never been, is not, and cannot be the prime activity of the police, although it is part of the mythology of media images, cop culture, and, in recent years, government policy'. Manning (1997) also discussed how police officers must use dramaturgic tools and strategies because there are many inconsistencies between what the police can do and what they are expected to do, much like the inconsistencies that the police community support officers show in this chapter. By altering and modifying their uniform, the symbolic relevance of a different role (that of their police officer counterparts), is in conflict with what their actual job entails. People 'read' signals such as patrolling PCSOs not on face value: with the position and context of social situations influencing the reception, dissemination and consumption of semiotics and dramaturgy. As dramaturgical sociology (Manning, 1997: 6) 'focuses on social control', and presumes that actions are symbolic in the way that everything relays messages and explores how they are interpreted, visibility and patrol carry much more contested mixtures of emotions, feelings and perceptions, which are often contradictory. These paradoxes are problematic, much more than the government's assertion that the police image and how it is managed through the uniform is simply a reassurance or deterrence factor (Innes, 2004). It is indeed, a 'masterful costume drama' (Manning, 1997: 5) from all sides. The effectiveness of these roles and dramatic realisations were noted by Heidensohn (1992: 299) in the way that authority is 'projected' and physical presence is used as a type of interaction in itself. Goffman (1959: 30) stated that 'policemen' have 'no problem' in dramatic realisation, but there is evidently not much dramatising to do because of their iconic uniform, accoutrements and vehicles.

*7.1**Introduction*

The literature suggests that female officers, regardless of rank, have been subject to discrimination, harassment, victimisation and reinforcement of stereotypical masculine traits in the police force (see Martin, 1980; Heidensohn, 1992; Kirkham, 1996; Miller, 1999; Brown and Heidensohn, 2000; Westmarland, 2001; Silvestri, 2003; Jackson 2005). In this chapter, evidence will be presented from the fieldwork from BlueCorp to explore the significance of the uniform. It will outline how officers' self-presentational techniques through uniform embellishments and accoutrements are used in ways that are seen to masculinise and feminise the self. In doing so, it emphasises the ways in which men and women use their uniform to construct and manage their occupational and personal identities.

*7.2**A 'Unisex' Uniform*

Conventional police uniforms were designed to be masculine as they typically tried to highlight big, strong, male shoulders (Fussell, 2003). Women police officers are generally depicted as portly, unattractive and masculine (Jackson, 2006) and their uniform reflects this representation. Feminist scholars have even remarked that the masculine portrayal of women and the subsequent design of the uniform is to predominantly keep women in their place (Brown and Heidensohn, 2000), and the masculine uniform is part of the 'test' (Jackson, 2006: 87). Since police uniforms cannot fully disguise or repudiate gender, evidence from the fieldwork will show that while the uniforms may have male and female 'options' for certain types of clothing, it does little to move away from the defeminisation of police clothing. As indicated by the literature in Chapter 3, the uniform for female police officers has become increasingly 'unisex' in the last century. While original uniforms consisted of skirts, kitten heels and a handbag to hold their baton and focused on 'beauty as duty' (Kirkham, 1996: 154) as opposed to clothing adept for fighting crime, current uniforms are considerably more masculine in style. Identical to male police uniforms,

female PCs and PCSOs wear combat trousers, black zip-up tops, stab vests, combat boots, and high-visibility jackets; all clothing usually associated with men (Wyles, 1952). Controversially, it has been observed that women who are content to live their lives in ‘masculine clothing’ are referred to as ‘gentlemen inverters’, some of whom are referred to as policewomen who ‘rarely appear in public without their mannish police uniform’ (Halberstam, 1998: 88). This supports Wright’s (1996: 155) view that the female version of any traditionally male clothes is ‘plagiarised masculinity in an attempt to normalise and/or assimilate women in an often male-dominated workplace’. Female police officers wearing a masculine (male) uniform ‘goes beyond imitation’ as it has constantly been a ‘conscious abduction of a garment primarily to achieve, or at least aspire to, the privileges of men in the public sphere’ (Wright, 1996: 153).

The main differentiating features between the current male and female uniforms are that the cut and style vary between males and females to fit different body shapes. The female uniform however, has come under intense scrutiny highlighting the fact that women’s uniforms send out the wrong message and remind women every day they get dressed for work that they are in a ‘man’s job’ (Haynes, 2007: 4). Some female officers in BlueCorp also indicated that it was visibly a ‘*man’s uniform*’ and they often felt defeminised when getting dressed and for the duration:

‘Oh my god, it’s so unattractive. It’s manly and ugly. I know it’s fit for purpose but they don’t take women into account at all when designing it.’

(PCSO Lemon)

‘When I first put [the uniform] on, my husband cried with laughter because it was like I was playing dress-up and not in a good way. The sleeves were far too long, it’s sorta one size fits all, and takes ages to get something that actually fits properly around [the breast area] ‘cause they never have anything in stock.’

(PCSO Cerise)

‘In a way, it’s kinda like they’re reminding you that it’s a man’s job and we’re [women] just messing around ‘til we leave and have kids or somethin’.’

(PC Cream)

‘Y’know, when it’s your time [of the month], your boobs go massive and it gets so sore under your kit, like far too tight. They should provide at least two different sizes of things. No chance of that though with these tight bastards.’

(PC Orange)

While sexism in the police force was rife in the early days of female officers and highlighted by their stereotypical female roles (Heidensohn, 1992; Walklate, 1992; Broady and Tetlow, 2005), their uniforms were, at the time, as feminine as possible. Similarly, men's uniforms were indicative of 'gentlemen' with 'top hats, uniforms of blue, [and] swallow-tail coats' (Emsley, 1991: 25). Though this did nothing to aid equality between male and female officers, the findings indicate that while the current uniform for women is an attempt at *demonstrating* how far the police institution has come for equal rights, it appears to do nothing but mask feminine characteristics. Herein lies a problem: identical male and female uniforms may promote equality in the job but the downplaying of the female body is evident in the designer's disregard for the female body shape and monthly cycles. This finding echoes that of a recent study by Stevenson (2014: 2) who found 'female officers are wearing male uniform' and it is not 'suitably designed to meet operational or personal needs'. The complaints from some of BlueCorps female officers echo Stevenson (2014: 15), who suggests that 'body shapes, monthly temperature changes and menopause' need to be taken into account.

7.2.1 *Practices of Feminising the Uniform*

Most female officers, during observations at BlueCorp, felt that their police uniform was '*masculine*' and '*defeminises*' women. Though the uniform rules and regulations for BlueCorp (2010: 8) state that women's make-up should be discreet, only clear nail polish (if any) and no jewellery except two small, plain rings may be worn, nearly every female member of policing staff, that was observed during the four months at BlueCorp, disobeyed these rules on some level in order to feel more '*feminine*'; an effect felt by Wyles (1952: 42) who insisted on 'prettying' her police uniform up to avoid 'shuddering' every time she looked in the mirror. There were differing levels of rule infringement: some women wore little makeup but jewellery and nail polish, others wore more makeup, less jewellery for example. But some women's level of violation were high, which PC Mint (male) referred to as the '*whole bloody shebang*'; a combination of false eyelashes, hair extensions, fake tan, acrylic nails and other accoutrements. It is worth noting however, that an observation of what I, and indeed PC Mint, thought to be high levels of attempted 'feminisation' is clearly subjective. Whatever the individual opinions, one fact remains;

the tension between ‘male uniforms and female embellishments’ clearly persists (Craik, 2000: 140).

‘I observed that PCSO Lemon is wearing fake tan (a spray tan remaining from the weekend she tells me), long acrylic red nails, false eyelashes, pink lipstick on and diamante studs in her ears. I was surprised to see such a glamorous PCSO!’

CRDC: Do your bosses ever comment on your make up or accessories?

PCSO Lemon: The men never do! The odd [female] sergeant has had a whinge about too many ‘things’ but I just ignore them. I think it’s important to look nice and as long as it’s not too garish, I can’t see why it makes a difference. They make us wear such manly clothes, I need something to help it! The sergeant actually asked me to take my nails off, or just change the colour, before you came today but I just didn’t have time.

CRDC: Why would she do that?

PCSO Lemon: Oh I dunno, probably thinks it sends out the wrong message or whatever. But horrible, unpainted nails send out the wrong message! Like, if I don’t look after myself, why should you expect me to be able to look after you [the public]?’

(Fieldnotes Excerpt: March, 2014)

BlueCorp’s regulations state that officers ‘should not wear any visible jewellery (with the exception of two plain rings), including earrings and studs. Uniformed female staff may wear discreet make-up... but dark eyeshadow or bright lipstick will not be permitted. Nails should be kept short and nail polish should be pale pink or transparent’ (BlueCorp, 2010: 8). When staff fail to achieve the standards set out by the regulations, ‘it is envisaged that most instances will first be handled on an informal basis... escalating to disciplinary procedures’ (BlueCorp, 2010: 16).

As PCSO Lemon revealed, male Sergeants tended not to mention female officer’s personal choices with regards to ‘prettying’ up their police image, or at most, commented in an informal manner. Interestingly, PCSO Lemon contested it was only female senior officers who took issue with it. Silvestri (2003: 121) stressed that the ‘concern’ with (female) body image ‘raises important clues for unpacking and mapping out the cultural identity of the police leader’, though of course these ‘clues’ are applicable in identity formation for all front-line police officers. PCSO Cerise offered an explanation for this preferential treatment:

‘Oh the guys never moan about it, and why would they? Very few females can actually pull off the “no make-up” look without scaring people. I suppose it’s a bit of eye-candy for the office and maybe the [female] superiors are jealous, or maybe they are suffragettes [laughs]. The treatment is obvious though, [male policing staff] are only

nice to the “pretty young things”. So I don’t paint my nails and do my make-up for them [the males], I do it for me, ‘cause I think the uniform is pretty ugly.’

(PCSO Cerise)

It was obvious that PCSO Cerise, who was in her late fifties, did not classify herself in the ‘*pretty young thing*’ category and therefore wore make-up for herself, than for the appreciation of the largely male office. Categorising the young females as ‘*eye-candy*’ for the office, and identifying that men did not complain about infringement of the rules, cements the idea that sexism is still plentiful in BlueCorp, and highlights that while women may undertake the same roles as their male counterparts, part of that role still consisted of a stereotypical feminine *purpose*; to look good for men. In a ‘humorous’ book based on the 1970s television program *Life on Mars, The Rules of Modern Policing – 1973 Edition*, the authors Hunt and Adams (2007: 99) advised that men should ‘open doors’ for women, ‘to make them feel a bit special, (and the reward is the view of their behind when you walk after them)’. Although referenced as a ‘comical’ view of modern policing, the book clearly demonstrated the sexist undertone present at the time within police forces.

Intriguingly, PCSO Lemon seemed to associate the ability of ‘*looking good*’ (which translated into ‘*looking after herself*’ via the use of female embellishments) with the ability of being able to ‘look after’ members of the public, echoing the thoughts of Adams et al., (1980) who found that a sloppy and complacent appearance will imply that officers are lazy and incompetent in their jobs. By ‘*looking good*’ however, PCSO Lemon allows herself to ‘fall into a male trap, using her body to define [her] social value to the job’ (Young, 1992: 270). There seems to be no middle ground for women: they fall into one of two categories; ‘butch and unfeminine’, or ‘weak and in need of protection’ (Young, 1992: 270). An attempt to occupy the dubious middle ground is shown in the ‘careful attention paid to displaying an appropriate balance of femininity and masculinity’ (Silvestri, 2003: 122). Similarly, Wex (1979: 136-9), a German photographer, suggested that the female body is an ‘ornamented surface’, and a ‘properly made-up face is... at least a badge of acceptability in most social and professional contexts’ and those who choose not to do it will face ‘sanctions’. It is within this feminisation of the body that cause women to be ‘object and prey’ for men, and ‘stand perpetually for [men’s] gaze and under [men’s] judgement’ (Bartsky, 1997: 140). Astutely, Bartsky (1997: 142) noted the pressure that women are under to maintain a well made-up, feminine appearance, is not necessarily coerced by one gender in particular; ‘the disciplinary power that inscribes femininity into

the female body is everywhere and it is nowhere; the disciplinarian is everyone and yet no one in particular'. This power of discipline to feminise the female body is by no means just limited to women. While women may feel *more* pressure, masculinisation for males in an occupation that celebrates machismo may also be important. These observations are indicative of 'girling the girl' (Butler, 1993: 232) and 'doing gender', that is, 'something that one *does*, [consistently feminising themselves and their uniforms] and does recurrently, in interaction with others' (West and Zimmerman, 1987: 140).

7.2.2 *Practices of Masculinising the Uniform*

Though it was evident that female officers went to various lengths to feminise their masculine uniform, it was interesting to observe how some male officers attempted to *masculinise* their already masculine uniform. As previously discussed by officers at BlueCorp (namely PC Mint and PC Lavender), the current police uniform has moved from professional appearance to militarised (Young, 1991a). Gleaning information from women on this subject was fairly unproblematic (primarily because when women wear makeup and other embellishments it is clear to the naked eye - also perhaps because I am a female myself). While it was not as obvious whether men were attempting to masculinise their uniform, the amount of discretionary equipment attached to their mesh vests (see PC Crimson as an example, *Figure 5*) made them appear (to me) more professional, more militarised, and more masculine; although these reasons were not cited by officers which in itself shows the significance between public perception versus police perception. More equipment worn was indicated as '*preparing for every eventuality*' (PC Crimson) and thus was directly correlated with length of service (and learning through past experience). Consequently, it can be deduced that whilst female officers feminised using 'female embellishments' of differing levels, the same could be imagined for men in terms of *masculinising* at different levels depending on the amount of discretionary equipment they attached to their vests. This masculinisation of the stab vest via the use of accoutrements was something that was not available for PCSOs however, as their 'kit' is carried on a belt around their waist (see *Figure 6*).

Interestingly, I observed nearly every male officer (PCs and PCSOs), at some point during the shift, standing with their hands tucked into the sides of their ballistic vests,

particularly during interactions with the public. When queried, they assured me it was ‘*just comfortable*’, and yet I did not observe this with *any* female officers. It was noticeable how much more imposing this made them look and perceptibly wider in shape (see *Figures 14 and 15* below). In a similar discussion of the ‘power suit’ worn by businessmen, Owyong (2009: 203) found that clothes, which only leave the head and hands on show ‘conceals a lack of muscular bulk’ and can hide ‘an unsightly paunch’. The pants and jacket of the power suit ‘work together such that when the wearer reaches into his pants pocket, his jacket fans outwards, boosting the size of the wearer, albeit momentarily’ (Owyong, 2009: 203): much in the way that policemen use their elbows to suggest a large, imposing size and shape. Similarly, Wex (1979: 134), documented the differences in characteristic masculine and feminine posture. She argued women aim to take up as little space as possible and this space is an ‘enclosure... by which she is confined’. Men however, ‘expand into the available space’ (Wex, 1979: 135). The ‘intrusive effect of bodily associated matters... varies greatly depending on what it is that intrudes’, and ‘it is thus that the elbows can be used in [Western] society for spacers, ensuring the actor some measure of personal space’ (Goffman, 1971: 73-4).



Figures 12 and 13

PCSO poses with hands tucked into the sides of his stab vest. This stance (see Figures 12 and 13) had been used only moments before during an encounter with a member of the public known to the police.

When I asked the PCSO to explain the stance and recreate it for photographs, he looked confused and queried what stance I was referring to. When I demonstrated, he laughed and admitted that he did it ‘all the time’ and performed it subconsciously. I asked whether this stance was ‘done all the time’ outside of work, if it changed, or was not used at all, and he confessed that had ‘no idea’ but he doubted it as he ‘didn’t wear clothing that allowed [his] hands to slot in the side’. It was particularly interesting that he was unaware of the adopted stance, but unfortunately I did not notice a correlation between the stance used (or not) and the demographic of the person involved in the interaction. A potential hypothesis would be that male PCs and PCSOs use this stance more with people ‘known’ to the police to appear more intimidating and masculine, though this would have to be explored further in additional research.

Using West and Zimmerman’s (1987: 140) discussion of ‘doing gender’ to frame this analysis of officers masculinising and feminising their uniforms, it is evident that a person’s gender in the case of wearing a ‘unisex’ uniform ‘is not simply an aspect of what one is, but, more fundamentally, it is something that one *does*, and does recurrently, in interaction with others’. In line with this idea, Martin (2006: 262) suggests an understanding of ‘doing gender’, and ‘practising gender’ to examine the ways in which people act in gendered ways. Martin rejects the idea that most of the time individuals actually perform gender *intentionally*; she acknowledges that while sometimes this may be the case (when a woman gets dressed she dresses with the symbols of femininity – makeup, high heels, skirts, handbag for example), but once this is done, this gendered presentation is largely forgotten. In line with this framework, the analysis of masculinising and feminising the female and male ‘unisex’ police uniform is unique. These gendered performances (Goffman, 1959) are constant, with the reapplying of makeup, brushing of hair (female officers) ensures that women become ‘self-policing subject[s], self-committed to a relentless self-surveillance... and is a form of obedience to patriarchy’ and more crucially, ‘*she* is under surveillance in ways that *he* is not’ (Bartsky, 1997: 149 - emphasis in original). Bartsky (1997) however, failed to explore fully that while women are agreeably the ones under the most surveillance from the patriarchal gaze, men may sense it, albeit in a different way. The detachment and reattachment of various pieces of equipment may be indicative of a masculine performance to fall in line with the police’s dominant discourses. What is interesting is that while the police uniform is perceived to be particularly masculine anyway, male officers may take steps to *further* masculinise an *already* masculine uniform. On the other hand, female officers have to take steps to feminise a masculine uniform, often undertaking more ‘feminisation’ than they would do at home, in ‘normal’ clothes; ‘*I do wear more makeup at work, because at home I’m wearing my clothes anyway so don’t have to make as much effort with my face*’ (PCSO Lemon). It is

clear that although Martin (2006) demonstrated that individuals largely forget the gendered signals that their feminising and masculinising choices ‘give off’ (Goffman, 1959) to other people, it can be that people largely are unaware of the phenomenon. But as illustrated, the awareness may be highlighted and exacerbated, particularly for female officers, by donning a masculine uniform. PCSO Lemon and PCSO Cerise illustrated that men never complained about their makeup and jewellery embellishments to their uniform and the female management did, it highlights that by women allowing themselves to be viewed as ‘eye candy’ (PCSO Cerise), they are ‘diminishing [their] status within the [police] organisation’ (Martin, 2006: 262).

7.3 *Conclusion*

In order to determine how certain actions, through the lens of the uniform, come to dominate, it is important to not just identify what ‘masculine’ traits are afforded, but also examine how these *masculinising* and *feminising* actions described in the discussion above, come to be seen as *masculine* or *feminine* in nature. Theories of masculinity and femininity are meaningless without being embedded in conditions that give them meaning. When actions or behaviours are linked to conditions traditionally associated with femininity, they *become* ‘feminised’; and the same with masculinity. For example, using Hooper’s (2001) theory of the process of ‘masculinisation’ and ‘feminisation’ in the context of wearing a unisex police uniform could be seen on its own as male/masculine clothing. However, if it linked with the excessive wearing of discretionary equipment, as illustrated by PC Crimson (and *Figure 5*) it becomes even a *more* ‘masculine’ practice, and thus masculinises the wearer (and role) further.

It became clear that different levels of masculinisation and feminisation of the uniform occurred (another example of a uniform *not uniform*), and officers attempted to retain a sense of *individual* identity through their *occupational* identity. Markus and Kunda (1986) argued that there is a conflict between conformity and uniqueness, as demonstrated by individualising officers’ uniforms. This conflict involves ‘striking a fine between being sufficiently similar to others to claim group membership, and sufficiently different not to lose one’s own identity’ (Markus and Kunda, 1986: 860). Butler (1999: 138) noted that ‘part of the pleasure, the giddiness of the performance is in the recognition of a radical

contingency in the relation between sex and gender'. Using this analysis of performance, it is understandable to conclude that BlueCorp's male and female police officers took pleasure in masculinising and feminising their uniforms: gender, after all, is a 'corporeal style', a performance (or sequence of performances), a 'strategy' that enables cultural survival, since those who do not 'do' their gender in the right way are admonished by society (and their police colleagues) (Butler, 1999: 139-40). Similar to Goffman's (1959) discussion on performances on a stage, the 'theatre' of life, Heidensohn (1992: 141) explored how female officers managed situations that 'they are alleged to be least competent in: violence and disorder' and termed these 'transformation scenes'. One of Heidensohn's (1992: 141-2) respondents would 'show her hair on intervening in a melee so that she would be seen to be a woman and have a calming effect' and it is through this example of alternative situational management, in events 'in which they proved themselves in some way', that 'transformation scenes' take place; the 'final stages of English pantomimes and plays in which the poor, shy heroine is transformed into a beautiful and well-dressed princess'.

In terms of gender contradictions in the wearing of the police uniform it is important to look at binary distinctions within this context. A 'masculine' versus 'feminine' uniform does not exist because, according to BlueCorp and indeed many other forces, items of police clothing are 'unisex'. The term 'unisex' denotes that their clothing is not gender specific, but as illustrated by various female officers, their body shapes, hormonal cycles and their sex in general are not taken into account when designing. According to West and Zimmerman (1987: 140), gender is constructed with what you 'do' versus what you 'are'. It is the repeated acts of practicing gender (Martin, 2006) through the masculinisation and feminisation of themselves and their uniform that officers construct their own personal gender identities. Interestingly, women's feminisation of their uniform was *evident* to themselves and to the audience whereas men *claimed* to be 'unaware' of certain masculine stances and addition of discretionary equipment to make themselves appear more masculine.

The identity performance (Goffman, 1959) for females through the use of embellishments is interesting: there is a conflict between being accepted into a masculine culture of the police and yet still attempting to maintain a feminine identity; it is through these arduous

day-to-day challenges that women will find it problematic to ever be viewed as a ‘zero drag’ employee (Hochschild, 2001: ix).

Butler (1993; 1999) considered how bodies become gendered through a consistent performance of gender and identity and what is particularly interesting about the findings relayed in this chapter is the process of ‘girling’. These observations are again indicative of ‘girling the girl’ (Butler, 1993: 232) and ‘doing gender’ (West and Zimmerman, 1987: 140). What is curious is the interesting contrast between women *acting* like ‘one of the boys’ (Brewer, 1991: 240), which will be evidenced further in the next chapter, but taking steps to *feminise* themselves and their uniforms. Men have been shown to stick to a consistent masculine ‘theme’ of behaviour and presentation, but some women in BlueCorp illustrated that there is a tension between *looking* ‘feminine’ but *acting* ‘masculine’. It can be therefore postulated that it is more *acceptable* within the cult of masculinity when women act like men, but still look like women (and according to PCSO Cerise, the more ‘*eye candy*’ level of feminisation the better).

Both Butler and Goffman concurred that natural sex differences do not precede gender-constructing processes. It seems that regardless of how much ‘masculinising’ or ‘feminising’ is being performed, or what individual is undertaking it, gendering men and women, while being a ‘process of repetition’ (Butler, 1999: 145), the performance is profoundly social, originating in the interaction order (Goffman, 1983), rather than the presentation or performances of individual male and female police officers. Butler (1988: 526) argued that ‘as a public action and performative act, gender is not a radical choice or project that reflects a merely individual choice, but neither is it imposed or inscribed upon the individual’. That being said, choices in performances are still being made, such as the selection of make-up or jewellery one chooses to wear or indeed what discretionary equipment to use. Goffman (1979) was more interested in the way that social spaces and interactional relations are gendered in ways that produce gendered performances and condemns the idea that any biological differences explain away gender inequalities. As Goffman (1979: 10) puts it, ‘what the human nature of males and females really consists of... is a capacity to learn to provide and to read depictions of masculinity and femininity and a willingness to adhere to a schedule for representing these pictures, and this capacity they have by virtue of being persons, not males or females’. Therefore, *reading* the depictions of self-presentation shown by the males and females in this study is, by its very

nature, problematic. The use of 'feminine embellishments' or seemingly 'masculinisation' through discretionary equipment and stance is a much individualised portrayal of gender through which the uniform is a suitable vehicle in this case.

Chapter 8 ***Doing Difference: The Complexities of Police Community Support Officer(PCSO) Appearance***

8.1 ***Introduction***

The government introduced neighbourhood policing (NP) in all policing areas across England and Wales in 2008. Integrated neighbourhood policing teams (INPTs) were formed, consisting of neighbourhood police officers (NPOs), neighbourhood beat officers (NBOs), and police community support officers (PCSOs). However, this new style of community engagement policing has conflicted with the dominant masculine ethos of the police institution and NP was seen by some as ‘expected to weaken the cultural expressions of the police’ (Loftus, 2009: 2). When PCSOs were first introduced in 2002, there was a great deal of confusion over their role (both among the public and within police forces). There were high levels of uncertainty over how they would fit into the existing policing structure, both practically and culturally. Johnston (2005; 2006; 2007) investigated issues that the first PCSOs experienced at the beginning of their employment. Their training was incoherent, irregular and sporadic and most supervisors put in charge of PCSOs had no standard instructions as to how PCSOs would fit into the existing organisation and what exactly to do with them. Johnston, unsurprisingly, found that the first PCSOs did not feel accepted into the police ‘family’. Twelve years on, BlueCorp’s PCSOs expressed general feelings of acceptance, aside from the recurring jokes that they ‘*wanna be PCs*’ (see Chapter 6.2.3). The next section explores different ranks’ opinions of PCSOs and how length of service causes variation between levels of acceptance.

8.2 ***Struggles for Acceptance***

Crime rates in the United Kingdom have long been a cause for debate. Unfortunately, *actual* crime is often not synonymous with *recorded* crime to fall in line with penal populism. In order to meet high targets and thus secure future funding, police forces have undertaken the dangerous task of manipulating crime statistics, and individual forces are often pitted against each other (under the public radar) in the ‘who’s got the best police’

game. During fieldwork at BlueCorp, I attended a presentation along with dozens of PCs and PCSOs on the National Crime Recording Standard (NCRS), and how it was changing:

‘[Presenting sergeant]: “Okay, so we know over the past few years, maybe decades, that there has been a total lack of crime recording. It was an unwritten rule, as you all know, that has been trickled down from the government that IF IT DOESN’T NEED RECORDING, DON’T RECORD IT [met with knowing laughter]. While they didn’t SAY that as such, it was a well-known perception of what the government wants, and what the public needs. These [crime] figures have always been statistically managed – ‘book cooking’ if you will, and this has impeded our cause, avoiding our primary objective which is looking after the public. But now the culture has changed. We used to have to make crime rates LOOK low. But now we need to record the TRUE level of crime. The NCRS now is victim focused, where the key role is servicing the public which was largely ignored in the past. Unfortunately, we [the police] have done ourselves a disservice. If you look at the headlines, “Crime is coming down!”, well yeah, course it is, because we’re not recording it! [laughter]. All the forces are always in competition with each other, “we’re better than you” and yeah, that was achievable with everyone manipulating the statistics! The top of the public agenda, if you ask them, is not about statistics and numbers, it’s about good relationships, good contact with the public. Our PCSOs have largely helped with that [points around room at PCSOs and smiles are exchanged].’

(Fieldnotes Excerpt: March, 2014)

While there has always been an underlying murmur of statistic manipulation, there had never been any outright admittance (and I was slightly surprised the presentation was ‘loose-lipped’ with policing ‘secrets’ with an ‘outsider’ present). However, as can be expected, if crime rates *look* like they are decreasing, why would police forces need to hire more staff? Sergeant Indigo had an explanation:

‘Yeah, everyone’s is in on it... politicians, Downing Street, the big police bosses... and it just gets trickled down to us, the minions that have to do as they say if we are to carry on with the charade. But we’re screwed now, because the crime stats have been ‘coming down’ for so long, the budget cuts have reflected that. “Oh look! Crime rates are down, great, we don’t need to hire any more policing staff because obviously we are doing really well with the few staff that we have got!” It’s a farce really. The government know we need more. So instead of giving us PCs, who can actually do something, “Blunketts’ babes”, what I call PCSOs, have been drafted in to do the job cheaply. They definitely have a bit of a pointless role, but they are good in what they are trained to do I suppose, but definitely a waste of money in my eyes, when we need more PCs.’

(Sergeant Indigo)

As demonstrated by the observation recorded in the NCRS presentation and Sergeant Indigo’s opinion of PCSOs, it seems that the idea that PCSOs are ‘policing on the cheap’ (Merritt, 2010: 734) is still the underlying concern when other ranks desire increased recruitment of PCs. Similarly:

'They brought in PCSOs to pick up our slack, the missing piece as you will and maybe it's 'cause I never actually did the role myself but a lot of PCs feared, and still fear, that they are being replaced. Our jobs are completely different but like, they get different treatment as well. We aren't allowed to strike, not saying that we want to or anything but the PCSOs have a union, we don't. But the main difference is if all the PCs and sergeants and the higher ranks decided to strike over the budget cuts tomorrow, who would do our job? There's literally no one. There would be anarchy tomorrow, but if the PCSOs decided to strike, police forces could cope. That should really tell them something. Like we don't really need them that much at all. And really if you think about it, if they wanna make all these cuts and stuff maybe they should think about getting rid of the force's "fat" [PCSOs] and employ more PCs.'

(PC Crimson)

'The introduction of PCSOs was a good idea, I know they can't do much in terms of powers but that is not the idea of their role, it is non-confrontational, we need them. The public need them. It's cheap too. The public want a friendly face for reassurance but unfortunately over the past few years they are picking up the slack of PC workload. Things that we no longer have time for, they do that but they should be given more training in terms of taking statements etcetera, which would be useful.'

(PC Mahogany)

Though there has been debate over giving PCSOs more powers (and current powers vary from force to force), *allowing* PCSOs to 'take statements' and picking up police constable's *slack* (commonly referred to as the '*shit jobs*' that are time-consuming) would be more *useful* and make their role '*less pointless*'. These tasks, originally reserved for police officers, affords a different meaning to neighbourhood policing and allows PCSOs to construct 'different performances', occasionally making their 'softer roles appear harder' (Davies and Thomas, 2008: 633; see also Goffman, 1959). Gender appeared to make a difference with the motivation to pick up PC 'slack':

'I think the guy PCSOs aren't bothered about it, they probably prefer to be doing something more worthwhile by helping us out, injecting a bit of "real" police work into their day of hugging grandmas'.

(PC Lavender)

Completing tasks for PCs, dressed up as aiding *real* police work, allowed the PCSOs to legitimise their role as 'proper' police officers, accepted into the policing family as 'real men'; it is, after all, not about kissing babies and all of that' (Davies and Thomas, 2008: 633). Descriptions such as 'kissing babies', and 'hugging grandmas' are associated with feminine traits and in line with the 'friendly relations' that community policing has

strived to achieve. However, ‘it is hard not to see “soft” as synonymous with “feminine”’ (Clear and Karp, 1999: 18).

Acceptance is not just limited to policing ranks. The public’s acceptance of PCSOs has been fractured and patchy (O’Neill, 2014a). It is no surprise that their reception was marred by negative press describing PCSOs as ‘plastic police’, ‘second-rate police officers’ (House of Commons, 2008: 92), and ‘pink and fluffy police’ (Davies and Thomas, 2008: 633). Even twelve years after their introduction, some members of the public are still unsure about their usefulness within the wider policing family:

‘PC Mint tells me that on a job he was on last week a PCSO had dealt with it first and received “a tirade of abuse from a household about how much they hate the police etcetera and that the PCSOs are ‘useless’”. PC Mint did a follow-up and said they were “nice as pie” to him and treated him with the utmost respect. PC Mint admitted this is probably to do with his rank and they thought that he was “more important” as a PC and said that a lot of the public he deals with have opinions along these lines.’

(Fieldnotes Excerpt: March, 2014)

‘We get it a lot. Turning up for a job they’re [public] like, “well what are you gonna do about it? What are you doing here? We want the proper police, you lot are bloody useless”. It makes you so mad sometimes.’

(PCSO Cerise)

‘[In agreement with PCSO Cerise] It’s harder that you have to control your temper, when they are being rude about our job, you can’t really say anything back. It’s nothing like training school where they tell you to challenge them and not take any shit but yeah you can’t do that in reality.’

(PCSO Bronze)

PCSO Bronze, who was in her late fifties, had been a PCSO for twelve years, and was employed as one of the first PCSOs in BlueCorp when they were introduced. She recalled a very unwelcome reception and lack of integration into her area:

‘Oh god it was so awful, we were totally ignored [within work] there was literally no eye to eye contact. I got left out of everything, they didn’t let me go to the briefings or anything saying that what I did wasn’t “real police work” and it wasn’t necessary that I go so I was just wandering around a lot of the morning not having any tasks to do. I made endless brews to keep myself busy. It was absolutely dreadful; I used to go home in tears all the time. They treated you like shit and some of them still do. Originally, there were only 160 of us employed throughout the UK, like a trial I suppose, so each INPT only got maybe one or two of us so we were on our own and it was really isolating. No one really knew what to do with us, the public or the police didn’t know how to react. The

supervisors would treat you like lesser beings, they would completely avoid you and dismiss you if you went to them for direction.'

(PCSO Bronze)

As discussed by Johnston (2005; 2006; 2007) and O'Neill (2014a; 2014b), while there are still problems with acceptance and recognition as an integral part of neighbourhood policing, it has taken a decade of PCSO visibility to gain a positive level of approval. Training has been standardised, PCSOs now have a defined role and supervisors know exactly where to place them in integrated neighbourhood policing teams to increase their effectiveness within the wider policing family. Gaining acceptance, both internally among their colleagues, and externally among the public, has been a slow process, but not too much unlike the first police officers who were perceived to be 'unproductive parasites' (Storch, 1975: 71). PCSO Bronze acknowledges that 'acceptance' is largely to do with other officers' lengths of service:

'It only really got better as time went on because the old staff retired, and then the new people came in who didn't know any different; the new people came into the force knowing PCSOs were part of it so it was much more acceptable for them I suppose. I still don't speak to my sergeant now because of it. He's an absolute prick [lowers her voice]. He's only the acting sergeant while [...] is away on maternity but literally we do not speak. At all. He used to leave me out of important meetings until more PCSOs came in and he couldn't get away with it anymore and I used to say to him, "can you tell me what's going on?" and he told me to keep my "fucking beak out", called me a "fucking bitch" and everything. I used to go home in tears.'

(PCSO Bronze)

Interestingly, it appears that colleagues, who joined at the same time as PCSO Bronze, or after, accepted the idea of PCSOs much more easily because they were not familiar with a policing 'family' *without* PCSOs. When neighbourhood policing was first introduced, departments that moved to incorporate community policing were described as being affected by a 'split force', where 'veterans, resistant to change' did not 'believe in departmental philosophy' (Miller, 1999: 197). These changes were referred to as 'the break-up of the family', and led to further strain, at least for a time, exacerbating the 'us versus them' culture from inside police forces. O'Neill (2014b: 25) noted that 'one should not underestimate the damage those early experiences [of PCSOs] did and the legacy they have left for PCSOs.' Supporting the findings of this study, O'Neill (2014b: 25-6) also suggested that length of service played a factor as veteran officers were more 'difficult to

bring round to the idea of PCSOs' whereas newer officers (post-PCSO introduction) did not recognise any other set-up and were thus 'more open to them'.

8.3 *The PCSO Role as Feminine*

'It's a bit of a girly role though, save the hard stuff for the men yeah.'

(PC Mahogany)

Waddington (1999: 298; see also Heidensohn, 1992; Walklate, 1992; Westmarland, 2001; Silvestri, 2003) observed that policing is a highly gendered occupation with masculine ideals at its core and described policing as a 'cult of masculinity', and is traditionally the preserve of 'real men, who are willing and able to fight'. Confronting physical threat is widely regarded as tough work and as such, the work is traditionally associated with men. However, the role of the police community support officer is characterised as non-threatening and non-confrontational, which is reflected in their no powers to arrest. Arresting members of the public is probably the action most associated with the police and is one of many main features of the role for the majority of rank and file police officers. Many authors have focused on how exercising and legitimising the power of arrest has a plethora of gendered connotations and Westmarland (2001) dedicates a whole chapter of her book to arrests through the lens of gendered connotations.

The arrest process has been closely linked with masculinity as women (especially when they were first allowed to join the police) were not seen to be physically capable of arresting the stereotypical male criminal. Consequently, as PCSOs do not currently have the powers to arrest and do not carry handcuffs (for the majority of forces), the role of the PCSO has contested understanding within the masculine culture of the police. In fact, all characteristics of a policing role at street level 'seem controlled by maleness and reinforced by events, colleagues, members of the public, and even those who are arrested' (Westmarland, 2001: 131-2). The difficulties that PCSOs face in terms of gendered identity discourses is that while their role is designed to be one of engagement and relationship building, with minimal confrontation, their role is within a workplace which is centred around enforcement and masculinity (Cosgrove and Ramshaw, 2015).

Neighbourhood policing requires its workers to have characteristics considered to be feminine, such as relationship building, trust and communication with members of the public (Crank, 1998; Miller, 1999; Herbert, 2001; Home Office, 2005, 2010a, 2010b). Women make up 44.9% of PCSOs, and while far from what can be described as a ‘women’s role’ in terms of an occupational gender split, it is one of the *more equal* gender splits in policing (Home Office, 2015). However, as previously examined, the characteristics associated with neighbourhood policing, and PCSOs in particular have indicated the importance of the ‘softer side’ of policing; ‘soft’, often being synonymous with ‘feminine’ (Davies and Thomas, 2008: 633). Certain performances by PCSOs allow them to construct ‘different performances’, occasionally making their ‘softer roles appear harder’ (Davies and Thomas, 2008: 633; see also Goffman, 1959).

While the PCSO role may be seen as softer and more feminine policing, females are still, by undertaking police work, assuming a masculine position alongside their male colleagues in neighbourhood policing. The constant pressure to be ‘act tough’ rather than ‘be tough’ (Uildriks and van Mastrigt, 1991: 161) it seems, is also a performance within NP, somewhere they should be able to relax into their ‘natural’ characteristics, if the opinions about ‘feminine’ neighbourhood policing are to be considered.

‘You can never let them see you cry, on my first week out [after training] I saw this kid practically decapitated by an electric gate at one of the estates. It was horrendous. And I remember one of the [neighbourhood] PCs saying to me, “don’t let the others see that it affected you, insist that you are fine”. Everyone was pretty quiet after but you’ve gotta be stoic, especially because he went on to say that I would see a lot worse. It hasn’t really got much worse than that but kudos to him for trying to prepare me.’

(PC Lavender, male)

‘Years ago, I went to a domestic and I arrived there before the [emergency] services were called and this guy had chopped up his whole family. The daughter, who was only about eleven I think, had been slit from head to toe. I told [another PC, who no longer works at BlueCorp] that I wasn’t sleeping [after it], and I was dreaming about it and he told me, cruel to be kind I think, to just deal with it whatever way I could because if I went for counselling, [the organisation] would see it as a weakness and they would find some reason not to promote me in the future, like I can’t deal with stressful situations and obviously that’s part of the job. I didn’t get over it for a long time.’

(PC Pink, male, former PCSO)

As indicated by PC Lavender and PC Pink, demonstrating emotional responses to stressful situations would be strongly linked to a traditionally ‘feminine’ response and by

suppressing these feelings, (particularly in relation to the recommendation made to PC Pink that seeking counselling would be perceived as a ‘weakness’ and thus not suited to policing culture), reveals the dominant masculine discourses that are omnipresent. The PCs are, at least in these cases, constrained in their identity performances (Goffman, 1959) by these dominant discourses, all of which are closely aligned with the canteen culture of policing that Waddington (1999) referred to. The meanings that normalise certain behaviours that represented ‘femininity’ to them, such as showing emotional responses, sleepless nights and the desire for counselling were (under advisement from colleagues) suppressed in order to fall in line with this dominant discourse. The male resistance to feminine characteristics can therefore be viewed as an attempt to not only preserve the myth of ‘real police work’ (see Holdaway, 1983; Hunt, 1984; Miller, 1999), but also reaffirms the police officer’s identity as ‘what it is to be a *man*’, especially in neighbourhood policing where the masculinity of certain roles are already contested.

PCSO Cerise, who was one of the first PCSOs in 2002, acknowledged that although she had been a PC in the 1970s with the Metropolitan Police and had taken a career break to have a family, she was ‘made aware’ that the only role available to her on her return to the police service was as a PCSO as it was more *suitable*.

‘I was a PC in the ‘70s with the Met. It wasn’t the “done thing” then if you had a child and then go back to work, even though that is what I wanted. When I tried to get back in when my daughter was about five, I got through three interviews and got told at the last one that I hadn’t been accepted; I cried for weeks. I did hear through the grapevine that a lot of the bosses thought that women’s place was in the home, especially if they had kids and a husband. Maybe it’s because they knew some women who couldn’t cope with this job or their own wives couldn’t cope maybe. But even when I decided to apply with BlueCorp, I was advised by a male police friend that a community policing role would be more “suitable” for me. I was happy just to get back in at the time but I’ve seen over the years that this role is seen as more suited to the “fragile” female. Makes me laugh, and not in a har-har way.’

(PCSO Cerise)

Female behaviours do not align with the masculine culture because they differ from the ‘ideal officer’ (in PCSO Cerise’s case, she was female, in her mid-fifties, and a mother). Through her colleagues ‘friendly advice’ that she was more *suitable* to community policing, she was subordinated and marginalised through a process by which she was ‘symbolically assimilated to femininity’ (Connell, 2005: 31). PCSO Cerise, along with other female

officers, partook in behaviours and actions that could be associated with masculinity in order to combat a perceived ‘feminine role’:

‘Don’t let the bastards get you down. I won’t let a few jumped up pricks push me out. I did complain about the bullying originally but it “somehow” got out and then I was known as a grass, and that is the worst thing to be in this place. But you just have to act like you don’t care.’

(PCSO Cerise, female)

‘I never used to swear before I joined. My mum is shocked when I go visit; says my “laddish” behaviour is very “uncouth” [mimics a posh accent].’

(PCSO Amber, female)

‘I try not to get involved, but some of the mouths on these women! And they belch and arm-wrestle with the lads. I mean I swear, but I don’t wanna be a total lad.’

(PCSO Aqua, female, PCSO for three weeks)

By performing in line with the masculine dominant discourse, the female PCSOs can reframe their role within the police force as masculine by refuting stereotypical feminine behaviour and acting ‘laddish’. Gender does not *happen* when we are born, but is a sequence of repeated acts through socialisation and societal expectations which harden into the appearance that something has been there *all along*. If gender is a ‘regulated process of repetition’ (Butler, 1999: 145) then it is of course possible to repeat gender differently to *recreate* it. It is however, a contested issue and you cannot just acquire a whole new gender closet for yourself since, ‘there is only a taking up of the tools where they lie, where the very ‘taking up’ is enabled by the tool lying there’ (Butler, 1999: 145). In this sense, police officers have to ‘make do’ with the clothes (tools) they are issued, but then go about completely modifying them which may reveal different perceptions of gender for themselves and how they are perceived by others.

Brewer’s (1991) study on policewomen within the Royal Ulster Constabulary (RUC) found that one of the strategies that women employ to manage gender identity is to absorb the masculine culture and survive police work by becoming ‘one of the boys’, and ‘interactionally underscore their own femininity, only to be rejected as women because they do not conform to the gender role’ (Brewer 1991: 240): in this sense, ‘women do more emotion managing than men’ (Hochschild, 2012: 164). Female officers whose gender performances are considered more masculine by their male (and female) colleagues may

find it considerably easier to work in organisations than those with a more feminine performance (Goffman, 1959). In this sense, it is clear that most of the female officers encountered during the fieldwork at BlueCorp fell into Martin's (1980: 186-7) category of *policewomen* (as opposed to *policewomen*) as they 'closely adhere[d] to predominant police norms', and 'strongly embrace the role conception prevalent among male officers'. There is evidence to suggest that by performing 'like a man' is the quickest way to acceptance; 'I chased three and arrested three on foot... then the shift were completely different towards me... "yeah, you've proved yourself now... one of the boys, you can get involved"' (Brown and Heidensohn, 2000: 140). In this sense, these actions and interactions are only *permissible* when the men agree that women can *get involved*, if they have *proved themselves*.

The meanings of these interactions are problematic however, and Kelan (2010: 46) queried what happens when people are alone, do they cease 'doing gender'? Possibly, even when alone, officers will conform to gendered expectations and attempt to further exacerbate their gendered identity. The 'internal audience' is also to be considered (Kelan, 2010: 46), and if this is the case and performances are done internally as well to 'keep up appearances', the clearly segregated front and back regions that Goffman (1959) referred to are in fact embedded in each other. Therefore, for some officers, the 'backstage', where 'the performer can relax; drop his front, forgo speaking his lines, and step out of character' (Goffman, 1959: 115) does not exist.

8.4 *The Transition to Police Constable: Differences in Uniform*

During my fieldwork at BlueCorp, I was fortunate enough to be granted access to the Police Training College (PTC) for a period of two days. Though the PTC is a site for training a number of ranks, I attended only police constable training and thus the data gathered reflects only the opinions of apprentice PCs. The classroom setting provided the opportunity to conduct an impromptu focus group, consisting of eighteen individuals – which is admittedly, rather large for a focus group. The focus group interview was recorded at the permission of the class tutor and tutees. Some respondents spoke a lot, others not at all: as a consequence, respondents have been numbered accordingly to the ones that were recorded voicing opinions. Throughout lessons, students had their first names and previous roles written on a piece of paper which they stuck to the front of their

desks, presumably to aid other students and the tutor in ‘getting to know’ one another. The focus group covered how differences in uniform affected individual perception of their role. Whilst in training, all students, regardless of previous role, are expected to wear full uniform (minus personal protective equipment) whilst at the training school, which consisted of combat pants, boots, black zip-up top and black fleece jumper (optional dependent on weather). I was fortunate enough to join the classes one week after the students’ first shifts out in BlueCorp’s residential areas with a tutor constable. Students usually complete ten weeks of tutor ‘shadowing’ following 28 weeks of classroom-based learning. I queried how the students found their first week of shifts in a police constable uniform:

‘Oh my god, it was so different. When I was a PCSO you asked someone to pick up some dropped litter and they would just stare at you. You ask them now [in PC uniform] and they do it. It’s a bizarre feeling.’

(R1, female, previously PCSO)

‘Yeah, I totally agree, you don’t realise how little respect people had for you until you ask someone to do something in this uniform.’

(R3, female, previously PCSO)

‘I know it sounds really sad but you feel a lot more convincing in this [uniform]. Not that I’m slagging off being a PCSO but I think a lot of people [PCSOs] were just waiting for them to start recruiting PCs again. It’s a lot manlier as well [cue laughs from other respondents as R7 flexes his biceps].’

(R7, male, previously PCSO)

As demonstrated, training PCs, who had previously held the PCSO job role, felt significantly different whilst wearing the PC uniform and experienced a higher level of power and legitimacy in the eyes of the public. Not only did it encourage an increased amount of compliance from the public but it allowed R7 to be more ‘convincing’, that is, he saw himself as a more valid or adequate authority figure, something that his PCSO uniform did not afford him. The PC uniform is perceived as masculine and as revealed by R7, his new uniform was considerably ‘manlier’ than his previous PCSO uniform. Note: The PCSO uniform differences included a royal-blue top, and ‘Police Community Support Officer’ embroidered epaulettes. R7’s admission that he felt more ‘manly’ demonstrates that by small variations in uniform attire resulted in noticeable changes in self-conception. Ex-special constables (whose uniform is identical to PCs) did not notice a difference however:

'I think most people thought we were PCs anyway. The [new] uniform is pretty much exactly the same apart from it now says "PC" instead of "Special" [constable] so I didn't notice a difference when I went out [for the first time]. Did you [R5]?'

(R6, male, previously special constable)

'No, you're right, I didn't either. I think it's interesting to hear [PCSOs] perspectives though, it must be strange to notice a difference with how compliant the public are or whatever, just 'cause of what you're wearing.'

(R5, female, previously special constable)

As discussed in Chapter 6.2.3, while the uniform for the PC and PCSOs are similar with slight variations, when experiencing verbal communication with the public, students perceived the different reactions with surprise:

'I used to work around this area anyway [as a PCSO] and I saw a group of kids from the estate and they said to me, 'oh shit, now you're a proper copper, I'll have to do what I'm told now yeah!'

(R2, female, previously PCSO)

'Oh god, yeah I agree [with R2]! A similar thing happened to me but with an older lad from my area. When he saw that I'd changed tops [from blue to black] he said he feels like he can't tell me as much now because I can actually do something about it now [laughs]. Moron.'

(R1, female, previously PCSO)

As indicated by the reaction of some members of the public, the perception of the student PCs had changed. The new uniform and role afforded them more authority to 'do something' and incited far more compliance when the public perceived them to have more power to do so. While training as a PC may have provided the students with more authority in terms of police powers and legitimacy (particularly in the eyes of the public), the PCSO role which is embedded with priorities to communicate and build relationships with the public, no longer existed:

'We are no longer approachable [since re-training]. They think that we're not their little community friend anymore, and I'm not talking about offenders.'

(R4, male, previously PCSO)

'There unfortunately still seems to be this big gap between the police and the public and obviously PCSOs were seen as the middle-man, someone they could come to with little

issues, which can be of course big issues. I kinda miss that, they view you in a completely different light.'

(R1, female, previously PCSO)

The cost of the increase in power and legitimacy new PCs seems to enjoy is an increase in social distance from the community they seek to serve. As suggested by the respondents, the transition to police constable from police community support officer was noticeable in terms of how they were perceived by the public via their new uniforms. There was a general agreement amongst the students that the police constable uniform was *unapproachable* in the basis of their *unapproachability or inaccessibility* comparison to their old PCSO uniform. This was categorised by the students as both as a form of conduct (the public were more cautious approaching them) and as a personal response (they felt more distant from the public by wearing the new uniform their role required). While some ex-PCSOs missed the 'community-feel' of their old role, the position of authority it gave them allowed them to combat previous negative characterisation, a type of 'status shield' (Hochschild, 2012: 163); *'I'm no longer called a plastic pig by my brother'* (R4, male, previously PCSO).

As previously noted, ever since their inception, the PCSO role has been criticised by the media as 'plastic policing', 'second-rate police officers' (House of Commons, 2008: 92) and 'pink and fluffy policing' (Davies and Thomas, 2008: 633). Police constables have even been known to describe them as 'like a gaggle of lost shoppers' (Caless, 2007: 188) so the transition from PCSO to PC afforded them a level of legitimacy, not only in the eyes of the public, but with other ranks as well. This was particularly noticeable among ex-PCSOs: ex-special constables however, in wearing the same uniform and holding the same powers of constable as before, did not notice a difference in the change in uniform to their personal perception of authority. Recently Cosgrove (2015: 8) identified three ideal categories that PCSOs fall into; 'Professional', 'Frustrated' and 'Disillusioned'. 'Professional' PCSOs are 'motivated by the potential for accumulating valuable experience... and police craft skills to support future career development'; 'Frustrated' PCSOs adopt an 'authoritarian approach' and are 'motivated by heightened aspirations to become police officers'; 'Disillusioned' PCSOs are 'suspicious, cynical and are less concerned to prove themselves leading to lower levels of integration' (Cosgrove: 2015: 10). These defining characteristics, though different for each category, play a central role in PCSO socialisation into the wider policing family, and show that PCSOs (particularly the

‘Frustrated’ category) are ‘most likely to endorse traditional characteristics’ of a ‘crime-fighting orientation’ (Cosgrove, 2015: 10) and thus integrating well into the pervasive masculine culture of ‘real’ police work. While it is not necessary to categorise the PCSOs and PCs in this study, it is clear that they showed elements of each of Cosgrove’s typologies, and felt under pressure to suppress the display of feminine characteristics (both male and female officers) in order to integrate into particular performance teams (Goffman, 1959). Cosgrove further observed that male PCSOs were more likely to be accepted due to their natural physiology:

‘Female PCSOs were acutely aware of the need to control their emotions suggesting they needed to endure, even tolerate, masculine values and accompanying sexist attitudes from male officers in order to develop relationships, facilitate integration and further their careers within the organisation. In many respects, doing so was a means of managing their presentation of self (Goffman, 1990) to sworn office and their acceptance into the team... Such was the pervasiveness of masculinity within neighbourhood teams that some female PCSOs felt that male PCSOs were more likely to be legitimised by police officers into the masculinized dominated culture due to their enhanced capacity to use physical force. The masculinist culture is therefore ultimately divisive and exclusionary.’

(Cosgrove, 2015: 13)

The PCSOs in Cosgrove’s study illuminated the same issues in terms of struggling for acceptance and integration into the wider policing family as the PCSOs in this study. Furthermore, it is difficult to ascertain when the ‘contamination’ effects of wearing a different uniform are desensitised for officers: officers often do not notice when the uniform has just *become* part of their working personality. Police constables who had been in the same role for a number of years barely noticed the symbolic effect of the authoritative clothing that they wear. With such an iconic uniform, entrenched with symbolism and police imagery, it is perhaps unsurprising that when the students put their *first uniform* on for the *first time*, the effects were much more noticeable:

‘Though it’s strange wearing [PC] uniform, it was even stranger when I first finished training three years ago. Putting the [PCSO] uniform on for your first shift is powerful, you feel like it’s an extra bit of protection in case your training hasn’t covered everything. I don’t mean like protection from an attack, it’s like, I dunno it’s hard to explain. Like people will be more cautious around you ‘cause they know what the uniform means. Don’t think it matters if I’m a female really. This [insignia] stands for the same thing.’

(R1, female, previously PCSO for three years)

The respondent's statement echoes that of Crawley (2004) who suggested that the uniform is not just an authoritative symbol, but as a mode of psychological protection. Furthermore, R1's admission that the public are more cautious resonates with Crawley (2004: 140) that the wearing of a uniform makes 'certain acts more permissible' and in contrast, makes certain acts *less permissible* for members of the public in the presence of officers.

8.5 Conclusion

This chapter has explored the variations in culture that could result from the organisational structural changes policing has seen in different specialisms, roles and departments. For PCSOs within NP, this conflict is seen not only from inside their own forces amongst different ranks, but from the media and public as well. They are frequently called derogatory nicknames and thus, have to find ways to understand their new roles within the policing family and construct and maintain their own sense of professional and masculine identity, striving to align with the dominant discourse of masculinity usually associated with policing. This conflict resulted in both male and female PCSOs attempting to reconstruct the idea of NP by emphasising masculine behaviours and playing down feminine characteristics.

It is interesting to note however, that the suppression of feminine characteristics were not limited to personality; females still 'performed gender' with the use of female embellishments, as illustrated in the previous chapter (see West and Zimmerman, 1987; Butler, 1993; 1999). In order to be wholly accepted by the rank and file not involved in NP, the 'feminine' traits involved in neighbourhood policing may need to be constantly re-appropriated as 'masculine' ones and reshaped under a new discourse in order to appear legitimate, powerful and desirable to new recruits and other members of the policing family. Altering the masculine bias within policing culture requires a significant shift in deeply entrenched police paradigms to which many rank and file (and senior officers) remain wholly resistant.

What has emerged from the research is the gendered discourses in which males and females align themselves with gendered identities within the police force, and particularly

in neighbourhood policing. When female PCSOs (and indeed PCs) swear, belch and pass wind for example, they are affording themselves a level of identity to associate with the dominant masculine culture: though women might achieve ‘metaphoric invisibility by “drinking pints in the club like one of the boys”, she can only be partially accepted (Young, 1992: 272). She may be a ‘seven-footer with a face like a cathedral gargoyle’, but ‘she is still a woman and is therefore structurally marginalised’ (Young, 1992: 272). In terms of binary pairs within this context, the contradictory behaviour and presentation of self in an ‘act[ing] tough’ versus ‘be[ing] tough’ concept (Uildriks and van Mastrigt, 1991: 161; see also Goffman, 1959) is challenging for female officers. In a similar, but completely different way of claiming certain expected identities, male PCSOs (and also neighbourhood PCs) suppressed ‘feminine’ characteristics such as emotional displays and the desire for counselling to combat not only the criticisms of other rank and file officers perceiving them as ‘weak’, but also to further bolster (and in some ways exacerbate) their machismo in an apparent ‘pink and fluffy’ role (Davies and Thomas, 2008: 633). By remaining ‘stoic’ and ‘*just dealing with it*’, PC Lavender demonstrated that by showing detachment (and therefore a level of professionalism appropriate for the situation) conflicted with the discourses of NP’s focus on community engagement and involvement and with the role that PC Lavender might be expected to perform in that (and other) situations (Mumby and Putnam, 1992). Hochschild (2012: 19) termed this management of emotion the ‘transmutation’ of feelings. Neighbourhood policing, and within it the PCSO role in particular, have contradictory meanings within the dominant culture of police work. PCs often associate their work as ‘real policing’ and ridicule (dressed up as ‘banter’) is commonplace to cement their colleagues’ PCSO role as feminine and ‘softer’ police work (Davies and Thomas, 2008: 633). Even though ‘femininity’ and ‘masculinity’ are social constructions, both men and women are ‘trapped’ in it; ‘women either accept their biological inferiority or strive to overcome it by becoming the manly policewoman, while men take to risky behaviour to prove “they have balls”’ (Chan et al., 2010: 426-7).

Young (1991b) examined how the us versus them mentality was ‘passed on to all initiates’ in “binary constructed hierarch[ies]”. These constructions were used by his policing team to separate the city (positive) and rural (negative) forces in his area. The city was defined as ‘real, localised, properly uniformed, socially centred, tall, city polises, purity, humanity centred, clean, us, positive’ and the rural as ‘ambiguous, distanced, variously (un)dressed, socially aberrant, small, unreal policemen, polluted, inhuman, marginal, disordered, them,

negative' (Young, 1991b: 76). As well as the 'supposed' masculinity and femininity of certain roles, ranks, uniforms and accoutrements, this chapter has also shown that there is another binary emerging. 'Claimed' equality versus hierarchy shows that individuals become 'ranked' within the same roles based on gender, ethnicity, as well as masculine and feminine 'performance'. These binary segregations can be usefully applied to the findings of this study as the now perhaps clichéd typology of the 'us versus them' mentality (Kappeler et al, 2015), has been revealed to be much more complex and multifaceted than originally envisioned. The different roles, ranks, uniforms and genders have caused new subcultures and 'teams-within-teams' to emerge allowing this damaging attitude to fester from the inside of police forces.

Though police officers often work on their own, they are integrally part of a team. Goffman explored collective aspects of the self through his discussion of 'teams' and the relationships that exist between the performance and the audience. He used the concept of the 'team' (or 'performance team') to demonstrate how individuals, in attempting to achieve the collective goal of the group, 'cooperate' in performances (1959: 85). He extended this concept by referring to a 'shill' who is a member of the team who 'provides a visible model for the audience of the kind of response the performers are seeking' (1959: 146). Each individual team member must maintain his or her 'front' to support the overall team performance and any deviance from a desirable presentation may destroy the credibility of the entire 'show'. An example of a 'shill' in one instance is PC Lavender's mentor who instructed him to play down his emotions after a particular traumatic event. The team-mates are 'locked in a conspiracy' to maintain the stability of their team performance by 'concealing or playing down certain facts' (in this case, emotional reactions), and the over-assertion of some facts ("*insist that you are fine*") (Peterson, 2008: 109). It is in these moments, under stress or 'when the chips are down' that the opportunity to 'display one's characters' becomes precarious to the individual and team performance.

In referring to the us versus them mentality, this would suggest that the 'team' would indicate the entire police force that has, occupationally, the same goals and would need to foster similar performances to the audience. However, various teams can be identified within policing. The membership criteria of each group varies, as does the audience and level of performance required for each individual team. One membership criterion is

role/rank. Police constables do not belong to the same team as senior officers, and nor do they belong to the same team as police community support officers which is interesting in the sense that integrated neighbourhood policing teams (INPTs) should, as the name suggests, have a high level of cohesion and amalgamation. Another membership criterion is gender. Gender is particularly interesting as a benchmark for involvement in certain teams because it seems that while teams may be separated by role (for the purpose of this example, PCs and PCSOs), women, who are present in both groups, may actually be subtly exempt from membership from the team demarcated in this way, forcing them to form another team (through gendered solidarity). Similarly, an interviewee in Chan et al's (2010: 438) study argued women's exclusion and inclusion are complex issues; 'I think the old view of "Oh, the female's been left out from the males", that's a bit too simplistic now. I think now there are, you know, it can [be] the lesbians, it can be the gay men, it can be minority groups, it could be, you know, for example Moslem groups within different genders, those sorts of things - far more complex'.

Hence, inclusion or exclusion from a team or team(s) is multifaceted. Within this, 'familiarity' is not necessarily developed slowly according to Goffman (1959: 83), but 'rather a form of relationship that is automatically extended and received as soon as the individual takes place on the team', and thus, acceptance may be based initially on sign vehicles and confirmed (or denied) by subsequent behaviour (Goffman, 1959: 1). Crucially, this does not guarantee acceptance into a team, a true 'teammate is someone whose dramaturgical cooperation is dependent upon in fostering a given definition of the situation' (Goffman, 1959: 83). Therefore, the performances of female police officers and their subsequent 'teammate' status, depends wholly on how similar to the ideal officer (i.e. expressing masculine characteristics) they are or effectively they portray their individual performances. Similarly, PC Pink's desire for counselling and display of emotion was dampened down by his colleague and kept 'between us' suggesting that a teammate can hide or fix another teammates transgression before potentially ruining the whole team performance:

'When a member of the team makes a mistake in the presence of the audience, the other team members often must suppress their immediate desire to punish and instruct the offender until, that is, the audience is no longer present.'

(Goffman, 1959: 89)

In the above example, not only was PC Pink's display of emotion shielded from the other team (the public) but also from other teammates, allowing PC Pink and his 'protecting' officer colleague to form their own team, albeit temporarily. Goffman references William Westley's unpublished PhD (1952) entitled *The Police*, to illustrate that two policemen, who witness discreditable and/or illegal behaviour on the part of their colleague, will show 'heroic solidarity and will stick by each other's story no matter what atrocity it covers up or how little chance there is of anyone believing it' (Goffman, 1959: 91). Using Goffman's typology (1959: 98), PC Pink's colleague took on the role of 'director', (correspondingly the colleague was his mentor), and thus took on the 'duty of bringing back into line any member of the team whose performance becomes unsuitable. Soothing and sanctioning are the corrective processes ordinarily involved'. Similarly, as detailed above, PCSO Amber, in expressing 'laddish' behaviour, allows her transition into a/the team much smoother (and ensure her stay is on a more permanent basis). It can be concluded then that the masculine culture of the police is ever-pervasive; male police officers have to suppress commonly associated 'feminine' traits and female police officers have to similarly but reversely adopt 'masculine' traits in order to be accepted in a policing performance team. Though there are adaptations to how 'feminine' or 'masculine' an individual has to be to be a teammate (see the classic typologies by Hunt (1984), Jones (1986), Brewer (1991), Berg and Budnick (1986), Hochschild (1973) and Martin (1980) in Chapter 2.2), Goffman (1959) suggested that members of a team may get away with staging different performances if a general overall cohesive impression is given.

Adding to Cosgrove's (2015) study, PCs (including former PCSOs), both male and females, as well as PCSOs, were left with little doubt they must strongly associate themselves with the dominant masculine crime-fighting culture in order to acquire a sense of value and becoming a 'teammate' (see also Cosgrove and Ramshaw, 2015). These persistent presentations of self, fronts and individual and team performances (Goffman, 1959) can have negative polluting effects into officer lives. 'Contamination' in this way is not limited to individual officers, but their home lives as well and the uniform operates as a contamination 'vehicle'. Nor does contamination and work spill-over limit itself to emotional (i.e. personality/attitudinal approach) to police work; it can come in many different forms including physical, symbolic and moral pollution into the lives of officers, which will be discussed in more detail in the next chapter.

9.1***Introduction***

While the word ‘contamination’ has negative connotations meaning ‘to sully’ or ‘spoil’ (Chalmers, 1957: 12), for the purpose of this thesis, and this chapter, contamination in the policing world refers to how the occupation and the uniform causes ‘polluting effects’ into the lives of officers and their families, often termed work ‘spill-over’ (Crawley, 2004: 227). It is worth noting that the ‘occupation’ and the ‘uniform’ is difficult to disentangle; they are both deeply embedded in each other (especially in uniformed roles). For the purpose of this thesis, ‘contamination’ refers to a few things: how the rank-and-file police officers, namely PCs, PCSOs, sergeants and detectives deal with ‘dirty work’ (Hughes, 1962: 9) and how they use rituals of purification to combat these effects. This chapter will also further discuss how the uniform can be construed as a contamination ‘vehicle’, and also how types of contamination, through moral, symbolic and physical taint (Ashforth and Kreiner, 1999), are experienced in different ranks, roles and length of service within BlueCorp.

9.2***The Job as Contamination: ‘Spill-Over’***

Policing staff, who deal with members of the public, often have to experience unpleasant, unsavoury, worrisome or disgusting aspects of their role that members of wider society are usually able to keep an appropriate social distance from. People, who experience work ‘pollution’, tend to become stigmatised by this role and their closest family and friends, in turn, encounter this stigma associated with policing. Goffman (1968: 30) argued that ‘there is a tendency for stigma to spread from the stigmatised individual to his close connections’:

‘Keeping my home life separate is really hard. You can never fully switch off.’

(PC Cream)

‘When I’ve had to deal with shit at work, which is quite often, I’m pretty moody when I get home, and I end up snapping at my kids, or my wife. I don’t mean to, it’s just that they don’t understand.’

(PC Pink)

‘You just have to pretend everything is okay, but there’s no way you can just turn it off. On normal days, when nothing much happens, it’s not too bad and you can just switch it off, but sometimes we have to see some pretty rough murder cases, or whatever, and it definitely plays on my mind when I get home.’

(Detective Purple)

When the lines between work and home become blurred, it can have detrimental effects on officers’ lives outside of work, what Finch (1983: 37) referred to a ‘vicarious contamination’. Officers at BlueCorp insisted that it was crucial that the end of the shift signalled the end of ‘work thoughts’. While this is desirable in theory, it was often not possible for officers, especially after dealing with intense situations. The family and home environment is often recognised as a ‘relief zone’ (Hochschild, 2012: 69), ideally free from the demands and stresses of work, but of course, this is not always achievable. Hochschild (2012: 69) noted that while the home may be a place where emotional labour is relaxed, it ‘quietly imposes emotional obligations of its own’. In light of this, many officers at BlueCorp attempt to create a protective bubble around their family life (Reese, 1987), and while every attempt was made to not talk about work at home in an endeavour to ‘switch off’, it affected their home lives nevertheless and is therefore evident that the blur between the work and home personality is a negative consequence of the police officer role. Even when conversations about work did not encroach on personal time with their families, officers acknowledged that contamination from the role they played at work affected their role at home:

‘It’s really important to clock out with your brain as well as electronically. You’d crack up from the stress otherwise... When I’m out with my eldest [daughter], I point people out when we’re in the car, like “look over there, he’s definitely a shitbag, look at what he’s wearing, what he looks like, who his friends are, and she goes ‘really daddy? How do you know?’” and I say [daughter’s name], [weighted pause] you just know. I used to try and do it with my wife but she goes nuts when we’re out and my eyes are scanning around, looking for stuff, she’s even started refusing to go out for meals with me [laughs].’

(Sergeant Indigo)

As demonstrated by Sergeant Indigo, this example of chronic and ‘continual suspiciousness’ (Loftus, 2009: 1) of members of the public, spills over into personal time

when he is driving his daughter around, and while out dining with his wife. So while he may attempt to ‘clock out’ from work, it is evident that the suspiciousness he has developed as a police sergeant contaminates his home life, as well as innocently encouraging his daughter to inherit her father’s mistrust of certain members of the public. The stereotyping of ‘shitbags’ via ‘*what they wear, what they look like and who their friends are*’, initiates a negative labelling based on first glances for his daughter, contaminating her view of the world via her father’s occupation and suspicions. This labelling echoes that of Van Maanen’s research (1978: 221) who similarly found that officers label certain members of the public as ‘assholes’ and they ‘represent a distinct but familiar type of person to the police’. The labelling that Sergeant Indigo attaches to certain members of the public encourages his daughter to view people through his professional vision and thus the ‘suspicious’ characters that are recognised by the police as untrustworthy via appearances urges his daughter to do the same.

Furthermore, Sergeant Indigo’s admission that his wife no longer wants to accompany him out for meals because of his mistrustful gaze, reveals that while he might not actually be at work, certain occupational personality characteristics leak into his personal time with his spouse. A police officer’s ‘professional vision’ (Goodwin, 1994: 606) is to notice that the culture of the job causes a refined way of seeing people and situations. It is through this ‘professional vision’ that ‘theories, artefacts and bodies of expertise that distinguish [police work] from other professions’ (Goodwin, 1994: 606). As Sayer (2005) also noted, disapproval of certain classes is deeply sensitive to what people ‘look like’ and the ‘sign vehicles’ within this (Goffman, 1959: 1). These appearance indicators are emblemised on the surface of the body or as Bourdieu (1984: 190) argues, ‘the body is the most indisputable materialisation of class taste’. As Loftus found (2007: 318-9 – emphasis in original), the ‘visual register’ held by officers ensured ‘the poor were highly visible and recognisable... [as] the police could *see scrotes* “a mile off”’.

Though Sergeant Indigo spoke of his wife’s current rejection of ‘date-nights’ humorously, it nevertheless demonstrated that there were negative consequences of his policing role on his home life. Similarly, Miller (2007: 27) found that ‘when [couples] do steal a few hours away together, he persists in Cop Channel mode, remaining hyper vigilant and suspicious of his surroundings, seeming to find it impossible to relax and just enjoy the outing’. Likewise, in high emotion situations, the treatment of family members can be affected:

‘Sometimes when we bicker, my wife will say, “don’t speak to me like shit! You’re not at work now y’know, dealing with those people”. Or if I’m telling my son off for something, sometimes you forget how you could sound, ‘cause obviously you have to be authoritative at work, in how you speak y’know, otherwise they’ll [public] will walk all over you. So maybe I’m a bit harsher in tone than I mean to be. You just don’t think about it at the time though.’

(PC Yellow)

As indicated by PC Yellow, the way in which he requires an authoritative tone of voice at work contaminates the way he speaks to his wife and son at home. These work behaviours that are required by his role as a police officer ‘makes it difficult to fulfil the requirements of his other role’ (Greenhaus and Beutell, 1985: 76) as husband and father as they negatively overlap. Police officers can be so intensely affected by these negative aspects of their working lives that it is perhaps unsurprising that ‘hostility overflows into the home’ (Waters and Ussery, 2007: 177).

9.3 *Body Territories: Purification Rituals*

As evidenced in the literature (Douglas, 1970; Finch, 1983; Crawley, 2004) ‘contamination’ has both material and symbolic meaning. The wearing of a uniform is designed to standardise the behaviour of officers as well as making their appearance alike amongst their colleagues. Another definition of space that is to be considered are the areas associated with the body; the zones surrounding it, as well as clothing and accoutrements. In the case of rank-and-file policing staff, there are many accompanying accoutrements that are associated with their uniform and though most are personal choice and can be detached as and when they please, the basic clothing of the police uniform remains and is a constant territory that is embedded with police symbolism whilst they are at work. As is demonstrated by the evidence from the fieldwork, ‘contamination’ of the policing role does not stop with leaving work as officers often brought aspects of their work personality and problems at work into their home lives. Crawley (2004: 235) discovered that prison officers are meticulous in their efforts to avoid contamination between their work and home lives as it damages the ‘relative purity of the home’. In a similarly dangerous occupation, it is important to discuss how *police* officers deal with contamination and symbolic space, something that has not been covered in the academic literature.

The type of 'space' utilised in front region interaction is symbolic space. The term covers several categories such as 'possessional territory' (objects identified with the self), 'the sheath' (skin and clothes), 'use space' (territory immediately surround an individual), and 'information preserve' (personal information 'hidden' in the personal back regions of performance) (Goffman, 1971: 59-63). All of these categories (as well as the four others that Goffman provides) can be grouped together to discuss the symbolic space of officers. Encroachments on these spaces, the territory of the self and body, is 'virtually sacred, [and] the sacred is not to be profaned' (Holdaway, 1983: 46). However, the police occupation requires differing degrees of 'dirty work'; near constant contact with unpleasant aspects of their role. People, places, situations: things that most members of society can keep an appropriate social distance from (Hughes, 1962) all threaten the purity of the police body. Goffman (1971: 69) postulated that there is an 'ecological placement of the body relative to a claimed territory'. He discussed the Indian caste system and argued that the 'potency' of 'contamination' depended on the social distance between castes and points out the 'ranking person' is at the 'centre of a personal space' and the other is a 'source of contamination', much like how the police inhabit their occupational social space (1971: 69). The 'us versus them' mentality (Kappeler et al., 2015: 83) is thus highlighted in this case (see also Van Maanen, 1978; Goodwin, 1994):

'We had a follow-up call to a domestic dispute and it was the "worst council estate" on PC Lavender's patch. Before entering the building, PC Lavender asked if I would like to wear his high-vis jacket as it was very cold and I accepted. The high-rise flats were disgusting, decrepit and stank of decay, stale cigarettes and booze. I didn't even want the jacket I had on to touch the inside of the lift and I wrapped it tightly around me to avoid touching the walls. I stood in something gooey leaving the lift and quietly shrieked, temporarily nauseated. PC Lavender saw the look on my face, laughed heartily and said he "often feels the same way". Before we got to the door of the address he turned to me and whispered "entering these places make me feel filthy even if I don't have to touch the people or anything. Some of these flats are disgusting, and so are the people, and you leave feeling somehow infected by their grossness; their blatant disregard for basic hygiene".'

(Fieldnotes Excerpt: March, 2014)

As revealed by the excerpt, even without verbally confirming my disgust at the state of the lift and walkways between the flats, PC Lavender understood my body language and facial expressions and mirrored them by concurring that he '*felt the same way*'. This particular interaction cemented the level of camaraderie between us and illustrated that, for a time at least, I was a fellow police officer joining him on a 'job'. My perhaps

embarrassingly obvious display of repulsion, which mirrored his own, enabled him to disclose how sickened he felt upon encountering certain places and people. It became clear that in echoing his private thoughts about his dirty work, enabled him to feel safe in divulging how he really felt about it; and he further informed me later that '*potentially offensive opinions*' (about people and places) were usually only reserved for fellow officers who '*understood*'.

While the uniform may be seen as an instrument of psychological protection for officers (Crawley, 2004) against sources of infection, it still does not protect the wearer from *feeling* contaminated via their clothes. Douglas (1970) suggested that certain procedures needed to be followed in order to limit the negative effects of the occupation polluting officer's homes and bodies. Police officers have numerous ways, all individual and personal, to avoid unnecessary contagion. Most officers at BlueCorp that were encountered during the fieldwork carried surgical gloves and alcohol-based sanitiser. Surgical gloves were made available by BlueCorp in all vehicles and in the offices for those who did not have the use of a vehicle for their shift. Hand sanitiser however, was personally bought at the officer's discretion. These particular items were regarded as '*essential*', especially among officers with five-plus years of service. PC Red gave a potential explanation for this:

'They are absolutely essential pieces of equipment. I think the younger officers don't think they need them because they've maybe not seen what we seen or had to deal with the things that we have, yet! They'll learn!'

(PC Red)

As demonstrated by PC Crimson (discussed in Chapter in 6.2.1 and shown in *Figure 5*), who carried a plethora of '*essential*' equipment to protect him against every eventuality; '*something that the younger ones*' did not think they needed (*PC Crimson*), PC Red also echoed the need for the crucial cleansing equipment, as well as the forensic cross-contamination protection issues. It became clear that officers who had a longer length of service, and had thus experienced a higher level of potential contaminations, regarded the surgical gloves and hand-sanitiser as '*pre*' and '*post*' infection; '*the gloves are for protection before you touch something, and the hand gel is for when you've ballsed up and you need to do something after!*' (*PC Crimson*). In reference to '*ballsing up*', PC Crimson indicates that by not using surgical gloves because he thought he did not need them for the situation, he was at least '*covered*', temporarily, by the hand sanitiser. Loftus (2007: 322-3) also found that '*the police emphasis on dirt and disease also manifested itself in a directly physical*

aspect of police procedure: namely, through putting on surgical gloves before touching those poor and dispossessed groups'. Interestingly, hand-sanitiser was used even in situations when officers had not directly come into bodily contact with individuals that would make them *unclean*;

'We were called to hotel where two drunken men had been arguing. I was told to wait outside but the reception was all glass so I could see what was going on. PC Cream and PC Pink spoke to the man at reception, who pointed to the two men in question who were sat on the floor. It seems they had stopped rowing. Both PCs spoke briefly to them and came back out to the car. As soon as they got back in, PC Cream got out her hand sanitiser, used it, and then gave it to PC Pink to use. I asked them why they were using it (as I had not seen them touch anyone inside). PC Pink said, "Erm, I dunno, just force of habit really. Cleans you up after a job and gets us ready for the next one!" [laughs].'

(Fieldnotes Excerpt: March, 2014)

PC Pink's answer is a clear example of a purification ritual and a reason for why hand-sanitiser was used by both officers when they had clearly not touched the two drunken individuals. It indicated that each and every job, at least for these two officers, was 'unclean', and by using the sanitiser it cleansed them ready for the next potentially 'dirty' job. Similarly, Rubenstein (1973: 316) found that officers 'may wash up several times' during busy shifts 'because many of the people [they] stop are filthy', whether they had touched them or not. Likewise, Loftus (2007: 322) noted that officer's disapproval of 'lower working class predicaments... appears to be bound up with notions of cleanliness, dirt and "respectability"'. The body it seems, 'including the hands, as something that can touch and through this defile the sheath or possessions of another' (Goffman, 1971: 69). So while officers can protect their hands through washing, hand sanitiser and surgical gloves, 'contamination' from a public body (and hands) does not protect the officer from being touched.

As well as protecting the hands, an unusual 'nose-gay' technique was employed by NBO Grey:

'We have to go visit this guy a lot [points out the house], only because he rings the police literally every few days about something or another, I think he's just lonely so we pop in and see how he is, but his house is disgusting. Like seriously horrendous. He's in his sixties and there's dog poo on the floor, his poo on the couch, I just don't understand how people live like that. And I've definitely been in worse houses as well, makes me feel filthy. I always have aftershave with me so I can spray my collar about ten times and just hold that up to my nose when I go in. I stopped using my best [Hugo] Boss

aftershave after a while, I was going through something like one a week! [laughs] It's also 'cause then I can just smell me later and not them.'

(NBO Grey)

While the smell of the aftershave may have dampened down the smell of the gentleman's house, for NBO Grey, using his own aftershave which he recognised as his own personal cologne allowed him to temporarily obstruct the contaminating smell of the man and his faeces-infected house, even hours after leaving (as his cologne would linger). By commenting that he begun to use a cheaper aftershave, rather than his more expensive preference, indicates that this method of purification was used more often than he liked. Loftus (2007: 319 – emphasis added) also noted that 'for the police, clothes, bodily comportment, articulation and even *smell* (actual or imagined) all betrayed the class origins of "scrotes"'. 'Bodily excreta', according to Goffman (1971: 71-2), particularly odour, 'cannot be cut off once it violates and may linger in a confined place after the agency has gone'.

Similarly, removal of certain items of clothing that make up the police uniform performs a similar role. As clothing can be perceived as a vehicle for the contamination associated with dirty work, 'immediate removal of the uniform' (Crawley, 2004: 245) at the end of the shift is necessary to eliminate clothes that are contaminated by the work environment:

'I never step inside my front door unless I've taken my boots off, they just get left on the porch. Some of these people's carpets, they really are horrid.'

(PC Crimson)

'I don't mind going home in my top but I don't ever take my boots home with me or my [high-visibility] jacket, I get changed into trainers or whatever.'

(PC Red)

'Everything stays at work. We've got lockers. I sometimes leave my vest on because that's been covered by my [stab] vest so that's alright.'

(PC Cream)

It is clear that officers were comfortable with different levels of 'purifications'; some were content with taking their work clothes home, while others never allowed the most polluted items to leave the workplace. For PC Crimson, the contamination followed him leaving the shift, his commute and all the way up to his front door where he left his boots on the front porch, demonstrating that for him at least, the purity of the home can remain intact

if his boots stayed outside; whilst his porch may be geographically part of his home territory, the contamination can remain safely outside. Other officers, like PC Red and PC Cream, insisted that work clothes stayed at work, in lockers, where the contamination can be *contained*. Interestingly, it seems that only some aspects of the police uniform have the potential to be contaminated, or rather *more* contaminated, than others. Vests that have been covered by exterior protection, such as the stab vest and/ or high-visibility jacket, allowed any contamination to remain on these items, symbolically and physically protecting the garments underneath. Often, officers insisted they showered as soon as they finished work, or immediately when they returned home;

‘I always, always, always have a shower when I get in. You just feel really dirty.’

(PC Crimson)

‘I try not to touch anything when I’m in houses but even if I don’t, you feel like you’ve got a film of muck on you when you come out. I have a shower as soon as I can back to the station after a shift, I don’t even wait ‘til I get home because it’s too long to wait!’

(NBO Grey)

While officers may employ certain techniques to purify themselves of any contamination from their job or their uniform into their home lives, officers insisting that taking a shower after a shift was of ‘vital importance’ thus indicating that dirty work is much more than uniform deep. BlueCorp recommends that ‘any uniform or clothing [that] is contaminated with blood or bodily fluid...’ is advised to wash the offending item with detergent to ‘at least 80 degrees’, ‘dry cleaned’, or ‘incinerated as clinical waste’ (BlueCorp, 2010: 13)

However, the removal and cleaning of certain items of clothing, namely boots and high-visibility jacket is not enough for BlueCorp officers; a shower is the final purification ritual. Therefore, extending Douglas (1970) and Crawley’s research (2004), purification rituals are actually many layers deep; the removal of a contaminated uniform being the first step to cleansing dirty work. The possibility of contamination is ‘one of the utmost relevance to policemen, who regard the violation of body territory as tantamount to insurgency’ (Holdaway, 1983: 46). Therefore, purification rituals and controlling the levels of pollution via their job ‘becomes immediate and critical when violation endangers the physical and symbolic space of, and around, the physical self’ (Holdaway, 1983: 46). As evidenced by the research at BlueCorp, contamination is therefore not just a physical problem. It is symbolic. Officers cleansing themselves before, after, and even when they

had not physically touched anything indicates that their uniforms and their bodies have the ability to be contaminated all throughout the shift via their occupation's *potential* to be dirty. In reference to police officer's 'dirty work' (Hughes, 1951; 1962; Ashforth and Kreiner, 1999), it is clear that officers deal with a combination of physical, moral and social contamination. Dirt's symbolic and social meanings lies in its ability to form a distinction between 'clean us' and 'dirty them' (McMurray and Ward, 2014: 1126), further exacerbating the 'us versus them' and 'insiders and outsiders' mentality (Kappeler, et al., 2015: 83). 'Dirt', as a social construction in this context, is also open to the argument of perception; 'dirt, whether physical or moral, is essentially a matter of perspective, no empirics' (Dick, 2005: 1368). Cahill (1996: 114) found that funeral directors challenged the stigma attached to their work by converting 'the stigma of their chosen occupational identity into a mark of honour'. Similarly, these active transformations of perceived stigmatised occupations can be applied to police subculture as a whole; Waddington (1999) argued that officers deal with the moral haziness of the job by celebrating it via its masculine culture, and in doing so, the 'Dirty Harry problem is effectively morally neutralised' (Dick, 2005: 1371). By Ashforth and Kreiner's (1999) classifications, this neutralising and reframing of negative events into positive ones occurs because there is an adamant assertion that they are simply undertaking the demands of their job. Members of stigmatised occupations however, 'like police officers... are not always at work, or with people who share their values and beliefs' (Dick, 2005: 1372) and thus the portrayal of 'dealing' with 'dirty work' can occupy the usual front and back regions (Goffman, 1959). Indeed, Manning (1997: 5) claimed that 'policing was a masterful costume drama, a presentation of ordering and mannered civility, that was also dirty work'.

9.4

Detectives

Types of contamination, whether symbolic, physical, moral or a combination of all three, is something that all rank and file officers experience in their roles as front-line officers. However, it is clear that different ranks experience different types of contamination due to the nature of their role. It is often claimed that there is a distinct divide between the office world and the street world of policing. Hunt (1984) distinguishes between 'street cops' and 'office cops': policing staff that are primarily in 'feminine labour' such as managerial,

public relations and administration roles are labelled as ‘ass kissers’ and ‘whores’ (who are incapable (or unwilling) to do ‘real police work’ (Hunt, 1984: 287; see also Holdaway, 1983; Miller, 1999), Officers at BlueCorp referred to this category of workers as ‘*station-cats*’ (see Chapter 5.6.1). This section discusses the different types of contamination that detectives experience at BlueCorp.

Detectives are an intriguing group of policing staff with regards to contamination as their role dictates that they deal with the most gruesome and heinous crimes and crime scenes, and yet spend the majority of their shift time as ‘*station-cats*’. Unlike rank-and-file officers, they are not the primary front line of policing and therefore their time spent with potential polluting aspects of their job is limited. However, when they *are* required to attend ‘jobs’ (local vernacular), they are usually of the most serious nature and thus the potential of work spill-over, symbolic, moral and physical contamination is undoubtedly one of the highest within the policing family:

‘I was a murder detective for eighteen years, I really enjoyed it, as macabre as that sounds. Some people can’t hack seeing dead bodies all the time, but by then I was already immune to it. It was horrendous at first. You’d dream about them and everything. But you become totally desensitised to it after a while but it’s not a conscious move, it just becomes you. It gets easier and easier with time. Within a year of being of being a detective my personality had changed dramatically. My wife, who I have been with since I was sixteen, told me that I was unrecognisable and had become cold.’

(Inspector Lilac)

For Inspector Lilac, a year after becoming a detective, he was ‘*unrecognisable*’ and immune to the more unpleasant aspects of his work, which he deemed necessary in order to undertake his work effectively. The detectives’ public and private selves (Rojek, 2001) become increasingly difficult to keep separate as length of service increases, and becoming immune to seeing ‘dead bodies’ effectively developed part of Inspector Lilac’s ‘working personality’ (Skolnick and Fyfe, 1993: 92), and become part of their ‘mental uniform’ (Miller, 2007: 27). Similarly, PC Yellow confided that he often felt guilty towards the way he expected other police officers to manage their emotions. As he had thirteen years’ experience he was often sent on the ‘cot death jobs’ by his sergeant. PC Yellow recalled an event when he felt angry towards a NHS staff member who was unable to control his emotions:

‘I remember going to a cot death at the hospital, which yeah, is just awful. I remember turning the baby over to check for injuries and all the blood collects where the body lies so

the babies' back was bright red, and the male nurse who was in the room was crying uncontrollably, a young lad he was. And I remember feeling really fucking angry that he couldn't get it together. I didn't say anything but it made it a lot harder to get the job done when he's there snivelling in the corner distracting me. And later, when I went home, I felt guilty, not at not comforting him or anything, but because I was supposed to probably feel the way the nurse felt and I just didn't.'

(PC Yellow)

The performance of PC Yellow in the cot death situation was to act professional and manage his emotions in order to 'get the job done' without distractions. However, the management of these emotions led to PC Yellow feeling guilt following the event. This type of emotional labour is defined as 'the ability to suppress feeling in order to sustain the outward countenance that produces the proper state of mind in others'; in other words, PC Yellow expected (and wanted) his outward display of stoicism to 'rub off' onto the male nurse, encouraging him to act in the 'proper state of mind' (Hochschild, 2012: 7) in order to satisfy the maintenance of the team performance (Goffman, 1959). After all, suppression of 'feminine' demonstrative outbursts and emotional distance is a 'key and fundamental way in which gender hierarchies are maintained' (Silvestri, 2007: 51). Following a period of reflection however, PC Yellow felt remorse for not feeling the *right* emotions, that is, he admitted he *should* have felt more upset and showing emotion was actually *not* 'out of place' for the situation. PC Yellow has recently applied to work as a detective, humorously confessing that he was probably '*more suited*' to the role now he was '*dead inside*' (personal communication). As previously evidenced by PCs in the previous chapter, it is important to switch off from work (or at least attempt to do so) to maintain the divide between home and work. However, this 'switching off' for detectives, though was problematic:

'Though it's so important in our line of work to be able to switch off, "switching off" can become rooted in there. When you become desensitised to things, though it's necessary, it's dangerous. You aren't affected by anything, because you've seen it all after a while, nothing shocks you. So when you're supposed to show a bit of sympathy to a friend who's, like, cat has died or something, you're just feeling nothing. It's so bizarre. And obviously they then think you're a cold hearted bitch.'

(Detective Green)

'When you become immune to things you have to be very aware of it happening. Pull out, move to a different department, different rank, different job, whatever. Because if you don't, you risk losing your humanity.'

(Inspector Lilac)

For Detective Green and Inspector Lilac, the importance of switching off was paramount to avoid ‘spill-over’ (Crawley, 2004: 227). However, it is demonstrated that after a varying length of time (these cut-off points change for every worker), the *conscious* ‘off’ button became *subconscious*. This involuntary immunity to the more unpleasant aspects of detective work became embedded in their personality, contradicting the idea that the work self is always a staged activity and detectives (and other ranks) cannot ‘always leave a portion of the self in reserve’ (Rojek, 2001: 11).

The level of contamination is particularly intriguing for detectives. Unlike their front-line colleagues, they wear their own clothes at their personal discretion and ‘are no longer in that basic symbol of police identity – the uniform’ (Young, 1991b: 83); however, ‘they should be dressed to create a professional image, e.g. business suits or formal jackets, and trousers/skirt/dresses. Male staff should wear a shirt and tie’ (BlueCorp, 2010: 15). Thus it seems that the psychological and physical protection (Crawley, 2004) that the standard police uniform offers is not an option for detectives. The option of one purification ritual of removing the uniform, for example, does not exist. Though I was not offered the opportunity to accompany detectives during my fieldwork at BlueCorp, detectives insisted that, like the PCs, they carried alcohol-based sanitiser and surgical gloves as a prerequisite to avoid contamination, moral, symbolic and physical. For most detectives, the risk of contamination (in the way that it is referred to in the above sections) were minimised due to attendance at serious cases being few and far between and office-based work was the norm. This allowed them to keep a relatively safe distance from job pollution although the potential for *emotional* contamination and ‘spill-over’ (Crawley, 2004: 227) was potentially higher due to the nature of their role.

Interestingly, the symbolic nature of their office-dress when combined with their detective status was evidently more powerful with the regards to how the public perceive them. Detectives, who had been employed as other uniformed ranks before, noticed that the public treated them with considerably more respect as rank and file officers are ‘close to the bottom rung of the police status ladder’ (Audit Commission, 1996: 42) and it is ‘the ones who are not in the uniform, they know they have got the power’ (respondent cited in Norman, 2009: 370). Similarly, my experience as a researcher highlights this:

‘We arrive at an address to do a follow-up with a woman whose house had been burgled. PCSO Lemon knocked on the door and I was standing next to her. When the woman

came to the door, PCSO Lemon told her why we were there and the woman looked at me and said “are you CID? Oh I’m so glad you lot are taking it seriously”. I looked down at my shirt and trench coat in surprise.’

(Fieldnotes Excerpt: March, 2014)

As illustrated by my experience of mistaken identity, members of the public hold detectives in higher esteem than regular rank-and-file officers as they feel they will be taken more seriously: and in an occupation where uniforms are usually required, like that of the police, ‘only those with the highest rank can avoid wearing the attire’ (Rubenstein, 2001: 86). Rubenstein (1973: xii) even ‘carefully chose’ his clothes to give him ‘the appearance of a detective or a superior officer’. This echoes Norman’s (2009) findings that ‘it’s them [detectives] who need to be seen in [communities], you only hear of *them* as the crime stoppers’ (Norman, 2009: 370 – emphasis added), and while the public perceive detectives to be a higher rank than PCs or PCSOs, this is not actually the case. This perception was not helped by Hunt and Adams (2007: 125) who stated humorously in their book’s glossary that ‘uniform [police are] poor sods who aren’t clever enough to be proper coppers yet’.

As discussed in the literature, the highly iconic and recognisability of the police uniform allows the public no confusion whatsoever about their livelihood. For detectives however, unless they identify themselves verbally or wear their lanyard identification, they can enjoy an element of anonymity that is not afforded to uniform-wearing officers. This level of anonymity and the fact that their work is largely office-based due to ‘*masses of paperwork and preparing stuff for the courts*’ (*Detective Green*), affords them less day-to-day contamination effects. Short periods of intense pollution were interspersed by longer spells of isolation from potential sources of contamination. However, overall the polluting effects of the role, though difficult to ascertain, may actually be considerably more intense than regular officers due to the nature of the cases they deal with, though unfortunately this is difficult to measure.

9.5 Conclusion

For police officers, and indeed for others that undertake ‘dirty work’ (Hughes, 1962: 9), contamination is a tricky concept. There are no clear-cut distinctions between moral,

symbolic and physical contamination; they are often embedded in each other, much in the way that police image, uniform and the occupation are difficult to disentangle. The polluting effects that officers experience go much further than simply *leaving work at work*. This ‘spill-over’ (Crawley, 2004: 227) is evidenced through the experience of officers’ relationships with their colleagues, friends and family. The ‘professional vision’ (Goodwin, 1994: 606) sometimes leaks into officer’s home lives and contaminates the once untainted views of family members as evidenced by Sergeant Indigo’s perception of ‘*shitbags*’ that he affected his daughter with. This extends Goffman’s (1968: 30) argument of ‘courtesy stigma’ as often courtesy stigma is referred to as an unwanted stigma onto family members via the occupation of the worker. In Sergeant Indigo’s case, he is pushing his opinions on his daughter through his professional vision, stigmatising her view in lieu of his own. Labelling members of the public ‘*shitbags*’ on first glance echoes that of Van Maanen’s (1978: 221) terming of ‘assholes’ and while the wording may be different, the meaning is perceived to be the same. These labelling techniques provide clues to the thoughts, perceptions and behaviours of the police. ‘Shitbags’, ‘assholes’, a ‘sus’ (suspicious person), are recognised on the basis of their appearance and behaviour in the public sphere and thus officers *contaminate* the labelled person based on these acuties, warranted or not. This stereotypical labelling is to separate alarm-causing behaviour from merely ‘improper behaviour’ (Goffman, 1971: 284), and is ‘the mark of the professional – the *machismo* of the expert classes’ where officers ‘can read signs invisible to civilians which make a car worth stopping and its driver worth approaching’ (Goffman, 1971: 288 – emphasis in original).

It is nigh on impossible to disentangle types of contamination for the police, and therefore it can be concluded that it *does* happen, on some level, for every officer through the nature of dirty work. Whether it be symbolic, moral or physical (Ashforth and Kreiner, 1999), labelling members of society via appearance, or indeed whether it is the uniform or the occupation (or a combination of the two) that is the *vehicle* for pollution remains to be seen. Crawley (2004: 245) found that prison officers deal with (symbolic) contamination of their uniform through the ‘immediate removal’ of it. Rubenstein (1973: 333) concluded that a police officer’s ‘power’ ‘does not extend beyond the range of the body’, suggesting, like Crawley (2004), that contamination is just ‘uniform deep’.

Even through ‘rituals of purification’ (Douglas, 1970: 44) via the use of surgical gloves, hand sanitiser, perfume, showering, and leaving the contaminated parts of their uniform at work (or at least outside of their home), the infection still remains, spilling over into their home life. This ‘vicarious contamination’ (Finch, 1983: 37), for some officers, eventually leads to a *loss of humanity*, as experienced by Inspector Lilac and Sergeant Indigo, and becomes part of their ‘working personality’ (Skolnick and Fyfe, 1993: 92). While this coping mechanism may be deemed necessary in the eyes of people who deal with dirty work, for PC Yellow, feelings of patience and anger ensued when the male nurse did not deal with the cot death ‘in the right way’ and a sense of guilt followed. An engagement of emotions, shown by the examples, ‘does not sit comfortably with the ideal prescription of police work’ (Silvestri, 2007: 50) and ‘there is a presumption that rational thinking can exist in a pure state devoid of emotional content’ (Drodge and Murphy, 2002: 425), strongly evidenced by PC Yellow’s complaint that the nurse’s ‘*snivelling*’ was ‘*distracting*’.

The hardening of the policeman’s personality becomes part of their ‘mental uniform’ (Miller, 2007: 27), another extension of their *physical uniform*. Goffman (1971: 82-3) argued that acts that are regarded as intrusive or exposing can be neutralised and interpreted as ‘appropriate when performed by... someone with whom he shares the relevant territory’. Therefore, wearing a police officer uniform makes certain acts more ‘permissible’ (Crawley, 2004: 140), and ‘thus a policeman who feels it necessary to ask a prostitute in the station to empty her purse so he can inspect its contents is likely to feel free to dig into his wife’s purse for change or cigarettes’ (Goffman, 1971: 83). Indeed, the extracts discussed earlier by PC Yellow and Sergeant Indigo highlight how their attitudes at work have seeped and tainted their home lives, attributing to work spill-over.

The different roles within the police occupation, as evidenced in this chapter, require differing degrees of ‘dirty work’, and indeed those who designate a particular type of work as dirty (Emerson and Pollner, 1975), all threaten the purity of the police body. When a police officer designates work as dirty, they ‘declare a kind of moral distance from that dirtiness’ (Emerson and Pollner, 1975: 244), similar to how someone who shows his embarrassment through a discreditable event is indicating that it was not his real self that was performing (Goffman, 1967). It is difficult for police officers to maintain the separation between ‘clean us’ and ‘dirty them’ through a spectrum of clean and dirty

typologies (Young, 1991b). Though these binaries still exist, another binary has emerged between feeling proud of their uniform (and the job it represents) and disgust and detachment via symbolic, physical and emotional contamination.

This thesis has sought to examine how police officers manage their identity, their image, and their work through the lens of the uniform and its accompaniments. Studying the ‘uniform’ cannot be limited to the basic issued clothing. Rather, image is managed through various material artefacts including vehicles, equipment, accoutrements and uniform. It was found to be negotiated and re-negotiated through rank, gender, experience, their place in the policing ‘family’ and the dominant discourses that run through the thread of policing.

With so many different variables shaping experiences of the uniform, an ethnographic approach has proved important in examining how officers *use* their uniform to construct their identity. It is difficult to try to disentangle the *uniform* and the *occupation*: they are so tightly embedded in each other and are dependent on an unknown number of conscious and subconscious variables. Ethnographic research in this context is challenging for broader exportability as the findings are specific to not only the researched police service, but to the specific divisions and individual officers observed in this study. This is not to say that similar research would produce *dissimilar* findings, but rather highlights the value of ethnographic observation to describe intimate and personal experiences and produce unique conclusions. By accompanying officers throughout their shifts, joining daily briefings, attending ‘jobs’, being included in ‘inside’ jokes, and wearing parts of their uniform, I became, albeit temporarily, a token police officer. Though I was not an ‘honorary’ police officer for longer than a few months, the nature of ethnographic research allowed me to acquire very personal and detailed officer accounts of their uniform and their police work. The applicability of the study can be used to study other institutional contexts where the use of a uniform is central to organisations where power is located.

The application of Erving Goffman’s concepts to this thesis offers a new framework to the study of the police uniform. Although there is no overarching theory within Goffman’s work, the many concepts he provides, such as belonging to ‘teams’ for example, helps make sense of the micro which suits this ethnographic approach. For example, Butler (1999) and Goffman’s (1979) discussions on gendered advertisements are examples of anti-essentialist sociology, that is, we should not distil features such as gender, race and

ethnicity into core traits because everything is socially constructed, negotiated and renegotiated. Thus, by exploring the uniform in a northern police form, this thesis is also looking at how human agency (individual police officers) are responsible for the way in which they construct their environment and how they navigate their social world. Therefore, this thesis shows that the uniform becomes a vehicle through which police officers exert human agency. While useful for an analytical framework, Goffman's concepts have not gone unchallenged and will continue to be challenged in the future due to the relentless pace of police reform. Though I observed the body-worn camera attached to clothes (also known as body-worn video 'BWV') it was still in the early stages of being trialled. This latest technology, though not compulsory, is being encouraged as a discretionary addition to the uniform and at the time of writing there are plans to equip all front-line officers with BWV. This may turn out to be a crucial turning point in how officers interact with the public. Additionally, seeing policing at work in different areas shows considerable differences in uniform (some seem to be moving back towards a 'professionalised' attire), and persistent rumours in the media of the dissolution of PCSOs and neighbourhood policing altogether makes it difficult to make specific recommendations. Goffman (1959: 35) suggested that interaction will tend to conform to the 'officially accredited values of the society', but the findings from Chapters six to nine of this thesis demonstrates that interaction is perhaps initially grounded in this idea, but changes in line with the various characteristics of individual officers, situations and contexts. Each performance and performance team (Goffman, 1959) and indeed individual officers' attitudes, develops their own expectations and beliefs about what is acceptable (gendered) behaviour for each role. The hierarchical relationships between officers and their uniform, colleagues, teams, roles and genders are neglected by past literature and yet informs a significant part of this research as it is through these aspects that officers form their identities. While not all of Goffman's concepts are equally applicable to this study, nor did he try and formulate grand theories to explain social interaction, one of his most important contributions was an attempt to bridge the gap between structure and agency. Some of the findings from this study clearly illustrate that whilst the uniform is an organisational method to deny autonomy, human agency operates to personalise and effectively challenge organisational pressures.

Similarly, the 'rigid dualities' that Young (1991b: 209) described; 'Masculinity /femininity', 'hard/ soft', 'logical/ emotional', 'rational/ irrational', 'scientific/ instinctive',

'force/ service', 'centrality/ marginality', 'defining/ defined', 'revered/ rejected', 'inside/ outside', with the male 'version' of each pair at the beginning, still exist but are considerably more distorted due to the gradual transformation of policing culture. Butler (1993; 1999) challenged the biological accounts of sex and gender binaries and believed that gender is far more fluid because of its social construction. However, this study has found evidence of Young's original binaries and has seen new ones emerging. Young's polarities do still exist to a certain extent and this study suggests that the contested and often contradictory positions that are manifested via wearing the uniform are as follows;

- Visibility (high visibility jackets) versus invisibility (uniformity and muted colours)
- Uniformity (expected homogeneity of a 'uniform') versus personalisation (the addition of discretionary equipment and use of embellishments)
- Masculinity versus femininity ('supposed' masculinity and femininity of certain roles, ranks, uniforms, accoutrements and vehicles)
- Pride versus disgust (via symbolic, physical and emotional contamination)
- Equal (claimed 'equality') versus hierarchical (individuals become 'ranked' within the same roles based on gender, ethnicity, and masculine and feminine 'performance')
- Militarised (authoritarian) appearance versus professionalised ('friendly') appearance

Previous studies suggested that the police uniform embodied concepts of invoked legitimacy, authority, coercion, trust and respect. The uniform, as this thesis has shown, is understandably, much more than these characteristics. It is about the 'lived' experiences of officers, those who had become desensitised to clothing effects and those who were experiencing it through fresh eyes, as well as the consequences of gendered uniforms and the perceptions of other ranks. A consideration of the binary contradictions, discussed above, reflected on how opposites generate meaning, not only by what each conflicting binary represents but also the relationships between the two. For example, the masculinity versus femininity aspect of policing (and the perception of certain roles) and the relationship between the pair, affords additional layers of significance. This thesis therefore shows that these binary distinctions generate a hierarchy of meanings and implications that are central to the cultural and subcultural narratives of the police.

The three research objectives set out in Chapter 1.2 of this thesis were not addressed by individual data analysis chapters, but embedded throughout the whole thesis. The problematic relationships between the uniform and the occupation as previously discussed show that they cannot be unravelled to ‘answer’ the thesis aims about the uniform as a single entity. An ethnography of the uniform unlocks the fluidity of meanings of the uniform and allows much deeper analysis, exploration and discussion of the multi-layered semiotics, symbolism and performance work that the uniform offers to officers. The three research questions will now be addressed using the datum gathered from the intense periods of police officer shadowing over a period of four months. The three initial research aims were as follows:

- To explore the role the uniform plays and the social meanings it holds in the experiences and working practices of police officers.
- To explore the gendered identity performances of officers within neighbourhood policing and how this is connected to the uniform
- To address concepts of ‘dirty work’ and ‘contamination’ in relation to the uniform.

The role the uniform plays and the social meanings it holds in the experiences and working practices of police officers.

The use of plain-clothes officers, similarity (and dissimilarity) of uniforms, vehicles and media presence all indicate the centrality of visibility of the police in public space. Essentially, the ways things *look* and how the police forces and individual police officers use their image and types and levels of visibility through how the public views them is significant. With many illustrations and analyses in the discussion chapters of outdated uniforms, different materials, procurement issues, concealment of insignia, and the use of discretionary equipment, it is evident that the uniform is not actually *uniform* in style. While some of the stylistic problems were BlueCorp issued, many officers made wearing their uniform a very personal affair. While officers were keen to maintain a force identity in terms of strongly opposing the removal of ‘BlueCorp’ features from their clothes, they were eager to discreetly change elements of the collective ‘police’ identity by amending and modifying elements of their clothes with the use of discretionary equipment. While the basic under-layers such as tee-shirts remained the same (for practical and regulation purposes), there were clear elements of personalisation that assisted officers in forging their own individual identity in a homogenous occupation.

Following the introduction of neighbourhood policing, increased visibility as reassurance was high on the agenda. But it was simply not enough to have increased visibility: it was the *type* of visibility that reassured, hence the use of a very similar uniform between ranks. The *type* of visibility was apparent not only in their roles, but also the areas that they patrolled and reactions at different times of day and night. Increased visibility does not automatically increase reassurance, as neighbourhood policing hoped: it is a much more complex situation in which many variables are involved in reassurance versus increased anxiety about becoming a victim of crime and negative reactions from other groups stemming from deep-seated distrust of the police.

Some male PCSOs in BlueCorp tried to mask part of their identifiable insignia, choosing to cover up their blue epaulettes, 'PCSO' insignia and even wearing black fleeces to look more like PCs. This management of their public persona afforded them, at least temporarily, increased feelings of legitimacy, worth, and masculinity in a role that is commonly referred to as a softer, more feminine function (Davies and Thomas, 2008). These coping mechanisms did however, lead to ridicule and mockery (dressed up as 'banter') and labelled 'wannabe PCs' by police constables. This underlines how the uniform plays an important role in performances 'given' and 'given off' by officers (Goffman, 1959: 2), Uniform, accoutrements and vehicles are used as a prop, a 'peg' from which to hang their aspirational sense of self as PCs rather than PCSOs (Goffman, 1959).

Interestingly, the main focus of neighbourhood policing was to repair the relationship between the public and the police by introducing a softer, more community focused function, but around the same time, the uniforms for PCs and PCSOs changed from a professional to a more militarised look. In doing so, a binary distinction emerged (Young, 1991b) between what NP was trying to achieve and a 'battle-ready' police image that was confusing to both officers and the public. Cooke (2004: 239) raised significant questions about 'police-like' officers, such as PCSOs, on concluding her research. She queried whether the transfer of significant police identifiers, such as the 'police badge', to other uniforms would 'diminish its power, authority and wider significance' and cause a 'watering down effect'. The findings in this thesis show that the PCSOs, by taking steps to emulate PCs, have caused a watering down effect that Cooke (2004; 2005) feared might happen. The symbolism of the police has been spread more widely across new roles within neighbourhood policing and while PCSOs take steps to emulate PCs, the authority and

deference towards police constables remains unchanged. Though Cooke (2004) considered this from a public perception this study shows that the watering down effect of personal feelings of legitimacy and authority have happened from the inside. Not only has the public perception of PCSOs undermined PCSO status but as evidenced in Chapters 6 and 8, PCs are also undermining PCSOs with ridicule dressed up as 'banter'. Cooke (2004: 243) suggested that the existence of PCSOs could have 'detrimental effects on the relationship between the community and the police, unless better distinctions are made between PCSOs and traditional public police' which has been clearly highlighted by the PCs and PCSOs in this study (evidenced in Chapters 6 and 8).

Regardless of individual force choices on attire and the development of 'soft' policing activities, this study suggests that a 'feminine' injection in policing may cause change to the frame of working and modes of operation amongst police officers in neighbourhood policing. Softer forms of policing have certainly become more accepted following community policing reforms, and 'have become more palatable' (McCarthy, 2010: 274). Due to this, 'cop culture', which has become somewhat of a cliché, may persist but is becoming diluted somewhat as officers 'feel less of a need to maintain the edge, become suspicious and be isolated from their "partners" of policing' (Paoline, 2003: 208). The findings from this study has shown that the integrated neighbourhood policing teams have allowed partners of policing, such as PCSOs, to become a consolidated part of modern policing, but their acceptance as a 'legitimate' colleague is an ongoing and complex process. Therefore, what this study shows are the hierarchical differences that came with PCSOs navigating their way through their day-to-day policing, and the uniform is seen as a marker of the strive for prestige and legitimisation.

The gendered identity performances of officers within neighbourhood policing and how this is connected to the uniform.

The integration of women has attracted a great deal of attention in recent decades. This thesis offers a new perspective of how male *and* female officers negotiate the cult of masculinity in 'feminised' neighbourhood policing which emphasises masculinities. Some male PCSOs were seen to hide their insignia, and alter the colour of their clothes to look more like PCs. Similarly, some male PCSOs took to wearing increased amounts of discretionary equipment which seemed to masculinise an already masculine uniform,

exaggerating their gendered performance (Goffman, 1959). Observing women on the other hand, offered an interesting paradox: women were more likely to enhance physical feminine *appearance* (with makeup and embellishments) while playing down ‘natural’ feminine *behaviour* (and partaking in ‘masculine’ conduct) in order to ‘fit in’ with the masculine culture. Women, therefore are (more) ‘accepted’ if they are ‘*eye candy*’ (PCSO Cerise) but still behave ‘like men’; they are a prime example of Young’s (1991b: 240) ‘new policewoman’ (discussed in more detail later). Goffman (1959) suggests that people tend to seek a consistency in appearance and manner but some of the women in this study, who increase their feminine personal front by embellishments but behave ‘like men’, results in a *lack* of consistency. Similarly, male PCSOs in ‘feminine’ neighbourhood policing who attempt to portray themselves as PCs offers another inconsistency. While the newer style uniforms look more militarised and consequently more masculine, it seemed some officers felt the need to ‘masculinise’ or ‘militarise’ the uniform further. There was a link between male officers, especially those with a longer length of service, and the amount of discretionary equipment they attached to their vests that seemed to portray a masculinising effect, in turn making their already masculine uniform *more masculine*. These choices were something that was not available to PCSOs as their equipment was minimal, carried on a belt around their waist. On the opposite end of the binary pair, female officers, both PCSOs and PCs, adopted varying levels of feminisation through their wearing of make-up, jewellery and perfume. This is a particularly interesting finding as female officers, in a male dominated environment, adopted masculine characteristics in order to be accepted; so while they might have endeavoured to feminise their *uniform* and appearance, their *personality traits*, at least at work, were *masculinised*, leaving the celebrated ‘working personality’ intact (Skolnick and Fyfe, 1993: 92).

Masculinity does still hold the ‘prime position’ and women continue to adopt “‘male characteristics’” to achieve even a limited social acceptability’ (Young, 1992: 192), meaning that women are still ‘not full members’ (Westmarland, 2001: 87). This position is supported by this study; unlike their *appearance*, women still display ‘masculine’ *behaviours*, evidencing an interesting juxtaposition. The introduction of neighbourhood policing and what it represents is at odds with the historically masculine culture. Though equality is claimed, it is undermined by the presence of a ‘unisex’ uniform which is designed with men in mind and thus the police identity as ‘male’ remains intact. It is important to note that this study has shown the different intensities of feminine or

masculine performance(s) and there is a multiplicity of masculinities and femininities. Being 'male', 'female', 'masculine' or 'feminine' are not predetermined and recognisable concepts, but more of an individual interpretation of what they personally mean to officers. Butler (1999) argued that women, demarcated as a separate 'group', reinforces a binary view of gender relations in which men and women are segregated into two clear-cut categories. Thus 'girling', or reversely, 'act[ing] like a man' (1993: 232; 1999: 18) as shown by female officers does not allow for these categories. Femininity, and indeed masculinity, is 'not a product of choice' (Butler, 1993: 232), but a product of policing culture, and the findings from this study suggest that in making personal choices about behaviour, performance, feminising, masculinising and the modification of their uniforms, it is, in part, reflective of personal choices made by officers. The written regulations of the uniform, BlueCorp's uniform dress code for example, offers a mere foundation of what constitutes the police uniform. Codes, regulations and idealised depictions may reveal how designers conceptualise the uniform for each force, its purpose and the way it should be worn. It cannot, and does not, cover how uniforms are actually worn in practice, how it is enforced and regulated by senior officers or how it is perceived by outsiders or the wearers themselves. Hertz (2007: 46) argued that deviations from uniform regulations may happen for various reasons; 'intentional (out of defiance or necessity), unintentional (out of sloppiness, inexperience), or unavoidable (due to insufficient supplies, finances, or communication)'. The findings from this study however, suggest that while the above reasons may play a part, gendered role conflicts, performativity, legitimacy and cohesiveness have been shown to also (self-) justify deviations. While uniforms may be physically modified for a number of reasons, the symbolic communications may also be manipulated, 'thus calling into question exactly who has control of a uniform, its meanings, purposes and messages' (Hertz, 2007: 47).

For the officers in this study, it can be argued that there is no specific gender identity, they are just consistently partaking in 'a schedule for the portrayal of gender' (Goffman, 1979: 8), and identity is effectively 'performed' in this way by 'the very expressions' they undertake (Butler, 1999: 25). Goffman (1959: 30) argued that 'dramatic realisation' is established through 'impression management' and is the use of signs and symbols that dramatically highlight confirmatory facts. While Goffman (1959: 31) admitted that the police do not have to undertake much dramatic realisation thanks, in part, to their symbolically infused uniform, this study demonstrates that due to gendered meanings and

tension between the roles of PCs and PCSOs there is *some* form of this activity going on as demonstrated in Chapters 6 and 8 specifically. These are not hard and fast rules however. Officers are still symbolically assigned into performance ‘teams’, of which ‘personal front’, ‘appearance’, and ‘manner’ all play a part (Goffman, 1959: 35). Extending the concept of insiders and outsiders and the ‘us versus them’ mentality (initially the police versus the public) (Young, 1991b; Kappeler et al., 2015), the allocation of individuals within these ‘teams’ can be dictated by unwritten, underlying criterion ‘set’ by the cult of masculinity. These may include gender (assigned crucially by ‘appropriate’ gendered behaviour); role (PCs and PCSOs performance teams are argued to be separate due to their stereotypical labelling of ‘masculine’ or ‘feminine’); and of course, rank, which is perhaps easier to demarcate as a separate team as rank is more obviously split by status and hierarchy. As the evidence shows, participants can move fluidly between teams based on certain criterion and they are often part of more than one performance team (Goffman, 1959). Young (1991b) developed a detailed model of polarities existent in the ‘us versus them’ subculture which categorises the police along a spectrum of clean and dirty typologies. According to the binaries, these hierarchies put PCSOs near to the bottom of the police status ladder, presumably still above the criminal category... and if your role is categorised on the wrong ‘side’ of the binary, officers ‘intrude to destroy the exclusive and rigid arenas of action which are preferred’ (Young, 1991b: 185). The arenas of action that Young (1991b) refers to are indicative of the front and back regions of performance behaviour (Goffman, 1959).

This thesis argues that despite the introduction of a softer, more feminine form of neighbourhood policing and an increase of female officers, the masculine culture of the police may be weakening, but the police identity as ‘male’ is still significantly evident. Male and female PCs and PCSOs within neighbourhood policing are still endorsing and following aspects of the traditional cultural views about gender roles and the fieldwork clearly demonstrates how their desire for acceptance into the new policing family galvanises conventional masculine values which undermines efforts towards cultural reform. Old habits die hard (Dick et al., 2013; Cosgrove, 2015) and ‘officers will continue to protect and endorse aspects of the traditional culture due to the reassurance and functional benefits it brings, both in terms of practice and its role in constructing occupational identities’ (Cosgrove, 2015: 16). Thus the negative associations that are attached to ‘softer’, ‘more feminine’ forms of policing and those involved in it will

continue to destabilise the change that is needed to break the pervasive masculine discourses that are still deeply embedded. The acceptance of women in policing and indeed male *and* female PCs and PCSOs is reliant on attitudinal change at a deeper level. Accepting women into the wider policing family at every level has, and will continue to, challenge the masculine ‘requirements’ in doing police work: ‘if women can do it, the value of the practice as a means for exhibiting masculinity is called into question’ (Messerschmidt, 1993: 175) but this should not be perceived as a negative. In fact, employing more women, particularly in traditionally ‘masculine’ roles, can only serve to further weaken the masculine ties that hold the culture together. Adopting a ‘unisex’ uniform can help to blur the lines between men and women within police forces, but as this study has shown, there are problems with the practicalities of this, specifically that female bodies are mismatched with male-tailored clothes. While the uniform may be used to deny agency, this study has found that both male and female officers retain human agency over their appearance and modify their uniforms and general personal appearance in masculine or feminine ways.

Looking beyond front-line roles, supervisory and management positions still remain gendered despite a considerable increase in recruitment (see Silvestri, 2003; Dick et al., 2013). It is perhaps telling that the smallest gender gap is located in the neighbourhood policing teams, underlining the idea that women are more ‘suited’ to community based roles. Though neighbourhood policing focuses on building relationships with communities and less about aggressive crime-fighting (as reflected in the fewer powers granted to PCSOs), it does not mean that coercive force is unnecessary and superfluous in modern society. Therefore, women in neighbourhood policing are perhaps more likely than their predecessors to encounter situations which require exercising authority and physical use of force but rather the focus is on using alternative policing abilities and skills. ‘No longer is the aloof, crime control-orientated professional appropriate in community policing; rather, a more informal, relational, and conciliatory style of policing is encouraged. Roles that were previously denigrated as feminine, and too “soft” or emotional for “real” police work, have become the ideal qualities for community police officers to possess’ (Miller and Bonistall, 2011: 318). Though these qualities may be deemed as ‘ideal’, community (neighbourhood) policing is still not valorised by ‘real’ policing and by officers. Women however, may never get the recognition they deserve because of this shift in cultural values; their skills are more likely to be dismissed as performing skills often considered

'innate' to women's 'natural' abilities whereas men who display the same characteristics are perceived as 'supermen' (Miller and Hodge, 2004: 39). It seems then that there is a conundrum. Male and female officers, as evidenced by this research, are shown to suppress feminine characteristics, behaviours and performance individually and within 'teams' (Goffman, 1959) in line with more traditional police culture. However, neighbourhood policing, with its refocus on alternative 'softer' skills, has seen a celebration of an empathetic and caring approach. The irony of this cannot be ignored. Stereotypical feminine traits (shown by both men and women), which were historically unacceptable in traditional culture have enjoyed a resurrection, repackaged into the 'ideal (neighbourhood) officer'. However, the pressure of the ever-pervasive masculine culture still dampens the progress that the introduction of neighbourhood policing has made to challenge long-standing and deep-rooted attitudes. The success of reform is largely dependent upon the reshaping of 'unacceptable traits' associated with femininity into 'acceptable traits' associated with masculinity and 'real police work' so that 'both men and women are able to deploy skills and talents in the ostensibly gender-neutral realm of community policing' (Miller, 1999: 95).

Young (1991b: 111) argued that the view of the 'male/female binary, which the police pursue with gusto' is exacerbated by the policing 'world view' that 'men are hard, tough, rigid, and logical, while women are soft, emotional and irrational'. Though it has been 25 years since Young developed his binary typologies, it has been debated and evidenced in this thesis that these dualities still exist but are taking new different (but similar) forms. Young (1991b: 240) admitted there has been an emergence of a 'new policewoman': officers who are unwilling to fit into either typology of 'traditional... homemaker' characteristics nor the 'butch 'burglar's dog' taking the part of a surrogate male'. These new policewomen are 'feared and revered, for they have upturned the prescribed homogeneity of the male ideology which assigns women a clearly defined place on the margins and which they are expected to fill gratefully' (Young, 1991b: 240). Nevertheless, the women in this study, and indeed the men and women found in 'feminine' neighbourhood policing have given weight to Young's (1991b: 240) claims as they are a 'structural ambiguity' because of their ability to attempt to dilute the long-standing masculine police culture.

Concepts of 'dirty work' and 'contamination' in relation to the uniform.

The police uniform can be seen as a contamination vehicle through which officers were seen to manage the aspect of 'dirty work' and work 'spill-over' in different ways and through various purification rituals (see Hughes, 1962; Douglas, 1970; Emerson and Pollner, 1975; Ashforth and Kreiner, 1999; Crawley, 2004). Officers are often in contact with discredited and stigmatised groups and were subject to courtesy stigma through the nature of their job (Goffman, 1963b), and went through various decontamination procedures to rid themselves of physical and symbolic pollution including the use of cleansing tools such as hand sanitiser, surgical gloves and showering, and the removal of all or parts of the uniform which are personally prohibited from entering their 'clean' homes and lives. Contamination in this way is shown to be stringently contained, unlike the pollution of officers' working personality and professional vision stigmatising their home and family life (see Goffman, 1963b; Skolnick and Fyfe, 1993; Goodwin, 1994). These findings extended Crawley's (2004) notable research that feelings of cleanliness were not just about the removal of the uniform, nor is it always about *physical* contamination. The symbolic aspect of contamination is arguably more powerful as, while consciously prohibited, it subconsciously seeps into parts of officers' identities and lives. The separation of work and home-life thus becomes a blur, contaminating each other in the process. This contamination can be moral, symbolic and physical in the dirty work of police officers (Hughes, 1962; Ashforth and Kreiner, 1999). This study departs from Crawley's (2004) in that undressing for prison officers decontaminated them, however police officers in this study used preventative measures such as hand sanitiser and surgical gloves and removing and leaving various parts of their uniform at work or outside the front of their properties. While this may explain de-robing the physical contamination, it gives no explanation for the symbolic aspect of it. Officers were observed to use 'rituals of purification' (Douglas, 1970: 44), such as the hand sanitiser for example, even when they had had *no physical contact* with situations or individuals, choosing to purify *symbolic contact*, through just *feeling* 'dirty'. While the opportunity for moral taint was discussed by Ashforth and Kreiner (1999), it is suggested on reflection of this research that moral and symbolic taint can *feel physical* and thus requires similar rituals to cleanse. Removing the uniform (and all traces of work) does not lessen the chance of work 'spill-over' (Crawley, 2004: 227) as the consequences of police work allows it to seep into the home, and change their 'working personality' over time (Skolnick and Fyfe, 1993: 92). It is

therefore impossible to attempt to disentangle aspects of contamination, stigma and role conflict within the police *occupation* and the *uniform* (and all that goes with it). It is however, not necessary to attempt to disentangle them, it is more about an awareness that police officers' expected 'roles' are continuously contested. They are so closely entwined, as are the different forms of contamination set out by Ashforth and Kreiner (1999; see also, Hughes, 1962; Douglas, 1970; Crawley, 2004), so it is difficult to separate all parts of what it means to be a police officer, much like Gunderson (1987) envisaged in discussing the perceptions of the uniform, officer, or previous contact with the police.

Police officers are in a 'relatively high prestige' occupation (Ashforth and Kreiner, 1999: 416), and because of this, do hold a 'status shield' (Hochschild, 2012: 163), but to what level this 'shield' protects them from contamination, role and gender conflict remains to be seen. Encroachments on the territory of the self, the body, and the uniform is 'virtually sacred, [and] the sacred is not to be profaned' (Holdaway, 1983: 46). However, the police occupation, as evidenced in this chapter, requires differing degrees of 'dirty work'; near constant contact with unpleasant aspects of their role and these all threaten the purity of the police body (Hughes, 1962). Goffman (1971: 69) postulated that there is an 'ecological placement of the body relative to a claimed territory' and it is thus difficult for police officers to maintain the separation between 'clean us' and 'dirty them'. Though this binary still exists, another binary has emerged between feeling proud of their uniform (and the job it represents) and disgust and detachment via symbolic, physical and emotional contamination.

Concluding Comments

This thesis on the police uniform is justified because there are very few studies on the police uniform and by looking at the anti-essentialist approach of Butler (1999) and Goffman (1979) allows an exploration of the micro-dynamics of situational interaction within policing. This thesis makes an important contribution to our understanding of the role of the contemporary police uniform. It provides an insight into how individuals negotiate values, occupational culture and gender expectations within an institutional and hierarchical setting. The work is one of a handful which have examined the police uniform, partly as a result of the closed institutional nature of policing and the difficulties for scholars gaining access to police officers at work. Despite scholars asserting that the

social construction of gender is fluid, the findings illustrate the pervasiveness of traditional stereotypical binaries of male and female within contemporary policing. Furthermore, this research confirms the binaries identified by scholars such as Young (1991b) but highlights new binaries such as those around contamination and pride; feminised and masculinised uniforms; visibility and invisibility, and community and military policing (see also the beginning of this Chapter).

The impression management of the police is conducted primarily through making bodies, uniforms, equipment and other police ‘indicators’ *visible* in different contexts. Of course, image can be managed *invisibly*, through the use of undercover work and plain-clothed officers for example but then this would be a very different thesis. It is perhaps more productive in this sense to think of policing as a multi-sensory activity and performance, one which is staged for themselves and their audience. The often-unexplored parts of performance, from the foreseen ‘staged’ ones (Goffman, 1959), to the more spontaneous and unprompted ones of individual officers, is very different in situations and interactions. In using Butler’s (1999) discussion on performance, people in this sense never entirely *perform* actions but always *perform*. In aligning with this, we can begin to understand why identity does not pre-exist for police officers, but comes into being through the ‘regulated process of repetition’ (Butler, 1999: 145). Performance is then just the ‘routinised iterative performances of sedimented forms of social practice’ (Cloke et al., 2008: 246) and identities are therefore moulded, contested and (re)negotiated through the dominant culture and subculture of the police, including the ever-prevalent issue of gender identity in masculine dominant discourses. This however, is a very simplistic view of enactment. As Gregson and Rose (2000: 439) point out, ‘performances are not necessarily replicative events’, nor are the contexts in which they are undertaken. Policing, like most occupations, has the high possibility of change, subtle or otherwise. Thinking about the binary pairs identified in this thesis and the accompanying dramaturgical analysis (see Goffman, 1959; Young, 1991b; Butler, 1999) alerts us to the fluidity of gendered identity, performance and contamination in light of the contested nature of individual police performances and police image constructed through their occupation and the lens of their uniform.

The pervasive masculinity, particularly at a grass-roots level will continue to saturate the working practices of police officers if there is not a drive for more female police officers and more women occupying senior management roles as Brown (1997) and Silvestri (2007)

suggested. The idea that an increase in female employment that may result in an ‘impact on the nature of policing’ (Silvestri, 2007: 41) needs to be examined with caution. It is less about policy reform and an increased recruitment of women to make things more ‘equal’. Appearance of equality (through increased numbers and non-demarcated roles for example) does not *equal* equality. Policy is not easily translated into practice and the discrimination faced by female officers in the twenty-first century is still present but unfortunately ‘less blatant, less visible, and as a result, more insidious’ (Silvestri, 2003: 172).

The individualities of the police uniform are experienced by those officers who choose to wear them differently, through personal preferences to how their identity is constrained through their role. It is in the expectations of these uniforms, and the bodies that wear them that holds the authority their bodies possess based on expectations, and the dominant discourses that run through policing culture. In this way, someone’s body can be seen as passive, used by the uniform (and the police institution) to be transformed to align with the values of a higher power. In the context of policing, the relationship between the body and the uniform (and accoutrements) are fused together, that is, the uniform is nothing without the bodies that fill it, and vice versa. Of course, this reductive view can be condensed to presume that certain individuals (bodies) are better *suited* to the job (or certain jobs) than others. This perception is particularly established (albeit not as dominant as in previous years) in terms of gendered policing and the PCSO role. While being truly indicative of allegiance to a certain group, the uniform, vehicles and equipment affords its user membership into a group that has many stipulations over what ‘real policing’ means and its inability to fully mask over the disquiets and angst that are attached to wearing something so iconic and infused with social meaning. To an outsider, members of a uniformed institution such as the police may appear analogous because of the shared semiotic system. Within the organisation however, individuals can display a wide range of diversity and multiplicity, as shown in this study, and thus ‘uniformity’ is ‘only an illusion to the casual viewer’ (Hertz, 2007: 49). Uniforms acquire their meaning not from the objectives of designers and ‘Uniform Code’ writers but from more crucial sources: the police institution and culture that interprets and enforces those objectives, the police officers who either conform with, negotiate, or deviate from those objectives, the public who make their own judgement on the police uniform, and finally, as Gunderson (1987) postulated, the situational context of any given encounter. Policing

transcends clothing and is found in equipment, vehicles, stations, canteens, and the home lives of officers, amongst many other places. The police officer's main instrument for carrying out their work is their body and the uniform and accoutrements are provided to magnify the effectiveness of the physique. It is through wearing uniformed clothing and the presence of equipment, whether they are used or not, that allow the body to be extended, a mannequin on which to attach deeply embedded discourses on what it means to be a police officer.

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Appendix A Participant Information Sheet and Informed Consent Form

I would like to invite you to take part in a research study. Before you decide you need to understand why the research is being done and what it will involve for you. Please take time to read the following information carefully. Ask questions if anything you read is not clear or would like more information. Take time to decide whether or not to take part.

Research Purpose

My research intends to:

- Explore the uses, meanings, impact and social meanings that the uniform holds and how this varies between PC and PCSOs in different divisions.
- Explore the social and professional effects of wearing the uniform and how this varies in and outside the work place: contamination and possible stigma effects of the occupation and/or the wearing of the uniform.
- Explore the effects of gender on the experience of being a PC/PCSO/member of the policing family in general and its relationship to the uniform.

Do I have to take part?

It is completely up to you. I will describe the study and go through the information sheet, which you will receive a copy of. I will then ask you to sign a consent form to show you agreed to take part. You are free to withdraw at any time, without giving any reason.

What will happen to me if I take part?

The research will involve observations with integrated neighbourhood policing teams. You are being invited to take part in this research because I feel that your experience as a police officer or PCSO can contribute much to my understanding and knowledge of the effects of police uniform.

When the information is used in my research, pseudonyms will be used in replacement of your name to protect your identity. Fieldnotes will be kept on a password-protected iPad of which only I have access to and are completely confidential. These fieldnotes will be transferred to a secure storage system at the University of Salford which is university-password-protected; following this, the original notes will be deleted. All information learned will be kept strictly confidential.

Another research method to be implemented is the use of still photographs, taken by me, the researcher. Undercover photography will not be used, and full consent will be sought before any photographs are taken. I will be using a quality high-definition camera to take up-close

photographs of you and your uniform and try to avoid any others in the photo. If any recognisable features (of place and other people) emerge they will be cropped/pixelated to ensure anonymity. The photographs will be used to supplement my observational research. Any distinguishing bodily features on show (tattoos/piercings/full facial features) will be cropped and or pixelated in the same way.

Your rights as a research participant

To gather the needed information for this project, I will be observing the work of PCSOs and PCs in integrated neighbourhood policing teams. Each participant has the following rights in relation to these observations and interviews:

1. To stop the observation or interview at any time, either temporarily or permanently.
2. To withdraw consent from participating in the project, either before, during or after the observation/interview.
3. To see drafts of the thesis in which you are cited to ensure your anonymity.

What if there is a problem?

If you have concerns about any aspect of this study, you should speak to the researcher (CRDC) and I will do my best to answer your questions: c.r.decamargo@edu.salford.ac.uk/ 07772349301

If you remain unhappy and wish to complain formally, you can do this by contacting The University of Salford's Research and Innovation Manager, Anish Kurien: chsc-research@salford.ac.uk

Should you wish to contact me at any point after the interview, please do so. My contact details are:

Camilla De Camargo
School of Nursing, Midwifery, Social Sciences and Social Care
University of Salford
Salford
Greater Manchester
M5 4WT
c.r.decamargo@edu.salford.ac.uk
07772349301

Informed Consent Form

Please delete as appropriate:

- I confirm that I have read and understood the information sheet for the above study and what my contribution will be.
Yes/No
- I have been given the opportunity to ask questions (face to face, via telephone and email)
Yes/No
- I agree to digital images being *taken* during the research exercises
Yes/No
- I agree to digital images being *used* during the research exercises
Yes/No
- I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I can withdraw from the research at any time, without giving any reason
Yes/No
- I understand how the researcher will use fieldnotes, who will see them and how the data will be stored
Yes/No
- **I agree to take part in the above study**
Yes/No

Name of participant _____

Signature _____

Date _____

Name of researcher _____

Signature _____

Dear _____

As you may be aware, I am conducting a research project on the police uniform, which is being undertaken for a PhD thesis for the University of Salford. I am interested in learning more about how PCs, PCSOs, and other units use different aspects of their uniform for various parts of their work, and to explore the social and professional implications of wearing police clothing. The University of Salford's ethics committee has approved this project.

I would like to emphasise that participation in the project is entirely voluntary. You are under no obligation to assist me, but I would very much value your input. The idea is for me to observe at least one PC and one PCSO from each integrated neighbourhood policing team, to learn as much as I can about the uniform during that time.

Should you agree to participate in this project, you can change your mind at any time. Everything you tell me during the observations, as well as my fieldnotes, will be kept confidential and held securely. When I write up the findings all participants will be anonymous, and no identifying information will be included. Please see the attached information sheet for more details. I would like to emphasise that while BlueCorp is supporting this project, I will not be reporting to anyone at any level of the organisation what I observed in the field or what we discussed directly.

If you would like to participate in this project, please contact me at c.r.decamargo@edu.salford.ac.uk or alternatively my phone number is: _____.

If you would like to contact me at any time regarding the project or anything else, please use the same contact information.

Thank you,

Camilla De Camargo

Ms. Camilla De Camargo
School of Nursing, Midwifery, Social Sciences and Social Care
University of Salford
Salford
M5 4WT
c.r.decamargo@edu.salford.ac.uk

Undertaking of Confidentiality

I, CAMILLA REBAC DE CAMARGO, as an employee of the **UNIVERSITY OF SALFORD** involved in the work between BlueCorp and **THE UNIVERSITY OF SALFORD** hereby acknowledge my responsibilities arising from this work.

I understand that my part in fulfilling the work means that I may have access to data, which may be confidential in nature and that such access shall include:

- reading or viewing of data held on computer or displayed by some other electronic means,
- reading or viewing manually held data in written or printed form, or
- overhearing any radio, telephone or verbal communication.

I undertake that:-

- I shall not communicate to nor discuss with any other person the contents of the data except to those persons authorised by BlueCorp as is necessary to progress the agreed work.
- I shall not retain, extract, copy or in any way use any data to which I have been afforded access during the course of my duties for any other purpose.
- I will comply with the appropriate physical and system security procedures made known to me by BlueCorp.
- I will act only under instruction from the BlueCorp.

I understand that the data I am provided with as part of my duties may be subject to the provisions of the Data Protection Act 1998 and that by knowingly or recklessly acting outside the scope of this Undertaking I may incur criminal and/or civil liabilities.

I undertake to seek advice and guidance from the BlueCorp Information Governance Manager or other relevant official of the BlueCorp in the event that I have any doubts or concerns about my responsibilities or the authorised use of the data.

I have read, understood and accept the above.

Name:

Signature:

Date: