Life as a Cop

The Impacts of Policing on Police Officers:
Is Policing a Lifestyle Choice?

By Ruth House[1]

Abstract

The face of policing is changing. This research examines the impact that the role of a police officer has on those who perform it. Through semi-structured, qualitative interviews, it explores the various pressures that are placed on officers throughout their role; the impact these have upon them as people; and the way in which they live their lives. In doing so, it seeks to determine whether policing is a lifestyle choice.

For the first time in over 30 years, police forces in England and Wales are being subjected to significant reforms at the recommendation of Tom Winsor. Moreover, due to governmental cuts to funding, there is now more demand than ever on the police to be an efficient, effective and resourceful public service. This climate of transition and change within policing, forms the context within which this research enquiry sits. Whilst these changes have only just begun to take effect, invariably they have, and will, continue to create additional pressures with which officers must contend. Thus, during a time when police officers are placed, more than ever, at the forefront of public and political scrutiny, it is important that the pressures engendered within their contemporary role are fully understood and, crucially, do not go unrecognised. Currently, police performance is quantified, for these stakeholders, through numerical performance indicators. However, the findings of this research have led the researcher to question how practicable this really is, and whether measuring performance in this way is unintentionally hindering officers, the police service, the government and, potentially, the social recovery of society.

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Chapter One: Introduction

The interesting role and unique position that police officers hold within society, makes policing a popular area of research. Thus there is extensive academic literature on this topic. Whilst being diverse, the majority of research tends to focus on policing in the isolated context of the police occupational role, as it is largely concerned with officers' performance and conduct whilst on duty. There is, however, less research into how policing impacts upon the individual who fulfils the role and, more specifically, the effect that the role has on them personally, both on and, more importantly, off duty. To an extent, the police service recognises that these two dimensions are interlinked; as prior to being recruited, officers are screened for personal problems that could affect their performance at work, through stringent psychometric, health, and physical fitness tests. It is important, therefore, to determine whether any of the personal problems experienced by police officers post employment, are as a result of the occupational conditions and pressures created by their policing role. This highlights an area that warrants further investigation. This focus creates a unique opportunity to gain an invaluable insight into the personal lives of police officers; the changes the role has meant for them as a person and the way in which they live.

The purpose of this research is to assess the various impacts that the occupational role of a police officer has upon officers, both at work and in their personal life. Theoretical accounts within criminology will be drawn upon to explore the influence and significance of police culture. The research seeks to determine and to explore the extent of the role that police culture plays within policing and the positive and negative impacts of this on officers. Furthermore, it aims to identify the specific aspects of the role that exert pressure, or have some bearing on police officers, to determine the impact these have upon the individual, emotionally, psychologically, physically and behaviourally; how they shape their attitudes and personality; and affect the way in which they live their lives, both at work and off duty. Through this, it is possible to ascertain the extent to which performing this role pervades an individual's life, to explore the idea that policing is not just an occupation, but is also, a lifestyle choice.

In exploring the above, this dissertation hopes to determine whether police officers suffer any negative impacts as a result of performing their role. If so, it will be considered whether these are legitimate problems for police officers; how any negative impacts are dealt with at present; and, whether they could be reduced or improved by other means.

In 2010 Tom Winsor was appointed to conduct a comprehensive review of police pay and job conditions. The report concluded by recommending that officers' pay should be relative to their skills, ability, efficiency and performance, as well as the type of policing jobs they undertake. In addition, Winsor has advocated the introduction of an annual fitness test, with pay cuts for those who fail, as well as the retirement age being increased to sixty years of age (Winsor, 2011). Although seemingly intuitive, these changes do not consider that the role itself could contribute to an officer's poor performance, decline in physical fitness levels, or need to undertake a 'back office' role for a period of their service. These modifications appear in parallel with the drive by central government to cut funding to the police service by 20% (HM Treasury, 2010). This reduction of approximately £1.2 billion (Winsor, 2012) represents a major challenge to the police service to be resourceful, whilst maintaining and demonstrating its performance as a front-line public service, particularly, as over eighty percent of the budget is used to employ staff (Winsor, 2011). Meanwhile, public demand, expectation and scrutiny of the police service continue to grow (Newburn, 2008). Another

controversial decision is to reduce the starting salary of a police constable to £19,000 (Winsor, 2011), as at present, the career is considered to be 'too attractive' (Beckford, 2012). With the freeze on recruitment having been recently lifted, it is questionable how attractive these reforms and additional pressures of the role will appear to potential new recruits, and whether serving officers' initial attraction to the role still holds. Moreover, with a reduction in job security (ibid) whether it is still the 'job for life' it once was and what this means for serving officers. This research also seeks to provide an appreciation of this.

Chapter two will provide an outline of the methodology that has been chosen to best conduct this research. Chapter three will follow with an examination of the existing literature on police culture and the impact that this, and the various dimensions of the role have upon police officers. Chapter four will present the findings of this research and a comparative analysis of these with the existing literature. Finally, chapter five will highlight the conclusions that can be drawn from this piece of research.

Chapter Two: Methodology

To undertake this research, both primary and literary methods have been employed; the former being a qualitative, semi-structured interview administered to four individual police officers, and the latter, a literary analysis of existing research.

Interviews obtain first hand information directly from a primary source. They can be shaped to meet the specific research aims, through carefully tailoring the questions to effectively gain this information (Bryman, 2008). Interviews also provide access to in-depth, personal accounts and perceptions, which, through other methods, would be unquantifiable (Berg, 2009). Being semi-structured they are less restrictive, and act as a vital tool to elicit additional new information. Through encouraging participants to expand upon, and further consider, their initial responses (Hale et al, 2009), a more evocative and insightful understanding can be gained. A significant amount of past research on the police has been solely observant; this method does not utilise the personal views and experiences of police officers, particularly in relation to the police culture of which they are actively part (Chan et al, 2003; Waddington, 1999). Thus, in order to explore the impacts of the role of a police officer, direct engagement in this way is essential to gain this self-reflection. One disadvantage of this method is the potential influence of the researcher upon participants' responses (Bryman, 2008). As a Special Constable, the researcher's ambition to join the police force was known to the participants; thus, to reduce the effect of this knowledge, participants were requested to answer honestly, and without concern for the implications.

Given the researchers ready access to serving police officers, a purposive sampling method was employed. Selected participants fitted the specific criteria needed for the research (Silverman, 2010), in this case, those who are, or have recently been, police officers. This sampling technique does however have its limitations in terms of being representative and being able to generalise the findings (Bryman, 2008).

To gain more reliable and representative results, a larger scale study, conducted using officers from several police forces would be necessary. A longitudinal study design, as conducted by Garner (2005) would also allow for the changes in impact of the role upon police officers to be gauged over a period of time. However, due to time constraints, this approach is unrealistic. Instead, participants with varying lengths of service were specifically chosen; this

provided an additional dynamic to the research, and allowed for further comparisons to be made. To ensure an accurate transcription of their accounts, all interviews were recorded. This allowed the researcher to fully engage in communication with the participant throughout the interview, creating a comfortable, informal environment. Although the interviews lasted no longer than an hour, this, combined with analysis of the data, was a time-consuming process for a solo researcher. Thus a small sample of four participants was considered justified for this qualitative under-graduate research.

Consent to conduct the primary research was gained from the relevant police organisation and from the university ethics committee. Participants were informed of the purpose of the research, both verbally, and through a written information sheet. As their participation was voluntary, it was emphasised that they had a right to withdraw at any stage of the process. Once they had consented to take part, formal written informed consent was taken. They were assured that their participation would remain anonymous; that responses provided would be treated as confidential; and that all data would be stored securely. Anonymity was imperative, as participants were discussing their profession; this was guaranteed by assigning a unique identifier to each participant. Due to the nature of the research, there were no significant risks involved for the participant or the researcher.

To compliment the primary research findings, a literary analysis was conducted to examine the theoretical explanations and research outcomes relevant to the area of study. This evaluation of existing literature effectively contextualises it within criminology and highlights the well established key concepts and themes, which are most applicable to be used in support of this investigation. Through comparison, it is possible to identify where the findings of this research support that of existing research and, more importantly, are able to contribute new ideas and concepts. Through a secondary analysis, easy and inexpensive access was gained to a vast quantity of high-quality resources, which can be used to support and frame this enquiry. There are, however, limitations to this process, in terms of the quality, validity and reliability of the data (Bryman, 2008); thus, consideration was given during interpretation of this. The age of these academic sources is also considered to be a drawback. Yet, as the literature demonstrates, the early theories and concepts on policing have survived to hold a strong and consistently relevant significance today. These prescribe the foundations for much of contemporary police research; a practice this study has also adopted.

Chapter Three: Literature Review

This chapter will provide an overview of the key themes that arise in the existing literature, with a focus on the following areas: the role and significance of police culture; the different pressures that policing generates for police officers; and the impacts this has on the individual.

Exploring Police Culture

An abundance of criminological research focuses on understanding the culture that exists within policing. This has been described using various interchangeable terms, including: 'cop culture' (Reiner, 2010), the 'working personality' of the police (Skolnick, 1966), the 'police mind' (Fielding & Fielding, 1991) and, 'police sub-culture' (Waddington, 1999). A definition of a culture, which is valuable within the policing context, is:

> 'A pattern of shared basic assumptions that was learned by a group as it solved its problems of external adaptation and internal integration, 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, 2004: 17).

In essence, the police culture prescribes a police officer's attitudes, behaviour, and work ethic (Scaramella et al, 2011) and the way they should perceive society and their role within it (Reiner, 2000). Where these cultural values are accepted, officers are believed to conform to what is perceived to be the dominant police identity. It is thought to have established on a foundation of shared generational experiences, which have been conventionalised and used to nurture new recruits. These experiences capture and convey examples of 'correct' police conduct and competent behaviours (Shearing & Ericson, 1991). This is further reinforced through organisational socialisation, whereby 'a member learns the required behaviours and supportive attitudes necessary to participate as a member of an organisation' (Van Maanen, 1972: 2). For police officers, this socialisation occurs both formally and informally throughout training, performing the role, and through integration with fellow officers (Lindsay et al, 2008; Fielding & Fielding, 1991). Some researchers suggest that this process occurs subconsciously (Kirschman, 2007; Skolnick, 1975), whereas others argue that it is an active personal choice (Chan et al 2003; Chan, 1996). However, internal and external pressures to conform and meet expectations, along with the desire for acceptance, may also be at play (Skolnick, 1975).

Earlier research conceptualises police culture as a singular phenomenon (Skolnick, 1966; Westley, 1970). This promotes a single, dominant culture that encompasses all police tendencies, to which officers become acculturated. Despite being once highly influential, much research has since rejected this particular view, in favour of one that seeks to account for cultural variation. In examining police culture from this perspective, researchers have identified a number of distinct police typologies, which aim to define and group certain characteristics together (Reiner, 1985; Paoline, 2003). These categorise individual officers and provide explanations for the differences found between them. Similarly, research also points to the sub-cultures 'generated by distinct experiences associated with specific structural positions' (Reiner, 2000: 116), such as rank level, specialised department, and police force (Alderson, 1979; Reiner, 2000; Chan, 1996).

The majority of critics have dismissed the positive aspects of police culture as inconsequential (O'Loughlin & Billing, 2000 in Coady et al, 2000). However, the culture can be seen as a necessary and effective tool for officers to use to handle the inherent, unpredictable, and dangerous nature of the role (Chan, 1996). As Waddington (1999: 295) noted, it provides 'meaning to experience and sustains occupational self-esteem'. The culture can be found to instil a positive 'sense of mission' within police officers towards maintaining order and protecting the public (Reiner, 2000; Prenzler, 1997). It is also regarded by officers as an effective coping mechanism; a figurative 'repair shop' that provides a unique means of communal relief from the problems, frustrations, and difficulties that officers experience on duty (Waddington, 1999). This is specifically attuned to cater for the cultural machismo; what Graef (1989: 381) describes as the 'strength, toughness, street wisdom…thick skin and strong hands' that is not commensurate with signs of weakness. It creates and maintains a security network providing officers with 'camaraderie, mateship and support in the job' (Chan et al, 2003: 250), whilst also generating a sense of mutual understanding between colleagues (Manning, 1977). This notion is most discernible when officers perceive that they, or their organisation, are under threat or scrutiny (Alderson, 1979; Shane, 2010).

The literature is, however, heavily weighted towards a more unfavourable, condemnatory opinion of police culture; epitomised as 'the delinquent occupational culture' (Niederhoffer,

1967: 96). This view suggests that it is responsible for creating a number of negative values and attitudes within police officers (Chan, 1996). It has been attributed to inciting discriminatory, racist, sexist and prejudiced views (Smith & Gray, 1985; Holdaway, 1983) as well as the use of corrupt and unethical practices such as the abuse of police discretion (Punch, 1985). Research argues that it also instils an attitude of hostility towards members of the public (Westley, 1970), establishing an 'us versus them' mentality, where the public are unanimously untrustworthy (Scaramella et al, 2011). Police culture has also been associated with the use of 'perceptual short-hand' (Skolnick, 1975: 45) a method used by officers to quickly detect danger and criminality. As a result, officers become intensely suspicious and cynical of the public (Skolnick & Fyfe, 1993). Together these factors create an environment where the police become socially isolated, increasing the need for solidarity between officers (Skolnick, 1975; Scaramella et al, 2011; Chan et al, 2003).

Exploring the Pressures and Impacts of Policing

The literature also examines the specific dimensions of the role that generate pressures or stressors for police officers. These can be divided into three categories: 'organisational', 'occupational' and, 'operational'.

Organisational pressures are primarily generated from the ambiguous relationships between police officers, their supervisors, and senior management (Terril et al, 2003). Research has frequently cited that inadequate supervision, poor communication, and ineffective management can create significant difficulties and stress for officers (Noblet et al, 2009; Hart et al, 1995 check; Stinchcombe, 2004). Critics argue that these deficiencies are a result of the organisation having lost touch with the current demands and conditions of patrol work (Paoline, 2004; T, P & Manning, 2003). This lack of understanding renders the support and guidance that is intended to be of aid to officers, as essentially incompatible with their needs. In the same way, the processes employed to make important decisions that have a direct effect on officers remain consistently ill informed (Noblet et al, 2009). Where officers' performance is evaluated strictly according to force policy, their use of initiative or innovation goes unrecognised, leaving them feeling devalued and creating poor staff morale (Shane, 2010; Reiner, 1978). To avoid managerial scrutiny, and to cope with these organisational pressures, officers have been seen to adopt a 'lay low and cover your ass' mentality towards their operational practice (Terril et al, 2003; Van Maanen, 1975). Where officers feel failed by the organisation's shortcomings, the bond between them becomes strengthened through a sense of heightened mutual dependency which consequently, generates a futile, anti-managerial working environment (Shane, 2010).

Occupational stressors arise mainly as a result of what can be described as 'job givens': aspects which are ingrained within the nature of the role that remain predominantly unchanging (Kirschman, 2007). This includes the irregular, and often heavy, workload combined with the responsibility of responding to, and dealing with, incidents as and when they occur (Noblet et al, 2009). Officers must also contend with the extensive amount of paperwork and bureaucratic 'red tape', which prolongs the processing of an incident (Scaramella et al, 2011). They are under constant pressure to maintain the organisation's performance targets, and to turn around their supervisor's daily requests (Turnbull & Wass, 2012). This usually requires careful prioritisation, as these demands are often conflicting (Ainsworth, 2002). What are also inherent to a typical police shift pattern are long unsociable hours, including regularly working overnight (Noblet et al, 2009; Garcia et al, 2004). In addition, there is the unpredictable factor of overtime, to which officers must adhere (Shane, 2010; Reiner, 1978).

Operational pressures are those that arise whilst officers are actively dealing with police incidents (Ganster et al, 1996). Primarily, this occurs when dealing with an individual whose behaviour is violent or aggressive (Brough, 2004 cited in Noblet et al, 2009). In this instance, the perpetrator poses a direct threat to public safety, as well as the officer themself. Officers are under pressure to make prompt, difficult decisions and manage situations effectively, which can be a very demanding and stressful task (He et al, 2002). Being witness to horrific crime scenes and the aftermath of inhumane acts can often be a disturbing experience with which to deal (ibid). The varied nature of the role also means an officer cannot readily predict what their next encounter may entail. This uncertainty means they must be mentally and physically prepared for the ever-present potential for danger; they must expect the unexpected (Scaramella et al, 2011; Holdaway, 1983). Although the operational pressures are, perhaps, the most difficult for the public to comprehend, it is argued that, for officers, these pressures are to be expected and, therefore, they join prepared to have to deal with them (Stinchcombe, 2004).

Within the literature on police culture, officers are typically perceived to be action orientated, fearless, strong, and resilient; essentially a person who should, at all times, be in complete control of their emotions (Waters & Ussery, 2007; Kirschman, 2007). According to Graef (1989: 342) this causes many officers to feel pressured to conform to this macho persona and adopt an unhealthy mind-set to 'just get on with the job and put up with the consequences'. When faced with dealing with difficult, violent, or tragic situations, officers are expected to distance themselves from these events, and remain emotionally unaffected (Waters & Ussery, 2007). They are also expected to deal with the emotional reactions of the people involved (Kirschman, 2007). Processing emotions in this way is seen to harden an officer, enabling them to perform their duties effectively. However, where this emotional control becomes habitual, they become unable to emotionally engage with people when they should; both outside of work in their personal relationships, or with victims whilst on duty (ibid; Roberts & Levenson, 2001). This is referred to as the 'John Wayne Syndrome' a means of actively 'seeking to preserve a macho ego image and avoid appearing weak by denying any personal impact of traumatic events' (Reiner, 1985 cited in Stinchcombe, 2004: 263). Here, officers contain their emotions and conceal their problems which, in itself, can be a precursor to further emotional and psychological ailments (Ainsworth, 2002; Graef, 1989).

The effect of these different pressures is commonly manifested through stress and the impact on this particular occupational group is heavily documented. The majority of the literature supports the opinion that policing is one of the most stressful of all occupations (Ainsworth, 2002; Graef, 1989; Toch, 2002), and has been seen to promote various undesirable stress-related reactions. Officers describe becoming more cynical, suspicious, aggressive and emotionally detached from life. They also report experiencing disillusionment with their role, leading to low occupational morale and personal inefficiency. In some cases, stress has caused alcoholism, substance misuse, and the breakdown of personal relationships (National Institute of Justice, 2000).

Research indicates that carrying out the role has been found to have a significant negative impact upon an officer's physical health and wellbeing (Stinchcombe, 2004). Their continual adjustment to an irregular sleep cycle due to shift work, means both their quality and quantity of the sleep is compromised (Waters & Ussery, 2007). Moreover, being unable to properly restore their energy levels, officers experience tiredness and physical exhaustion. This has been found to impede both their ability to perform well at work, and the quality of their time

spent off duty (Turnbull & Wass, 2012; Shane, 2010). Police shifts are characterised to involve 'three hours of boredom, followed by two minutes of terror, concluding with six hours of report writing' (Kirschman 2007: 19) taking a physical and mental toll on the individual. These factors increase the likelihood that officers will become run down and take time off sick; thus increasing the workload for those that remain (Graef, 1989).

The literature also emphasises the impact that the role has upon officers' relationships, and personal and family life outside of work (Toch, 2002; Reiner, 1978), particularly their inability to maintain a healthy work life balance (Turnbull & Wass, 2012) due to difficulties with switching off from both the role, and the stress and tensions it engenders (Waters & Ussery, 2007). Because the majority of incidents are of an unpleasant or confidential nature, officers feel unable to discuss or share these experiences with those who are non-police. This gap in understanding leaves officers feeling isolated from those with whom they should feel most close, and their families frustrated with being unable to bridge this gap (Toch, 2002; Roberts & Levenson, 2001). Their participation in normal family life is permanently disrupted by their shift pattern, and requires a considerable amount of forward planning. Even then, special events of the year such as holidays and birthdays are often missed (Kirscman, 2007; Waters & Ussery, 2007).

As policing revolves heavily around teamwork, developing strong working relationships with other officers is seen as essential (He et al, 2002). In fact, what is established is regarded to be the highest degree of solidarity in any occupation (Caplan, 2003). This fundamental support mechanism helps officers to carry out their role effectively; during difficult or dangerous situations, they can confidently rely on the loyalty and support of their colleagues (Scaramella et al, 2011; He et al, 2002). Furthermore, having had the same experiences, police officers can relate to one another on a level that civilians cannot. This mutual understanding provides them with a means of debriefing after particularly stressful or difficult incidents (Chan et al, 2003; Waters & Ussery, 2007). This solidarity is often considered to be both the result and cause of the way in which the police isolate themselves from the rest of society (Westley, 1970; Scaramella et al, 2011). However, officers regard it to be highly beneficial to their lives, both on and off duty (Chan et al, 2003).

Having the power to deprive the public of their rights and freedoms; to use reasonable force against them; and to regulate these actions using their own discretion, places police officers in a unique position within society. Recipients who are recalcitrant tend to perceive this authority as a threat and as potentially unjust and therefore regard the police unfavourably (Chan et al, 2003). These tensions generate attitudes of hostility and distrust towards officers (Reiner, 1985; Manning 1977). Being 'despised by the very people for whom they daily risk their physical and mental wellbeing' is demoralising (Graef, 1989: 342); thus officers become hardened, less compassionate, more intolerant (Chan et al, 2003) and reciprocate the hostility they receive (Westley, 1970). Witnessing people at their worst and dealing with the destruction that their brutal, inhumane, and often senseless actions create, inevitably has an impact. Most significantly, it affects their view of human nature, as they question the existence of goodness within people (Graef, 1989; Kirchman, 2007). Research indicates that police officers progressively develop more negative, distrustful, and suspicious views of the public (Chan et al, 2003; Manning, 1977). From this, and their exposure to criminality, they may begin to embrace a very cynical view of the world and the people in it (Scaramella et al, 2011; Westley, 1970). This mind-set substantiates a tendency for officers to make assumptions and attribute cause to behaviours, even when they are legitimate (Ainsworth, 2002). It makes them more perceptive of danger in their immediate environment, and

particularly observant of minor detail (Skolnick, 1975; Manning, 1977). These characteristics are seen to promote effective investigation (Reiner, 2010) and a desirable proactive approach to police work (Caplan, 2003), yet they also create a tense and challenging relationship between the police and those policed, reinforcing the 'us versus them' mentality and the internal solidarity prescribed within police culture (Chan et al, 2003; Lindsay et al, 2008).

These different aspects of the role can be seen to contribute to, or detract from, an officer's job satisfaction. The literature notes that, after having experienced the role, some officers become disillusioned with their ability to impact upon crime, transform their community, or really help victims (Garner, 2005; Reiner, 1978). In some cases, officers find this reality very stressful (Shane, 2010) yet, for the majority, their fulfilment and commitment to the role remains unchanged (Garner, 2005). There is also the realisation that much of police time is spent performing administrative tasks rather than arresting people, what is considered to be 'real' police work; this is often at odds with new recruits' preconceptions of the role (Kirschman, 2007). Officers have reported frustration and resentment towards the operation and bureaucracy inherent to processes within the judicial system, particularly those that place constraints on their role (Chan et al, 2003; Kirschman, 2007). Weighed against this, there are several aspects of the role, which have been found to increase officers' job satisfaction. These include the ability to work independently and be responsible for the control and organisation of their workload, and to demonstrate their own capabilities and skills whilst performing the role (ibid). Also reported was the sense of achievement gained through making a worthwhile contribution to the community and helping people (Toch, 2002). This is reinforced chiefly by appreciation from the public (ibid), yet, as this is seldom received, positive feedback from supervisors was equally valued and a significant generator of job satisfaction (Miller et al, 2009; Monk-Turner et al, 2010).

Chapter Four: Research Findings and Analysis

The interviews began with a series of questions about officers' experiences of police culture. They were asked to describe the culture; what they believed had shaped it; its positive and negative features; and the significance of this culture to them personally. The interview then went on to examine their views of their role; what they liked and disliked about it and their motivation for choosing to become a police officer. They were then asked to think about the different pressures of the role; the ways in which these impact upon various aspects of their lives; and whether performing the role has affected their behaviour, personality, attitudes, and relationships. Throughout, officers were asked to consider whether they perceived these impacts or changes as positive or negative. In doing so, it was possible for them to weigh up these impacts along with the pros and cons of performing their role and what they gain from it in terms of job satisfaction. Having considered all of the above, they were asked whether they felt their chosen occupation is also a lifestyle choice.

Reflections on Police Culture
All four officers demonstrated a distinct awareness of a culture and, it was clear that it meant a great deal to them. In line with the work of Reiner (2000) and Graef (1989), the majority described the culture to have once been characterised by values of masculinity, boisterousness and heavy drinking (O2; O3 & O4, 2013). However, they believed that the culture had since changed, particularly in response to reforms of society and the police service (O3, 2013). Officer 4 (2013) believed that police culture has been steadily shaped by

a distinctive personality 'type'; they emphasised that those who are attracted to the traditional values of the culture, apply for the role because they already possess these characteristics (O4, 2013). From their perspective, the culture is not exclusive to the police. It was likened to that found within other 'blokey' professions in warehouses or on building sites, which are perceived to attract people who have a similar personality (ibid). This view is at odds with Skolnick's (1975) theory that the culture develops a 'working personality', which is socially generated amongst police officers. As Officer 3 (2013) noted 'I didn't want to be excluded… I didn't consciously make any decision to behave in a certain way but invariably I copied my peers' illustrating that upon joining the police service they were perhaps impressionable and held a desire for acceptance. This supports the idea that officers unwittingly conform to the culture (Skolnick, 1975; Kirschman, 2007) and follow by example of their colleagues (Shearing & Ericson, 1991); thus, police officers become acculturated through socialisation with other officers and experience of the role (Van Mannen, 1972; Lindsay et al, 2008; Fielding & Fielding, 1991; Chan et al, 2003). Officer 3 (2013) went on to say 'most police officers are pretty similar, they fit in the same box'. A number of possible factors could cause this: the force actively recruiting a certain type of person into the role (Prenzler 1997; Skolnick & Fyfe, 1993), as Officer 4 described; likeminded people being attracted to apply for the role; or these similarities developing as a result of officers being moulded by the role itself (Fielding & Fielding, 1991; Kirschman, 2007).

The interviews highlighted several interesting cultural divisions. One was that found between different sections, where officers' combined personalities were seen to construct a culture that was exclusive to that team (O3; O4, 2013). Officer 3 (2013) recalled that, on occasion, where an individual did not get on with a particular section, they were reassigned to a team with which their personality was more compatible. Although the literature reports on the cultural divides between different ranks and specialisms (Chan et al, 2003; Skolnick, 1975; O'Loughlin & Billing, 2000 in Coady et al, 2000), it scarcely acknowledges this division between teams. This finding suggests that there is pressure upon new officers to conform to, and to accept, the standards and expectations of their team, in order to be accepted by them. Where people choose to abstain from this, as Officer 3 (2013) explained, they are regarded as 'a bit of a weirdo' and often excluded from the team's culture (O3, 2013). Here, also noted by Van Maanen (1972) and Scaramela et al (2011), the culture is seen to reject individuality in favour of conformity. This is reinforced by the way that the police, as an institution, encourages conformity, both from the public, to abide by the law, and from its officers. Despite this, officers proceeded to emphasise the importance of maintaining an identity and personal values within the role (O3; O4, 2013) as, for some, the role has become their only self-identification, it is 'who they are, they're just all about the job' (O4, 2013). This suggests that, in order to retain a personal identity and also receive inclusion by the team and its culture, a careful balance is required.

Another cultural division was described, between individual officers, in terms of their work ethic and attitude towards the role. Officer 1 (2013) noted that 'to be successful, or to be viewed as a 'good cop' in the eyes of other cops, you've got to have a little intensity about the way in which you do things' (O1, 2013). In essence, those who work hard gain peer respect, and those who are 'bone idle and lazy' do not (ibid). Similarly, Officer 2 (2013) noted the cultural divide between those who just 'treat it as a job' and those who embrace it as a way of life. These distinctions between officers are resonant of those observed by Reiner (1978) between his police typologies of the 'professional', the 'uniform carrier' and the 'bobby'. Officer 1 (2013) described how, for some officers, their work life becomes the centre of everything and they are perceived as being 'obsessed' and merely 'live for the job'.

Here, in the same way that officers can lose all identity, without a healthy balance, their work ethos can also become a negative.

All four officers illustrated how the culture was seen to reinforce a positive team environment. At work they felt reassured, knowing they could rely on each other, particularly in difficult or dangerous situations, where resilience as a group is essential. Under these circumstances, officers emphasised the importance of 'playing on the same side' (O2, 2013), as Officer 3 (2013) explained 'you are sat on one side of the fence trying to uphold the law'. These responses are indicative of the 'us versus them' mentality, cited as a negative within the literature as well as the notion of the 'thin blue line' that the police are seen to maintain (Scaramella et al, 2011). However, here a culture of strong group identification is seen as a positive, as it generates a close relationship between officers on both a professional and social level. This produces a sense of mutual understanding, regarded as invaluable for when things do go wrong; a concept also supported by Waddington (1999). From a senior officer's perspective, the culture was seen to 'knit a very tight group of people who respond well to pressure' (O3, 2013). This was demonstrated by banter between officers whilst informing 'the way in which the team policed itself in relation to sorting out problems' (O3, 2013). Officer 4 (2013) described how the culture could also be used 'to minimise things and get through the day' primarily through humour, thus enabling officers to cope with the more difficult aspects of the role through this technique. This coping mechanism is well recognised within police research (Reiner, 1978; Waddington, 1999; Holdaway, 1983) yet desensitisation in this way, as Officer 4 did acknowledge, can also become a negative (Roberts & Levenson, 2001). In these different ways, police culture is seen to enable officers to adapt to, and deal with, the demands and variability of the role, whilst it also supports their wellbeing and interpersonal function within the team. Thus, managed well, the culture can effectively become a team's strength (O3, 2013) and, therefore some supervisors have actively encouraged it (O1, 2013).

Reflections on the Role

For two of the officers, becoming a police officer had been an ambition they had wanted to pursue from a young age, yet they began their career in policing later in life (O2; O4, 2013). In contrast, the other two joined young and for them this decision was more of an impulsive new direction (O1; O3, 2013). The former two aspired to do something for other people, serve their country, and protect their community in what they considered to be an honest role with a worthwhile purpose. These motivations are seen as central to the notion of a 'sense of mission' held by police officers (Kirschman, 2007; Reiner, 2000). Officer 2 (2013) outlined 'I see myself as a good guy…it's like the goodies versus the baddies… I like the idea of trying to get rid of the bad guys'. This humble notion, alongside the thrill of racing around and arresting people (O4, 2013), are activities that can be 'uninhibitedly and delightedly engaged in because they are also seen as worthwhile' (Reiner, 2010: 120). For the other two officers, the attraction was to do something different; far from routine and the confines of a desk, the role was seen to offer them freedom, excitement, and the opportunity to work within a team (O1; O3, 2013). They also outlined the appeal of the variability and 'sporadic nature of the work' (O3, 2013), and being responsible for organising and managing their own workload (O1, 2013). These attractions to the role were also found within the existing literature (Monk-Turner et al, 2010; Scaramella et al, 2011) and, in general, were consistent with what officers claimed to enjoy most about their role and, in all cases, this initial attraction still held.

When asked if the reality of the role was what they had anticipated, officers provided diverse responses. One held the preconception that the role would involve facing danger and risk on a more regular basis (O1, 2013) and another the romanticised notion that:

> 'You turn up to work, you put your funny hat on, and you go out on foot…help old ladies across the road, slap kids behind the ear, and lock up baddies' (O2, 2013).

Although the literature indicates that officers feel disillusioned when their expectations of the role are not met (Shane, 2010; Stinchcombe, 2004), these officers appeared unfazed. Instead, their responses demonstrated 'an attitudinal recalibration toward more realistic expectations' (Garner, 2005: 66); accepting that 'nobody wants to be fighting with people every day of the week' (O1, 2013) and 'the reality is…we are a form of social services' (O2, 2013). In contrast, the other two officers stated that the role was what they had anticipated. One reason for this could be the time at which they joined. Officer 3 did so in the 1980s, prior to substantial changes to the police service, whereas Officer 4 joined in 2010, after the majority of these had occurred. Therefore, they individually envisaged a more accurate version of the role and understanding of the 'job givens' (Kirschman, 2007) applicable at the time.

Upon joining, all of the officers viewed the role as a 'job for life'. This was followed in all cases, by acknowledgment of the significant reforms, which have considerably reduced their job security, something that they were previously guaranteed. Their concerns particularly focused upon the ease with which police officers can now be made redundant; a process that, before, was extremely difficult (O1; O2; O4, 2013). For Officer 3 (2013), the impact of this dawned when they were faced with having to retire at the age of just forty-eight. This officer decided to embrace this eventuality, and spent the remainder of their years in service also in part-time education, in an effort to increase his employability outside the policing field. In contrast, the other three officers demonstrated significant apprehension towards this prospect. This reflects Kirschman's (2007) finding that officers view the transition from policing to a civilian career as very daunting; they feel ill equipped to fulfil any role other than that of a police officer. This preoccupation may be another reason why officers regard policing as a job for life. Officer 3 (2013) noted that he had observed a shift in mentality towards the role, in those who joined from the mid 1990s onwards: 'they want to run before they can walk'. They referred to the change in ambition from simply 'wanting to be a police officer', towards a focus on career development and promotion (ibid). Interestingly, only Officer 4, the one who joined after this time, voiced any ambition of this kind. This suggests that the role has always been regarded as a 'job for life', yet police officers actual appreciation of this concept may have changed due to the culture of promotion.

In contrast to the literature findings, officers all exhibited a very positive attitude towards their role. One explanation for this difference could be that much of the literature that places more emphasis on the negative impacts of the role is based on American police officers. This suggests that policing is not internationally generic and that American officers are subject to different pressures; thus the American literature is perhaps not automatically transferable to the United Kingdom. However, antipathy was expressed towards the bureaucratic procedures within policing, particularly the amount of paper work required (O3; O2, 2013), which is also cited in existing research (Chan et al, 2003; Kirschman, 2007). As Officer 2 (2013) noted, the police 'do everything in triplicate and are scared to death of litigation'; thus, the organisation makes what could be an easy job, very difficult (O3, 2013). Another concern voiced by Officer 2 (2013) was that:

> 'As people get senior in rank, they become more managers of a business and, unfortunately, the police has turned into a business that demands results and demands figures'.

It was felt that this has led senior officers to focus solely on meeting performance indicator targets, and their own progression in the rank structure (O1; O2, 2013). Thus, they are not perceived to care *how* those below them achieve these figures, as long as they do (O2, 2013). Another issue raised was the way that officers' own performance is also measured solely by the statistics that they individually produce; as Officer 4 (2013); emphasised 'policing is more than just arresting people' and 'having to tick boxes' (ibid). This highlights officers' frustration with elements of the role which hinder their work; elements which are also perceived to transgress the true essence of what they feel policing is really about.

The Personal Impacts of the Role

All except Officer 3 had initially anticipated that performing the role would alter or impact upon their lives. On reflection, they all agreed that it had done so in a number of ways. Officers described favourably how joining the police had matured and shaped them as people (O1; O3, 2013), given them confidence (O1, 2013) and developed within them 'a disciplined set of standards' (O3, 2013). Behaviourally, they cited being more alert to signs that a situation would become confrontational or dangerous (O3, 2013) and more aggressive when it did (O1, 2013). Officer 1 (2013) reflected how they had taken the behavioural traits and mannerisms they had picked up at work into their personal life, some of which they regretted; this officer explained 'you change, it's not always desirable, but you are that person now'. In contrast Officer 4 (2013) believed that the role had not changed them as a person. Instead they maintained that changes to their behaviour and personality were only present on duty, as a result of learning to perform the role. This could be because this officer has only been in service for two years, thus these changes have not become ingrained, unlike for Officer 1 who has completed eight years service. Officer 4 did note, along with others, the negative physical impact of shift work, which was seen to worsen with age (O2; O4, 2013); 'the shifts take it out of you, the shifts kill you...we weren't designed to live like that!' (O1, 2013). In line with the work of Skolnick (1975) and Manning (1977), these changes are seen primarily to be an adaptation to the role. Officers equip themselves with these skills and behaviours which, used appropriately, enable them to deal effectively with different situations and to protect themselves.

Witnessing, and having to deal with people who are displaying hostile, intimidating or threatening behaviour, was found to have an impact upon officers' attitudes towards the public (O1; O2; O3, 2013). Officer 2 (2013) regarded such individuals as disrespectful, adverse, and the most difficult population to deal with, belonging to a 'part of society that does nothing for the rest of society'. This applied particularly to those with whom the police repeatedly come into contact (O2; O3, 2013). Officer 2 (2013) demonstrated frustration and disillusionment with their inability to prevent this recurrent process. Despite this, officers did not think that their general perceptions of society had changed since taking on the role, as they regarded the majority of the public to be upstanding, decent people who value the role of the police (O1; O2; O4, 2013). This is contrary to the implication of the literature (Scaramella et al, 2011; Chan et al, 2003; Manning, 1977), as officers do not condemn society as a whole, but have, through daily exposure, an increased awareness of the minority within society who simply have lower moral standards. This supports Westley's (1970) finding that the majority of police time is spent dealing with the most hostile members of society; those who are policed, not those they should be protecting. Because of this, as Manning (1977) notes, officers develop a more distrustful, suspicious and judgmental attitude towards such people (O2; O3, 2013) and these judgments can be employed to group individuals together (O3, 2013). This practice of categorising people by their relevance to policing is well recognised (Flanagan, 2008; Reiner, 2010; Holdaway, 1983) and is seen to enable officers to anticipate

and prepare themselves for the problems that different individuals may present (Reiner, 2010). Officer 3 (2013) described how this trait had been negatively transposed into their social life, as they were critical of themselves for making immediate value judgements when meeting new people.

All officers agreed that their role does have an emotional impact upon them. Officer 1 (2013) explained that there are many emotional highs and lows within policing, which can affect officers. They described the effect of self-criticism when making a mistake 'you can beat yourself up about it…over analyse it and get yourself down' (ibid). Toch (2002) emphasises the significant pressure upon officers to make decisions, which have the potential to be life changing for the people they affect. As Officer 4 (2013) noted 'you're doing an important job and you can't really mess up…if you do something wrong, it can be catastrophic'. Consequently, as articulated by Officer 1, anxieties and self-doubt surface, sometimes leading them to bring their own competence and ability into question (Toch, 2002). All of the officers noted that witnessing disturbing or violent incidents had some impact upon them. Of particular distress were incidents involving the injury of a colleague, or vulnerable people such as children (O2; O3; O4, 2013); also noted by Ellison & Genz (1978) as the sole two 'acute' stressors. Officer 3 (2013) explained the cultural expectation for officers to deal with the emotions attached to these incidents in a certain way. They referred to the 'John Wayne Syndrome' and noted that those who struggle to conform to these principles are perceived as weak or 'not up to the mark' (ibid). This unhealthy notion neglects the reality that police officers are human and do suffer human frailty. In contrast to existing research (Ainsworth, 2002; Graef, 1989; Toch, 2002), none of the officers stated that they experienced a substantial amount of stress from their role. It was considered that 'a little bit of stress is good for you' (O1; O2, 2013) and what is important is how you manage this and organise yourself at work to deal with it (O1; O3, 2013).

Officers pointed to support from their colleagues as their primary means of coping with these emotional impacts. They discussed disturbing events, problems, or blunders on duty with colleagues, to alleviate their emotional strain by sharing them with people who understand (O1; O2; O3, 2013). This informal debrief, allows them to go home and switch off from the day's events (O1, 2013). Moreover, Officer 4 (2013) reflected that, on duty they 'become' the uniform, rather than the person wearing it. In doing this, officers can effectually detach themselves from the hostility and abuse received from the public. Officer 1 (2013) also supported this view: 'people tend to see the uniform…you mustn't take it personally…they're railing against the system, not against the individual'. This response is seen as a coping mechanism, which preserves officers' emotional stability when it is most critical, and prevents them from feeling under direct attack. They are indeed, 'taking on the role'.

All of the officers indicated that shift work has a significant impact upon their lifestyle, personal lives, and work-life balance. Bound by their unsociable shift pattern (O4, 2013), they frequently have to work evenings and weekends, when friends and family are off work. In line with Waters & Ussery's (2007) findings, they see these people less and often miss special occasions and events, unless they book time off (O1; O2; O4, 2013). Despite this, they did not view the shifts as a negative, socially; instead, they embraced and enjoyed the up-sides that they afforded them. Having time off during the week was regarded as convenient (O2, 2013) and enabled Officer 4 (2013) to partake in childcare. Although 'it's very difficult to do anything spur of the moment when you're a cop' (O1, 2013), officers explained how careful pre-planning, time management and organisation, was key to making

the shifts work for them (O1; O2, 2013). Moreover, having gone back to what they referred to as 'civvy street', working nine until five during the week, Officer 3 (2013) reflected that 'you realise how good those shifts are…I've never had so much time off than when I was working shifts'. This suggests that although officers' free time is perhaps less 'valuable' in terms of coinciding with other people, they actually get more of it and learn how to make the most of it.

When officers were asked whether they try to separate their working life from that of their private, three agreed that they did (O1; O2; O3, 2013). Officer 1 (2013) noted

> 'it's nice to have a distinctive home and a distinctive work life…home is home and you don't talk about all the awful stuff that happens at work'.

They described the importance of being able to 'switch off' to achieve this (O1; O2; O3, 2013) yet, unlike the literature portrays (Waters & Ussery, 2007; Toch, 2002), these officers did not have any difficulty doing this. Not talking about their job at home (O1, 2013), or engaging in activities or voluntary work that takes them away from their role as a police officer (O2; O3, 2013), was found to help. In contrast, Officer 4 (2013) described how they did not want or *need* to make a concerted effort to switch off and found it helpful to discuss work-related matters with their partner. Thus, perhaps the desire, or need, to separate the two domains develops with time in service.

Relationship with Colleagues
The officers described how, upon joining, they had developed new friendships with fellow officers and had let their previous friendships diminish somewhat. Having time off which coincided only with that of their colleagues was seen as a major contributor to this, as it means that they also predominantly socialise with fellow colleagues outside of work. Officers also perceived their colleagues to be on the same wavelength and possess similar experiences to themselves, which has created a valuable mutual understanding (O1; O2; O4, 2013). As such, working alongside their close friends was described to have a very powerful and emotive impact upon officers on duty. Having this tight bond provides reassurance, particularly in dangerous situations, as Officer 2 (2013) noted: 'their lives could be in your hands and likewise yours could be in theirs' (O2, 2013). As a new officer, Officer 4 described how their relationship with their colleagues also provided an invaluable learning experience and support network (O4, 2013). Sadly, the majority of literature regards this bonding in a negative light, and as a means of building an insular environment, which excludes police officers from the rest of society (Chan et al, 2003; Skolnick, 1975). Despite this, it is understandable that such an environment develops and, why this unique relationship has such a significant role throughout both officers' professional, and personal lives; as Officer 1 (2013) noted 'I couldn't come into work and not have that…work could be a very lonely place' Furthermore, whilst officers benefit from having this relationship, they also recognise the importance of maintaining contact with non-police friends (O1; O2, 2013) as Officer 2 (2013) described 'it's important to keep your feet on the ground and liaise with normal people'.

Relationship with Supervisors
With regard to supervisory input at work, the general consensus was that this relationship was very important and that a supervisor could potentially 'make or break a team' (O1, 2013). In line with the findings by Monk-Turner et al (2010), good supervisors were described to:

> 'Have their finger on the pulse…bring the entire team up just by making the right decisions…be aware of the different strengths and weaknesses of people…and been able to craft an effective, hard working, very successful team of officers' (O1, 2013).

As the literature suggests (Ganster et al, 1996; Stinchcombe, 2004; Ainsworth, 2002; Paoline, 2004), where supervisors are unable to do this, officers find it very difficult to work with them, as they are perceived as neglectful and unsupportive of the team, which significantly lowers staff morale (O1; O2; O4, 2013). As opposed to supervisory incompetence being a result of a loss of understanding of patrol conditions (Paoline, 2004; Terrill et al, 2003), Officer 3 (2013) associated it with the promotion of officers with only a few years experience in service. They noted,

> 'Promotion doesn't make you a manager overnight…they are picking people under the wrong criteria and for the wrong reasons…you need leaders, not just managers' (ibid).

Support Services

Officers believed that every frontline police officer is subject to the same pressures of the role and, therefore, also experiences similar impacts upon their lives. They agreed that the police organisation has acknowledged that policing can have negative impacts, and they were all aware of the support services made available to them; as Officer 3 (2013) noted 'there's plenty of woolly fluffy stuff now if you want it'. Despite this, Officer 1 (2013) argued that this is merely an 'acknowledgement' and the support available, is more of a 'token gesture':

> 'Does anyone genuinely care for us? I don't think so, the job needs to get done and you're there to get it done…Is it right? No. Am I really that upset about it? No. As long as they leave me alone and let me do my job I'm happy' (ibid).

Officer 1 demonstrates an independent outlook towards their role and a detachment from the senior rank structure of the organisation; a separation also recognised within the literature (Terril et al, 2003; Shane, 2010).

Job Satisfaction

In terms of what officers gain from performing their role, they reported developing people skills, confidence and life experiences (O1; O3, 2013); gaining the ability to deal with a range of situations (O1, 2013); as well as a broader perspective on society and the issues it faces (O3, 2013). When asked what they found most rewarding about the role, officers responded with great enthusiasm, and all indicated that it was always, or still is, a role that they thoroughly enjoyed. Officer 1 (2013) described how the reward comes from working hard to achieve a good result as this 'reminds you why you enjoy doing the job it is you do'. For the others, the reward came from helping people in the community, having a positive impact upon their lives, and keeping them safe (O2; O3; O4, 2013). Unlike the literature, which portrays officers as becoming disenchanted and cynical after just a few years in service (Stinchcombe, 2004; Kirschman, 2007), these rewards reflect the fact that their initial attractions have been maintained. In terms of job satisfaction, all officers believed the pros of their role to significantly outweigh the cons, as Officer 3 (2013) retrospectively offered: 'when you leave the service you realise what a good job it was'.

The Role as Defining

The literature emphasises how 'a police officer's job dominates and defines the individual in a way that most ordinary work does not' (Graef, 1989: 387). This is something that all of the officers agreed to be true. After having spent thirty years in the police service from a very young age, Officer 3 (2013) believed that this was inevitable, whereas, Officer 2 (2013) felt that their role simply defined them as a decent and upstanding member of society. For the others, being defined by their role could be somewhat frustrating, as they found that people tended to see them as a 'police officer' before the person that they are (O1, 2013). Moreover, in their experience in disclosing their profession, people's attitudes towards 'the police'

tended to be very extreme. Where negative, people tend to tar all officers with the same brush and fail to recognise they are 'doing a very difficult, very dangerous job for all the right reasons' (O4, 2013). Here, officers are stigmatised by all the negative qualities that society has attributed to their role.

Policing as a Lifestyle Choice

Having considered these different factors and the ways in which their role has affected them and impacted upon their lives, officers were asked whether they considered policing to be a lifestyle choice. Although all of the officers believed that this was so, they considered it to be more likely that individuals would choose to become a police officer, and then subsequently acquire the lifestyle (O1; O4, 2013). Officer 1 (2013) explained, that to be happy and gain fulfilment from the role, officers must embrace it and, in doing this, they are also embracing it as a lifestyle. This reflects Reiner's (2010: 119) emphasis that policing is more meaningful than just an occupation, as it is 'a way of life with a worthwhile purpose'. Officer 2 (2013) noted how police officers' lifestyles are restricted in unique ways, such as where they reside and their being unable to voice their political opinions. Off duty, officers are also expected to conduct themselves, at all times, in a way which maintains the moral values of their public office (O3, 2013). This includes upholding the law; thus, being prepared to intervene in situations where they are presented with the commission of an offence (O2, 2013). Officer 4 (2013) summed up that:

> 'It's not a job, it's a lifestyle and it's who you are. You don't sign a job contract; you get a warrant card…you're always on duty, you're always a police constable'.

Chapter Five: Conclusion

The officers' experiences provide a strong indication that there is a culture inherent to policing and a number of contrasts within this: They emphasised the importance of maintaining a healthy balance between a hard-working commitment to the role and quality down time spent off duty; acculturation, integrating within the team and retention of self-identity; and embracing the role as a way of life, as opposed to as just a job. The culture was also seen to facilitate a rewarding and enjoyable working environment, within which officers thrived upon the bonds and support that resonated between them. These findings demonstrate that police culture is seen as vital to them as police officers and as people. Unfortunately, the majority of existing literature fails to appreciate this and 'those who neither understand the culture nor belong to it' subsequently condemn it (O'Loughlin & Billing, 2000 in Coady et al, 2000: 63). For the police service, as this research highlights, this culture could be used to craft a successful, dynamic and responsive team of officers. The organisation should accept that police culture exists and harness and develop its potential to be a positive, and use it to good effect.

The personal development that officers reported supports the notion that a relationship exists between their cultural tendencies and the practicalities and tensions engendered within policing (Waddington, 1999; Newburn & Reiner, 2007 in Maguire et al, 2007). Having examined the different pressures and impacts the role has upon police officers, the police culture also emerges as an acceptance of, and response to, these demands; specifically, how officers have learned to manage these, to prevent or reduce the potential for them to have a negative effect on their lives and wellbeing. It reflects how they have adapted to effectively

perform their role, both as individuals and, collectively, as a team. There was also some indication that these changes become more prominent with length of service. Officers demonstrated how they had learned to make the role work for them by synchronising their personal lives with it and embracing the new lifestyle that this brings. This allows them to function and gain fulfilment in both domains. What is also emphasised is that, whilst their authority, powers, and responsibility to serve and protect the community are only publicly identifiable in uniform, their implicit obligation and moral duty to uphold this position, remains constant throughout their time spent off duty. In effect, their role as a police officer is a 'twenty-four-hour-a-day identity' (Skolnick & Fyfe, 1993: 92) and it becomes what they represent as a person. This research accentuates these unique sacrifices that officers make and advocates, along with Association of Chief Police Officers (ACPO) (2011) that this should be recognised, both by the organisation and the public.

The findings demonstrate that officers have an intrinsic attraction to the role; they want to do it for reasons other than the instrumental gain (Reiner, 1978). As Kirschman (2007: 106) emphasises: 'choosing to become a cop means dedicating oneself to socially meaningful work…being part of something bigger than one's own personal needs'. This research also implies that this initial attraction becomes the element that officers go on to find most rewarding about their role. Thus, the rewards gained mitigate the lifestyle changes and restrictions placed upon officers, and are also what continue to sustain their commitment and motivation towards their work. Therefore a reduction in starting salary will be unlikely to affect new recruits' motivation for choosing this occupation. Although officers demonstrated concern for the reduction in their job security, they still implied that, although it is no longer the 'job for life' it once was, they were still committed to a career with the police service (O1; O2; O4, 2013). This change also has its positives as, combined with the more stringent recruitment processes (Beckford, 2012), it will help deter and root out those with a lazy work ethic, and retain, recruit and reward, the hard working officers, who do their job for all the right reasons.

Whilst the officers demonstrated how they successfully managed many aspects of their role, they did highlight some, related to organisational and occupational stressors that were beyond their control. These were the proliferation of bureaucratic systems, processes and personal performance indicators, which force them to administer their role in a prescribed way. Ellison and Genz (1978) describe these as 'chronic' stressors; it prioritises compliance with these requirements over the results that officers are trying to achieve (Berry, 2010: 1). The negative impact of promoting inexperienced officers into management positions and the promotion mentality within officers was also raised. This, in addition to concerns raised by the literature (Paoline, 2004; Terrill et al, 2003) leaves Winsor's (2012) recommendation for recruitment of external police managers as potentially detrimental. In effect, these issues reduce officers' ability to perform their role in the most efficient and effective way.

Based on this research, and in line with the recommendation by ACPO (2011), this researcher believes that all police managers should first be police constables. Through this, they gain an invaluable appreciation and experience of the role, become immersed in police culture, and have the opportunity to earn and gain the trust and respect of their fellow colleagues. This way, the foundation for positive working relationships can be built; crucial to addressing the present divide between officers and their senior ranks. This researcher also advocates that only delegates who can successfully demonstrate leadership and management skills should be promoted. These skills are necessary to recognise, meet, and support the needs of officers, and to best enhance their performance as individuals, and as part of a team. As Berry (2010)

found, minimal progress has been made towards reducing the excessive bureaucracy in the police service. What is needed is for the organisation to reinstate trust and confidence in officers' ability to use their professional judgement and discretion to make decisions and be personally responsible and accountable for them (ibid). Building positive and trusting working relationships between police ranks is also central to achieving this.

The government has set quantifiable performance targets for all public services to monitor public spending, promote economic recovery and increase efficiency and productivity. This underpins the decision to measure and define an officer's individual performance based on the figures they produce. Although this issue was not something that was directly explored with officers, throughout their responses they raised strong contentions about the restrictions that this places upon them. As Officer 2 (2013) expressed, it has also caused a shift from a police force that manages people, to an impersonal business that prioritises managing figures. As the Home Secretary has asserted 'targets don't fight crime; targets hinder the fight against crime' (Theresa May, 2010 cited in Travis, 2010); they do not convey or measure anything of the quality of the service that is being provided and officers are forced to concentrate 'on ticking boxes…at the expense of simply being the best they can be' (Curtis 2013, cited in Police Oracle, 2013). Measuring performance and efficiency is vital to improving the police service. However, the current performance indicators are incompatible with the practicalities of policing. This researcher recommends that individual performance should be measured in a way that allows officers to concentrate on working hard, and to the best of their abilities. The figures should depict a true reflection of this.

What was prevalent throughout the interviews was officers' genuine dedication and commitment to their role. Thus, this researcher believes that demanding that they, and other public service workers, prioritise meeting performance targets over the quality of service delivery, effectually challenges this commitment. Furthermore, the government is contradicting its own mission towards social recovery; 'The Big Society' (BBC, 2011), as it restricts those whose position and contribution to society, has the propensity to make the greatest difference. It fails to recognise the value of the intrinsic reasons that motivate people within public service, to do what they do; and is disabling them from employing this motivation to its best effect. The officers accepted that they are powerless to change the negatives that they identified and must just continue to work within the system as it stands; they conceded that 'it's the nature of the beast' (O1; O3, 2013).

It is acknowledged that this research does have its limitations, particularly due to the small sample that was selected from officers who were known to the researcher. Thus, in order to draw conclusions that could be extended, a larger, randomly selected sample, drawn from several police forces, would be required. This research highlights potential scope for further research into the effects of performance targets on public service generally. Following the full implementation of changes prescribed by Winsor, a research opportunity will also arise to examine the impact of this on the police service specifically; the new face of policing.

Appendix 1: Interview Schedule

The following themes/issues are to be addressed within each of the interviews;

- What is the role/rank of the participant within their specific police organisation?

- What were their motivations for choosing to become a police officer?

- What were their preconceptions about what the role entailed? – Do these match the reality of the role?

- Did they believe that performing this role would alter their life (in terms of behaviour, attitude, lifestyle) in any way? – If so, has that happened and in what ways?

- Do they believe there is a culture that is inherent/specific to policing? – If so what do they see as the positives and negatives of this culture?

- How would they describe police culture – how does this vary to non-police culture?

- What does the police culture mean to them?

- Where does such culture/attitudes/behaviour come from?

- Has their role impacted/affected/changed any of their attitudes/personality and how?

- Have they witnessed any specific negative outcomes/effects/ of policing on officers' behaviour or attitudes?

- Do they feel the role has had any emotional/ psychological/ physical impacts?

- Has the role had an impact on their personal/ family life off-duty?

- Is there sufficient support for police officers in terms of policing impacts?

- Job satisfaction vs. negative impacts – how do these weigh up?

- Do they believe policing is a lifestyle choice – what does this mean to them?

Appendix 2: Notification of Ethics Decision (SREC)

NOTTINGHAM TRENT UNIVERSITY

College of Business Law and Social Sciences
School of Social Sciences.

School of Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee (SREC)

Notification of Decision

Student's Name	Ruth House
Supervisor's Name	Natasha Chubbock
NTU ID	N0332575
Programme	BA Criminology
Date of SREC meeting	20/11/2012
Date Notification sent to student	22/04/2013

At the Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee meeting the following decision was made in respect of your application for Ethical Approval of a Research Project:

Approved - you may commence your research as outlined in your application

If you have to **re-submit your form** you must ensure that you clearly indicate on the form that it is a resubmission, for Chair's action, and **on a separate document detail what changes have been made, together with including any relevant attachments** (e.g. research instruments or participant information).

If you need to enter an ethical approval code for the research participation scheme, then use the date of this notification as that code.

If you have any queries please do not hesitate to contact your project supervisor or alternatively e-mail SOC.ethics@ntu.ac.uk.

Further information and guidance can be found on the ethics module (XXSOC10002) on NOW.
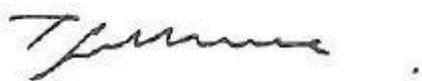
T Gillespie, Chair SREC

Appendix 3: Participant Information and Informed Consent

NOTTINGHAM TRENT UNIVERSITY

Participant Information & Informed Consent Form

This form will provide you with information about the research, please read through all the details carefully.

Information to participant

The purpose of this research is to examine the impact the occupational role of a police officer has upon police officers as individuals.

You are being asked to take part in an interview, which will last approximately one hour. The interviewer will ask a series of questions about the impact your role as a police officer has had on you and the effect of this on both your occupational and personal life. This is to explore the idea that policing is not just an occupation, but also a life style choice. During the interview, please let the interviewer know if you would rather not answer any of the questions put to you.

You have the right to withdraw without giving a reason to do so. If you wish to withdraw you should contact the researcher (or their supervisor) and ask for your data to be withdrawn from the study by February 1st 2013.

To enable an accurate transcription of the interview, it will be recorded. Only the interviewer will have access to recordings and all recordings will be destroyed after submission of the research in May 2013.

Anything you say during the interview will be treated as confidential. Due to the nature of the research, extracts from the interview will be used in the final report. However, you will remain anonymous throughout, as all names, places and organisational branches will be removed to ensure this. You will only be referred to using a unique identifier e.g. 'Officer 1'

Upon completion of the interview you are free to ask any questions you may have about the interview or with regard to research in general.

Participation is voluntary and greatly appreciated. If you are happy to take part in this research please sign and date below. If you have any question or concerns before, during or after your participation in this research my contact details are below, along with those of my supervisor.

Agreement to consent

I have read and understand the purpose of this research and my part in it.

I have asked any questions if needed and understand that I can contact the investigator at any time with queries or concerns.

I have the right to withdraw my data at any point during or after the interview up until the deadline date and understand that all materials will be destroyed.

I am aware that the interview will be recorded and I agree to this.

I voluntarily agree to take part in the study.

Signature of
Participant_____Date:_____

Name of Participant _____

Signature of Researcher _____ Date:_____

Name of Researcher_____

Unique Participant Identifier: _____

Researcher Contact Details: **Ruth House**
Email: ruth.house2010@my.ntu.ac.uk

Supervisor Contact Details: **Natasha Chubbock**
Senior Lecturer in Criminology
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Email: natasha.chubbock@ntu.ac.uk

Thank you for your participation!

Version 1.0

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