

What causes police officers to become cynical?

Is there any dislocation between themes in literature on police cynicism, and police officers in contemporary society?

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Abstract

The main aims of this dissertation were to use empirical and secondary qualitative research techniques to establish why police officers become cynical, and to investigate any dislocation between the themes elicited from police literature on the causes of cynicism, and the feelings expressed by contemporary police officers. The dissertation takes a post-modern position and rejects broad theories and typologies derived from some previous behavioural studies of police officers.

The literature accessed highlighted the most prevalent causes of police cynicism to be shortfalls of management, boredom, vocation disappointment, the excessiveness of paperwork, the influence of colleagues, unity and solidarity, isolation from the public and a lack of relevant training. These themes were investigated in the methodology, which involved a semi-structured interview with the Assistant Chief Constable of 'Westshire' Police, a social survey of 16 police officers of which 13 were response constables and a focus group of 5 respondents.

The research established some dislocation between the causes of police cynicism evident in police literature, and the actual feelings and opinions expressed by the officers involved in the study. Officers believed that boredom, a lack of respect from the public and training were not primary causes of cynicism in contemporary police officers and police typologies were rejected by the respondents. Though it was not established in literature, the ineffectiveness of the UK Criminal Justice System was prevalent throughout the responses as a cause of cynicism.

Some of the themes in police literature contributing to cynicism were corroborated in this dissertation; the shortfalls of management, the influence of colleagues, various disappointments about the vocation, and the excessiveness of paperwork proved to be consistent issues within literature and the field.

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Introduction

A broad definition of cynicism as a pessimistic outlook on features of policing (Caplan, 2003) will be adopted for this dissertation. It is accepted that there may be more focused definitions available, but it is considered that given the nature of the study it would be beneficial to use a broad definition. This allows for new themes and issues to arise from the empirical work, rather than restricting the researcher to a focused perception of cynicism.

Police cultures and the 'police personality' is analysed in a massive range of literature, much of which provides critical arguments damning the cynical features of police personalities. Public interest on the issue grew when 'David Copperfield', an anonymous serving police officer, released his cynical, comedic and factual diary of life as a police officer. 'Wasting Police Time' provides some insight for members of the public to understand what being a police officer entails, and goes some way to nullify media interpretations which portray policing to be constantly exciting and action-packed.

The main aim of this dissertation is to gain an initial understanding of why police officers in the UK such as 'David Copperfield' become cynical, various relationships between cynicism and features of the vocation will be investigated. Research on existing police literature will provide some themes and issues which may contribute to police cynicism, and these themes and police typologies will be interpreted and investigated in order to examine the validity of the literature in contemporary policing. It is predicted that some of the themes, arguments and typologies within literature on police cynicism will be rejected because of the heterogenic and changing nature of contemporary police officers and cultures.

This dissertation provides a critique of the potentially harmful and over-deterministic academic literature; it is argued that as public interest in police cynicism grows, increased care must be taken by researchers when interpreting the behaviour and responses of police officers to a social study and it is important to acknowledge the potentially harmful effects of misinterpreted behavioural responses.

One of the secondary aims of this dissertation is to provide some appreciation of police cultures and cynicism as an aspect of a police officers personality which can be drawn upon at times of high emotion, tension and danger. It is argued that cynicism can provide officers with some protection from feelings of naivety and foolishness and can actually improve the officer's ability to perform, contrary to much of the police literature highlighting the potentially detrimental effect on an officer's productivity.

The researcher's interest in police cynicism increased after joining the police service as a keen and enthusiastic young Special Constable, but after two years attached to a response shift, the signs of cynicism referred to in police literature have become evident in his working personality. The researcher agrees that police officers become cynical but disagrees with some explanations within literature, and argues that the pessimistic representation of police cultures within literature predates contemporary police cultures; it is also argued that police typologies as a concept are over-deterministic and potentially damaging to the UK police services.

The subsequent chapters aim to provide critical analysis of police literature to investigate the causes of police cynicism, and to assess the validity of police literature with reference to cynicism, and appreciate the effects of cynicism in police officers. The following chapter focuses on the existing literature on police cynicism.

Literature Review

This literature review provides a critique of monolithic theories deriving from academic research, and assesses the individual themes which contribute to cynicism in police officers within academic literature. The most notable themes, issues and debates in police literature are boredom, career and vocation disappointment after a keen sense of mission, excess paperwork, unity and solidarity, lack of support and respect from the public and the 'new managerialism' (referred to by Long (2003) as New Public Management) culture. These themes are individually discussed in this chapter.

This dissertation is partly inspired by 'Wasting Police Time' (Copperfield 2006), an anonymous police officer's account of contemporary policing. It is argued in this research that the use of a non-academic source, 'Wasting Police Time' (Copperfield, 2006) is justified by the factual nature of the anecdotes which are representative of the literature highlighting and condemning the negative aspects of the police personalities and cultures, of which cynicism is an attribute. It is apparent from the police research literature that police officers often become cynical, most accounts acknowledge this and criticise its effect on behaviour but little criminological literature develops any understanding of why this happens. As Waddington argues 'merely to condemn and dismiss such behaviour is to retreat from an exploratory task' (1999a, 2005: 372) and this literature review aspires to provide some understanding as to *why* some police officers become cynical. It is possible to understand cynicism as being a response to the danger, authority, pressure and nature of police work (Niederhoffer, 1967; Fielding, 1988; Chan, 1997; Waddington, 1999a, 2005; Reiner, 2000; Gerber, 2001; Foster, 2003). Chan (1997), Waddington (1999a, 2005) and Reiner (2000) agree that 'cop culture' and the cynicism associated with it is essential for coping with the significant everyday pressures of being a police officer. The researcher agrees with Chan when she argues that the attributes associated with police culture are not primarily negative, but are 'functional to the survival' (1997: 45) of police officers.

It is important to note Foster's (2003) argument that despite the heterogeneous nature of police cultures and personalities, cynicism remains consistent throughout as a general characteristic of police officers. Conversely, and consistent with post-modern criminological theorists who reject over-determined theories which assume homogeneity (Lyotard, 1984; Harvey, 1989 cited in Hopkins Burke & Sunley 1996:14), Waddington (1999a, 2005) rejects monolithic theories and recognises the importance of contextual relevance during the application of theories deriving from academic research, one must note that cynicism is not different to other researched police attributes, it should not be generalised and must remain in context. Waddington also argues that just because police officers exhibit a 'common trait', it should not be readily interpreted as a distinctive characteristic (1999a, 2005: 368). Thus, opinion among police commentators regarding whether or not this aspect of police personality is homogenous is split, but this does not seem to prevent researchers from making broad-brush statements about police officers. Foster (2003) argues this well when she writes:

Police researchers find it difficult to move away from the general...characteristics of the dominant police culture...This frequently led researchers to believe that the dominant cop culture is representative of policing per-se (Foster 2003: 208)

It is argued in this dissertation that the sweeping statements referred to by Foster regarding police personality and cultures are unjust because of the heterogenic nature of the contemporary UK police service; most police writers seem enthusiastic about finding evidence of negative aspects of police officers' personalities, without looking for a deeper understanding or only loosely associate it with the fear, danger, lies and adrenaline which police officers are subject to more than other occupations. Muir (1977), Reiner (1978) and Mastrofski *et al* (2002) recognise the heterogeneity of police cultures, but it could be argued that their respective typologies are still over-deterministic because police officers will probably display behaviour and attitudes that vary across the different orientations. Moreover, it is plausible that the civilian researcher may interpret certain behaviour to be consistent with attributes of their typologies, but this may not be an accurate and straightforward representation of their intentions and actual attitude. There is a tendency to create over-determined accounts of police personality and culture without actually completing comprehensive empirical, longitudinal behavioural studies or actually experiencing life as a police officer, what most researchers get is essentially a snap shot of policing. The short period of time that police researchers spend with officers is seldom enough to analyse in sufficient depth their attitudes, particularly when commenting on the cynical aspects of police personality. This is why the author believes that the accounts of former police officers turned academics such as Malcolm Young, Simon Holdaway, PAJ Waddington and Joel Caplan are more credible because their experience may enhance their understanding, resulting in a more accurate interpretation of police behaviour. The critical criminologist may argue that ex-police officers may not be able to fully distance themselves from their former identity as a police officer (Young, 1991), which may cause them to express some biased arguments. However ex-officers do still criticise elements of the police culture, an illustrative example of this is Young's (1991) criticism of his own conformity to sexist remarks and jokes during his career as a police officer.

Police researchers find studying front line officers most exciting and enjoyable so most UK research is completed on response officers (Foster, 2003), it could be argued that most criminological critique of the police service is unjust because primary research usually focuses on a small portion of officers who do the most frustrating job, and feel least valued by the organisation (Nottinghamshire Police 2006). Crick argues that criminological theories of police officers are 'overdetermined, regenerative and self-justifying' (1976, cited in Young 1991: 15), and despite this there is no research in the UK to indicate the proportion of officers who adopt poor attitudes (Foster, 2003), instead we are inundated with accounts of their attributes without any indication as to the size of the problem, except for apocalyptic articles from the media (Scott, 2004; Reiner, 2003). Young (1991) argues that the media have caused an increase in fear of crime with spectacular news headlines about crimes of violence, which contributes to cynicism by making a difficult job even harder, yet media representations were not an issue evident throughout most other literature as a cause of cynicism.

The themes, debates and issues notable throughout police literature, as listed at the start of this chapter will now be discussed. It is important to note that these issues are not mutually exclusive and overlap somewhat, therefore it is impossible to measure the significance of each individual theme.

Television programs are seldom representative of policing (Hurd, 1979) and programs such as 'The Bill' and 'Starsky and Hutch' contradict most literature which notes that policing is not usually exciting. Even during the pilot study of police work in the UK, Banton notes that 'waiting, boredom and paperwork' (1964: 85) had an influence on police officers and this issue is ever more present in contemporary police literature. Reiner notes the 'mundane reality of everyday policing, which is often boring, messy, petty, trivial and venal' (2000: 89). Student officer's fantasies about the job are soon replaced by the realisation that police work is usually mundane and frustrating and as a result the officer may be disappointed with the often boring nature of policing (Van Maanen, 1973; Kirschman, 1997; Waddington, 1999a).

Reiner argues that cynical 'Uniform Carriers' (1978) are the result of 'career disappointment prior to a sense of mission' (2000: 90). This sense of 'mission' is notable throughout the literature and it has been argued that it only takes a few disappointments for an 'idealistic young officer to build a self-protective wall of cynicism against being made to look foolish or feel naïve' (Kirschman, 1997: 22). One of the disappointing aspects of policing to student officers is the excessiveness of paperwork and 'non-police work' (Foster, 2003).

The aggravation of police officers in response to paperwork is captured by Copperfield when he writes 'in the idle moments between switching biros and reaching for the stapler...' (2006: 290). Despite this, officers accept that without paperwork good case preparation and successful prosecutions are impossible (Foster, 2003), but the frustration stems from its excessiveness and the amount of time officers need to dedicate to completing the necessary forms. It is because of this that Van Maanen notes that incentive to perform is considerably reduced (1973 cited in Foster, 2003). This lack of incentive may seem harmful, but the actual behaviour of the officer may not reflect their supposed negative attitude (Ainsworth and Pease, 1987; Chan, 1997; Waddington, 1999a, 2005), as the chasm between what officers say, the attitudes they display and their actual behaviour is notable throughout literature. Kirschman (1997) argues that once a cynical attitude has become a personality trait, officers expect nothing good from people and are rarely disappointed as a result. This may support the argument that cynicism can protect officers, but it may also isolate police officers from the rest of society, and emphasise the unity and camaraderie within police culture.

It has been widely noted that police officers often have very few friends outside the organisation (Wilson *et al*, 2001; Skolnick 2005), with some commentators interestingly using the phrase 'versus' when describing the relationship between police officers and civilians (Graves, 1996; Skolnick, 2005), as if police officers and civilians are working *against* each other. Niederhoffer (1967) notes an increase in cynicism consistent with the officer's length of service, and in their study Wilson *et al* (2001) argued that one young officer had many friends outside of the police *because* of his lack of experience. Fielding (1988) found that student officers quickly learn that they need the support of their colleagues because policing can be difficult involving emotionally and physically stressful situations and traumatic tasks, and these incidents can have a powerful effect on officers' behaviour at work, as well as their lives outside of the service (Waters & Ussery, 2007). Fielding describes this depersonalisation as a move from 'autonomy' to 'solidarity', from individual to part of the group (1988: 189; Foster, 2003). Commentators who explore the negative side of solidarity often fail to recognise the importance of unity, reassurance, emotional support and back up when

faced with threats (Chan, 1997; Waddington, 1999a). Despite the benefits of conforming to the 'grain of the (cynical) old sweats' (Burke, 1993), Manning suggests that cynicism 'increases individualism and decreases identification of the collective purpose' (1979: 57), which supports the argument that officers can become cynical about each other (Fielding, 1988; Heidensohn, 2003; Reuss-Ianni & Ianni, 2005), but this argument is given no contextual relevance. If officers display similar cynical attitudes one would suggest this would increase, not decrease solidarity. This solidarity evident in police officers has often been reinforced in literature by a lack of support from the public.

Wilson *et al* note that there is 'little support for the police' (2001: 149), one direct contributor to a police officer's cynicism towards the public is the impression that the public 'fail to recognise the good they are doing' (Young, 1991; Reiner, 1992; Kirschman, 1997; Crowther, 2000; Wilson *et al*, 2001: 149; Dixon, 2005; Copperfield, 2006). Skolnick (2005) notes one officer's argument that citizens have a duty to keep order as well, not just the police, but one would suggest that the public usually feel that it is the exclusive job of the police officer to prevent society from becoming 'incapacitated' (Westley, 2005: 137), and this discrepancy will only increase any detachment officers feel from the public.

Further separating the police officer from the public is the issue of endorsible and non-endorsible 'Fixed Penalty Notices' (tickets). It has been well documented that few police officers enjoy writing citizens tickets, and citizens hate receiving them (Skolnick, 2005). But because of the performance driven nature of middle management officers, beat officers seldom have the freedom to use their discretion at times where an incident warrants the use of a ticket. This drives them further from the public as they demand to know why they rarely catch burglars, but often dispense £30 tickets for having a crack on a vehicle registration plate. The shortfalls of performance driven new-managerialism and the perceived lack of competency from higher management officers is a huge contributor to cynicism on the front line.

It has been argued that management officers and street officers have different views on policing and different loyalties (Reuss-Ianni & Ianni, 1983; Manning, 1979; Waddington, 1999b). The dislocation between these two layers of the organisation can lead to cynicism from and towards both tiers of policing, because street officers need do the 'dirty work' for the new managerialism performance culture, which reinforces differences between street officers and managers (Foster, 2003). Gelsthorpe and Padfield (2003) suggest that new policies which increase the need for the police to focus on certain crime types (e.g. street robbery, burglary) causes front line officers to neglect other crimes. In the interest of good public relations it could be argued that policies should reflect what the citizens' want, but this increases demand on street officers, which in turn reinforces the 'street cops Vs management cops' (Foster, 2003) dichotomy. Policies with positive intentions from chief officers may not necessarily translate into practice (Holdaway, 1995), and as the policy is passed through the ranks it may become distorted or simply not enforced by inspectors and sergeants in the interest of keeping street officers happy. Dysfunctional policies which conflict with each other and those which have immeasurable results contribute to cynicism, as the only way that management officers can monitor individual officer's performance on certain aspects of policing. An illustrative example of this would be during briefing, a manager may highlight certain areas which need high visibility patrol during the night-

shift, but may not be present to ensure the patrols are actually being done. This could cause officers to become cynical about the organisation of management (Kurke & Scrivner, 1995). Even once the policies have been implemented, a lack of feedback and training leads officers to believe in an 'emphasis on results, rather than means' (Kurke & Scrivner, 1995; Chan, 1997: 91; Nottinghamshire Police, 2006). Chan goes on to argue that this emphasis on performance targets also causes officers at a managerial level to reward the wrong types of activities, reducing the officer's sense of mission. One issue that highlights cynicism from higher management officers towards street officers is the widespread opinion that, contrary to the well documented sense of 'mission', street officers consider the police service to be a job, not a lifelong vocation. Police researchers have noted the police officer's sense of mission (Kirschman, 1997; Reiner, 2000; Foster, 2002), however, more recently it has been suggested that the police service provides 'a job which would eventually change' (Wilson *et al*, 2001: 150), so management officers may treat the response officer as a disposable resource, not as a long term prospect for the future. Graves (1996) argues that leaders must incorporate a professional bond of trust between the ranks in order to prevent feelings of cynicism. It is important to note that all police managers were front line officers at the start of their career, and many will have similar experiences to the front line officers who they manage.

Student officers are often told by their tutor or any more experienced officers 'how it really is' (Burke, 1993), and if there is indeed a relationship between time served and cynicism, student officers are probably exposed to cynicism from their first shift. Cynicism can be the result of prolonged exposure to the negative side of human behaviour and can grind down an officers morale (Niederhoffer, 1967; Kleinig, 1996; Kirschman, 1997; Reiner, 2000), as officers become more cynical they can come to expect 'nothing but the worst in human behaviour' (Graves, 1996). The fact that people lie to police officers regularly can cause them to become more cynical and suspicious about whether they are being told the truth (Kirschman, 1997; Foster, 2003), note the pattern as they become more experienced they may become the 'old sweats' referred to by Burke (1993: 16) who display the cynical attitude to student officers in the first instance. As police officers become more experienced, it has been argued that they believe they know how the world works (Burke, 1993) and a lack of training means officers are not learning or refreshing their skills, and are not keeping up to date with policies (Police Review, 2006a; 2006b). Kurke and Scrivner argue that 'training must integrate the realities of the workplace' (1995: 82; Home Office, 2007) or skills will not be acquired effectively, and when training is ineffective or irrelevant it could increase belief that the job is impossible (Foster, 2003; Nottinghamshire Police, 2006), thus creating a vicious circle in which cynicism festers and flourishes and it could be argued that cynicism breeds and self-perpetuates.

A report from Nottinghamshire Police Market Research Group (2006) of 2,030 officers and staff indicates that the majority of their officers think that training is often irrelevant, and the themes arising from police literature identifying possible causes of cynicism are reinforced in that officers do not feel valued at work, are not given recognition when they do a good job and do not have a clear sense of direction (2006: 3). The divide between management and street police officers has been reinforced, with officers feeling a lack of support and visibility, and a heavy focus on results. According to the study, officers only feel valued by their immediate colleagues (Nottinghamshire Police, 2006).

To conclude this literature review, the themes evident in police literature which it is argued contribute to police cynicism are the shortfalls of management, boredom, career disappointment, the excessiveness of paperwork, unity and solidarity, isolation from the public and lack of relevant training. It is argued that these issues contribute to causing cynicism over time but it is important to note that these themes are not mutually exclusive and it is impossible to calculate the direct influence of each. One must consider that the development of cynical personality traits is caused by the nature of most police work and this dissertation argues are actually essential requisites to prevent further disappointment, depression and feelings of naivety. The writer agrees with Waddington (1999a, 2005) and Chan when they argue that attributes such as cynicism associated with police culture are not primarily negative, but is 'functional to the survival' (1996, 1997: 45; Caplan, 2003) of police officers.

Muir (1977), Reiner (1979) and Mastrofski *et al* (2002) come to similar conclusions about police orientations, noting a cynical and disillusioned 'avoider' and 'uniform carrier' who is motivated by nothing more than money, and who attempts to work as little as possible. The researcher would consider these labels to highlight essentially 'bad' personality traits and the next section explores the empirical methodology used to try to gain some understanding as to why police officers may develop these cynical attitudes.

Methodology

This chapter discusses the methodology implemented to explore the issues and themes prevalent in police literature which it is argued contribute to cynicism in police officers. It examines the social survey and focus group and provides some justification for the methods used with regard to potential drawbacks and ethical concerns.

This dissertation draws on a semi structured interview with the Assistant Chief Constable of Westshire Police, a social survey and a focus group of respondents. The material is examined in light of secondary data, elicited from academic and government funded research. The anthropological aim of this investigation was to gain an initial understanding of why British police officers become cynical 'Uniform Carriers' (Reiner 1979) and 'Avoiders' (Mastrofski *et al*, 2002). Secondary research was completed in order to gain some scope for comparison and critical analysis of previous academic findings and theories. The library based, secondary research allowed for the careful selection and application of already established key concepts, prevalent themes and issues for investigation into the subject area.

Qualitative research presents an opportunity to analyse and evaluate the in depth thoughts and feelings of the respondents, regarding the themes contributing to cynicism within established criminological literature. This means that the researcher could gain a more significant understanding of the issues prevalent in the actual causes of cynicism. An open question social survey emailed to serving police officers was followed by a focus group with five respondents allowing for a more detailed discussion of some of the key issues raised in the self-completion questionnaire. This was used to elicit further information about the issues contributing to police cynicism. Originally the researcher planned to complete semi-structured interview sessions with the respondents but due to time constraints on the part of the researcher and volunteers, it was decided that elaboration on the key concepts and issues would be more fitted to a focus group involving a small number of willing respondents. For the first stage of the empirical work, the researcher arranged a meeting with the Assistant Chief Constable of Westshire Police to discuss the issues common in the literature and to gain some knowledge of why he considers cynicism to arise in the officer of Westshire Police. Self-completed questionnaires were then administered to 30 police officers and the responses analysed with a view to finding recurring issues and concepts relating to cynicism, which will be addressed in the Analysis section of this dissertation. 16 officers responded to the questionnaire, a response rate of 53%. All officers were constables apart from R3 and R13 (who are sergeants) and R1 (an inspector). When these issues and concepts were finalised, a focus group of five response officers and the inspector was set up and these issues were discussed in a semi-structured manner. These officers were R11 (2 years in service), R12 (16 years), R10 (5½ years), R15 (3 months) are response officers and R1, the inspector (20 years).

Apart from time and financial restraints, the self-completion questionnaires were easily and quickly dispersed as they were emailed to potential respondents. The nature of open questions in a social survey provides the scope for new issues to be raised that are not expected by the researcher (Bryman 2004: 145), and because they are completing it on their own they may think about particular issues that are not necessarily present in police literature. Interviewer effects (Bryman, 2004) were not an issue in that the volunteer could complete the questionnaire in their own time at a convenient moment

without the influence of the researcher. Ecological validity of the study was boosted by the fact that the research was carried out in a police station, the working environment which was being discussed. However, validity may have been challenged by the nature of social surveys because participants may have provided responses which they thought were desirable to the researcher rather than accurate and honest, however they were all informed that their anonymity would be observed throughout, with use of a respondent number rather than their name or collar number. They were advised to give their honest opinion and informed that there will be no further action as a result of any of the views expressed during the study.

As discussed by Bryman (2004), there are drawbacks to using self-completion questionnaires in that respondents cannot be prompted if they do not understand a question, but this issue was not expected to materialise as the questionnaire was designed to be morally, not academically stimulating to a police officer, in that the questions should have caused them to reflect on their attitude and cynicism. Fortunately, all responses received were fully completed so there was no missing information. With the qualitative nature of the investigation, there was no statistical analysis necessary so had there been information missing from the responses, it would not have posed a major problem. Being unable to ask a large number of questions was a drawback but this was countered by asking questions that were only directly related to the key issues extracted from the library based research on cynicism, rather than probing around the topic. Another drawback of the social survey was that the researcher could not investigate intriguing responses to the questionnaire, and was unable to collect additional data, instead, these issues could be investigated during the focus group stage of research

The focus group allowed the researcher to gain access to respondent's perspectives in a relaxed environment. There were methodological issues in gaining and maintaining control over the topic of discussion, and preventing it from moving from formal discussion into 'gossipy' banter proved to be a challenge. However during these lapses in concentration the respondents expressed some interesting opinions and feelings about the topic without actually directly referring to the research. Though the responses tended to be heavily personalised, many of the same general expressions and topics remained, as will be discussed in the analysis. During the periods where the researcher made an attempt to halt proceedings in order to catch-up on the minutes and analyse thematic developments, conversation tended to stay on the topic being discussed and one may feel that some opportunities for conversational development could have been missed. For example, an improvement to this method would have been to use a recording device, but at the time of implementation it seemed too formal and the researcher felt that conversation would be too forced and less free-flowing. Fortunately for the researcher, there was already established relationships between all of the focus group participants, there was little problem of group effects and it was not necessary to draw in silent members of the group (Bryman, 2004; Noaks & Wincup, 2004), and little prompting for differing opinions was needed, the participants (somewhat frustratingly) expressed similar opinions in most of the discussion.

By virtue of the accessibility of serving police officers to the researcher, convenience sampling was implemented to access serving constables, sergeants and inspectors. It is acknowledged that there are numerous pitfalls in using such an approach, mainly due to difficulties involved in gaining information that can be generalised, and it is impossible

to know if the sample is representative (Bryman, 2004). However, it could also be argued that by its very nature, undergraduate research is a small-scale study which could be further investigated on a larger scale by a governing body or be explored in more depth as part of an MSc dissertation or PhD. This is also a minor disadvantage when one considers the privileged position of the researcher, in having access to serving police officers. It should also be considered that friendship between colleagues could lead to more trustworthy results in that there is already an established relationship between most of the respondents and the researcher and as Lucas (1997 cited in Bryman, 2004) found, high levels of response were gained because of the nature of the sample. The researcher accepts that the established relationship between the researcher and the officers could be criticised, but the officers were asked to express their honest opinion, regardless of what they consider to be desirable responses. The majority of police officers responding were from Westshire Police, but some officers from other services responded and this posed some means for comparison, however the fact that so few respondents were from outside of Westshire Police means that no firm conclusions could be made regarding potential issues relating to cynicism from an inter-force perspective.

There are ethical and political issues at any level of criminological research (Hudson, 2000) in that it may 'subvert deeply held moral beliefs and practices, and may uncover unwelcome truths' (Hughes, 2000: 235), however due to the nature, scale and inconsequentiality of the study, no political boundaries were challenged. The 'Code of Ethics for Researchers in the Field of Criminology' (BSC, 2006) was consulted and all guidelines were followed rigorously and crucially no ethical constraints were breached at any stage of the research.

To provide more accurate and representative research on the issue of cynicism in UK police officers, it would be necessary to involve a far larger sample of police officers from around the country. Due to the heterogeneous nature of the UK police service, it could be argued that providing an absolutely representative sample is impractical. More accurate responses could be obtained through a more longitudinal ethnographic or observational study of police officers at work, however the problem remains that behaviour requires interpretation on the part of the researcher, and it could be argued that an academic researcher may come to different conclusions about certain behavioural responses than was intended by the participant.

To conclude, the writer acknowledges the potential drawbacks of this particular method of gaining an understanding into the reasons for police cynicism. Time and financial constraints meant that this dissertation can only provide an initial understanding into the subject area, and it is argued that only government funded, national research could provide more accurate and representative results. The next chapter implements and analyses the results gained from the meeting with the Westshire Police ACC, social survey, and focus group.

Analysis

The literature on police culture identifies several causes of cynicism amongst police officers, including boredom, career and vocation disappointment, the excessiveness of paperwork, unity and solidarity, cultures, lack of training, 'new managerialism' and a lack of support from the public. These issues were investigated during the empirical work and this section will link the literature on police cynicism and the opinions of the ACC of Westshire Police to the results derived from the primary research following the structure of the survey (i.e. on a question by question basis). A brief justification of the dissertations critical position on theories from academic research is followed by the analysis of responses, with the focus group helping to clarify the themes and issues.

The primary research revealed some surprising and fascinating responses. One of the themes of this dissertation is the rejection of broad-brush theories deriving from some academic studies of police officers. One respondent in particular, R16, with eight years service is an exceptional officer, one of the most productive and knowledgeable officers in the local area and his numerous commendations and position as a divisional training officer pay testament to this. Yet his responses to this survey are cynical in the extreme. If these officers were to be judged from the survey alone one would probably observe his responses and immediately label him as a 'Uniform Carrier' (Reiner 1979), but having been a colleague for 18 months the researcher knows for certain that this label would be completely incorrect. R16 is a typical example of why this dissertation rejects the over-determined typologies of police officers, because his behaviour at work is excellent despite his cynical responses, and we have seen from police literature that officers' behaviour does not necessary reflects the cynical attitude they express (Ainsworth and Pease, 1987; Chan, 1997; Waddington, 1999a, 2005).

From question one on the survey (see Appendix 2) the mean average time in service was 9.5 years, with 8 officers having completed less than 5 years service and 8 having completed more than 5 years. Two Police Sergeants (R3, R13), 12 Police Constables, one Special Constable (R2) and one Inspector (R1) completed the survey and are referred to by respondent numbers. The first issue directly related to exploring cynicism was the respondents' motivation for joining the police service.

The reasons why these officers joined is quite consistent. Only R16's provided response seemed cynical by answering 'not really sure'. Most other officers expressed a desire to 'help' and were attracted by the challenge of being a police officer. Eight of the respondents stated their ambition to be a police officer from a very early age, an issue which was previously raised with the ACC of Westshire Police, who suggested that these officers who consider policing to be a lifestyle and not just a job are becoming rarer. This dissertation notes that officers who have been serving for a varying number of years still express the same 'Childhood dream' (R7), namely to be a police officer. The fact that eight out of 16 officers responded in a similar manner would suggest that many consider the job to be a vocation. The responses as to why they became police officers supports Kirschman (1997), Reiner (2000) and Foster (2002) who noted the police officer's sense of mission. Only one respondent (R16) failed to express a desire to make a difference in some way, which could provide some counter-argument to literature which argues policing is 'just a job' to these people (Wilson *et al* 2001), as a contributor to cynicism.

The officers were then asked why they are *still* police officers. Only two respondents failed to express enjoyment, which was present in nearly every answer to this question. R3 provided an interesting response: 'Tied into the pension, still enjoy at times'. Clearly the sergeant does enjoy his job, but still expressed the cynical view of being 'in it for the pension'. The responses to this question provided more support for the sense of mission present in most police literature. None of the officers expressed any desire to leave the service despite the ACC and some pieces of literature arguing that there is a lack of commitment in modern police officers (BBC, 2007; Steele, 2007).

Respondents were then asked what the best and worst aspects of the job are and most of the best aspects were consistent with the reasons why they joined, with the majority of respondents noting the satisfaction of getting a good result, helping people and 'making a difference'. R4 suggested the best thing about being a response officer is the camaraderie, which would provide some counter-argument to some police literature which suggested that camaraderie was a negative influence on officers (Graves, 1996; Wilson *et al*, 2001; Skolnick, 2005). However, later in the survey, R16 argued that being surrounded by cynical people makes other officers become cynical, and if camaraderie has a heavy influence on officers it could be suggested, as Burke (1993) does, that as some officers become more cynical others will follow. The officers in the focus group agreed that one cannot be a police officer without the support of colleagues, which is essential for surviving in the role; this bears similarity to much of the literature (Chan, 1997; Reiner, 2000; Foster 2003; Caplan, 2003) which argues that some aspects of cop culture are functional to survival.

Regarding the worst aspects of being a police officer, results showed a surprising lack of consistency. Only three respondents referred to paperwork, despite the researcher's expectation that it would be a constant; however the focus group confirmed that paperwork is a negative aspect of the job but not the worst. A lack of support from management was an issue in many of the responses (consistent with much of the literature), which was not surprising when one consults the Nottinghamshire Police Market Research (2006). The ACC also expressed concern about the quality of middle management, and with reference to the literature on poor management it becomes clear that the issue arises consistently as a cause police cynicism. The participants in the focus group discussed management and agreed with the ACC that well informed policies with good intentions are usually not translated into practice (Holdaway, 1995) as they are often not enforced by inspectors and sergeants. R11 and R12 identified target led 'new managerialism' cultures to be responsible for most of the cynicism held by lower ranking with regard to police managers.

The workload of response officers is a theme in the Nottinghamshire Police Staff Perception Survey (2006) and this was also the case in the responses to this survey. For instance, in interview the ACC said;

Cops want to get rid of work; it's like a nurse saying "working in a hospital would be fantastic if we didn't have patients".

Despite the apparent frustration caused by the excessive work load, it could be argued that having too much work is better than being bored, a theme discussed later in this section.

R7 was the only officer who suggested that a 'lack of respect from the public' is the *worst* part of the job, despite the amount of literature which labels this lack of respect as a major contributor to cynicism (Young, 1991; Kirschman, 1997; Wilson *et al*, 2001: 149; Dixon, 2005; Skolnick, 2005; Copperfield, 2006). The focus group suggested that this is because officers come to accept that most of the public dislike them so it no longer bothers many of them, the researcher was surprised at this and considered the likelihood that this attitude in itself boosts cynicism despite the attempt of the focus group to justify it. One interesting aspect of the responses to questions about the best and worst features of being a police officer was the relationship between time served and length of response. The officers with more time served tended to provide a lengthier response to the worst things about the job, the focus group clarified this in a comedic manner when they agreed that 'old cops just love to moan' (R11), which was a light-hearted comment, but it could speak volumes in a study of time served as a indicator of cynicism.

Next, subjects were asked whether being a police officer affects their perspective on human nature. Eight respondents expressed an opinion that their ability to trust people was jeopardised by the fact that officers are often lied to. R4 noted how difficult it can be to 'switch off' and R7, R16 and R12 provided similar responses to the effect that they became cynical about peoples motivation because they spend their lives being lied to. Most respondents made some comment about being more aware of the bad side of human nature, suggesting this is because they see the 'highs and lows' (R2) and 'best and worst' (R3) in human behaviour. Only one respondent argued that their perspective had not changed, and this was because of his life experience prior to joining the police (R14), which shows that they were probably not as cynical prior to joining the police.

Officers were then asked to select features of typologies from either Reiner (1979) or Mastrofski *et al* (2002) without seeing the actual label. The responses to this justify this dissertations position on over-determined police typologies because only 2 of the respondents selected features of one typology, R16 was the only officer to select all of the features of the 'uniform carrier' position. All other respondents selected various characteristics from different typologies which were mostly positive aspects of a police officer's personality, showing that officers themselves in this instance feel differently about their working personality than many critical academics. Officers were then asked what they think causes officers to become cynical.

The ACC felt that cynicism grows, and has grown in the past 30 years for a number of reasons; because lower ranks fail to challenge it when it becomes evident in their colleagues and (consistent with Wilson *et al*, 2001) that cynicism has increased because policing has become more of a 'job' than a lifelong 'vocation'. He suggested that the prevalence of malicious complaints encourage officers to become cynical about members of the public and introduced the concept of target led 'new managerialism' to the researcher as a cause of cynicism because of the 'dislocation between street level and management officers', which has been central as a cause of cynicism throughout this dissertation. He was also critical of the relationship between sergeants and constables, arguing that their relationship is seldom professional enough to ensure that discipline is enforced by sergeants.

There was a mixture of responses from the officers, but the bureaucracy and features of target led 'new managerialism' were notable throughout, including 'red tape' making

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the job impossible (R7, R16, R9) and a lack of support from managerial officers (R7, R4, R8, R10, R9). The focus group identified the shortfalls of modern managers to be the single biggest cause of cynicism in street officers; R12 showed this well when he noted a:

Huge change from a culture of professionalism and respect from both tiers, to managers who just pay lip service up the ranks and don't care about the street officers...

This is representative of many of the responses received about management officers; the officers were collectively extremely cynical about the motivation and integrity of higher ranked officers.

The other aspect of policing which officers felt causes cynicism was the 'failings of the Criminal Justice System' (R10). This is not a prominent theme within police literature but 56% of respondents argued that 'catching the same criminals time and time again' (R3, R7) causes officers to become cynical about the Criminal Justice System as an institution because repeat offenders are released without the punishment officers feel they deserve then 'constantly re-offend' (R13). This is known as the 'revolving door syndrome' (Travis & Ward, 2001). The focus group agreed, R1 suggested that:

Because officers are chasing the same people all the time, they grow cynical about the courts, especially magistrates because they are so detached from reality... They have no idea about the misery these criminals cause.

Though none of the respondents specifically mentioned the magistrates' court during the survey, the officers did feel that a cause of cynicism is the fact the offenders 'receive little punishment' (R3, R10). It could be argued that this cynicism towards the courts is caused by the amount of work required to secure the sentences themselves. One constable with 35 years experience (R14) notes that an increase in obstacles preventing officers from 'getting the job done' in the last 10-15 years causes them to become more cynical. One student officer argued that 'old age' is a cause of cynicism amongst his colleagues, which would support the suggestion that officers get more cynical with age.

Only 3 respondents suggested that a lack of support from the public causes cynicism, which is contradictory to the police literature by Young (1991), Kirschman (1997) Wilson *et al* (2001), Dixon (2005) and Copperfield (2006). The focus group accepted that this issue does contribute to cynicism in some officers, but also proposed that the lack of responses labelling it as a cause may have been because these officers are no longer bothered about what the public think of them, an incredible irony considering the service which the police are supposed to provide. Consistent with Foster (2003), two officers argued that the job is impossible (R7, R10), because regardless of how hard the officers try, there is always more to do. R16 suggested that cynicism is caused by being surrounded by 'lots of like minded cynical people' (note the similarities to the literature on unity and solidarity).

It is interesting to note that boredom is an issue prevalent in the literature (Banton, 1964; Van Maanen, 1973; Waddington, 1999a; Kirschman, 1997; Reiner, 2000; Foster, 2003) yet in this dissertation boredom was not mentioned once by any of the

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respondents other than R16. The officers in the focus group disagreed with the literature about issues of boredom, R11 argued that 'Police work is more stressful and frustrating than boring', R12 went on to say that:

Police work is boring is when your sat in the nick filling in form after form, but even then there's always the chance you could get an assistance shout or something.

It could be argued that these officers are in denial, and some critical criminologists may take the position that officers take pride in the impression held by the public, that police work is exciting (Van Maanen, 2005). As Burke (1994) noted when he was observing officers, he was surprised at the number of occasions that the officer felt the need to confirm that it is usually more exciting. This is evident in the responses received in that no officer expressed feelings of boredom, conversely, officers felt overworked.

Participants were then asked if they feel that cynicism affects their ability to perform in a fair, just and non-discriminatory manner. The answer from every respondent was essentially no, and there may have been a number of reasons for this. Professionalism was a theme in the majority of answers; most officers suggested that officers can operate professionally (R8, R7, R13, R16, R12, R11, R1, and R15) despite inner feelings of cynicism, which differs to Klienig's (1996) suggestion that professionalism is jeopardised by cynicism. Representative of these responses, R3 argued that 'it is ok if (the officer) doesn't act on feelings of cynicism'. Interestingly, R15 responded to the effect that,

You can talk to these officers in private and they seem really cynical, yet come across very professionally when dealing with the public.

This answer justifies the position of this dissertation on the subject, specifically officers seem cynical when they provide thought for academic interpretation, and in private may display cynical attitudes, but when operational their cynical attitudes do not usually culminate into discriminatory behaviour (Ainsworth and Pease, 1987; Chan, 1997; Waddington, 1999a, 2005). R10 stated that 'a cynical cop is an honest cop', and R9 suggested that:

A cynical cop is a realistic cop and it doesn't affect ability in any way.

This supports the argument that cynicism is simply a product of the job (Foster, 2003), and is not necessarily a negative aspect of their personality (Chan, 1997; Waddington, 1999a, 2005; Caplan, 2003). Only two officer's who expressed any concern that cynicism could have a negative effect on the ability to perform fairly. They stated that cynicism could potentially taint their judgement because of automatic feelings of suspicion (R4), and performance could be affected the de-motivating nature of cynicism itself (R13). However, R5 stated that these reflexive feelings of suspicion can have a positive influence, expressing the view that because of the nature of the job, officers need to have a certain amount of suspicion.

The ACC took a more critical position and suggested that officers with cynical predispositions are a product of policing simply being a 'job' and not a vocation with a worthwhile purpose. He suggested that 30 years ago policing was a lifestyle; about

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positive community relations, and police officers were part of the community they serve. He went on to argue that there is a '30 year culture' (consistent with Newburn, 2003) in that it will take 30 years to change these cynical officers who are more motivated by money now, rather than doing a worthwhile job, hence the recent industrial action (BBC, 2007; Steele, 2007). Despite this critique from one of the most senior officers in the constabulary studied, the respondents in the focus group agreed that cynicism does not usually harm their performance, and agreed with Caplan (2003) and Chan (1997) in their arguments that cynicism is necessary for officers to perform. This is summed up well by R10 when she said,

Without cynicism, cops will be naïve to the criminal's tricks and lies.

Most of the other officers then highlighted occasions where they felt naïve because of disappointment at court, the Crown Prosecution Service's refusal to charge, trusting criminals and various other incidents where their hard work had no effect. This protective layer of cynicism enables officers to prevent themselves from looking foolish (R14, Foster 2003). Readers who take a critical position may argue that police officers will justify their own cynicism by highlighting the ways which it can aid them, but it could be argued that listening to their justification and working to understand it is better than making potentially harmful assumptions about their attitude.

The next issue on the survey concerned training. Some literature highlighted the importance of police training to prevent cynicism (Burke, 1993; Kurke and Scrivner, 1995). These officers opinion on training was split, six respondents expressed a belief that the training they received was adequate for preparing them for the streets, whilst five (including the special constable) argued that it was inadequate. Four of the officers suggested that the 'in house' training did very little to help their development but the ten weeks tutorship provided a good insight to street policing. R16 responded,

Not at all, it was unrealistic and dated; we had no preparation for the paperwork and nothing to help deal with real conflict.

R4, a tutor constable also expressed a concern about conflict resolution and suggested that officers are not given the skills they need to develop early in this area. The focus group came to the conclusion that whilst 'in house' training is necessary, the ten weeks 'on the job' probationer training provided the best development. They also agreed that within Westshire police the refresher sessions are necessary and usually helpful. Respondents were then asked to provide insight into their biggest influences during their development.

The majority of officers (8) considered their shift to be the biggest influence on their personal development; this supports much of the literature which argues that other officers have a huge influence on cynicism (Fielding, 1988; Burke, 1993; Graves, 1996; Foster, 2003; Skolnick, 2006). Other responses regarding influences on development included reference to their sergeant (R9, R6, R7, R4, R2), friends and family (R14, R3) and tutor constable (R8). The focus group discussed the relationship between influences on development and cynicism, and most agreed that the officer's shift is the most prominent influence on cynicism, but this must to be contextualised and reinforced by their own experiences (Henry, 2004).

Officers were then asked what they thought policing was about before they joined. The responses varied, but nine respondents made reference to ‘catching criminals’, the ACC made no reference to catching criminals, but stayed focused on the community aspect of policing. He considered, and still does, that policing is about:

Serving the public as a local village ‘bobby’, people shouldn’t join because of pay... closer to the ‘golden age’ of policing... policing as a member of the community.

It could be argued from this that there is a discrepancy between the motivations of officers who joined 30 years ago and officers who joined in the last ten years, but R14 (35 years as a PC) thought policing was about ‘catching baddies’ so there is not enough evidence to make any informed judgement about what officers with more years in service thought policing was about before they joined. The community was mentioned in five of the officers’ responses, and this dissertation had expected that the officers who considered policing to be about catching criminals and declined to mention community relations would be the most cynical after being more affected by disappointments, but this was not the case. Officers who displayed cynical attitudes throughout the survey also often conveyed the message that they joined to help the community. Only one officer stated that they do not know what they thought policing was about, unsurprisingly this was R16. However, the responses to the next question, concerning whether the officers’ perceptions had changed provided some support for the suggestion that cynicism affects officers regardless of what they considered policing to be about.

Interestingly, five of the nine officers who thought policing was about catching criminals had changed their position, all made some reference to what Foster (2003) referred to as non-police work, such as desk and paper work. This may represent a relationship between disappointment (Kirschman, 1997; Reiner, 2000) and cynicism as it could be argued that these officers are disappointed about the nature of policing. One short, but fascinating answer was R15, who became operational in January 2008; his response was ‘not yet’. This justifies the dissertation’s position on time served and cynicism, because this officer is actually *expecting* his perception to change and for himself to become more cynical and this is evident throughout his other responses. This cynical change in perspective was also evident in the community based responses, with two of the five respondents becoming more cynical about callers (consistent with Gerber, 2001; Hassell, 2006; Siegel, 2006) and paperwork, targets and figures (R5), which may nullify the argument that officers who thought policing was about catching criminals grow more cynical over time, as this evidence suggests community focused respondents also grow cynical. R14 stated that his perception has not changed and that essentially policing is still about ‘catching baddies’, which again supports the argument that cynicism may not be caused by length of experience, however, the writer considers that R14 may be the in the minority of experienced officers who take such a position. The focus group did suggest that officers who thought policing was all action become cynical quickly, R1 stated:

I’ve seen it time and time again, cops come in with their sleeves rolled up ready to kick ass, and within a few months become as cynical as the rest of us...

The discussion in the focus group strongly supported the argument that officers who thought policing was about helping the community take longer to become cynical, but came to the conclusion that 'it catches up with everyone eventually' (R12), which suggests that regardless of what the officer thought policing was about, their perspective will eventually become more cynical over time.

The next issue explored by the survey was that of paperwork. Extant literature shows that much police cynicism is caused by the excessiveness of paperwork (Banton, 1964; Van Maanen, 1973 (cited in Foster, 2003); Foster, 2003; Copperfield, 2006), and the officers in this survey displayed similar cynical attitudes to recent research (Nottinghamshire Police, 2006). Only one of the sixteen respondents argued that all paperwork is necessary. Of the fifteen officers who displayed cynical attitudes about paperwork, five expressed frustration about having to repeat the same information and filling forms which they consider to have no use. The focus group agreed, and this would reinforce the literature on this particular issue, despite it not being one of the worst aspects of the vocation identified by respondents, it does contribute to cynicism.

The final issue on the survey concerned job satisfaction, the writer assumed the position that officers who showed a low level of job satisfaction would show high levels of cynicism and this was the case, the respondents who's answers were most cynical throughout all stated that they were not satisfied (R16, R7, R10, R5). R7 considered himself to be 'worthless' and R16's response:

...job pays reasonably well... good pension... good time off to spend with family

Would reinforce any argument that he could be labelled a 'uniform Carrier' (Reiner 1979), which (as discussed) the writer feels would be unjust and over-determined.

The most interesting aspect of these results was the lack of a relationship between job satisfaction and time in service. The results even suggested that the more experienced officers were more satisfied with their job, as (on average) the more cynical officers had fewer years in service with an average of 5 years experience, and the less cynical officers had 8 years (a mean average). This is interesting because it could suggest that cynicism rises and falls over time. However, R14 was one of the more satisfied officers (with 35 years service) and it could be argued that his influence would make a significant difference to the results, yet even with his response removed there was still a six month increase over the average years of service of the cynical officers (5½ years). The only significant statement regarding cynicism among younger officers was by R15 who after 3 months operational service was still 'very satisfied'. None of the more experienced officers expressed such enthusiasm and these results suggest that over a length of time he too may become more cynical, or realistic, depending on the reader's position.

The key issues evident from the respondents is support for the argument that behaviour is not representative of cynicism, and the dislocation between some of the established themes in literature and these 16 officers is evident through much of the survey. The rejected themes included boredom (Banton, 1964; Van Maanen, 1973; Kirschman, 1997; Waddington, 1999a; Reiner, 2000; Foster, 2003), training (Chan, 1997: 91, Kurke & Scrivner, 1995; Nottinghamshire Police, 2006), lack of respect from the public

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(Young, 1991; Kirschman, 1997; Skolnick, 2005; Dixon, 2005; Copperfield, 2006), and police typologies (Muir, 1977; Reiner, 1979; Mastrofski et al, 2002). There was a mixture of support and rejection of the relationship between time served and cynicism. Though these issues were rejected by the officers studied, there was some support for themes deriving from literature on police cynicism, these were the influence of other officers (though evidence suggests that this must be contextualised and reinforced with bad experiences), disappointment, and there was some support for paperwork as a cause of cynicism. Evidence from the empirical work also suggests that the failings of the Criminal Justice System are a major influence on cynicism, which could be further investigated as it is not prevalent in police literature. These issues will be discussed in the conclusion of this dissertation.

Conclusion

To conclude this dissertation, the evidence suggests that there is *some* dislocation between those issues and themes identified as contributing to cynicism in the academic literature on police culture and the opinions of this small sample of police officers. The themes contributing to cynicism which were emphasised in the research literature, which were subsequently rejected by participants were boredom, lack of training and a lack of respect from the public. Police typologies were also rejected by respondents, which raises questions about over-determinate typologies as a concept. This dissertation argues that there could be numerous reasons for the rejection of these literature themes as causes of cynicism. It could be testament to the changing and heterogeneous nature of contemporary police cultures, because modern police cultures outdate some of the literature, and beyond the basics, the actual job itself has changed over recent years with the introduction of 'new managerialism'. Another reason for the rejection of these particular themes could be that the officers in previous research on police cultures and personalities had different experiences to the respondents of this dissertation; however this in itself raises questions about the representativeness of samples within such a heterogeneous population. Despite the rejection of some themes which the literature highlights as contributing to police cynicism, others factors identified as significant in this body of work police were corroborated to some extent. These were the influence of colleagues and peer pressure, various disappointments about the nature of some police work and negative results, and paperwork. One prominent theme within the responses which lacks supporting literature was the perceived failings of the criminal justice system. Though it could be argued that this is covered under disappointment (Kirschman, 1997), this dissertation argues that because it was referred to so specifically by respondents it should be further explored in its own right.

There was little evidence to support any theory that cynicism increases over time, but there was evidence from the officers with 20 or more years experience to support the suggestion that it decreases after a prolonged period. It is argued therefore that the focus of the sample could have been a comparison between officers with less than one year service and officers with more than one year service rather than five years and above because the responses suggest that cynicism became a distinct feature of these officers working personality after less than five years, supported by the responses of the student officer, with 3 months experience which were enthusiastic and optimistic. The focus group suggested as a concluding statement that:

There is a period where everything is novel, exciting and interesting, but once that passes after a few months or so they will probably become more cynical

This would support the suggestion that cynicism becomes rife after less than 5 years and reinforces the fact that cynicism does become a feature of police officers working mentality. However, there was no evidence from the primary research to suggest that their cynicism affects their behaviour. In fact the results were contradictory in that respondents were of the opinion that cynical officers can remain professional and productive when operational, which opposes some of the academic studies referred to in the literature review, and supports the arguments of Chan (1997) and Waddington (1999a). There was also no apparent relationship between rank and cynicism.

This dissertation does not comprehensively explore the idea that police officers could display cynical attitudes just for the sake of it, or as an identity. There is potentially scope for further research into this concept at some stage, as it is not investigated by any of the police literature accessed.

Whilst the primary and secondary research on police cynicism may have highlighted some of the reasons why the 16 officers involved in the study may have *become* cynical, there was no exploration of potential initiatives and policies to reduce cynicism in police officers, and this could be investigated further as part of a PhD or MSc thesis. It also assumes the broad definition of cynicism as a pessimistic outlook on features of the vocation (Caplan, 2003), and it is accepted that there may be more focused definitions available for use but it was considered that given the nature of the study it would be beneficial to use a broad definition as it allows for new themes and issues to arise from the empirical work.

Given the size of the sample, it is difficult to draw any significant conclusions about contributors to police cynicism; this is due to the small scale nature of undergraduate research. It is argued that in order to draw significant conclusions from any criminological research, particularly on the issues within police cultures, one must select a larger sample representative of the population. It is also argued that because of the heterogeneous nature of police officers in the UK it is impossible to obtain a comprehensively representative sample, and as a result any conclusions from academic study on aspects of police culture will be criticised, not least because they are at best provisional. The researcher is also aware that he is likely to be criticised for ‘going native’ and exploring a concept which is either already a feature of his own ‘working personality’ (Waddington, 1999a) and may present a bias in order to protect himself from criticism at work. However, every step to investigate police cynicism in an impartial manner has been taken.

Despite these potential limitations, the argument that some literature on the causes and influence of police cynicism is outdated and inaccurate, is one crying out for further research.

Word Count: 10,919

Appendices

Appendix a)

Assistant Chief Constable Interview schedule

**The training session being referred to is 'Citizen Focus' training, attended by the researcher prior to the interview*

***Though the questions present the means of a structured interview schedule, other debates arose and the session was treated as semi-structured*

Morning Sir...Thank you for giving up your time to let me speak to you today. Here is a copy of the questionnaire I am giving out to willing participants; I plan on using a small group of officers to discuss the issues that arise from the survey in order to gain an understanding of why some police officers become cynical over time.

During my library research on police officers one of the most prevalent issues was police cynicism. You went some way to challenge the behaviour arising from cynical attitudes during your citizen focus training session.

Some of my discussion will involve the argument that contrary to academic belief, cynicism in police officers is necessary to prevent feelings of naivety, disappointment and depression. Do you think that cynicism has any advantages?

What were the five topics you mentioned at the start of the training session which are being reviewed?

What do you think causes some police officers to become cynical over time?

During the session you told us about an officer who made blatant racist and sexist comments and then refused to apologise or adapt his behaviour. Do you think that the fact that everyone was so shocked to hear such comments shows that police culture is already changing?

What would you say to the argument that occupational culture exists everywhere and that the current culture will just be replaced by another one?

Do you think that there is any scope for believe that the changing police cultures challenges the cohesion, friendship and teamwork among colleagues?

You refer to some occasions where officers have been selfish, narrow minded and lazy in your training. Why do you think these officers behave so inappropriately?

Is there any particular issue regarding attitudes within your police service which you would like me to focus on during my research?

Before you joined, what did you think police work was about?

Appendix b)

Social Survey

**This social survey was sent out via email to the participants*

Hi

I'm doing my Criminology dissertation at Nottingham Trent University, and I'm studying police officers, trying to find out why they become cynical uniform carriers over time. I know how busy ***** cops are but I hope you can take 10 minutes to fill this in and forward it back to me. Thanks

The responses given will not be forwarded to any governing authority and are absolutely anonymous, and will only be referred to in the dissertation, which will be made available if you wish to see it. There are no guidelines as to the length of your response and there is no obligation to fill in answers for every question.

1. How long have you been a police officer?
2. What rank are you?
3. Why did you become a police officer?
4. Why are you still a police officer?
5. What is the best thing about your job?
6. What is the worst thing about your job?
7. Do you think being a police officer affects your perspective on human nature, and why?
8. Please select the following statement(s) which are most relevant to you at work (delete the others)..
 - a) Happy with job security, mostly satisfied, interested in crime prevention, usually friendly, approachable and thorough.
 - b) Motivated by pay alone, unsatisfied by job, cynical, bored, no belief in the criminal justice system
 - c) Highly motivated to catch the bad guys, satisfied by job, action seeking law enforcer.
 - d) Belief in public service, very thorough with domestic jobs, believes that the social side of policing is most important.
 - e) Uses little discretion, thorough, idealistic and highly motivated by promotion prospects.
 - f) Belief in the federation, mostly friends with other police officers, cynical, detached from the public.
 - g) Keeps head down, often reluctant to be first on scene, tries to avoid jobs, and patrols more peaceful parts of the beat.
 - h) Crime fighter, few conflict resolution skills, authoritarian, intimidating.

Cynicism

9. Consider that cynicism is the belief that most human behaviour is motivated by selfishness... What do you think causes cynicism in police officers?
10. What effect do you think cynicism has on the ability to perform as a fair, just and non-discriminatory officer? Is a cynical cop necessarily a bad cop?
11. Do you think your training prepared you adequately for the streets?
12. What was the biggest influence on your development as a police officer? E.g. Tutor, training, colleagues, family, friends.

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13. When (if ever) have you performed police work whilst not on duty and what was the outcome?
- 14a. Before you joined, what did you think police work was about?
- 14b. Has your perspective changed?
15. Do you think the paperwork involved in many jobs is necessary? Please explain.
16. Are you satisfied with your job? Please explain.

Thanks again for taking the time to complete this questionnaire

Appendix c)

Focus Group Schedule

Thank you all for attending today.

The Purpose of this focus group is to gain further understanding of the themes derived from the social survey you all completed, and will involve me directing questions and topics to the group for you to discuss.

I will make you all aware when its time to move on to another subject and will bring a halt to discussion when I need to catch up on notes.

What effect do you think camaraderie has on a police officers ability to perform?

I was surprised at the lack of consistency in your answers to the question ‘What is the worst thing about your job?’ Many pieces of literature note that most police officers hate excessive paperwork and the lack of respect you get from the public but few of you directly referred to them in your responses during this question. Why do you think that is?

Why do you think the more experienced officers had lengthier responses to this question?

Why do you think that despite most literature claiming that a major cause of cynicism is a lack of respect form the public, it was not prevalent in many of the responses as a cause of cynicism?

The shortfalls of modern managers was an issue which contributed to cynicism in most answers, why do you think that is?

Some of the officers were very cynical of the Criminal Justice System beyond the police, what do you think about this?

Do you think policing is boring?

Do you think cynicism harms a police officers performance?

What do you think of the ‘in house’ probationer training in Westshire Police?
Do you think the refresher sessions are useful?

Many of the officers suggested that their shift was the biggest influence on their development, and most police literature argues that colleagues are the biggest catalyst of cynicism. Do you think there is a relationship between whom, or what influences your development, and cynicism?

Which type of officers do you think become the most cynical?

Though in the responses it was not the worst aspect of the job, do you think paperwork makes officers more cynical?

Finally, do you think that cynicism is inevitable, as a characteristic of police officers per-se?

Thanks again for taking part.

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