

The Police Uniform: Power, authority and culture.

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Abstract

The highly recognisable and iconic nature of the police uniform is arguably the most powerful tool of the police trade. The power and authority it bestows on its' wearers can only serve to have some 'contaminating' effect on officers. This study uses qualitative interview data obtained from nine police officers accessed via a Police Neighbourhood Team over a two week period in December 2011. The resulting data was used in an attempt to explore the links between power, authority and the wearing of the police uniform and to discuss the social impact their occupation has on their lives outside the force.

The findings show that it is through the wearing of the uniform and their occupation in general that police officers often contaminate their home life with the negative effects of policing and that certain cleansing rituals are necessary to avoid the work/home blur. Whilst wearing the uniform they acquire a 'celebrity' status which further exacerbates the pollution of their non-professional life. It has become evident from my research that the length of time spent as a police officer is directly correlated to the contamination effects, and in some cases has actually become part of their personalities.

Although previous research has been conducted on specific issues of the police occupation, none have attempted to explore the links between the uniform itself and negative consequences. The most similar study undertaken was Crawley's work on prison officers (2004); although being a similar occupation, my research endeavours to establish whether the uniform provides an invisible (but distinctive) divide between the *public* and the police (one which could not be undertaken in a prison).

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Chapter One:
Introduction

Policemen on duty are unique users of the areas they patrol. They don't often personally know the majority of people who commonly use the area, but everyone knows that they are part of the police force. Every aspect of their appearance has been stringently and deliberately designed to ensure that there is no confusion whatsoever about their social identity. Most people can easily identify police officers by their official police uniform. Many parents teach their children to trust and respect individuals who don the professional attire of police clothing. Since the uniform has become such an important part of police subculture, it is necessary to explore the social and professional implications of wearing the uniform itself. It is suggested that the way we react to this iconic uniform is automatic through socialisation, and we as children are taught to respect and fear the presence of the police and their powers. This is further exaggerated and confirmed by their wearing of highly visible and recognisable attire. One important question is to wonder whether we respect the police themselves or is the uniform a protective *symbol* of our feelings of safety. These psychological implications are not only on the part of the public, but the police officers themselves who have reported feelings of psychological protection whilst wearing the uniform.

This study aims to explore some social phenomenon surrounding the police's uniform. The main foci are to explore what previous research has uncovered but not fully investigated in the way that the uniform is directly linked to how officers perceive certain aspects of their occupation. The power differences that police officers experience whilst in and out of uniform are stark, and the beliefs on protection by what the uniform represents is important to explore as it is evident that the uniform itself holds a psychological 'power' to officers; one that has not been investigated which ensures this thesis is a viable contribution to the current criminological body of knowledge.

Previous research has suggested that being a police officer brings with it the highest occupational solidarity of any occupation (Caplan, 2003) and thus and 'us versus them' mentality (Whitaker, 1982). This in turn causes a stigmatised identity, experiences of isolation from the wider community and makes it very hard for officers to form or sustain 'normal' relationships with people outside of the force (Reiner, 1985). This study aims to investigate the extent of this social divide between the public and the police and what effects this has on their social relations and life outside of work.

In order for officers to combat these negative consequences of being part of the police, it has been widely reported that certain rituals and cleansing processes are necessary. Officers have been known to lie about their occupation to their friends and family in order to protect their identity, and to undertake certain procedures to avoid 'contamination' between work and home (Douglas, 1970., Crawley, 2004). It has also been suggested that the longer spent in the job, the more it becomes part of their identity as a whole, and they then find it harder to separate work and home life. The longer spent in the job the more 'bitter' they become (Reiner, 1985) due to their suspicious minds. This study also looks at elements of suspicion and its impact on how they carry out their duties and what bearing this has on their life outside of work.

The study begins by examining existing literature; through identifying gaps, the interview schedule emerged to bridge the links between the previous studies. A discussion of the

methodology follows; considering why particular techniques were preferred over others and to anticipate any potential problems that I needed to be aware of. A reflexive account of the methodology and limitations of research were examined following this. The findings and analysis section proceeds to highlight my findings and to compare them to previous research outlined in my literature review to conclude the dissertation.

Chapter Two: **Literature Review**

“(The uniform) explains and justifies, I believe, much of the pride we take in our collective accomplishments, even when our own contributions lie at the insignificant margin. It explains the special importance we attach to the signal act of collective freedom... We begin with a group act and then derive and distribute the individual responsibilities thereof. Individual pride makes sense because of our participation in a collective accomplishment.”

(Kutz, 2005: 171-2)

People gather clues about others from their appearance. Clothing provides a psychological shortcut to ascertain one's gender, status, authority and occupation (Myers, 1993). Previous studies (Lennon and Davis, 1989., Connor et al., 1975, Joseph and Alex, 1972) have shown that clothing and aesthetics are crucial in forming the first stages of social relationships, in showing that physical appearance (genetic looks as well as clothing), remains the first and foremost factor in generating a leading impression of an individual (which is why associations with brand-names is so influential). Therefore the uniform worn by a police officer produces particular stereotypes about their status, occupation and authority.

The Uniform Stays the Same

The police uniform is representative of tradition of law enforcement dating back as far as 1829 (Johnson, 2001). In this year, the first modern police force, London Metropolitan Police, established standard police clothing. Their dark blue militarised uniform served to distinguish them from the British military who wore red and white (ibid). The design and general appearance have remained strikingly similar for almost two centuries. Although the style has changed slightly over the years (see appendix five for pictures), the colour scheme has stayed the same. Dark colours have been the preferred choice for a possible number of reasons: it's ease in cleaning, stain concealment and concealment in dangerous situations, and night-time coverage when seeking and apprehending criminals.

Colour

Choice of colour has played a key role in being able to define the individual and collective identity of the uniform; the same applies to certain marks or patterns embellished on the clothing to reiterate their symbolic meaning; one of the key functions that designers of this type of clothing encourage is its highly recognisable iconic nature to the wider public. Throughout history, the representation of good versus evil has been emphasized by social

mediums (urban myths, religion and the mass media), for example the angel in white, the devil in black. These social constructions have been prevalent in the development of how colours are represented; “lightness tends to be associated with goodness, purity and innocence while darkness suggests evil and death” (Nickels, 2008: 79). As in the medical profession where nurses and doctors who wear white coats to suggest the healing and purifying nature of their occupation, the dark shades of the police uniform symbolises not just the identity of the institution, but the presence of societal protection, who unlike the medics, heal through punishment and retribution rather than cure. It has been suggested that this metaphorical colour coding is “automatic” rather than a product of “intellectual” learning (Nickels, 2008). This is doubtful as it renders the effectiveness of learned behaviour and acquired cultural understandings through primary and secondary socialisation inept. Would we know the difference between good and bad, innocence and evil, the connotations of white and black if they weren’t learned understandings? We see the uniforms of the armed forces and the police as symbols of power and something to be feared because that is what we have been *taught* to respect and fear, not as an innate knowledge of what they are instinctively supposed to represent. Originally uniforms were designed to have masculine appeal, so constructed to emphasise or highlight strong shoulders; this is shown in the history of the uniform with epaulettes, shoulder boards and braiding etcetera (Fussell, 2003). If colours and clothes were *not* gendered by social constructions of what is it to be masculine or feminine (that is, blue for boys, pink for girls), would society feel just as ‘protected’ by officers in powder-pink uniforms for example? It is hard to imagine since everything we know is learned through socially accepted cultural understandings.

A Symbolic Uniform

Previous research such as that by Mauro (1984) has shown that the effects of colour change people’s perception of police officers. In the study, participants were asked to rank their symbolic perceptions of two different police uniforms: the navy shirt and trousers favoured by most law agencies today, and the traditional clothing of California’s sheriff’s, comprising of khaki-coloured top and trousers. Mauro found that while both uniforms were ranked highly in terms of authority and competence, the lighter colour of the sheriff’s gave off impressions of ‘helpfulness’ and ‘honesty’. While these connotations may be useful in community and public relations, it may send the wrong message with regards to levels of conformity from citizens. A dirty or wrinkled uniform or crassly worn duty belt, in the same way may convey to people that the officers have a complacent attitude, which could incite violent encounters if criminals believe they have inefficient and sloppy attitudes to their job (Adams et al., 1980).

An important question to consider is whether the public view the police themselves as our protectors or it is in fact the uniform that they wear the protective *symbol* of our feelings of safety. If the latter is true it is necessary to view the uniform as a very powerful tool of their trade, the epitome of their occupation and to explore to what extent it changes the persona of the officer wearing it.

Individuality

Individuality in society, although encouraged to a certain extent, is not something the police force can afford to promote. In a strict and well-defined legal justice system where only fine

lines of marginality are afforded, anonymity and sameness are encouraged to instil the importance of conformity first within the force, and then pushed to wider society to ensure the upholding of the law; “when a policeman dons his uniform, he enters a distinct subculture governed by norms and values designed to manage the strain created by an outsider role in the community” (Blumberg and Neiderhoffer, 1985: 91). Any attempt in the past to further suppress individuality has been squandered, for example “an attempt in the early 1980’s to remove the one remaining individualising feature – the ‘collar number’ – was correctly rejected by civilians” (Young, 1991: 67). This rejection of extra anonymity proves that although the public feel a degree of safety when seeing the police in their uniform, as a type of ‘dark avenger’, personalising them makes them more approachable (and there is evidence to suggest that a good relationship between the public and the police is essential to combat crime), however in general the distinctive barrier between them that incites compliance.

Internal Solidarity

The uniform itself is a distinctive barrier between the public and the police, demonstrating the obvious separation between the culture of control (in where the police have virtually no personal identity aside from the small number on their shoulder) and the individuality of the civilians that they are controlling. Through the wearing of the uniform this depersonalisation and the unique divide between the police and public can generate aspects of police subcultures that can be hard to reverse or ‘shake off’ at the end of the working day. It can become an integrated part of the policeman’s working personality and cause the divide to become more pronounced as the officer feels isolated from the wider community. It has been heavily documented that the police have one of the highest levels of occupational solidarity of any job. The learning process in the police academies comprehensively emphasises the element of occupational danger and suggests that their colleagues are their “only protection” against a threatening society (Caplan, 2003). Through training, in learning to sever ties with their previous life and in being re-socialised as police officers, the recruits steadily acquire a permanent feeling of solidarity with their fellow officers; an “us against them” mentality (Whitaker, 1982). This marked internal solidarity between police officers causes them to become a sort of “beleaguered minority” (Reiner, 1985), unable to form and sustain ‘normal’ relationships with people outside of the force;

“Many police officers report difficulties in mixing with civilians in ordinary social life. These stem from shift-work, erratic hours, difficulties in switching off from the tension engendered by the job, aspects of the discipline code, and the hostility or fear that citizens may exhibit to the police.”

(Reiner, 1985: 92)

Coupled with their intense training, subsequent time in the field and constant contact with other officers with the we/they mentality, people who are not police officers come to be viewed with suspicion; the world becomes more black and white, more composed of ‘insiders’ and ‘outsiders’, more police and citizens (Kappeler et al., 1995). Trust becomes a precious commodity, one that is only bestowed on other officers, the only people who truly ‘understand’ the world they are in (Graves, 1995). Internal solidarity is not just about regarding the public as suspicious; it is an unspoken reassurance that other officers will “pull their weight” in assisting their colleagues and they will “defend and back-up when confronted by external threats” (Goldsmith, 1990: 93-4). This internal solidarity is further emphasized by

wearing the police uniform. With all members of the law enforcement 'team' donning the same attire, they are inclined to feel a type of membership in an exclusive club where their colleagues are their comrades and the public are the ever-present potential enemy.

The Uniform as a 'Prop' of Performance

The police uniform also acts as a type of role playing symbol. Costumes are articles that are worn when people are engaging in play-acting; the portrayal of a different character or personality (Fussell, 2003). Uniforms, in a similar way, is clothing that is worn when people are fulfilling a role, and uniforms in general are depicted as serious indicators of the performance of important tasks as part of a larger structure. Goffman (1959: 22) noted that first impressions are crucial as it is on the foundations of these first impressions that other individuals (namely their colleagues and the public) will gauge the appropriate "responsive action" to the individual based on first impressions, and in the future. Police officers in particular, being in a position of authority, are well aware that early presentations of 'machismo' are imperative if they are to be perceived as an effective authoritarian tool.

Goffman (1959) famously discussed the 'front' and 'back' stages of performance. Front stage is where the 'actor' (police officer) 'performs' a character (machismo/authority) to the 'audience' (public). Goffman referred to the back stage as a place where other 'performers' are present but the audience can no longer see them. This is usually where the front can be relaxed in front of fellow colleagues and at home. These 'fronts' which Hoschild (1989) termed 'emotional labour', requires certain coping strategies. While Hoschild conducted her research primarily on waitresses and air hostess's, her work can be applied effectively to the occupation of the police. While hospitality staff have the 'back stage', for example, i.e. the staff room where they can relax their performance, managing emotional labour for police officers is problematic. Waddington (1999: 295) advised that the police canteen is the "repair shop" of policing, where officers can relax and relieve their stresses of their often emotionally and mentally draining occupation. It must be noted however that, just because the canteen is a 'backstage area' "does not mean that the officers are not staging performances" in there as well (ibid.).

The feelings of social isolation suffered by police officers can cause them to conceal their identities especially as relationships with 'normal' citizens are strained due to social reactions to the job. Their family life has to be "exemplary" (Whitaker, 1982: 237) and the elements of threat and danger make the police officer "less desirable as a friend" and isolates them from the rest of the potentially dangerous community (Skolnick, 1975: 265).

"Few members of the public, once they learn of a police person's occupation, can't resist talking to him or her about some police matter. Several police wives say they sometimes get the feeling that they are regarded as a potential spy by their neighbours. People have been known to apply for a reduction in rates because policemen live near them."

(Whitaker, 1982: 238)

Contamination

While Crawley (2004) based her work on prison officers, her assessment of work/home contamination can be effectively applied to the work of the police. In her research she found that prison officers are meticulous in their efforts to avoid 'contamination' between the home

and work as it may ruin “the relative purity of the home with talk about prison” (Crawley, 2004: 235).

Policemen are trained to be suspicious to “perceive events or changes in the physical surroundings that indicate the occurrence or probability of disorder” (Skolnick, 1975: 267) and due to the levels of authority, the police institution tends to bestow “chronic suspiciousness” on officers (Chan, 1997: 78). Reiner (1985: 113) advised that this causes the police officer to develop “a hard skin of bitterness” which only worsens the longer spent in the job. The contamination of their home life and their hardened view of social reality causes their families and close friends to become ‘infected’ by this; “a kind of vicarious contamination” (Finch, 1983: 37). Contamination can have both material and symbolic meaning. Douglas referred to a “ritual purification” (1970: 44), where the boundaries between the workplace and the home are clearly defined and steps are taken to limit the effects of any part of the prison officer’s work polluting other aspects of their lives. Crawley discussed that wearing a (prison) officer uniform “makes certain acts more permissible” (2004: 140). Crawley continues to consider the use of the uniform not only as an authority symbol to the people they are controlling, but also as a sort of “psychological protection” for the person wearing it (ibid). In Crawley’s research on one female prison officer, she found that it was imperative that the boundaries between (the impurity of) work and (the purity of) home are maintained to avoid the “polluting effects of symbolic contact with ‘profane’ individuals” (2004: 245). In order to do this, ‘rituals of purification’ were followed the most important one being the “immediate removal of the uniform” (ibid) that is, clothes that were ‘contaminated’ by her work environment. Due to recent reports in the Daily Mail newspaper “Too risky to commute in uniform say police” (Sept. 2011), the divide between work and home that most police officers would strive to achieve could be disintegrated further. According to a report by Policy Exchange, it has been suggested that if officers wore uniforms to work it would increase visibility and further reassurance to the public. These proposals have been condemned by the police saying that they would ‘never get there’ due to the ‘pestering public’. Not only this, any secrecy that the officers wish to keep about their occupation to their neighbours and the public will be unveiled.

The uniform is a symbol of the police’s work. It has been discussed that the police uniform, badge and weapons of control are universal symbols of authority and power. When they put on their uniform it seems that they adopt the authority that goes with it, contributing to what is known as the ‘police personality’. Although stringent efforts may be made to leave this persona ‘on the job’ some officers may continue to carry it with them, everywhere, at all times; it can potentially become an aspect of self as the lines between home and work become blurred.

Chapter Three: Methodology

For most researchers in this field, qualitative methodology is the most appropriate choice when embarking on a study of social phenomenon. It enables the researcher to gain insight into people’s personal beliefs, attitudes and experiences that cannot be gauged from using quantitative methods. It gives researchers the opportunity to “[get] close to a clear and convincing model of the phenomenon [they] are studying” (Rubin and Riene, 1995: 47) and

ultimately “generate(s) data which gives an authentic insight into people’s experiences” (Silverman, 2001: 87). As my focus is into certain aspects of policing culture, qualitative interviewing on a one-to-one basis seemed to be the most suitable method to gain personal experiences from police officers themselves. This chapter discusses the methods used and the approaches to data collection. Following this, a methodological reflection and limitations of research are discussed.

Sampling

Sampling is used in order to study a proportion of the population that is in some way representative “in order to make inferences about the whole population” (Arber, 1993: 38). Although sample size is important for generalisation, detail is more so. Snowball sampling was used in order to gain insight from those participants that are recommended to me by previous interviewees. Although this can be criticised as a type of convenience sampling which has attracted a lot of attention over recent years (Bryman, 2008) it is seen as an “acceptable” form of qualitative methodology as probability sampling (regarded as much more generalizable as it is representative of the population) is “frequently avoided because of the difficulty as costs involved” (Bryman, 2008: 183). Snowball sampling is also closely related to purposive sampling as it gives researchers the opportunity to approach individuals where the research required is most likely to found (Denzin and Lincoln, 1994: 202). Using these types of sampling methods further narrows the generalisable possibilities as it is deliberately seeking out participants that are appropriate to the research. It is not that I am unaware that my data will un-generalisable, but merely that I am seeking to provide evidence of a particular contention; it is noted that data acquired from qualitative research is “not *meant* to be representative of a population” (Bryman, 2008: 391 – emphasis added). Instead it is the researcher’s aim to generalise *theory*: “It is the cogency of the theoretical reasoning” (Mitchell, 1993: 207).

Gatekeeper

Contact was made through an acquaintance² who is a police officer for Blue Line³ police force in Northern England. He provided me with an email address and phone number for his head of department. Once contact with the gatekeeper had been established, copies of the consent form, information sheet, and interview questions were emailed to him to ensure that any problems or issues with the ethical appropriateness or interview schedule were ironed out before interviews actually started. In informing the detective that officers of different genders and experience were required I was promised a two-week turnaround in order for the gatekeeper to arrange potential interviewees. In actual fact, it was four weeks until I received confirmation of an appropriate time to conduct them. It was arranged that I would interview six officers (all male) at their community offices. On retrieving the initial data, the gatekeeper assured me that if any more participants were needed it would be no problem to rearrange. On reviewing the information gathered it was ascertained that I would need at least another three or four officers (preferably females) to add further depth to my research and provide me with more data to increase generalizability and clarify themes and common answers.

² I was introduced through mutual friends. One of the main reasons why this research was undertaken was the fact that when he first disclosed his occupation, it invoked a reaction in the group that sparked my interest; the tone of the conversation changed in response to his revelation. This is further discussed in chapter four.

³ Pseudonyms have been used to protect participants and guarantee anonymity and confidentiality.

Using gatekeepers to retrieve the sample is a common procedure when accessing individuals that are inaccessible to the general public (in this case the British police force which is notoriously secretive). It gives access to individuals that would usually have been closed off to the researcher, but in forwarding copies of my interview schedule (necessary in this case for interview approval) it puts the gatekeepers in 'control' and gives them the opportunity to brief the potential interviewees about the research, generating the possibility for the participants to 'plan' their answers, therefore skewing the data.

Gender Differences and Length of Time Served

In opting for interviews that included male and female officers, it accounts for gender differences in opinion and how they view their uniform (this was an important distinction as the police uniform was traditionally a masculine design); as their uniform has not changed significantly over the past century, it was interesting to explore how female officers felt in wearing a uniform that plays down any feminine features. In the same way, selecting officers that have been in the force for different periods of time is important in discussing contrasts in opinion; that is: officers who have recently graduated (within two years) will be fresh on the job compared to officers who have been in the force for longer periods of time (five years +) and thus training and/or the political/emotional/social aspects of the job may have changed the longer they are in the occupation.

Why Interviews?

Interviews commonly use an informal approach primarily to put participants at ease, a method which Burgess termed "conversations with a purpose" (1984: 102). This style of informality (although preferable in getting people to feel relaxed and therefore more likely to 'open up') has its complications as well. Denzin advised that interviewee's opinions on the topic in discussion may have been influenced by "prior cultural understandings" (1991: 68) which naturally vary from person to person and are prejudiced (sometimes enormously) by their unique socio-economic factors. The differences between interviewer's socio-economic characteristics and the participants could skew the data in the way that participants' responses to questions are sometimes based on their judgement of the researcher, specifically, the social categories to which they belong. This important issue is subsequently intensified when research is carried out on groups with whom the researcher does not "share membership"; consequently, as research is usually undertaken to explore the phenomena of groups that we seek to understand further and are therefore 'non-members', "we may not know enough about the phenomenon under study to ask the right questions (in the right way)" (Miller and Glassner, 2004: 127-8).

The Semi-Structured Interview

The interview schedule was semi-structured. Although I constructed a list of definite questions I wanted to ask, the topics were left open, leaving scope for other topics and themes to emerge. This is common in this type of interviewing as it gives the researcher "some latitude to ask further questions in response to what are seen as significant replies" (Bryman, 2008: 196). It also encourages what Geertz (1973) referred to as "thick descriptions", that is, detailed accounts of your research which generates possible opportunities for its use in other research.

Pilot Interviewing and the Dictaphone

In conducting the pilot interview with the police officer that I originally contacted (it was deemed to be inappropriate to use him as he was an acquaintance but proved useful for pilot interview purposes), it allows researchers to identify ambiguity, poorly worded questions, or a confusing sequence, and it establishes a time frame for the interview schedule. As well as having numerous positives to 'test' your questions, it also provides the researcher with the experience of conducting interviews and instils confidence that the questions asked will provide answers sought (this cannot be guaranteed but increases the probability). A significant relief was that the participants all consented to be tape-recorded, for in the pilot I found myself with considerable arm-ache trying to write as fast as he spoke. At one point I had to plead with him to slow down as my attempt at short-hand (my solution to writing at frightening speed) was incomprehensible even to me. Hall (2003) found similar problems in his research:

"I couldn't keep up with events and conversations if I was simultaneously recording these with paper and pen and even if this had been possible I would have been uncomfortable doing so."

(Hall, 2003: 12)

Typing as the participants spoke seemed to be the solution, although this was a solution that was proved to be unnecessary with respondents consenting to be tape-recorded. Using a Dictaphone is popular in qualitative research; Heritage (1984) in particular noted that recording and transcribing interviews can eliminate any natural memory failure, interviews can be revisited repeatedly, provides a more in-depth examination, and helps to diminish any allegations that the resulting research has been affected by researcher bias. Sacks (1984) concurred in saying that it is simply impossible to rely on human recollections of memory; though we can maybe summarise what people said, it can become a case of Chinese whispers; furthermore, to remember seemingly minute issues like pauses, overlaps, laughter and in-breaths etcetera is extremely difficult even if noted at the time. These characteristics of natural conversation can completely change the tone of an answer and must be taken into consideration.

Rapport

The building of trust and rapport is cited as one of the most important elements needed in order to limit interviewer effects and to gain the most reliable data. In order to disclose possibly salient and significant information (about themselves or even colleagues), rapport must be achieved at some level as it encourages a more natural environment; an 'informal discussion' rather than an interview and thus (hopefully) generating more truthful answers: "Individuals are much more likely to disclose potentially discrediting or salient information if they feel comfortable around the researcher" (Kitsuse and Cicourel, 1963: 133). However, regardless of the level of rapport established, skewed data production can occur in the sense that the interviewee may modify his or her answers to those they believe the interviewer will 'expect'. In the same way, the interviewee may restrain themselves from "answering certain questions about which he assumes he has ideas very different from those of the interviewer"

(Blum, 1970: 87) - this is especially true if there are obvious generational/socio-economic differences between the researcher and those under study, which in this case there are. On the other hand, *too* much rapport can also cause problems. The level of 'friendliness' achieved may have resulted in respondents answering questions in a way that is presumed to be 'pleasing' to the researcher; and so "the achievement of rapport between interviewer and respondent is therefore a delicate balancing act" (Bryman, 2008: 202).

The Female Researcher

Another important point to note is that I am a woman interviewing men and women (in a predominantly masculine profession where 'performances' of masculinity are common). Although it can be presumed that women are more likely generate a relaxed environment in the interview setting (imperative for producing sound data), and it has been noted that women are much more likely to "listen seriously" to other women's opinions (Spender, 1985), although it has been argued elsewhere that the apparent "less threatening nature" and the "greater communication skills" of the female researcher is actually "a myth" (Warren, 1988: 64).

Fronts and Performance

Participant 'fronts' is always a complication for researchers as their 'performance' will inevitably distort the information and produce a false account of what the research has found. It is difficult for researchers who do not know the participants to differentiate between fact and fiction (the data will not be omitted just because the researcher has suspicions that the respondent is lying, exaggerating or displaying elements of bravado). Silverman argues that in an ideal world "the social scientist is transformed into a philosopher-king (or queen) who can always see through people's claims better than they do" but in reality, this is hard to achieve. It is not the researcher's responsibility to determine whether the data should be approached with a cynical eye, but instead, they must present the data as they find it and analyse it in its true form rather than attempting to dissect the differences between factual and fictitious 'story-telling'. Men are notorious for their tendency to 'perform masculinity', especially within their peer group networks, even more in predominantly masculine professions such as the police.

A Methodological Reflection and Limitations of Research

With any research, there are potential problems and issues that can distort the data, create bias, and cause the data to not be as valid or reliable as it should be. It is important to note that although the study could have been conducted differently on hindsight, any problems that occurred were out of my control. If the research were to be replicated, the following limitations are a stepping stone to develop new ways to embark on a similar project.

Gatekeepers

Although gatekeepers are sometimes the only way to access a sample, using them can cause a range of problems (most of which I still do not know if they had any effect on the data) but it

is important to mention them nevertheless. My gatekeeper (the head of department for the unit that was interviewed) chose the participants that would take part. Albeit taking away some of the time-consuming finding of interviewees, it creates bias (unconscious or subconscious on their part) in the way they are chosen. The gatekeeper though seemingly having the same socio-economic characteristics as the majority of interviewees, could of selected them based of pre-conceptions of what he thinks would make ‘better’ participants (of which we will never know), perhaps based on age, race, gender, moral standings, known prejudices etcetera; in an ideal world they were chosen randomly, but this would be naïve on my part to presume so.

As the interviewing was done in two parts (six interviews then three more two weeks later), it may have caused differences in how the interviews were conducted; I may have asked questions differently, in a different tone as I was more familiar with the interview process following the first six, though comparing the recorded interviews this does not seem to be the case (I am however a very biased judge!). Upon asking the seventh interviewee (the first of the second set) whether he understood what the research was about etcetera (after reading the information sheet) he replied “*oh yeah, Mike told me about it last week anyway*”. I didn’t ask him to elaborate on this but it made me wonder what sort of information he had been told and whether it would affect his forthcoming answers (exact questions asked? Or just a vague “interview about uniforms”).

Start/Finish

Interviews took place in a community church hall (where the unit has weekly meetings and the gatekeeper has an office). Interviews took place at night (approx. 8pm) and it was understood that some of the interviewees would be just finishing/starting their shifts. I was informed that the two officers finishing their shift at that time would like to go first (for obvious reasons). As they were the first interviewees I did not notice the difference until transcribing that their answers seemed to be considerably more concise, dare I say ‘rushed’ compared to the others. Perhaps it is I that is picking up on something that doesn’t actually exist but a possibly viable explanation for that would be that as they had finished their shift they were not getting paid for the time spent in the interview and obviously after a long shift they wanted to get home as soon as possible. On the other hand, the officers who *started* work at eight, were much more inclined to relax, make themselves a coffee first, and spent more time with their responses; as one officer put it “*well the longer I spend in here with you, the less time I have to spend out there, it’s freezing!*”. From the officer’s comment it is important to consider ‘push’ and ‘pull’ factors of the interview process. As aforementioned, the ‘push’ factor of one officer to ‘rush’ through his interview as he had already finished his shift may in the same way apply to other officers, albeit inversely, as in reference to the above quote, interviewees who had just started their shift were reluctant to go outside and may thus have prolonged their responses.

Socio-Economic Characteristics

Seven of out the nine interviewees were male, two were female, ages ranged from 24 to 46 years old, eight were Caucasian, and one was of ethnic minority background and informed me she was Muslim (non-practicing) – the rest did not state their religion. The variations between the researcher’s socio-economic characteristics and those being studied could potentially distort the data as participants’ answers can sometimes be based on their judgement of the researcher, specifically, the social categories to which they belong. This important issue is subsequently intensified when research is carried out on groups with whom the researcher does not “share membership”; consequently, as research is usually undertaken

to explore the phenomena of groups that we seek to understand further and are therefore 'non-members', "we may not know enough about the phenomenon under study to ask the right questions (in the right way)" (Miller and Glassner, 2004: 127-8). Although I was well aware of these potential effects prior to the interview process, it is important to note that the above comments are not intended to justify any errors in the data due to these differences, but to just draw attention to the limitations of illustrating conclusive judgements about the research.

The Female Researcher

Although it is hard to establish whether the gender of the researcher effects participant's answers, it must be taken into account nevertheless. As the majority of my participants were male, stereotypical elements of bravado and what is seen to be 'socially desirable' responses may have formed part of my research. Though it has been suggested in the past that women are much more likely to "listen seriously" to other *women* (and presumably not so much so to *men*) (Spender, 1985) the "the less threatening nature" and "greater communication skills" of the female researcher is actually said to be a "myth" (Warren, 1988: 64).

Dictaphone

After the learning curve that was the pilot interview, a Dictaphone as a form of recording for reasons of accuracy and representation was deemed to be the most appropriate tool in gathering full interviews. The expense of the machine is the smallest of problems however. Recording responses clearly formalises the interview, and while at first the Dictaphone was accepted without hesitation it has the potential to damage any rapport established. The respondents are also well aware that the interview data can be revisited as many times as the researcher sees fit. Furthermore transcribing is an exceptionally time consuming task, "even for an experienced stenographer" (Whyte, 1984: 114). Participants were informed verbally that all data collected would be destroyed once the research was completed and this was reiterated in their information sheet (see Ethical Considerations on page 34).

Rapport and Probing

Unfortunately, I did not have a lot of time for rapport to be established and I do not know how this will have affected my data. Although small-talk was engaged in over a coffee beforehand (whilst the officers were kitting up/down), the amount of time I spent with them before the interviews was short. This can be seen both positively and negatively; although establishing rapport is important in order for the officer to *want* to participant in the research, too much and the risk of 'socially desirable' responses increases. Bryman described rapport as a "delicate balancing act" (2008: 202) one which can be achieved just the right amount of 'friendliness', which I hopefully achieved.

While ambiguous questions were seemingly ironed-out in the pilot study, it was clear from my interviews that a couple of respondents failed to understand certain questions, or didn't elaborate on their answers (as much as I wanted). Interviewer intervention in either instance is highly problematic as it could influence the response then given. Whyte (ibid) provided possible solutions for these problems in suggesting that a 'uh-huh', nodding the head, or simply an encouraging "that's interesting" does not exert any manipulation over their answers (1984:99). Desiring elaboration also carries the same pit-falls and thus prompts must be given in exactly the same way every time. Whyte (ibid) suggested repetition:

“Let us say the informant concludes his or her statement with these words: “So I didn’t feel too good about the job”, the interviewer then says “you didn’t feel too good about the job?” – repeating the last phrase or sentence with a rising inflection.”

This therefore implies to the participant that they should continue discussing the same line of thought without creating bias. Any sort of intervention during the interview is dangerous as even a slight change of tone in the way the question is asked is biasing (placing a subconscious tone of surprise on the inflection can be easily misconstrued “what do you *mean* you didn’t feel too good about the job?!!!” for example).

Participant Fronts

As a female researcher, it is potentially problematic to interview males in a predominantly male occupation (though researcher-gender may not affect the following issue). Respondent ‘fronts’ has always been an issue for researchers as the participants’ ‘performance’ and responses to questions asked will inevitably skew the data and produce false accounts (and subsequently distorted research findings). While it can be extremely difficult to distinguish between ‘fronts’ and true form, it must be highlighted as a potential issue nonetheless. As aforementioned, it can be very hard for researchers who do not know the participants’ personalities well, to differentiate between fictitious ‘story-telling’ and truthful accounts. Data cannot be excluded because the researcher has doubts that the interviewee is exaggerating or lying, but instead it is criminological-necessary to attempt to ‘read between the lines’ and determine what is ‘actually meant’ rather than what is said (this is highly subjective though and thus problematic). Similarly, Silverman argues that in an ideal world “the social scientist is transformed into a philosopher-king (or queen) who can always see through people’s claims better than they do”.

Men are notorious for their propensity to ‘perform masculinity’ and in the police force where approximately 75% of the population is male (Home Office 2010)⁴, the tendency may be one of the highest in all occupations (though this is impossible to prove), and it is acknowledged that “boasting” and “bragging” is the ‘norm’ when interviewing males (Richardson, 2010: 749).

Goffman (1959) famously referred to the ‘front’ and ‘back’ stages of this performance. ‘Front’ stage is where the ‘actor’ (male police officer) performs masculinity to the ‘audience’ (the researcher and other officers). ‘Back’ stage is usually a place where performances can be relaxed, perhaps at home, in the canteen, or sometimes in front of a researcher who is not a ‘member’ of the social group (though this front can be sustained in front of the researcher for exactly this reason). If the display of machismo is sustained out of fear as being ‘outed’, there’s always the possibility of a performance ‘slip’. If this does occur and they show ‘feminine’ characteristics (emotion displays, sensitivity to the job etcetera), they risk acquiring what Goffman referred to as a “spoiled identity” (1963). In reference to the women interviewed, ‘performances’ may be present albeit in a different form. While performances of

⁴ Home Office “Assessment of Women in the Police Force” February, 2010 (accessed 09/01/2011)
<http://library.nipa.police.uk/docs/homeoffice/assessment-women-police-service.pdf>
www.internetjournalofcriminology.com

masculinity are common in males, women may also be under pressure from these performances. Regardless of the fact that I am a female researcher, the stigma of showing inherently 'female characteristics' in the force may cause the women to guard their true feelings towards the topic in question.

Validity/Generalizability/Reliability and other ity's...

Generalisation in research is always going to be problematic, especially for qualitative studies. As I adopted a snowball sampling method, in this case the gatekeeper was the one to select participants, it is particularly hard to attempt to generalise (as aforementioned) it is impossible to gauge how much bias (subconscious or otherwise) the gatekeeper places on his selection. Selecting the sample from a unit of the police force narrows down generalisation further as it cannot be used to make sweeping statements about the views and opinions of *all* officers from *all* units. It must be noted that this study is not *supposed* to be representative of the population in general (or even just the police force's population), it is merely to provide evidence for a particular contention and to generalise the theories behind it.

Most qualitative studies, no matter how much the researcher explains every single detail of the process, are hard to replicate. There are far too many variables to conduct a true replication, as often one of the main positives behind qualitative research is based on the researcher's own originality. Furthermore, what I decided was significant to my study may have no interest to another researcher, the responses of participants and the way they are analysed and presented are solely under the researcher's subjective gaze, prior understandings and previous judgement about those being researched and the topic under analysis. Riessman reiterates this in saying that researchers need to be aware that "the story is being told to particular people; it might have taken a different form if someone else were the listener" (1993: 11).

The reliability and validity of interview data is questionable in all research. Participants will usually have more candid and personal knowledge of the research topic than the researcher; however, all interview data should be approached with caution as what the interviewees think they 'know' and believe to be true reality is typically a debatable concoction of fact, point of view and social construction. It is nonetheless, not my responsibility as the researcher to determine fact from fiction but merely to report and analyse the data as I find it in spite of any possible reservations about it.

The credibility of the research is reliant on the presentation of the findings and whether it is feasible and plausible to others reading. Credibility entails ensuring the research is undertaken following the strict ethical guidelines on good practice and submitting the findings to other members of that social world (in this case, other police officers). This is to gather confirmation that the researcher has understood that social world in the correct way (though subjectivity is part and parcel of any qualitative research). A way to combat this is to give the respondents the opportunity to look at the 'findings' themselves (this option was given but declined by all participants).

Neighbourhood Policing

My sample derived from the Neighbourhood Policing Team (NPT). NPT's are, by nature, small in size and are responsible for a fairly condensed area of a town or constituency. They work closely with members of the public and hold monthly meetings for residents who can

air their concerns about crimes and anti-social behaviour in their area. Due to this, it likely (and evidenced in the data) that the police officers know the area they patrol extensively and particularly the people who frequent the neighbourhood. It was ascertained that the officers know a significant proportion of the community by face, if not by name also. This completely changes the findings and the research would most certainly have taken a different approach would it have been undertaken with a different unit (and thus different methods to policing). Their occupational closeness to the residents and the in-depth knowledge this brings would most certainly affect the opinions and views of the officers questioned, for example, one of the questions being “What power differences would you feel if you wore everyday clothes when carrying out your policing duties as opposed to wearing the uniform?” – this may not have an effect in the officer’s view since he knows the residents by face (and presumably vice versa) and thus some of the public would still know that they are police officers regardless of clothing worn and therefore not affect any feelings of ‘power’.

Ethical Considerations

Adherence to strict ethical guidelines is essential to ensure that respondents are fully protected by the interview process. The Nuremberg Code of 1947 is a useful guideline to follow:

“The voluntary consent of the human subject is absolutely essential. This mean that the person involved should have legal capacity to give consent, should be so situated as to be able to exercise free power of choice without the intervention of any element of force, deceit, duress, over-reaching, or any other ulterior form of constraint or coercion; and should have sufficient knowledge and comprehension of the elements of the subject matter involved as to enable them to make an understanding and enlightened decision.”

(Smith, 1981:

16)

Smith (ibid) indicates that informed consent is an imperative issue in undertaking qualitative research and the interviewer is thus required to inform participants of what their participation in the study will involve, the time frame of the interview schedule, and their opportunity to opt out of the research at any time without judgement or having to provide a justification. Furthermore, prior to the interview, verbal reassurance (as well as written word) was given that anonymity would be granted, and the data collected via the Dictaphone would be stored in a locked office to which only I had access to and it would be destroyed once the research had been completed; this was further reiterated following the interview process.

To ensure that full consent was obtained, an information sheet along with the appropriate consent forms were given to participants to sign, asserting as fully as possible the purpose of the study, how the resulting data would be used and ascertaining their rights (see Appendix Two). It is important that the participants fully understand the nature of the research and the information sheet that couples the consent forms is giving the potential interviewees the opportunity to appreciate what the researcher is trying to find out. As Kelly (1998) insists:

“It is easy to get very wrapped up in the subject and think that, because we are convinced of the particular value of our research, others will be too.”
(Kelly, 1998: 121)

On the other hand, both qualitative and quantitative researchers consider the potential ‘dilemma’ of giving participants the opportunity to understand the *full* extent of the research; as in, the possibility of ‘contaminating’ the study by informing the interviewees too in detail about the research questions that are to be asked (Weber, 1946).

Chapter Four: Findings and Analysis

The following chapter explores the research findings and offers criminological insight into the police. It attempts to analyse the links between the wearing of the uniform and the authoritarian aspect of policing culture. Some social phenomenon that surrounds officers in regards to the social impact their occupation has on their lives outside of work have been examined and used to refute or support previous research on the subject.

The Uniform as Representation

The police uniform generates particular stereotypes about the wearer’s status and what the occupation entails. The standard police attire has not changed significantly for over a hundred years, the reason being its highly iconic and recognisable nature to the wider public (see Appendix Five). It symbolises not just the identity of this powerful institution but the identity of the wearer and the symbolic indication of societal protection against crime. They were originally designed to have masculine appeal (Fussell, 2003) and this has not altered since women were allowed to join the police force. Stability and sameness in not altering the uniform incites feelings of safety in citizens; people by nature, do not like change, and a state of confusion would arise if the uniform modified every few years as the highly recognisable nature of the institution would lose its most powerful symbolic feature. The officers interviewed recognised this as a potential problem were it to ever happen:

“People like sameness, stability” (Afeerah)⁵

*“It’s important that the public see us as one unit, a team, it gives the impression of togetherness and it commands more respect, if I wore normal clothes and tried to arrest someone they wouldn’t be havin’ any of it.”
(Natasha)*

One officer even referred to wearing the uniform as being part of an animal herd:

⁵ Pseudonyms have been used to protect participants and guarantee anonymity and confidentiality.
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“You’ve seen nature programmes right?! Look what happens when one deer gets separated from the rest!” (Mark) – This suggests that being an image of togetherness and a unit gives a psychological feeling of protection to the wearer.

The police uniform as a whole is a representation of the sameness and anonymity that the institution promotes to encourage conformity (from the officers and the public). Individuality is not something the police can afford to promote and the lack of personalisation further exaggerates the distinctive divide between officers and the public. Of all the officers interviewed it was accepted and understood that the collar number was just a means of identification, supporting the idea that personalisation would be a contradiction of the sameness of the uniform itself;

“Well I suppose being anonymous at work, like just with your number, is safer for everyone. You can’t have people knowin’ your name. I think they want it to stay that way ‘cause otherwise it’d get too personal y’know? We’re not meant to be everyone’s mate.” (Jason)

People are socialised from an early age to understand what the police are about; *“The reason why the people are so powerful is because it is what the public is led to believe” (Afeerah)*. The public are led to believe it and therefore it must be so? It should be noted that the police force is an extremely powerful institution, at one of the top tiers of the hierarchy in our modern capitalist society, and thus, it is likely that we are taught to believe that they are powerful and they command respect, even if this became no longer the case. Apart from the odd report that the public no longer trust in the police’s work (due to increasing crime rates), the force still remains an extremely influential force, capable of changing the tone of any street once their presence is felt.

As is evident by the pictures shown in Appendix Five and the respondent’s answers it is clear that the police uniform’s most important feature and its usage as a representation of the institution is its iconic and highly recognisable nature promoting feeling of safety in the eyes of the public.

Celebrity Status

During the interviews it seemed that one word appeared to emerge frequently: “celebrity”. It became apparent that once the uniform is donned and they are recognisable as police, they become like *“mini celebrities” (Natasha)*. Although the word ‘celebrity’ carries negative and positive connotations, it generally means ‘recognisable’. Rojek (2001) ascertains that the word comes from the French word ‘celebre’:

“...meaning ‘well known in public’... it suggests representations of fame that flourish beyond the boundaries of religion and Court society. In a word, it ties celebrity to a public... We might reduce this to an admittedly rather crude equation: celebrity = impact on public consciousness.” [Emphasis in original].
(Rojek, 2001: 9-10)

Rojek’s explanation supports the idea that the police are well-recognisable to the public and in a way, are celebrities in their own right. Everyone knows who they are when in uniform and generates a certain reaction like a popular culture ‘celebrity’ would:

“It’s like Moses partin’ the water, you walk down the street and you can feel like a million eyes on you.” (Natasha)

James referred to it as “*three head syndrome*” with “*everybody staring*” though it was established that this reaction becomes a part of the everyday, a consequence of the occupation. A large proportion of officers interviewed reported the ‘weirdness’ of this celebrity status, and the ‘uncomfortable’ feeling of a ‘hundred public eyes’, but most insisted that it was something they became accustomed to, increasingly part of the norm the longer they had been officers, so much so that it becomes unnoticeable, something “*you get used to*” (Simon). It is however important to consider that while the officers referred to it as ‘unnoticeable’ after a while, they have had to have *noticed* that it has become *unnoticeable*. One explanation of this could be, like most issues presented at the beginning of their police career, they have become hardened to the more unpleasant aspects of policing and perhaps performing emotional management in this case (the management of emotions and performance is discussed later).

Although the emergence of a celebrity status was not anticipated when embarking on this study; it is actually the surfacing of a *new* theory as a consequence of the police occupation. It is an important expansion of the theory that the highly recognisable feature of the uniform creates a sort of notoriety for its wearers; a generation of a celebrity status.

Uniform Colour

The colour of the police uniform was also important to consider and questions were raised about a potential colour alteration. Apart from the aforementioned recognisable nature of the uniform, being that it hasn’t changed significantly, “*it’s always been this way*” (Simon), it is interesting to consider the implications of colour connotations should the uniform be changed to a lighter, brighter colour (I gave the possible options of white or pink). Apart from the original designers choosing black to encourage the recognisable nature of the clothing, it’s ease in cleaning, and it’s camouflage effect in dangerous situations, the dark shades of the uniform has connotations that surpass its efficiency. From the age old religious background of good versus evil (the angel in white, the devil in black), the dark colours of the police uniform have been chosen to represent its masculinity, its power, the symbol of punishment and retribution.

Though white is a neutral colour, pink was chosen as an option to explore whether it evoked ‘macho’ reactions in a predominantly male environment as pink has socially ‘feminine’ connotations. In the age of the ‘new man’, I was not sure what sort of reaction this would have. It seemed my original presumptions were correct however. The male participants balked at the idea, one even openly associating black with ‘being male’: “*I wouldn’t like it [the light colours]. I come from a generation where men should be men*” (Richard). With references to the “*girly colour*” suggestion (Nick), significant amounts of “*ribbing*” (Mark) would take place and it would be “*hard to be taken seriously*” (James). One respondent referred to the symbolic connotations of colour and supported Nickels (2008: 79) view that “*darkness suggests evil and death*”:

“Black symbolises death (laughs) and danger, if you saw us riding the streets on horseback in white, it wouldn’t have the same effect would it?!” (Jason)

While *Natasha* commented that the uniform itself was “*obviously made for men*” the colour in-fact made no difference and she understood why the uniform is the way it is; i.e. to encourage sameness and unity.

As aforementioned, the most important aspect of the police uniform is its consistency and this is essentially highlighted by the monotonous colour that has remained largely unchanged over the past hundred years (slight neutral changes have occurred: black/navy) but none that would change the perception of the clothing itself. It was no surprise that displays of machismo emerged when it was suggested that a ‘feminine’ colour be used, supporting previous theories that presentations of masculinity in a predominantly male environment like the police force are common, even in-front of a researcher.

The Uniform as Deterrence

As explored above, the potential colour change to uniforms would alter the perception that the officers had of themselves rendering them ‘less masculine’ and thus presumably less authoritarian as a consequence, it is called in question whether it is the police officers *themselves* that are the deterrence against crime or whether it is the *uniform* worn by these officers that incites compliance: “*I think the uniform is like a deterrence mechanism, people tend to behave themselves when they’re around the police*” (*James*). Previous research by Mauro (1984) indicates that lighter colours of uniform are ranked lower in terms of authority while darker clothing were ranked higher for respect and competence. If Mauro’s research is based *just* on the uniforms (this is unclear) and not the physical characteristics of the actual officer wearing it in the study then it is evident that it is the uniform itself that generates these public reactions. *Jason* reiterates this in saying that “*people see the kit and tend to automatically comply, it certainly wouldn’t have the same effect if we were wearin’ civvy clothes*” thus supporting the theory that it is not the *people* in uniform they fear, it is the uniform itself and what it represents. One officer disagreed with this however, in commenting that it depends on the type of person the officer is in the situation with; “*It all depends on who you’re dealin’ with whether you get respect or not. It’s less about the uniform and more to do with who you’re dealin’ with at the time*” (*James*).

As well as a deterrence mechanism, the uniform gives police officers’ a sense of ‘pride’. A significant proportion of police officers exhibit (and verbally confirm) the pride taken in their job. While Kutz (2005: 172) stated that individual pride “makes sense” because of the contribution to a greater good, I believe it to be more of a novelty feature that gradually wears off the longer they are in the job. Though officers reported that it *did* make them feel proud to wear the uniform, its effect was a lot more prevalent at the start of their careers, before they “*knew what it [the job] was really about*” (*Johnny*).

“When I first joined, it was a really proud moment, like ‘I can do anything!’, but I think the longer you’re in this game, the less it means, it just becomes part of who you are I suppose.”
(*Johnny*)

It is apparent from the officers questioned that it is the uniform itself that incites compliance and acts a deterrent to criminals. This has been investigated in the past, albeit not fully, as one theory *not* explored in previous research is the evidence that it does not appear to be the

officer themselves that are the deterrence but actually the *uniform*; this suggests that anyone regardless of socio-economic characteristics can wear this powerful clothing and it would possess similar effects.

The Home and Work Divide

These powerful items of clothing are by nature, going to have some sort of effect on the wearer. With the evidence suggesting that it is the uniform itself that emits authority and power it is in no doubt that the wearer will, in some way, become ‘contaminated’ by this powerful item of clothing, taking these feelings of power and superiority they feel at work through to their everyday life, particularly at home where the officer’s family are the closest ones to notice this work/home personality blur.

Respondent’s noted that the differences between their home personality and work personality were vast, in fact “*two personalities*” (Afeerah). While this is a given in most jobs with the requirements of professionalism, a police officer’s personality may be subject to the most significant change. With dealing with potential dangerous situations on a daily basis, the ‘hardening’ of the personality is seen to be a requirement and one that is ‘taught’ in training, to “*put on a hard front at work*” (Natasha). This is what Goffman (1959) referred to as performance management; the ‘front’ and ‘back’ stage personas. The front stage is where the police officer will put on a performance (the ‘hard’ personality) for the audience (members of the public) and back stage is where this performance can be relaxed (at home). It was suggested by Waddington (1995) that police officers’ back stage is the work canteen; it is important to consider that just because the work canteen is away from the public eye (i.e. the primary audience) does not mean that officers are not staging their work performances in there as well. As Natasha pointed out:

“[At the start] I think I cried at least once a week from feeling stressed at work. All the lads used to laugh at me which didn’t help. So I learnt to kinda toughen up, I mean it still gets to me, you see some horrible stuff, but you can’t show it. I’d get ripped, I have to act like one of the lads.”

– And thus it is important to Natasha that her ‘front’ is sustained even in front of other colleagues through fear of getting ‘ripped’.

While the male officers did concur that the situations at work were challenging and emotional, none gave any indication that these ‘fronts’ were indeed fronts, though it is evidenced through some of their answers that it did affect them mentally, whether outwardly shown or not;

“I’d come home proper moody and not wanna talk about anything.”
(Richard)

“It plays on your mind.” (James)

“Every now and then, I do wake up at four in the mornin’ thinkin’ about somethin’.” (Simon)

The blur between work and home can have detrimental effects on officers’ lives outside of work, what Finch referred to a “vicarious contamination” (1983: 37). Crawley (2004) found that this ‘contamination’ was due to the “polluting effects of symbolic contact with ‘profane’

individuals” (2004: 245), and with talk about work. The officer’s interviewed all insisted that it was imperative that the end of the shift meant the end of thinking about work situations, *“I’m a big believer that as soon as you clock out, it’s over”* (Simon). The only officer that commented that talk about work was part of home life said he did so because his wife was also a police officer remarking that there was therefore *“nothing else to talk about”* (James).

While it was concluded that it was important not to talk about work at home in an effort to switch off, it affected their home lives nevertheless and is thus evident that the blur between the work and home personality is unfortunately a negative consequence of the occupation. While the interviewee’s insisted that it was important to ‘switch off’ once work was over, it was apparent that for some of them this did not happen. There seemed to be a high correlation between those who found it easier to disengage from work and the length of time served, indicating that switching off was something that became easier the longer you did it, a type of desensitization to the stress. It was however, these same officers that reported that the occupation and the uniform becomes part of them, an extension of their personality;

“It’s just part of who I am now, I just see it as an extension of that. When you’ve been here for years, like a lot of the guys have, they see it like part of themselves, like how they describe themselves.” (Richard)

It therefore seems that this disengagement is less to do with ‘switching off’ but more to do with suppressing part of their work personality that has become part of their selves. This suggests that a ‘front’ is also sustained at home, to cover the part of the personality that they do not *want* to take home but subsequently has to as it has gradually become part of their character. Furthermore, it is evident that ‘performances’ are not just for the main audience, i.e. the public, but part of the way they attempt to present themselves to generate certain impressions in the eyes of others; for example, an impression of controlled emotion is deemed necessary when at home to avoid their family and friends becoming contaminated by their occupation. This however, is unavoidable at times, an unconscious reaction for some officers:

“Like my missus will say to me, “you’re speaking to your wife here, you’re not at work right now!”, like without even realising it, the way you’ve said something ‘cause of the way you deal with people at work, subconsciously, without even realising it. I suppose work and home cross over sometimes” (Mark)

It was previously hypothesized that the officer’s would sustain fronts for not only the researcher, but their extended social circle as well. Although there is evidence to imply that this is the case, fronts are extremely hard to distinguish, considering that the officers themselves may be unaware that performances are even in place (when personality adaptation occurs).

Me, Myself and I: Solidarity in the Force... “Erm, erm I work for the council”

As the police officer’s personality may become a mix of both social worlds, this identity ‘crisis’ can become problematic. Mead (1964) famously explored the split between the private and public self and refers to it as a natural, human condition that has always existed. Like Goffman, he speaks of the ‘fronts’ that people stage in order to present a particular self. The split between the I and the Me for the police officer becomes increasingly difficult as the time passes, especially when it becomes part of their personality. As ‘celebrities’, at least

while wearing the uniform, “identity confusion” can cause officers to retreat to the umbrella of the institution... other police officers (Rojek, 2001:11).

It is heavily documented that the police force has one of the highest levels of occupational solidarity of any job. Through their initial training they are re-socialised to forget their old life and it is suggested that their colleagues are their “only protection” against a menacing society further emphasising the ‘us versus them’ mentality. This seemingly begins in the training process which “is intended to sever many of his ties with his previous civilian life” (Whitaker, 1982: 227). One of the officers interviewed supports this view in saying that “*they pretty much tell you to forget your old life, this is your new one sorta thing. So I did have to cut myself off quite a lot*” (Jason). This obvious cut-off point from their ‘life before’ can only serve to exacerbate the feeling that they are isolated not only from the wider public but from any previous life that they had especially if they had ‘undesirable’ friends or acquaintances:

“I’m not saying I used to hang around with dodgy people, but it’s like they have to be careful what they said. I’d rather it not be like that but I also have to be careful what I hear ‘cause you have a sort of job responsibility” (Nick)

The uniform itself makes the officers aware that they are different and Reiner (1985) reported that they are unable to form and ‘sustain’ normal relationships outside of the force because of this. Similarly to Crawley’s findings (2004) most of the participants in my study lied about their occupation to people they didn’t know (and in some cases to their friends and families), partly due to the sometimes ‘obvious’ behavioural change that people had;

“I’ve learnt to keep my mouth shut, but it’s funny how much people change the way they speak to you when they find out you’re a policewoman. I find it quite entertaining.” (Natasha)

Another reason cited was the aspect of safety:

“I was told when I first started you have to be careful as people who you’ve done an’ stuff can find out where live... an’ it’s just not safe.” (Nick)

Rather than *lie*, it became more of a distorted truth for one officer:

“Yeah, I do tell people I do something else, I work for the council or whatever, as it’s not a lie really!” (Simon)

Although I presumed that they would all lie about their occupation it was, apart from the odd comment, surprising to find that most were not as secretive about being a police officer as I imagined, especially to their family and friends. To others (on holiday or in the pub for example, questions about occupation were skirted or had only elements of truth about them). One explanation for this would be that the majority of officers questioned did not live in the area (where they worked), and therefore it was probably easier to keep home and work life separate, in the sense of no danger to them coming across members of the public outside of work that they had altercations with on the job.

As for occupational solidarity, a consequential necessity in the eyes of other researchers (Reiner, 1985; Whitaker, 1982 et al.), the majority of officers questioned felt that although they expected and experienced their fellow officers 'backing them up' when needed, the level of solidarity was not as prevalent or important as previous research has reported. Although it must be considered that when earlier studies were undertaken in this area it was thirty years ago and therefore the social politics of the force may have changed, a more plausible explanation would be that most of the officers questioned did not live in the area and could therefore keep their home and work life very separate, diluting the need for occupational solidarity. For a similar reason, refuting Skolnick's report that being a police officer makes them "less desirable as a friend" (1975: 265), my study shows that although some friend relationships were disintegrated when they joined, most social relationships were kept throughout their occupation. In the process of forming new social relationships it is possible that due to lying about being an officer they were able to form these friendships without damaging them from the outset (it was unclear whether there were admissions after the event however).

Nevertheless whilst *at work*, solidarity was quite high with mutual understanding being cited as the main reason:

"We all have to deal with the same stuff in the job so yeah, we sort of have an understandin'" (James)

Ashforth and Kreiner reported that workers sharing the same social experiences come to regard themselves as "in the same boat" (1999: 419), and theorise that workers draw a "psychological boundary around the group, thus exacerbating the sense of difference and separation" (ibid); the 'us versus them' mentality.

Whether this is intensified by the officers all wearing the same uniform was unclear as it was just an accepted perception that people on 'their side' would look the same and thus the visual confirmation was instant:

"Like it's obvious who's the police; like with a glance you can tell who's on your side or not, y'know if it's a dangerous situation or somethin'" (Simon)

As Simon remarked "you can tell who's on your side", it implies that the 'sides' to be taken are between the police and the public, supporting the idea that there is a marked boundary between them, visibly signified by the wearing of the uniform.

Although there is evidence to suggest that internal solidarity does exist, from the officers that were interviewed it was slightly ambiguous; some cited high levels of solidarity while others claimed to not socialise with colleagues. Rather than refuting previous literature on occupational solidarity it begs the question whether it depends primarily on the type of department under study.

Cleansing Rituals and Moral Taint

The contamination between work and home life is a negative consequence of the police occupation. In Crawley's research, she found that it was imperative that the boundaries between (the impurity of) work and (the purity of) home are maintained to avoid the

“polluting effects of symbolic contact with ‘profane’ individuals” (2004: 245). To achieve this, ‘rituals of purification’ are developed, the main one being “the immediate removal of the uniform” (ibid). Although Crawley’s researched prison officers, I found that police officers followed the same processes to avoid contamination between work and home.

“I always go for a wash and put on my own clothes, it makes me feel normal again.” (Natasha)

“I always have a shower when I get home. Just because some houses that you go in, some of the people you come into contact with. You always feel a bit smelly, a bit tainted by them.” (Mark)

“I never ever take my uniform home; I like to keep my home and job completely separate.” (Johnny)

While all of the officers noted the importance of the removal of their uniform and washing themselves to avoid contamination, when it was suggested to them that they should wear their uniform to and from work (as proposed by a think tank), the reasons why they were against the idea were less about contamination and more about the safety aspect of people knowing where they live. Though indicating that although it is important to remove the uniform and wash themselves in a ‘cleansing ritual’, safety aspects were reported as the main reason they did not want to wear their uniform home and *not* contamination: there is then evidence to presume that once they are ‘washed’, they are ‘clean’, signifying that the contamination is more than uniform-deep; deep enough to penetrate the uniform since washing is needed to remove the pollution as opposed to just kitting down.

Policing work can provide a ‘moral taint’ on its’ officers as it is an occupation that causes the worker to “employ methods that are deceptive, intrusive, confrontational, or that otherwise defy norms of civility” (Ashforth and Kreiner, 1999: 415), all of which the officer is required to perform during the course of their career. Through this moral taint, it can be very hard to construct a positive sense of self (ibid: 413). As an occupational consequence, officers can become stigmatised by the sheer nature of their policing role and dealing with ‘profane’ individuals and/or situations:

“People who must deal with pollution – who perform dirty work – tend to become ‘stigmatised’, - that is, society projects the negative qualities associated with dirt onto them so that they are seen as dirty workers.”

(ibid: 416)

Hughes (1962) reiterates that it is exactly because dirty workers handle the unpleasant aspects of their work in order to sustain the effective functioning of society that others can continue to consider themselves clean. Though the ‘dirty work’ of the police occupation is necessary to fulfil ones role, the immediate removal of the uniform and the following of cleansing rituals can serve to psychologically shed this symbolic ‘dirtiness’ and thus emerge ‘clean’ in time for home.

It is apparent from the previous literature cited above and the officer’s responses that contamination does occur from the workplace to the home. Attempts to control it are evident, and to support Crawley’s (2004) research that cleansing processes are necessary, the officers

questioned also note the importance of this. These attempts are obviously futile in some cases however as it seems that the longer they work for the police the harder it is to separate the work personality from their social side outside the force.

Time Served = More Suspicious?

Skolnick reported that police officers are trained to be suspicious to “perceive events or changes in the physical surroundings that indicate the occurrence of probability of disorder” (1975: 267). It is not a *condition* of police work, it is in fact “deliberately encouraged by training” (Reiner, 1985: 91). *Natasha* confirmed that it is part of initial training in saying that “*they do tell you to be suspicious of everyone!*”

It became clear from participants’ responses that a suspicious nature is something that becomes more acute the longer they are in the force. There seemed to be a direct correlation between years served and the more suspicious that had become. This observation was not based my subjective view of their answers, but on the fact that they were very aware of what was happening to them:

“I don’t trust anyone now. I know that’s bad, but loads of people that I thought were good eggs turned out pretty bad. I think it gets worse the longer you’re here, and you’re well aware what’s happening to you. When I joined, I was only a youngster and I thought everyone was inherently good, but you really do meet some vile people, it makes you realise how lucky you are but on the other hand it makes you kinda lose your faith in people.” (Johnny)

“It’s given me a very stereotypical view of people, everyone is the potential enemy.” (Nick)

While it is evidenced that is an inevitable consequence of training and time spent on the job, the acquirement of a suspicious personality was seen as a ‘necessity’, “*cause it makes you safer*” (*James*); a necessity that needs to be kept in check to avoid becoming cynical and desensitized:

“There’s a danger of becoming desensitized to the job... Otherwise, you could get to maybe not my level of service, but certainly fifteen, twenty years down the line and not give a crap about anythin’” (James).

Chapter Five: Conclusion

This study aimed to explore some of the social phenomenon surrounding the police uniform and the effects that being a police officer has on their life outside the force. My aims were to investigate the links between the uniform and how it is used as one of the main tools of their trade. The majority of the findings supported previous literature on the topics, however interesting themes emerged that have not been noted before; namely that the officers acquire ‘celebrity status’ and that it is the uniform itself that is the authoritarian contrivance and not the people wearing it.

It is clear that one of the main reasons why police presence is so powerful is the highly recognisable and iconic nature of the uniform. Originally designed to have masculine appeal (Fussel, 2003), they serve to be symbolic of the protection of society. The dark colours of the uniform also represent the sameness and unity of the force and the unchanging clothing is purposely constructed to create a distinctive barrier from the public. As investigated by Nichols (2008), colour connotations are powerful in examining perceptions of people and clothing. Predictably, when a colour change to 'pink' was suggested, the male officers interviewed advised that the police would lose 'respect', not only because of the feminine connotations of the female-associated shade, but also because the original uniform is powerful due to its identifiable features. These findings support Mauro's (1984) research that indicated that lighter colours of a uniform are ranked lower in terms of authority.

An interesting question (but impossible to investigate as we can't change the past) is to consider for a moment that gendered stereotypes did not exist. That is, if colours weren't gendered (and this has not always been the case), would the police uniform designed as pink originally incite the same powerful connotations that the dark uniforms hold today? I think so. Furthermore, in suggesting that they *would*, it is then essentially a case of *learned understandings*. Primary socialisation occurs when parents teach their children from a young age the appropriate attitudes and values attributed to a particular culture; most parents teach their children to respect and fear the authoritarian presence of the police and this continues through secondary socialisation, further reinforced by the mass media, and then onto our offspring. It is therefore a 'learned' understanding; refuting Nickels' (2008) claim that colour coding is "automatic".

Since the police uniform is such a powerful representation of their institution, it is important to consider whether it is the clothing itself that acts as a barrier between the police and the public and thus prompts compliance or is it just the officers themselves that cause these reactions. The findings indicate that it is the *uniform* that people fear, with the majority of responses implying that their authority and powers would be diminished significantly should the Criminal Justice System choose to discontinue the wearing of the uniform. This is influential new data as it has not been noted before (in any significant detail) that it does not appear to be the officer themselves that are the deterrence, but the clothing that they wear; this insinuates, albeit as a broad statement, that any member of the public, regardless of socio-economic characteristics can put on the uniform and inherit its power and authority.

The obvious power that the uniform holds can only serve to have some psychological effects on the wearer. From the participant responses it can be concluded that their personalities between work and home are split (and the difference vast). In order to cope with the daily stresses of police work, officers are trained to see it as an essential requirement that they 'harden' their personality. These hard fronts are not only sustained for the public but it seems for other officers as well due to the risk of a feminine performance 'slip'. This supports Goffman's (1959) research on the front and back stage personas but while he noted that the back stage is where officers can relax in front of other 'performers' (colleagues), (as did Waddington's (1999) 'police canteen' and Hoschild's (1983) work on air hostesses) there is evidence in this study to suggest that officers could *not* relax these performances in-front of colleagues, for fear of getting "ripped". Therefore it seems that these 'fronts' are sustained whilst at work, and relaxed at home.

The pressure to sustain these fronts became greater the longer they spent in the force. This led to what Crawley (2004) found to be a contamination through to the home, long after their

shift had ended. For some officers it was apparent that this contamination was embedded in their personalities completely after a while, essentially becoming part of who they are. Although this personality ‘blur’ was evidenced in some cases, attempts to ‘cleanse’ themselves were stringently made in all cases. The removal of the uniform and washing themselves were quoted as the most important methods of cleansing themselves from the ‘dirtiness’ of work, suggesting that although the uniform is their most powerful tool in dealing with the public, it was seen as a symbol of pollution, one that had to be removed immediately to ‘get back to normal’. It is interesting that the removal of the uniform was not enough to cleanse; this signifies that contamination is more than uniform-deep, and a shower is ultimately needed to remove the full ‘contagion’.

While internal solidarity was still at high levels inside the force, it was not at an intensity that would fully support the previous literature (Reiner, 1985; Whitaker, 1982 et al.); most of the officers interviewed did not socialise with colleagues. As much as I would like to conclude that ‘office politics’ have obviously changed in the 30 years since Reiner (1985) and Whitaker (1982) undertook their research, it is more likely that the respondents, in not living in the same area where they worked, were able to keep a split between their social lives outside of the force; enabling them to sustain any social relationships thus lessening the need for internal solidarity.

The emergence of a ‘celebrity status’ theory was one that was not anticipated but added depth and a completely different angle to my study on the uniform. A significant proportion of the officers questioned noted that, in uniform, they became “mini celebrities”. While established that the ‘celebrity feeling’ was considerably more noticeable at the start, it became part and parcel, a seemingly negative consequence of the occupation.

Contribution to the Criminological Body of Knowledge

While the aims and objectives of this research were sought through responses from the interview schedule, the most important finding was that of a ‘celebrity status’. As the other findings either refuted or supporting the previous research undertaken on the police (as demonstrated in chapter four), the importance of new findings ensures this study is of criminological significance as it allows scope for other researchers to expand and further explore.

The emergence of a celebrity status adds a much needed update to Goffman’s work on stigma. In the fifty years since it was first published other researchers have used vague adaptations of stigma in their own work; it is important to note that stigma has emerged as a consequential part of popular celebrity culture today. Nettleton (2006: 95) understood Goffman’s stigma by claiming that it is the “process by which the reaction of others spoils normal identity”. With police officers it is the part of their occupational personality that is ‘spoiled’; that is, when the uniform is removed they return to being ‘normal’. However, as discussed in chapter four, over a prolonged period even the removal of the uniform cannot help to differentiate themselves between their ‘normal’ and ‘stigmatised’ selves. It is interesting to also note that while ‘stigma’ itself has negative connotations and can thus have a knock-on effect with employment, social status etcetera, the police force and other governmental agencies who hold similar stigmatised status’s (prison officers, FBI) actually hold unique classifications; their occupational prestige is startlingly juxtaposed with their stigmatised status.

Recommendations for Further Research

Conducting nine interviews, although producing more than enough data for my study, is not enough to make generalisations. Questioning only two women did not add enough cross-gender analysis so in future I would recommend an equal gender split to cross examine male and female responses more effectively. The sample was the Neighbourhood Policing Team and I would thus advise exploration into different departments and units as their experiences with the public would be completely different dependent on their roles in the force.

Recommendations for Police Policy

There are many arguments surrounding the debate on whether the police uniform should change. The BBC⁶ reported that casual suggestions of ‘open-necked t-shirts’ and ‘baseball caps’ were proposed in the debate to improve relations between the police and the public. While this could help combat the social impact of the distinctive divide between the two (and assist in the numerous psychological and social problems highlight in chapter four) it has been indicated by previous research (Mauro, 1984) that while ‘casual’ uniforms and lighter colour choice may incite conformity and improve relations, it decreases officers’ feelings of authority and potentially public perception; a ‘friendlier’ uniform may insinuate a ‘friendlier’ officer; Adams et al (1980) found that this could encourage complacency on the part of the officers which in turn could embolden criminals. In contrast it was also reported by the BBC that proposals were made that the police become a more militarised force (increased visibility of weapons and more protective garments) which would seemingly increase feelings of public safety but also widen the distinctive divide between officers and civilians.

With the above proposed changes taken into account, the debate between improved public relations versus increased social disorder is an important one. It is therefore concluded that drastic changes cannot be made considering their most powerful feature is its iconic recognisable nature. Instead, subtle modifications are needed to sustain the fine balance between public relations and officers’ authoritarian status.

⁶ BBC News Online, “The Police Uniforms Blue?”, September 2000 (accessed 01/02/2012)
<http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/910968.stm>
www.internetjournalofcriminology.com

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Appendix One:
Completed Ethics Form

UNIVERSITY OF SALFORD

Research Ethics Panel

Ethical Approval Form for Post-Graduates

Ethical approval must be obtained by all postgraduate research students (PGR) prior to starting research with human subjects, animals or human tissue. A PGR is defined as anyone undertaking a Research rather than a Taught masters degree, and includes for example MSc by Research, MRes, MPhil and PhD. The student must discuss the content of the form with their dissertation supervisor who will advise them about revisions. A final copy of the summary will then be agreed and the student and supervisor will 'sign it off'.

The applicant must forward a hard copy of the Form to the Contracts Office once it has been signed by their Supervisor and an electronic copy MUST be e-mailed to the Research Ethics Panel through Max Pilotti m.u.pilotti@salford.ac.uk. The applications are processed online therefore the form cannot be submitted without the electronic version.

(The form can be completed electronically; the sections can be expanded to the size required)

Name of student : CAMILLA DE CAMARGO

Course of study : MSC CRIME AND CRIMINAL JUSTICE

School: HLaSS – Humanities, Languages and Social Sciences

Supervisor : DR TINA PATEL Research Institute: CSR-SALFORD

Name of Research Council or other funding organisation (if applicable): N/A

1a. Title of proposed research project

THE POLICE UNIFORM: A STUDY OF THE POWER, AUTHORITY AND PSYCHOLOGICAL EFFECTS OF THE UNIFORM.

1b. Is this Project Purely literature based?

NO

2. Project focus

To critically assess the use of the uniform and to evaluate the power and stigma relationships associated with the wearing of a police uniform.

3. Project objectives (maximum of three)

The aim of this study is to (i) Critically assess the use of the uniform; and, (ii) To evaluate the power and stigma associated with uniforms. As such, the objectives are:

- (i) To explore the meanings and impact of uniform wearing.
- (ii) To explore the personal associations of the wearing of a police uniform.
- (iii) To explore the social impact of the police officer's occupation and the uniform wearing; internal solidarity and the isolation from the public due to job/uniform.

4. Research strategy

(For example, where will you recruit participants? What information/data collection strategies will you use? What approach do you intend to take to the analysis of information / data generated?)

I will be contacting my local Lancashire constabulary by email to ask permission to interview their police officers. My local police force is Blue Line* police force, Northern England. Once contact is made, I will be stating what my research aims and objectives are, my method of gathering interview data, and also to attach my consent form, information sheet and list of possible questions that I wish to ask in the interview. Once permission has been granted and access granted, snowball sampling will be used in order to gain interview data from colleagues of the original interviewee.

Interview schedules will be structured/semi-structured to allow for a gathering of more information and to gain opinions and personal experiences. Interviews will be tape-recorded for clarity and revisiting of data.

Questions will be based around the research focus; social impact of the uniform, potential secrecy around occupation/uniform (theories of stigma and isolation – Skolnick (1975), Goffman (1959, 1963 etc.) Importance of wearing the police uniform. Cleansing rituals of de-uniformisation (Douglas (1970) Finch (1983) and Crawley (2004).

Once interview data is gathered it will be coded to generate emerging themes and previous research/literature on the subject will be used to support or refute my findings (e.g Blumberg and Neiderhoffer (1985), Young (1991), Adams et al., (1980) Volpp and Lennon (1988) etc.)

5. What is the rationale which led to this project

(for example, previous work – give references where appropriate)

The idea of what the uniform represents has always been of interest to me. Goffman's (1959, 1963) theory of stigma for example and his analysis of the front and back stages of performances are important in relating to my research in terms of the stigmatising of the occupation and the wearing of the uniform in public, what it represents to them and the public; whether their 'performance' changes when in and out of uniform/...in-front of colleagues/at home. Fussell (2003) also conducted considerable research in the history of the uniform and what it represents to the police force in modern times. Nickels (2008) explored the uses of colour and what they represent in terms of good/bad connotations and their cultural meaning. Important research such as Previous studies (Lennon and Davis, 1989., Connor et al., 1975, Joseph and Alex, 1972) have shown that clothing and aesthetics are crucial in forming the first stages of social relationships, in showing that physical appearance (genetic looks as well as clothing), remains the first and foremost factor in generating a leading impression of an individual (which is why associations with brand-names is so influential). Therefore the uniform worn by a police officer produces particular stereotypes about their status, occupation and authority. Skolnick (1975) conducted ground-breaking research on the isolation and suspicion that police officers generally experience and this is 'learned' through their initial training. This widens the personal divide between the public and the police, in turn heightening internal solidarity with their fellow officers. This is interesting in my research as I would like to explore the isolation that officers feel in their occupation, when wearing the uniform, and whether this changes when wearing/not wearing it. Reiner (1985) undertook similar research in investigating the problems that police officers face in mixing with civilians in ordinary social life. Finally, Crawley's (2004) work, although focused on prison officers, her pioneering research on the effects of work spill-over and the isolation that the occupation brings is also very relevant to my research focus on police officers, as prison/police officers face similar problems and issues in a social context.

6. If you are going to work within a particular organisation do they have their own procedures for gaining ethical approval

for example, within a hospital or health centre?

No.

If YES – what are these and how will you ensure you meet their requirements?

7. Are you going to approach individuals to be involved in your research?

Not personally: As stated in question 4, I will be emailing my local constabulary in order to gain access to police officers. Once permission is granted it will allow me to access between 5-7 police officers. The first contact is important in being able to then use snowball sampling following recommendations that other officers that are willing to partake in the research. Anonymity and confidentiality will be ensured (see attached Consent Form and Information Sheet).

If YES – please think about key issues – for example, how you will recruit people? How you will deal with issues of confidentiality / anonymity? Then make notes that cover the key issues linked to your study

8. More specifically, how will you ensure you gain informed consent from anyone involved in the study?

By providing a detailed information sheet and consent form that needs to be signed by the participant and myself. The consent form includes information of what I intend to do, my research objectives, how information will be collected and stored, what they can expect from the interview, participant involvement/selection, the importance of voluntary participation, and their right to withdraw from the study at any given time without explanation.

9. Are there any data protection issues that you need to address?

YES

If YES what are these and how will you address them?

As interviews will be tape-recorded it is important to ensure that the participants fully understand that all data gathered is completely confidential and no names will be used in the research. The data will be kept in a locked room to which only I have access. The data will then be destroyed once my research is complete.

Adherence to strict ethical guidelines is essential to ensure that participants are fully protected from any harm the interview process may cause them. The Nuremberg Code of 1947 will be used:

“The voluntary consent of the human subject is absolutely essential. This means that the person involved should have legal capacity to give consent, should be so situated as to be able to exercise free power of choice without the intervention of any element of force, deceit, duress, over-reaching, or any other ulterior form of constraint or coercion; and should have sufficient knowledge and comprehension of the elements of the subject matter involved as to enable them to make an understanding and enlightened decision., this latter element requires that before the acceptance of an affirmative decision by the experimental subject there should be made known to him the nature, duration, and purpose of the experiment; the method and means by which it is to be conducted; all inconveniences and hazards reasonably to be expected; and the effects upon his health or person which may possibly come from his participation in the experiment.” (Smith, 1981: 16)

As well as the above, following the ethical guidelines from the British Sociological Association and the Data Protection Act 1998 will ensure that all ethical codes are adhered to.

10. Are there any other ethical issues that need to be considered? For example - research on animals or research involving people under the age of 18.

There could be problems of sensitivity of issue for example, gaining ‘closed’ insight from the experiences and personal opinions of police officers in such a powerful government institution may have a vulnerability factor. Stringent efforts will be made to ensure that the questions are inoffensive, unambiguous and not asking anything that will cause obvious distress or upset. Pilot interviews will take place in order to rule out any such questions. The police institution in general has many counselling services and help available for officers. Contact details will be at hand to pass to participants should I feel that it is needed preceding the interview.

11. (a) Does the project involve the use of ionising or other type of “radiation”

NO

(b) Is the use of radiation in this project over and above what would normally be expected (for example) in diagnostic imaging?

NO

(c) Does the project require the use of hazardous substances?

NO

(d) Does the project carry any risk of injury to the participants?

NO

(e) Does the project require participants to answer questions that may cause disquiet / or upset to them?

NO

If the answer to any of the questions 11(a)-(e) is YES, a risk assessment of the project is required.

12. How many subjects will be recruited/involved in the study/research? What is the rationale behind this number?

Between 5 and 7 police officers, hopefully different genders and differing lengths of service will be incorporated for comparative purposes.
The study has never been intended to be generalizable. It is merely an exploration into policing culture in Britain. 5-7 are appropriate numbers for the size and access issues of the research project. Interviews will be about 20-30 minutes long and this will gather enough data to fully explore the aforementioned objectives.

Please attach:

- A summary in clear / plain English (or whatever media/language is appropriate) of the material you will use with participants explaining the study / consent issues etc.
- A draft consent form – again in whatever media is suitable for your research purposes / population.
- A copy of any posters to be used to recruit participants

Remember that informed consent from research participants is crucial; therefore your information sheet must use language that is readily understood by the general public.

Projects that involve NHS patients, patients' records or NHS staff, will require ethical approval by the appropriate NHS Research Ethics Committee. The University Research Ethics Panel will require written confirmation that such approval has been granted. Where a project forms part of a larger, already approved, project, the approving REC should be informed about, and approve, the use of an additional co-researcher.

I certify that the above information is, to the best of my knowledge, accurate and correct. I understand the need to ensure I undertake my research in a manner that reflects good principles of ethical research practice.

Signed by StudentCamilla De Camargo.....

Date09/09/2011.....

In signing this form I confirm that I have read and agreed the contents with the student.

Signed by Supervisor

Date

Appendix Two:
Informed Consent Form

Informed consent form for members of the Blue Line police force, Northern England, who I am inviting to participate in my dissertation research titled “The Police Uniform: A study of the power, authority and psychological effects of the uniform”.

Part One: Information Sheet

Introduction

My name is Camilla De Camargo and I am a Masters student at Salford University in Greater Manchester. I am doing research on the use and significance of the police uniform, an evaluation of the power and stigma associated with uniforms and the isolation from the wider community that police officers face in their line of work.

The following sheets will provide information about the research and invite you to take part. You do not have to decide today whether or not you will participate. This consent form may contain words that you do not understand. Please ask me to stop as we go through the forms and I will happily explain or clarify any doubts or confusion you may have.

Purpose of the Research

The police uniform has been a universal symbol of law enforcement agencies from as far back as the beginning of the 18th century. I intend to also learn about the psychological elements and notions of power when police wear their uniforms. Furthermore, exploring the divide between the police and the public is important in understanding any issues of isolation and stigma that sets police officers apart from the rest of the public.

Participant Involvement

The research will involve your participation in an interview that will take about 30 minutes and will be recorded for my research evaluation purposes at a later date.

Participant Selection

You are being invited to take part in this research because I feel that your experience as a police officer can contribute much to my understanding and knowledge of policing culture.

- *Clarification: Do you know why I am asking you to take part in this study? Do you understand what the study is about and what is involved?*

Voluntary Participation

Your participation in my research is entirely voluntary.

It is your choice whether you participate or not. The choice that you make will have no effect on your job or on any other work related evaluations. You may change your mind at any point in the process even if you agreed to take part at the beginning. Do you have any questions?

Procedures

I am asking you to help me learn more about policing culture and the wearing of the uniform. I am inviting you to take part in this research project. If you accept you will be asked questions about your personal experiences within the police force. The questions will be

about your experiences of isolation and stigma because you are a police officer and whether experiences (good or bad) spill over into your home life. The interview will also cover questions on the police uniform including the significance of wearing it and what it means to you personally, and whether being a police officer has made you overly-cynical and cause you to only fully trust other police officers (known as 'internal solidarity').

Please note: You do not have to reveal any knowledge or personal beliefs or experiences that you are not comfortable sharing.

The interview is one on one and no one else will be present during the discussion. The entire interview will be tape-recorded, but no-one will be identified by name on tape. When the information is used in my research pseudonyms will be used in replacement of your name. The tape will be kept in a locked cabinet of which only I have access to. The information recorded is completely confidential and no one else will have access to the tapes. These tapes will be destroyed after my research is complete (early 2012).

Please note: You do not have to answer any questions which make you feel uncomfortable in any way. You do not have to give a reason for not wanting to respond to a question, or for refusing to take part in the interview.

Part Two: Certificate of Consent

I have read all the previous information, and I have had the opportunity to ask questions about it and any questions that I had have been answered to my satisfaction. I consent voluntarily to be a participant in this research.

Name of participant _____
Signature of participant: _____
Date: _____

As the researcher I confirm that the participant was given ample opportunity to ask questions about the research and any/all of the questions asked by the participant have been answered to the best of my ability. I confirm that the individual has not been forced into taking part and the consent has been given voluntarily.

A copy of the information sheet and the certificate of consent have been provided to the participant.

Name of researcher: _____
Signature of researcher: _____
Date: _____

Appendix Three:
Interview Schedule

1. How long have you been a police officer for?
2. What do you enjoy most/least about your job?
3. What does your police uniform mean to you?
4. What power differences would you feel if you wore everyday clothes when carrying out your policing duties as opposed to wearing your uniform?
5. Do you think the public would view the police as less powerful if the CJS scrapped the wearing of the uniform?
6. How do you feel when you put your uniform on?
7. Is there any cleansing rituals/differences you feel when you de-uniform at the end of the working day?
8. It has been recently suggested by some think tanks that the police should wear their uniform to work... How do you feel about that?
9. What does your badge number mean to you? What if there was not any number identification? (More anonymity for example).
10. What if the uniform was a different colour? i.e. pink/white for example?
11. Do you feel protected by your uniform and what it represents?
12. Does wearing your uniform/ being a police officer have a social impact on your life?
13. Do you feel a certain sense of belonging amongst your colleagues?
14. Is this further exaggerated by them all wearing the same uniform?
15. Do you lie about your occupation to people you don't know when out of uniform? People you do know? Why/why not?
16. How important is your uniform to you? Is it personal? Or a representation of the political aspects of policing?
17. Do you feel stigmatised by your occupation? By your uniform?
18. Do you feel isolated by the wider community?
19. Do you have a different personality at home and at work? When wearing/not wearing your uniform?
20. How hard do you find it to separate your work and home life?
21. Has becoming a police officer made you more suspicious of people?

Appendix Four:
Participants' Transcribed Interviews

Pseudonyms have been used to protect the police officer's identity and to ensure confidentiality.

Pseudonym

Time Served as a Police Officer

<i>James</i>	10 years, 8 months
<i>Mark</i>	7 years, 6 months
<i>Simon</i>	5 years, 6 months
<i>Nick</i>	1 year, 6 months
<i>Richard</i>	10 years
<i>Jason</i>	7 years
<i>Johnny</i>	12 years
<i>Natasha</i>	2 years
<i>Afeerah</i>	4 years

“James”

1. Ten years, eight months.
2. Most, there's lots of things I enjoy I do, I do. I think other people probably hate the bureaucracy of it, that's what I hate anyway, all the time wasting, filling out forms, filling out risk assessments, that's the order of the day really, back covering. Obviously just gets in the way of what I wanna do, which is catch crims' (laughs). I don't like sudden deaths, I don't like dead bodies, but it's just part of the job innit. I'm not that keen on investigatin' stuff, I love bein' out an' about.
3. I mean, I've been wearin' a police uniform since I was 18, I mean, I was a special constable for three years before I became a regular officer, so y'know I've been wearin' it for 14 years, I suppose when I first began as a special constable, I was self-conscious to be honest with ya. It's a bit like three-head syndrome really, I mean, ya walk into a room an' everybody starin' at ya (laughs).
4. Well ya can't get any less respect! (laughs). Well, it identifies ya as a police officer, it all depends on who you're dealin' with whether you get respect or not. It's less about the uniform and more to do with who you're dealin' with at the time.
5. Definitely. Mainly 'cause they wouldn't be able to recognise you as a bobby, but I think the uniform is like a deterrence mechanism, people tend to behave themselves when they're around the police, or when they can see them hangin' around.
6. It's just the usual for me now, but I suppose I see it as a protective armour, not only to do with the stab vest an' stuff but also the way it feels when you put it on, like no harm can come to ya.
7. Well my wife won't let me sit down in the lounge with my pants on! I mean, I can't wear them in the house. I think she's got issues around cleanliness and keeping the place clean! I mean I'd wear my uniform home, I'm not really bothered but I'm not allowed (laughs).
8. Erm, I wouldn't agree with that. Erm, I mean it depends what you're neighbours are like really. I'm lucky I've got good neighbours. I mean, I don't wanna sound snobbish here but I live in quite a nice area and fortunately people are generally pro police, whereas other officers I know that live in other areas might not have that experience. I'm less bothered about me, more bothered about my wife, I mean, she is more than capable of looking after herself, she's a police officer as well, but I'd be more worried about her, and I've got a little child now, and obviously that comes into the equation now as well. Selfishly speaking I wouldn't want to do it for that reason.
9. It's just means of ID really. I don't mind being just a number. I've seen in other forces, they have their full names on their uniform, I remember workin' a bobby from

another force at a footy match and that does invite a bit o'cheek from maybe, kids who you're tryna speak to.

10. (laughs). Well, it would be difficult to be taken seriously wouldn't it.
11. No, not necessarily. I just see it as practicality.
12. Yeah, I suppose. People speak to you in a different way when you're wearing it, or even when you're out of uniform an' they know you're a police officer. It's like you have to make a lot more effort to gain their trust as a friend if you know what I mean. When really, it should be the other way 'round!
13. Erm, I never really thought about it. I suppose we're all in the same boat, we're all wearin' the same kit, we all have to deal with the same stuff in the job so yeah, we sort of have an understandin'.
14. Yeah, 'cause even if we don't know the other guys in uniform, at footy matches or somethin', there's just an understandin' that we all know what the deal is, if we need to watch each other's back an' stuff.
15. Erm not really, I might not tell them, but I wouldn't lie.
16. I suppose it's just what we're made to wear. It is a good symbol of what we're doing, that we're part of the police force an' we have a job to do.
17. I suppose you do get some funny reactions from people. It's so obvious, the way people change around you when they know what you do, like they clam up, like they can't trust you, or can't trust themselves to be y'know, like, normal around ya. It is a bit annoying, like we have a weird celebrity status when we're in uniform, you just get looked at all the time. Ya get used to it though.
18. A little bit, I don't lie about my job, but I don't tell them unless they ask. I don't like to offer out that sort of information, it could invite a whole host of trouble. So because I don't lie maybe it's more obvious why people move away from me or clam up when I tell them what I do.
19. In the early years you worry about stuff more, it plays on your mind. There's a danger of becoming desensitized to the job, I think you do need coping mechanisms, you need to keep a little objective if that's the right word. Everyone has coping mechanisms, but you have to be careful not to become too desensitized. You need to still be able to see it from the view of the member of the public, or someone who's suffering from what you're dealing with instead of thinking about it like, oh it's just another this, or that, it happens all the time, it's a crap area anyway etcetera, I think you need to guard against that. Otherwise, you could get to maybe not my level of service, but certainly 15, 20 years down the line and not give a crap about anythin', 'cause you've seen it all before an' you think well the world's f'd anyway, what am I gonna do about it, so I think you need to guard against that.
20. As sad as it is, you end up talking about work anyway, especially with the missus also bein' a bobby, as sad as it is (laughs). Well if we've both got a day off, I mean, what else is there to talk about apart from what's been happenin' at work?
21. It's hard 'cause you don't wanna be like that, but it becomes part of who you are which is sad really. Makes you a bit cynical 'cause you meet a few bad apples and expect everyone to be like that. You need to be like it I suppose 'cause it makes you safer, like expect the worst and hope they surprise you in a way.

“Mark”

1. Seven and a half years.
2. You meet people from all walks of life. No two days are really the same in that respect I suppose, I can't really compare it to anything because it's the first proper career job I've ever had, hearing from other people that work in office jobs, it seems to be the same day in day out, that kinda thing.
3. Mean to me? I think, uniform, when you put it on, it sounds silly to say, but, you definitely feels like it gives ya, a form of protection, in the sense that you would not dream of doin' the stuff you'd do if you were in a jumper and jeans kinda thing, it makes you feel safer, when you wear it. You've seen those nature programmes right?! Look what happens when one deer gets separated from the rest! (laughs) In terms of, some people, not all people, when you wear it, what it symbolises. For a fair proportion of people involved in the criminal justice system it means a lot to them, it does give you that extra protection, makes you feel safer.
4. More vulnerable. Definitely not the same form of protection, like with our protection and also the psychological element to it as well, I wouldn't feel as protected or respected if I weren't wearing it I suppose.
5. They wouldn't be happy with it. General members of the public, the law abiding members of the public, well you wouldn't stand out at all from other people walkin' down the street. There would definitely be more crime, it does deter it, when you see a bobby walkin' down the street wearin' the uniform, y'not gonna go an' do a burglary.
6. Refer to Q3.
7. Always have a shower when I get home (laughs). Just because some houses that you go in, some of the people you come into contact with. You always feel a bit smelly, a bit tainted by them, you don't know what some people have got, so always have a shower when I get in.
8. I think it's absolutely ridiculous, on a whole host of different levels, it's for your own safety. I would not like someone that I don't know knowing what I do for a living, so for my safety, my families safety, there's issues around your own protection. There's cost implications as well 'cause you'll be on duty, house insurance would go through the roof wouldn't it!
9. It's just an easy way to be identified. The police has gotta be accountable, so if members of the public have to remember a name, they wouldn't remember a name for example. We have to be a lot more careful because we're easily identified.
10. Well there's a reason why it's black, it looks smarter, easier to clean. It represents authority. If it was more of a girly colour we'd just be getting' ribbed wouldn't we? No doubt about it, we'd get absolutely ribbed.
11. Refer to Q3.
12. Absolutely. I mean normal desk jobs you go home at five, five past five, with paperwork an' stuff ya can be hours and hours. I mean, New Years Eve, we were supposed to finish at two, didn't get home 'til ten in the mornin'. So, like, when you've got childcare issues, organising social aspects, or just like pickin' kids up from school, it can cause a lot of difficulties. I don't really have friends in the force, I live quite a way away from where I work, so I think in that respect it helps me separate my work and home life. I've always consciously kept that distance.

13. Oh yeah definitely. As much as I don't really have a lot of friends that I hang around with outside of work, it definitely makes you feel part of the same cause when you are at work. Like a team that's all going through the same stuff ya know.
14. Yeah I suppose when you look around, you see all of them in the same uniform you do feel a sort of protection knowing that they are all there ready to watch your back.
15. Sometimes. Not out of fear as such, but I've heard stories like, people find out where you live, get your registration, your windows get smashed. It's not embarrassment, just safety.
16. I don't think it's personal as such, I mean I don't personally choose to wear it! But suppose it is a good representation of what we're about, what the police is about. We are made to wear it and have been for decades, for very good reasons. It's more of an identity thing, people can easily identify us and it makes them feel safer.
17. Apart from everybody looking at you, an' I mean staring! You do get used to it though, it's like we're diseased (laughs), but that was more at the start. The longer you wear the kit the more you get used to it, like anythin' I suppose.
18. A little bit. 'Cause y'can't be totally honest about what you do, you always have to be careful about what you're up to, what it can look like. Best behaviour as such. Like you're livin' separate lives. But it's never separate 'cause one always encroaches on the other.
19. When ya join the police, I mean, it's not like I dropped any of my friends but you do have to really distance yourself, and when you join the police, you're one step closer to prison than everyone else. I mean, I made the decision, not that I had any really dodgy friends, but you have to be careful who you hang around with because the law really will throw the book at ya. Like you have to behave yourself outta work, they can just get rid of ya on disciplinary grounds. For me, in a way, its not so much, I've never been a job anyway, but you're much more aware of consequences what can happen to people when they're drunk. I mean, you see how easily some people can get a glass bottle in their face, someone looks at someone the wrong way, someone barges into someone, and things can just kick off like that (clicks fingers), and ya deal with that all the time, so you can kinda see things two steps ahead. So yeah, you do behave differently when you're out in town with your friends, because you've seen what happens in town, you're aware of what happens in town, so you see things before things happen. My missus says I do! (laughs) Probably (pauses). You're the same person, the same morals, values, things like that. Sometimes it's hard to switch off. Like my missus will say to me, "you're speaking to your wife here, you're not at work right now", like without even realising it, the way you've said something 'cause of the way you deal with people at work, subconsciously sometimes, without even realising it. I suppose work and home cross over sometimes.
20. Yeah you do think about work, you can't just clock off at the end of the day. Generally, go home, have a few beers, and wind down kinda thing. If we finish at like three, four in the mornin' for me it's impossible to go home an' go straight to bed, I need to unwind for a couple of hours.
21. I wouldn't say 'suspicious', more like less trusting of people, like they teach to how to be well aware of people, and every situation, and expect the unexpected.

"Simon"

1. Five and a half years.

2. The variety it brings, the variety of working with different people, and I suppose the unpredictability of it all, all the time. I hate walking round in the heavy rain, weather conditions sometimes in Blackpool make the job harder (laughs).
3. It makes you feel safer I suppose, it means it's part of who I am, it's part of what I do. I suppose it just becomes like a second skin the longer you're in the job, like it's part of who you are. That sounds stupid doesn't it!
4. Obviously with the uniform you're clearly identifiable, and all the other agencies, like say, some departments in the council wear high-vis', ours stands out, especially with the more traditional side of it with the custodial helmets, but the uniform itself quite clearly says police on the back, with the high visibility vests, we're just clearly identifiable as opposed to wearing your own clothes or like civvy clothes. Because then sometimes it can call into question whether you actually are in the police, and that can be difficult when dealing with some people, 'cause they don't know you're a police officer. It's clear, there's a clear-cut boundary there.
5. Erm, I think certainly when it comes to events like football matches, marches and that type of thing, you would just kinda blend into the crowd. You're easily defined. I don't know whether I believe the word 'powerful' but there are so many reasons why it needs to be clear, why it needs to be easily defined as police uniform.
6. Erm, well after being in the police now for just over five and half years, I suppose it's just habit. But I remember first putting it on, it felt very alien at first, you've got a lot of kit y'know, your stab vest, utility belt, erm and at first it felt very alien, but now it's just like second nature, and when I come in and I'm kittin' up for the day, it's just another day at work. So yeah, I suppose it does help, from first walkin' in the office, to kittin' up, y'know that you're at work then, and you put your kit on 'cause y'know you've got a job to do.
7. That I do personally? Yeah, well I never take my boots home at the end of the working day. I always put my trainers on. Erm, because we go in some undesirable places and locations, and y'never know what you pick up on your boots. But apart from that, that's probably the only one I do, on a routine basis anyway. Some people get changed, or showered or whatever, but I generally don't have time for that, so I just leave my boots at work.
8. I think that's a ridiculous suggestion. And just by the fact that a think tank has come up with that suggestion makes me think that they should get better people on this think tank. You're puttin' your family at risk, your personal property, including your house at risk, friends and relatives potentially at risk, I think if they were gonna do that, they'd have to pay us more money, extra time etcetera, because once you've got your uniform on you're technically workin'. It would cause a lot of problems if we had to wear our uniform to and from work, and I think if that was the case, all departments, not just the police should have to wear their uniform to and from work. It would definitely cause a lot of problems and I think everyone would just refuse point blank to do it.
9. Your collar number, I mean, it's obviously for identification purposes, we have it on all our kit. Well yeah, I never thought of that really, it would be very difficult as we use it for a variety of different ways. Obviously it's traditional. It doesn't just make me feel like a 'number', because I am that number, no one else has got that number. It's something you just accept and get used to.
10. Well it's been this colour for quite a long time now; it's always been this way. I disagree with it being a brighter colour, it's just not appropriate and it wouldn't be something that the public is familiar with. A lot of it comes down to familiarity, we

- are easily identifiable. It is tradition, but it's not all about tradition y'know, it's more to do with what people have grown up with, what people know to be the police.
11. Yes, well you are in the police as an authority figure, however does it protect me physically? Well I've never seen it tested, but I would hope it would. I suppose it does give me an air of protection.
 12. No, I think maybe when you first join, you don't realise how much people stare at the police. You literally walk down the street, and you'll have hundreds of eyes staring at ya, and at first it's quite uncomfortable but you just get used to it, and as your service increases you don't really notice it anymore.
 13. Yes, it's uniform, and that's what it is, uniformity, everyone's the same. I suppose yeah we do have a sense of belonging. We're all in the same job and we're all see similar stuff which isn't nice so you do feel like you've got a certain silent support 'coz we all go through the same stuff.
 14. No, not really. I suppose it just separates us from the public. Like it's obvious who's the police; like with a glance you can tell who's on your side or not, y'know if it's a dangerous situation or somethin'.
 15. Yes. Depends what circumstances you're in, I don't always not tell them I'm in the police, I mean a lot of people do know, but people I first meet, hmm, it sounds really bad but if I'm away on holiday or somethin', they might be asking me questions I'm not sure about, or advice, which I don't mind givin', but not all the time. Or it depends where you are, if I was in the pub for example with some friends, and ya got chattin' to another group and y'don't know who these people are, and I just don't want them knowing what I do. Yeah I do tell people I do somethin' else, I work for the council or whatever, as it's not a lie really! But I think that's common for a lot of people.
 16. I think it's something that's practical, I wouldn't want to wear my own clothes to work every day. The main thing is its practicality.
 17. Yeah, okay, yeah you get people trying to speak to you in different ways. For some reason when people speak to police they try to speak slower and use longer words than they usually would, to maybe try and appear more intelligent. They become someone that they're not, it's an act they put on in front of you for whatever reason. You're pretty much a question magnet, people constantly walk up to me and ask me questions, I can spot a question coming a mile away, 'cuse me, cuse me!' all the time! Where's this hotel? Where's the sea? Where can I get my bike coded? Which hotel am I staying at? So yeah, it could be anythin', yeah you do draw a lot of attention. Some do try and avoid ya, it's like there's two different types of people.
 18. Not really. Some people probably have a certain view about ya, but it's that's their prerogative. I suppose we all combat bein' isolated by lying to people about what we do, or careful who we speak to about it.
 19. No, well, obviously there's two sides to me. When I'm at home I'm myself, when I'm at work I'm myself, but when I'm in uniform out on the street I'm a bit different, I'm a lot more professional, assertive, wary. But when I go back into the office, I can relax a bit more.
 20. Sometimes, I mean it depends what you've been dealing with that day. Like if you've been dealing with a stressful incident for example, I mean, we deal with the same sort of people day in day out. People think that it's the nasty jobs like murders that are the ones that keep you awake, but no, for me, it's the neighbour disputes, the silly little petty things that keep you awake 'cause they're long term issues. I'm a big believer that as soon as you clock out, it's over, but every now and again, I do wake up at four in the mornin' thinkin' about somethin', but as a general rule of thumb, yeah I do

separate my life and work, and that goes hand in hand with not tellin' people what I do, an' that type of thing.

21. Not really, erm I hadn't really thought about it. I'm quite a cynical person anyway, and I don't really trust anyone but I don't think it's made me worse, I've always been this way! (laughs).

“Nick”

1. About a year and a half.
2. The variety, no two days are ever the same. I hate the bureaucracy, all the pen pushing, it wasn't what I imagined.
3. It means a lot. It's a representation of the Queen, our country and what we do to protect the public.
4. I certainly wouldn't feel as protected. Apart from the obvious equipment we carry, I mean, it sorta gives you an extra layer of protection, like people know not to mess with you 'cause they can see you're uniform and they know what powers you have.
5. Yeah, because everyone knows the uniform, everyone knows what it represents and it would be anarchy if people didn't see a police presence around, I think there would be a lot more criminal activity.
6. I feel proud of my uniform. I'm a traditionalist, and I feel like it is a good representation of a very important institution. I thought everyone was the same before I joined, like we were all fighting for the same cause, but a lot of the lads just view it as a job. I mean, I know it is just a job, but I would like to think what we're doing is important, and to answer your question, I suppose it is a symbol of that.
7. Yeah, I suppose it's like shedding a skin, like you can relax. I never take my uniform home, I always have a shower, 'cause a lot of the people we talk to and the places we go make you feel dirty.
8. Absolutely ridiculous. When I'm at home, I'm at home, I don't wanna be at work as soon as I get dressed in the mornin', and that's what it would be like, as soon as you walk out of your front door, you'd be harassed, and I do not want anyone knowin' what I do for a living!
9. It's just a means of identification. We don't have names on there for safety and respect reasons I think.
10. I think we'd lose respect. People respect the colour maybe 'cause they identify with it being the police. It's masculine and we'd get a lot of ribbin' if it was a girly colour.
11. See Q4.
12. Only if you let it. I never tell anyone what my job is, apart from the people on a need-to-know basis like my family.

13. Erm, not really, I suppose they are my colleagues and when we're all on the job I feel safer with them all around but maybe that comes with age, I'm only 21 and I've not been doin' it that long, a lot of the lads are older than me so maybe feel more camaraderie.
14. See Q13.
15. Definitely. As I said before it's a need-to-know thing. I was told when I first started that you have to be careful as people who you've done an' stuff can find out where you live and I still live with my parents, an' it's just not safe. Plus a lot of my friends have changed towards me since I became a bobby, they just don't know how to be around me anymore.
16. See Q3.
17. Erm, like I said, some people have changed towards me, they don't know how to be themselves. I'm not sayin' that I used to hang around with dodgy people, but it's like they have to be careful what they said. I'd rather it not be like that but I also have to be careful what I hear 'cause you have a sort of job responsibility. I take my duties seriously. Maybe that will change the longer I'm pen-pushing (laughs).
18. Not really, mainly because I think, I haven't told them what I do. Noone knows like down my street what I do, or in my neighbourhood, they think I work for the council. Still respectable but doesn't invite unwanted attention. I think if I did let everyone know, I would feel a bit isolated 'cause they would all probably scarper when I walk out my front door (laughs).
19. I've always been pretty responsible, my parents would probably say differently (laughs) but I suppose at home, I'm relaxed, I haven't got things to think about at home. Some of the stuff I saw in the first few months really got to me and my mum was naggin' me to quit, but you get used to it, and the guys at work just make jokes about it and that's a good way to cope with it.
20. See Q19.
21. Yeah, this job definitely teaches you to be suspicious of everyone. Things that you weren't aware of before you definitely see more clearly now. People that you wouldn't even look at you see them more, you learn about body language and what it means, though it has given me a very stereotypical view of people, everyone is the potential enemy which I think you certainly have to keep in check 'cause I'll just end up bitter and twisted in my old age (laughs).

“Richard”

1. 10 years next month.
2. You get to meet loads of different people, no day is ever the same. Some of the paperwork is really monotonous and it's getting ridiculous now. When I first started it wasn't half as bad. Now it takes you like 4 hours to fill in for someone you've got for shopliftin'.
3. It's part of who I am now. I wouldn't feel the same without it. Obviously it is just a job uniform, loads of people wear uniforms but it just shows everyone who I am, what I do.
4. It wouldn't feel right, wouldn't feel the same. You wouldn't get any respect, people see the gear, they see the logo and most people tend to behave themselves.
5. Oh yeah, definitely. Because how would they know we're police?
6. Well like I said, it's just part of who I am now, I just see it as an extension of that. When you've been here for years, like a lot of the guys have, they see it as like an extension of themselves, like how they describe themselves. I could never not be a police officer now.
7. Erm, well my home is my home, work is work, I don't wanna cross the two over if you know what I mean, I like to keep them separate at all times. As for cleansing, I think everyone takes a shower after work, like you're washing off the day.
8. Well I certainly wouldn't like the neighbours to know what I do, I don't work in the area where I live and although some people know I don't want my wife to be subjected to sly digs or anythin' like that if people found out.
9. It just identifies you, you can see who's on what job and so forth.
10. I wouldn't like it. I come from a generation where like the men should be men, if you know what I mean. (laughs) that sounds really sexist doesn't it. But I do think policing is a man's work, it's too dangerous for women and some of the people ya deal with, well let's just say they aren't the nicest of people and you do need strength and a male mentality to switch off. (“what do you mean by a ‘male mentality’?) Well, erm, I dunno, like men can switch off a lot easier, not let it get to them as much, women tend to exaggerate and let it play on their mind, they're too emotional about everything.
11. I suppose yeah, when you get to work, you put it on and obviously you know you've got a job to do. It makes you feel more powerful I suppose.
12. Not really, I tend to keep my work life and home life very separate, I don't see it being a problem if you don't let it. My close friends know what I do, and I don't hang out with anyone in here, I don't live in the area anyway but no it's not much of a problem.
13. Yeah I suppose so, yeah. We all go through the same situations, speak to similar people, you kinda have an understanding for each other.
14. Not really. Even if we were all wearing normal clothes, I know what everyone does and who they are.
15. See Q8 and Q12.
16. It is important yeah, I wouldn't feel like the same person without it like I said.
17. No, don't think so.
18. No, 'cause where I live people don't know what I do, so I don't feel that at all.

19. Yeah. But isn't everyone like that? (laughs). Obviously when you're with your mates at work, you're gonna be different. There's hardly any women here, so sometimes it's just like bein' in the pub, lads will be lads (laughs). Then when I get home, I'm all sweet, sensitive Mike to my wife.
20. Erm when I first started, I was only a baby and I found it really hard actually (pauses). Me and my ex girlfriend used to have a lot of rows 'cause I'd come home proper moody and not wanna talk about anything. Just wanted to chill out an' watch tv, not think about anythin'. You do become hardened to it over the years though, learn to switch off. You get used to it, and most of the time, you've seen it all before.
21. Oh god yeah, I used to be such a nice guy! (laughs). I'm not a snob but I do look at everyone, especially the people you deal with around here, and think you really are scumbags. Everyone, and I mean, everyone, will have done somethin' that you can do 'em for.

“Jason”

1. 7 years.
2. The power and authority it gives me, I'm a power junkie (laughs). Erm, I don't really like the shift work, sometimes I miss the 9-5 regularity of life.
3. It shows authority. I love seeing people from school an' college that were d*cks, and they can see what I wear they won't say anythin' to me now (laughs). Just knowin' you have the power to ruin someone's day is great.
4. I'd hate it, it wouldn't feel the same. They're not thinkin' about doing that are they?
5. I don't know if the public would feel less powerful, but I certainly would. It's not about the actual protection that the kit gives you, it's the sort of psychological protection behind it. People see the kit and tend to automatically comply, it certainly wouldn't have the same effect if we were wearin' civvy clothes.
6. Like I'm a different person, it's weird. (“what do you mean?”) Well, it's like I'm in character, like I know everyone's different at work and at home, but it makes you feel important, like you know you've got a job to do, everyone else knows it and they expect a certain level of authority from you. It's quite pressurising sometimes. My wife says I've definitely changed. I sometimes take this weird work personality home, like I've forgotten where I am (laughs). My wife always says to me “you're not at work now buddy!”, I suppose I find it a little hard to switch off at the end of shift.
7. Well like I said, sometimes I do like forget where I am an' stuff in the way I speak to her, maybe when I've done a really long shift or something. My missus rules the roost (laughs) so it does kinda feel like I've lost a sense of me, a sense of power when I take it off, like she certainly won't let me push her around (laughs). (“You mean like you push people round at work?”) Erm no not really, God I'm makin' myself sound really bad here aren't I (laughs), no I mean, like when you tell someone to do somethin' they more or less do it straight away and my missus would certainly not stand for that (laughs).
8. It would be awful. We'd have to get paid for the extra time obviously (pauses). I mean, my neighbours know what I do, I think the whole street knows, but that's not the point, people would probably treat you differently. I know people know, but knowin' what someone does and then actually seein' them in the uniform is a different thing altogether.
9. Well I suppose being anonymous at work, like just with your number, is safer for everyone. You can't have people knowin' your name. I think they want it to stay that

way 'cause otherwise it'd get too personal y'know? We're not meant to be everyone's mate, we're there for a reason. You can't be someone's mate one day and then nick 'em the next.

10. People wouldn't respect us the same. Black sorta symbolises like death (laughs) and danger, if you saw us riding the streets on horseback in white, it wouldn't have the same effect (laughs).
11. Not protected as such, but it does make you feel more of a man. That sounds stupid I know, but I'm only 5,10, so I suppose it makes me feel a bit taller, especially with my hat on an' stuff and everyone knows that taller people are more intimidating.
12. Well, like I said before, the working hours are erratic, I don't even know what day it is sometimes, especially when I'm on night shift. I do miss the routine of a normal job. But that's about it!
13. Oh God yeah, it makes you feel like you're part of a team, you know the lads always have your back, like when you're in trouble or anythin' like that.
14. Erm, I hadn't really thought about that. I know who they all are, so it's not like a recognising thing.
15. Well, most people know to be honest. I don't see a problem with it. I know a lot of the other lads don't tell people. It wouldn't be my first description of me but I don't lie about it. Why should I? I'm proud of what I do.
16. It does make you feel like you're part of somethin' important even if things have changed for the worse since I joined ("what do you mean?") Well, like things aren't how they used to be. It's more about meetin' targets an' budgets than actually 'fightin' crime' now, which is a shame 'cause that's not what it's all about.
17. No, not at all.
18. Well I had a few, let's say, undesirable mates when I first joined. They pretty much tell you to forget your old life, this is your new one sorta thing. So I did have to cut myself off quite a lot. But when you've been here a while, all the lads are in the same boat, we all see the same stuff, deal with the same stuff, so these are my mates now, you can't really afford to hang around with people that are against what you do. Did no one ever tell you that the police are closer to prison than anyone else? (laughs) We can't step a foot outta line.
19. See Q6 and Q7.
20. See above.
21. (laughs) I was just talkin' to my mate about this the other day. He said somethin' an' I must have screwed up my face or somethin' and he said I'm getting' bitter and twisted in my old age, you do definitely become more atuned to things around you, like you've got a seventh sense or somethin', it can be hard to switch off, like even when you're out of work, like with your mates down the pub you've always got your eye out, I can't help it, it's annoyin' sometimes.

“Johnny”

1. 12 years.
2. I don't really dislike anything, I like my job. It's frustrating sometimes, but on the whole it's what I always wanted to do.
3. I just see it as somethin' I have to wear to work.
4. Erm, well we would still have the same powers, maybe it's just 'cause people wouldn't recognise us as police straight away. Everyone knows who the police is because of their uniform, it's recognisable.
5. Not really, maybe at first, 'cause they wouldn't know who we are.
6. When I first joined, it was a really proud moment, like 'I can do anything!', but I think the longer you're in this game, the less it means, before I knew what it was really about. It just becomes part of who you are I suppose. A lot of people characterise themselves by their job, like, John, 34, policeman (laughs).
7. I never ever take my uniform home, I like to keep my job and home completely separate. I've seen a lot of lads blur the lines, it's not healthy. The sh*t that comes with this job, like the disgusting people and houses you go in an' stuff, it'd be like I'm inviting them home to tea if I wore my uniform home!
8. I don't think it would work. Maybe they would get better value for money, but seriously we get asked like 50 questions a day, so I wouldn't wanna be pestered at home too. Also, no one knows what I do where I live. I don't live in the area. People think I work as an EHO (laughs) that was my second career choice.
9. I don't think it would make much difference.
10. (laughs) erm, I'm not sure we would be happy about it. Mainly because black is such a male colour, it means something. Plus, the main reason our kit works so well is that everyone has grown up knowing what it means, what it represents, if we changed it, people would get confused.
11. Erm, I used to, when I first started. Like when I first put it on, it was more like you are automatically protected, it gives you a sense of boundary with 'the other side'. There's always a clear distinction between us and then public and that's what makes us so effective I think, we're told to try and be approachable in certain situations, but you get way less respect for that. Believe me, I've tried it.
12. Erm no, I don't live in the area so when I go home, I'm just Johnny, so I still have the same friends an' stuff. Even my friends don't know what I do, it's hard when you've had the same friends for years and have to like lie to them an' stuff, I just skirt the question. Everyone knows I'm quite a private person anyway, but it's not been much of a problem, I've had the same friends since university and they are all good people, so don't really have to worry too much about having to nick 'em (laughs).
13. I do when I'm at work, you have to be able to trust each other. It's a good team and you need to know you can rely on them if you're in trouble and need backin' up y'know.
14. Erm I suppose, like when you look around you know you're all here doin' the same job.
15. See Q12.
16. See above.
17. Stigmatised? No, it makes me feel powerful, like I can do anything, like I'm Superman. But like I said before, it's part of who I am now... Maybe I am Superman?! (laughs).

18. See Q12.
19. I try not to, I don't want it to take over my life. I live on my own so I don't have anyone to tell me different, but obviously when you're at work, you've gotta be a lot stricter with yourself and other people 'cause you're here for a reason.
20. See Q7.
21. I don't trust anyone now. I know that's bad but loads of people that I thought were good eggs, turned out to be pretty bad. I think it gets worse the longer you're here, and you're well aware what's happening to you. When I joined I was only a youngster and I thought everyone was inherently good, but you really do meet some vile people, it makes you realise how lucky you are but on the other hand it makes you kinda lose your faith in people, I know you shouldn't stereotype but I know pretty much as soon as I see someone what kinda person they're gonna be. I've not been wrong yet!

"Natasha"

1. Just over 2 years. Jesus, has it been that long already?
2. It's job security, especially with the economy the way it is now. I don't enjoy trawling the streets at night when it's freezing!
3. Well with all my equipment, like my handcuffs etcetera, it feels a little like playin' dress up at times. I'm a girly girl really, when I'm at home so it did feel very odd at first putting on what is essentially a male uniform. They shot down my suggestion of wearing a skirt (laughs).
4. I wouldn't mind it, I hate the uniform and it would still give us the same protection right, the same powers? Apart from the obvious protective element of it, the job wouldn't feel the same.
5. Oh yeah, definitely. It's important that the public see us as one unit, a team, it gives the impression of togetherness and it commands more respect, if I wore normal clothes and tried to arrest someone they wouldn't be havin' any of it. I think a lot of people grow up to fear the police, like fear what we're capable of. I like that.
6. Gross! (laughs). It's really stiff and uncomfortable, I don't think they had women in mind when they made these things. I know they are made for practicality and protection ecetera, but I really hate it.
7. I always go for a wash and put on my own clothes, it makes me feel normal again. It's like the stresses of the day are taken off with the clothes, it's weird.
8. Erm, I personally wouldn't like it. I think my boyfriend would though (laughs) he likes the uniform. It's not something I would recommend though, it's not safe, especially for women, it's alright when you're at work, surrounded by lots of big men, but I wouldn't feel safe walking round on my own, loads of people have vendettas against the police, and what about the people you've arrested before? They could follow you, and find out where you live, my grandparents live next door, it just wouldn't be safe at all.
9. It's just a means of identification isn't it?
10. Well, that's a silly question! I'd be all for it! (laughs). I don't think it's to do with the colour, the colour makes no odds, but the men would hate it, everything is very macho macho, 'I'm in the big man' at work (laughs) actually I think we should try it out! The clothes we're made to wear were made for men though definitely, and I don't think they took anythin' into account when they allowed girls to join, but I understand why it is the way it is, it's supposed to all look the same.
11. Erm you mean like by the stuff we're given to use on people? Well, yeah I feel like I can accomplish more things while I've got it on, people would listen to me more.

12. At first my friends were dead sceptical, like I lost a few through it, not through my choice either, it was like they couldn't be themselves around me no more, they were a bit 'undesirable' let's say (laughs) but those probably weren't friends worth keeping anyway. When I go out, you have to be careful of your behaviour 'cause it definitely comes back to bite you in the a*s. Like you can't be seen to be drunk around town an' stuff, and I always feel like I have to babysit my friends.
13. Erm not really, I don't have many friends here. It's like being in the boy scouts, I know a lot of them don't think women should be here, one of the guys said it to me in training, I don't work with him anymore, but it really p*ssed me off! I know I don't have the same brute strength but surely that's not what it's about, I do my job well I think. At first there were a lot of sexual innuendos, which I did find quite upsetting, but now I see them like brothers, I grew up with four brothers so it's not much different.
14. I don't think it makes any difference. Actually the comments would probably worse if we had non-uniform day (laughs).
15. I used to tell everyone, like not shout it out, but if people asked. But now I've learnt to keep my mouth shut. If people know then fine, but it's funny how much people change the way they speak to you when they find out you're a policewoman. I find it quite entertaining.
16. I think it's just something we have to wear unfortunately. Like I said, I understand why we do wear it, it's important to look all the same.
17. Not really, it makes me feel great when I've got it on, like people treat you differently but in a good way, like they respect what you do.
18. You mean when I'm at work? ("At home and at work") At work yeah, like it's Moses partin' the water, you walk down the street and you can feel like a million eyes on you, everyone knows what you're there for, like being a mini celebrity (laughs). At home, not so much, the people who know I'm part of the police don't really treat me any differently now. Maybe at first 'cause they didn't know how to act but not anymore, people just accept it now.
19. Erm, I had to kinda put on a hard front at work. I know that sounds stupid, but when I was in training, they show you all these videos and pictures etcetera, stuff that you are just not used to seeing at all, it's not a film, it's real people, and it upset me quite a lot. In the first year I think I cried at least once a week from feeling stressed at work. All the lads used to laugh at me which didn't help. So I learnt to kinda toughen up, well not toughen up, I mean, it still gets to me, you see some horrible stuff, but you can't show it. I'd get ripped, I have to act like one of the lads (laughs).
20. Well, like I said I used to find it really hard, you do have to learn to switch off which takes time, like leave your troubles at work. My boyfriend will not ever let me talk about work, as much as that sounds harsh 'cause sometimes you do need to talk it out, it was making me worse 'cause it would just play on my mind but now I get home and try and relax, unwind, and try not to think about it, like if I've got a bad domestic abuse case, with kids or somethin'.
21. Erm not really, they do tell you to be suspicious of everyone! But you can't live your life like that, you would just end up stereotyping everyone and thinking everyone's done something wrong.

“Afeerah”

1. Four years.
2. The long hours, they said you're gonna finish at a certain time and you never do!
3. It makes me feel important, it gives me a purpose in my life and my uniform is a representation of that purpose.
4. It definitely wouldn't have the same impact, I wouldn't feel as safe certainly.
5. Maybe not less powerful, 'cause we would still have the same rights wouldn't we? But I think we'd lose respect, people respect the uniform and what it represents, not the people wearing it.
6. Like I've got a job to do. I know I'm at work when I put it on, obviously, but it's like right, get your game head on now.
7. I always take it off straight away, 'cause then it's like I've finished work, I don't want it to encroach on my life outside work.
8. I don't agree with it, more to do with safety though. It's not safe for like you're family. I still live with my mum and dad and my grandparents live there too at the moment and I wouldn't wanna put them in any sort of danger. My parents don't agree with my job anyway so they wouldn't like to see the uniform at home.
9. It wouldn't really bother me. At work, we're just a number anyway and that's fine by me.
10. Erm, I don't think it would work. The reason why the police are so powerful is because it is what the public is led to believe. The uniform is a good representation of us, people know the uniform they know what we do. People like sameness, stability, they want to things to stay the same maybe.
11. I suppose yeah, I wouldn't feel as safe if I wasn't wearing it.
12. Not really, apart from my family no one knows what I do, it would cause a lot of aggro in our community. My parents are quite traditional and weren't happy about it. They would have preferred me to settle down and have children but I'm only 25, I can do all that later.
13. No not really, I have only two proper friends here, both girls. I don't really mix with the men, I don't like a lot of them, they're pigs! I don't really have much trouble with sexism, it's definitely more to do with race. I was born here, but obviously my skin tone doesn't help matters, I've heard comments, like really nasty racist comments, I did report it but nothing got done, maybe they did get talked to but it's more sneaky behind my back now. I certainly haven't told my parents, they would make me quit straight away. I try and ignore it but it's frustrating at times. I was offered a headscarf when I first started but I said no, it's hard enough being a girl in here without alienating myself further with that. I'm not a practising Muslim anyway as much as my parents would like it. I think it's good that they do give you that choice now, I know it's a recent change.
14. Don't think it makes a difference.
15. See Q12.
16. It is important to me. I'm honoured to wear it.
17. See above.
18. Nobody knows in the area, and I don't work anywhere near my area, so doesn't really make me feel isolated as such.
19. (laughs) well I'm the good little Muslim girl at home, and obviously those traditional values get left at home. It's like I've got two personalities but that's more for the benefit of my parents than me personally.

20. Not hard at all. Although I do think about work a lot when I'm at home, it's too hard not too, I can't talk about it, apart from 'yeah work was fine Mother', they don't want to talk about it and neither do I.
21. Being stereotyped myself, as much as it's unwise to admit that the police are racist, you can't tar everyone with the same brush. There are some lovely people that it doesn't make any odds too so if I did that, I'd be justifying what some people do to me, how they treat me, so I try and meet every situation with an open mind.

Appendix Five:
A 100 Years of the Police Uniform

1920s



1940s



1960s



1980s



2000s

