

**Understanding Assaults against Police Officers: A study of conflict escalation in
police encounters with the public**

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Abstract

Assaults against police officers are an enduring aspect of the risk posed to police officers, with the underlying risk of conflict prevalent in all encounters with the public. Egon Bittner (1975) highlighted that police officers hold the threat of and ability to use force to resolve conflict between and with citizens. As a result, police officers put themselves in situations where there is an increased risk of being assaulted or injured. Police officers make quick decisions to interfere in the lives of others, deciding whether to use force and on how best to control potentially violent individuals.

The main research questions for this thesis focused on the impact of the police role and the informal rules of the 'occupational police culture' on the risk of conflict escalation. It explored the importance of cultural talk as a way of making sense of the police role but also in guiding the way in which officers approach future incidents. To provide this detailed understanding of cultural traits, the study concentrated on the observation of police officers in action at live incidents as well as their behaviours and actions in the parade room and police vehicles when discussing and explaining incidents of violence. The thesis explored how both male and female officers engaged with gendered discussion and the differences between officers in how they approached incidents and reacted to facing aggressive non-compliance. In doing so, the study moves away from quantitative overviews of assault data, including location and temporal analysis towards understanding the realities of policing, the dynamics of incidents, how officers support each other and the influence of informal cultural values in explaining some assaults and the general reactions to being attacked.

The study reveals that there is a strong connection between how an officer performs according to informal rules and guidance and the increased risk of being assaulted. The approach of an officer, coupled with a desire for action and a need to (re)assert authority create situations whereby there is often a higher risk of conflict escalation. The police role also influences the risk of assault with a clear impact of workload and call demand stressors on the police response to incidents, including the danger that an officer under stress can over-react to challenges to their authority, creating conditions by which assaults sometimes occur. The final key finding suggests that the demands of assistance based calls present new risks and challenges to police officers from the misunderstanding of needs to problems in morally applying force and establishing authority.

This study extends knowledge of assaults against police officers in England and Wales and leads to wider debates about the influence of informal cultural values and discretion on assaults alongside the impact of assistance based calls. Recommendations are made for police policies on personal safety training, the encouragement of reporting assaults and the

provision of information on the effects of drugs and mental health concerns on a person's behaviour. The conclusion also raises opportunities for future research on this emotive subject.

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Abbreviations

ACPO- Association of Chief Police Officers

AOABH- Assault Occasioning Actual Bodily Harm

BME- Black Minority Ethnic

BWV- Body Worn Video Camera

CCTV- Closed Circuit Television

CID- Crime Investigation Department

COG- Chief Officer Group

GBH- Grievous Bodily Harm

HMIC/ HMICFRS - Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary/Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Services

IPCC/IOPC- Independent Police Complaints Commission/ Independent Office for Police Conduct

MDT- Mobile Data Terminal

NCRS- National Crime Recording Standards

NDM- National Decision Model

NHS- National Health Service

NPIA- National Police Improvement Agency

NPCC- National Police Chief's Council

(O)PCC- Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner

PACE- Police and Criminal Evidence Act

PCSO- Police Community Support Officer

PSU- Police Support Unit

SMT- Senior Management Team

TASER- Thomas A. Swift Electronic Rifle

Chapter One: Introduction

1.1 Background to the Study

A police officer is assaulted every 20 minutes, and the number of these attacks has risen by 34 per cent since 2013. Violence against police officers is not only a frequent occurrence, but also often hidden from official view. Recent figures which find that upwards of 25,000 assaults against police officers are recorded each year (*The Times*, 2018). Reports of everyday individual assaults against officers tend to be overshadowed by those less frequent assaults of a serious nature especially where a police officer is seriously injured or killed. There is a greater focus in social media on police assaults, especially on police force specific accounts, but this has yet to transcend to a wider media. The concentration of media reports on serious assaults prevents any meaningful discussion in the wider public conscience of everyday individual assaults against police officers. In late 2018, for example, Lincolnshire Police released a video of a male member of the public assaulting a female officer, leading to the officer needing to take time off work and consider her career as a frontline officer. The number of recorded assaults raises a number of questions, including the extent to which violence against the police is part of their job as enforcers of the laws of the state, or whether assaults are self-inflicted and reflective of an innate violent culture, or whether violence and resistance towards police officers is indicative of a deteriorating society, which minimises deference to authority and the notion of 'policing by consent'.

Previous studies in England and Wales and the USA (by, amongst others, Brown, 1994; Christopher and Noaks, 1990; Toch, 1969) have studied assaults and the conditions in which they occur but focused chiefly on the use of quantitative data. The main aim of this study is to consider the context of police assaults with regards to the modern role of the police and the context of police behaviours, actions and culture. The study considers assaults through the use of both quantitative and qualitative data, enabling the thesis to take into account the reactions of police officers post-assault, and the impact of assaults on how some police officers confront aggression. The research focuses on the realities of day-to-day policing, emphasising the behaviours, actions and role performed by those on the frontline of public policing. The research analyses how conflict escalates or de-escalates during incidents as dynamics changes, drawing attention to the emotional demands of police work as well as the impact of austerity. This study not only provides a wider understanding of assaults against police officers but contextualises them by considering where they occur as well as the dynamical shift of potential conflict and violence within incidents.

The study allows for a thematic analysis of the research data considering assaults alongside key concepts with a focus on the contexts in which police officers take formal action and use

force and conversely the contexts in which police officers decide to take no formal action in response to being assaulted. The printed media commonly conflate assaults with the work of the police, with little focus on the other emergency services. Amongst the rank and file of police forces and officers, assaults have often been viewed as 'part of the job', an unavoidable rite of passage in the frontline role. The study makes recommendations for reducing the number of assaults and minimising the risk of conflict escalation within incidents. The inclusion of policy recommendations allows the study to impact on policing in both academic and practical arenas. It is important that any policy introduced on assaults serves to protect officers, maintain health and safety during incidents and minimise the risk of harm to both officers and citizens. The focus of all policies should not deter people from applying to join the police.

Researchers have considered why police officers are assaulted during some incidents, mainly in the context of officers in the USA but also in England and Wales. Owing to the presence of routinely armed police officers in the United States, the nature and dynamics of policing is different to England and Wales. This study focuses on frontline police officers in England and Wales and where data are compared to previous studies, these are those which have gathered data from police forces in the United Kingdom. Previous studies have also considered the nature and extent of assaults and the circumstances in which they occur (for example, Brown, 1994; Christopher and Noaks 1990; Toch, 1969). This thesis adds to the existing body of knowledge about why police officers are assaulted at some incidents and not others by analysing assaults from the perspective of those police officers who have themselves been assaulted. It draws on findings from observations of officers' decisions, actions and behaviours during encounters with citizens, but also focuses on how frontline police officers talk about assaults, make decisions on the correct action to take and respond to harm and danger. To this extent, the research explores the language of officers in the parade room when talking about their approach to incident and reaction to violence.

The study identifies factors which increase the risk of assaults against police including personal, interactional, cultural and structural influences. These characteristics are analysed in the context of existing theoretical concepts (outlined below and in chapter three). It provides an account of the changes to the role of the police since 2010, arising from the social, economic and cultural context in which contemporary policing takes place. Researching assaults against police officers from the position of a 'frontline police officer' perspective¹ provides a different and interesting methodology from which to consider

¹ During the research, I was employed as police officer. Please note, that the term 'frontline policing' refers to those officers who respond to calls for assistance from the public or undertake proactive policing exercise such as night-time economy patrol or stop and searches.

assaults and enables the research to identify new factors relating to conflict escalation and aggressive non-compliance. For the purposes of this study, frontline officers are Police Constables and Sergeants who are the first responders to the majority of calls from the public. It also includes specialists units such as roads policing and dog units who also deploy to some incidents. Whilst it is accepted that there are risk to all officers who speak directly to the public (including PCSOs); chapter five shows that it is these frontline officers who are at the highest risk of assault. This study also considers where assaults occur, the context in which they happen, but also contemplates on why some seemingly compliant incidents tend towards conflictual escalation between an officer and citizen. This study supports and adds to the growing literature on policing, victimisation and criminology.

The aim of this study is to explain how informal cultural values, external structures and organisational policies can be linked to policing decisions around the use of force, arrest and non-action and how officer behaviour can alter the outcome of police/public encounters. It achieves this by incidents where a person reacts aggressively to police actions or instructions or violently challenges the authority of an officer, which is known in this study as aggressive non-compliance. The research sets a number of research questions, which form the basis and structure of the analysis chapters. These questions are implicitly important in providing a detailed scholarly understanding of assaults and for developing new policy with the aim of minimising assaults. The following research questions are addressed throughout the analysis section (chapters five, six and seven) and focus on cultural, structural and emotional factors, which could assist in developing our understanding of assaults against police officers.

1. What is the relationship between the occupational police culture and assaults against police officers?
2. To what extent do the approach and behaviour of police officers towards encounters and efforts to control incidents and violent individuals minimise or increase the chance of being assaulted?
3. How do the institutional and structural contexts of frontline policing affect the risk to police officers of being assaulted?
4. To what extent do changes in the structure of police work due to austerity and legal, procedural and policy changes increase the risks of officers being assaulted?

The study also concentrates on the potential increase in officer attendance at 'assistance-based encounters'² including those involving mental health and psychoactive drugs, and how the approach and dismissiveness of some officers may lead to an increased risk of injury and conflict escalation.

I decided to study assaults as my own experience as a police officer led me to conclude that they are impactful occurrences but which, as stated earlier, are readily misunderstood or downplayed by officers. In academic research and in media reports there is a greater focus upon police use of force rather than risks to police officer safety during encounters, which reflects historical relations between the police, government and the public, but requires revisiting in the current era defined by austerity measures. Research and media articles detailing and analysing the misuse of force by police officers appear to be more readily accessible than those about assaults against police officers. It is important to note though that the misappropriation of force against a citizen could negatively affect public confidence in police authority and legitimacy, increasing the likelihood that people will resist police efforts to physically control an individual. Access to the research environment, was achieved by careful negotiation with my employers, especially the Chief Officer Group (COG) in Lincolnshire Police.

On beginning my career as a police officer in June 2010, I was informed by my tutor constable that one thing was for certain; at some point during my time as a response officer I would be assaulted by a member of the public. Another more experienced officer told me that if 'cops' were not receiving complaints from the public then they were not doing their job properly. Moreover, male police officers were often judged and informally grouped in parade rooms by the extent to which they confronted violent people and the force used to control aggressive people. Receiving complaints and responding to potentially violent incidents, so the story ran, tended to be seen by officers as demonstrating a willingness to disrupt people and criminal activity, showed assertiveness and proved willingness to defend colleagues and suitability for the role. Those frontline officers who did not demonstrate a preference for confrontation were often seen as being more suited to other roles such as investigation teams. I soon recognised that officers were often, partially, at least, judged on their effectiveness according to how they confronted aggression, number of arrests they made and whether they resolved incidents of potential or actual conflict by use of force rather than their communication skills. This appeared to be the internally guided police officer view of the role of the quintessential 'frontline police officer'. There was one type of officer who people

² The study draws a crude distinction between adversarial calls and assistance-based encounters, defining them as the two different incident types for the purpose of analysis. They are more widely defined in chapter 7.

aspired to be, one who would not back down from resistance. If these standards were met, an officer might be accused by other colleagues of under-performing in this aspect of the role.

The role of the British police officer is to uphold the law and maintain order (Reiner, 2000). During the attestation process, new police officers promise to uphold the Queen's Peace. Officers may use non-negotiable instruction and take action through coercive force (Bittner, 1975). The decisions of officers when dealing with an incident can affect its outcome, especially where a person challenges the authority of the police or where the legitimacy of the police is questioned. The public and media may scrutinise police legitimacy to tackle crime and apply the law fairly and base their judgements on officer actions and moral choices such as the use of force against vulnerable persons. The study draws attention to assaults through the lens of police authority and legitimacy and considers the way in which police officers apply law and order in private disputes. It illuminates attempts by police officers to reassert their authority over an incident after being assaulted or violently confronted and the necessity of such action. The moral and legitimate actions of police officers are also analysed in the context of the policing of vulnerable people, such as those under the influence of alcohol or drugs.

This study makes use of two continuums when considering assaults and the different reactions of participants within police/public encounters. These highlight the range of behaviours of both assailants and police officers during incidents and interactions. The first range focuses on conflict escalation and public compliance to formal police instructions and runs between 'full compliance' and what is termed 'aggressive non-compliance'. Non-compliance is defined by those incidents where a person may offer verbal resistance to police officers and verbally disagree with the instructions of officers. Aggressive non-compliance is where a person uses physical violence against police officers in an attempt to resist arrest or harm an officer. The force used against the officer must be deliberate. Whilst some officers are seriously injured or killed whilst on duty, these are rare events and do not form part of this study. This study, moreover, does not focus on violence towards police officers at large-scale public order incidents as the conditions, circumstances and factors pertaining to violence in these encounters tend to be substantially different to those occurring in assaults whereby a smaller number of officers are involved. Rather, this study focuses on incidents where direct physical force has been used against police officers by a person involved in an interactional encounter which often cause minor or no physical injury but where there often was an emotional reaction to the encounter. It also includes incidents where an officer was technically assaulted (according to the law) but where an individual was not arrested.

The second continuum and range separates and distinguishes between different decisions and choices made by police officers both during and after incidents; dividing the selection of police actions between formal and no formal actions. The formal police actions include making an arrest or the use of force; whilst no formal police action contains behaviour such as judgements not to arrest after technically being assaulted. Between these two ends are situated are actions and behaviours such as informal advice or out of custody disposals, including community resolutions.

The thesis draws upon a number of key points around police officer decision-making and assaults, including considering how internal expectations and the influence of cultural teaching influences choices around making an arrest or officially recording an assault. The thesis also explores gendered differences in policing styles and approaches as well as the different reactions to assaults between male and female officers. It analyses the use of language and performance by male and female officers when discussing assaults and violent incidents. Aspects of assaults in front- and backstage environments (van Maanen, 1972) are analysed during the study to see what effect they have in relation to the increased risk of conflict escalation and officers' reactions. The continuums and ranges are used as an analytical construct to explain conflict escalation and de-escalation in police/public encounters and changes in decision making between a choice to use force and a decision not to record an assault.

1.2 The Research Framework

The research was predicated on a number of choices regarding where and when the research fieldwork was to be conducted. The study commenced in 2011 with an examination of previous studies on assaults. The main research fieldwork was conducted between 2013 and 2015. The quantitative data, observations and interviews were all carried out in and supported by Lincolnshire Police. The Lincolnshire force was chosen as the main site for the research as this was the force I was working for throughout the study. Therefore, to conduct the most detailed research and for ease of access to a research site, it was decided to limit the research to Lincolnshire Police. It also enabled the data to be gathered alongside my duties as an officer. At the beginning of this study, I considered interviewing officers from a number of forces to be able to compare rural and urban policing styles. In discussion with my supervisors it was decided that this would make this study too broad and potentially not achievable in the time allowed.

During my initial deployment as a frontline response officer (2010-2017) and for the duration of the fieldwork, I patrolled the same large town in Lincolnshire, always being positioned on the same shift. Incidents in this policing command area were where the majority of the

incidents detailed in the observations happened. The interviews, however, were conducted with officers across Lincolnshire Police and the criterion for selection for the interviews is described in chapter four. The decision to name the force was agreed early in the research and agreed by every Chief Constable who was in position during the period of this study. I have not stated the exact area of my patrol work in order to protect the identity of the other officers and citizens who may otherwise have been identifiable. More detailed descriptions of the county of Lincolnshire and its police force, along with the methodology used within this study, are provided in chapter four.

Any changes to force policy or national legislation are reflected in the writing. For example, in the last few months of writing up this study, the Government introduced the Assaults on Emergency Workers (Offences) Act 2018, which introduced longer maximum custodial sentences for those who commit common assault offences against all emergency workers including police officers, paramedics and fire officers (up to a maximum of twelve months imprisonment, where previously the maximum was six months). There have been other policy and internal changes, which are commented on during this study and its conclusion. These changes continue to highlight the changing dynamics of frontline policing, and allow this thesis to develop new knowledge on assaults but also to be a benchmark for further studies on the impact of changes to the police role and risk the of assaults against police officers.

1.3 Introduction to the Methodology

Chapter four analyses the choices taken and the potential benefits, drawbacks and validity of the chosen methodology. This introductory section rather outlines the methods chosen and discusses my personal experiences relating to these. The research is conducted using three main sources of data collection, namely quantitative data from Lincolnshire Police, participant observation case studies and interviews with serving police officers. I decided at the start of the thesis that I would continue to serve as a police officer whilst I carried out this study. This choice was made in order to add depth to the analysis due to my being able to empathise with the officers' actions during incidents. Whilst this enabled me to gain access to observational data, it might potentially have changed how some officers responded to me or whether some colleagues would talk openly about their experiences in the parade room. For every set of shifts worked there were incidents, which could form the basis of observation reports to be included in this study. It was important to reflect on each occurrence and determine the extent to which recording the incidents developed the emerging themes around explaining assaults against police officers. In order to be able to say that the data gathered and conclusions reached are rich and valid, I was reliant on

officers talking freely about the impact of assaults and about the incidents they had attended. The observations in this study are formed from attending incidents, but also from capturing the verbal exchanges and discussions of the officers in the parade room after violent encounters. I acknowledged that these discussions could add to the analysis of how officers made sense of emotional encounters and of uniting police officers in a common goal. At the commencement of the following study, the intention was not to focus on talk but rather to solely examine the dynamics of encounters. The data received from parade room discussions and informal talks, however, added a different richness and direction to this study, which needed to be highlighted. The research was also reliant on the ongoing support of police senior managers who enabled me to gain access to police data and therefore study a highly emotive and unpredictable subject where it was not known what might be revealed. I also put my trust in the officers; that those who agreed to be interviewed would be open and honest in their answers during the interviews, as they were talking to another police officer and often describing shared experiences.

Cognitive dissonance was also something that I had to be aware of throughout the commission of the research. I had to be prepared to take on two roles, know the difference between them and be able to switch between them. First and foremost, I was a frontline police officer and, as such, was still expected by my supervisors and managers to attend and deal with incidents, support my colleagues and where necessary be involved in controlling violent confrontation with citizens. On the other hand, I was also a researcher, which meant being able to observe incidents, recall encounters hours or even days after the event and analyse them in an academic manner. During the research, it was a skill to be able to write police statements after an arrest or conclusion to an incident and subsequently writing full fieldwork notes on the same subject after finishing the shift. Contrasting styles and language were used between the statement and the case study. The focus of the formal police statements would focus on evidential material needed to prove a case; whereas the observation reports concentrated on the dynamics of incidents and factors connected to conflict escalation. The ways in which the separation of the two roles was achieved forms an important part of the methodology chapter.

It is hoped that the methodology used in this study is replicable in other research and other police forces to allow the consideration of other aspects of police work as well as assaults. The research should be able to be repeated as circumstances in policing change to see whether the factors raised in this study can consistently explain assaults. Furthermore, research can be conducted after the recommendations have been implemented in order to corroborate and test the explanations given for why some assaults occur are accurate. This study can be used as a starting point for comparing the characteristics of assaults between

more rural and localised police forces such as Lincolnshire in contrast with larger city forces and metropolitan area forces.

1.4 Thesis Overview

This study presents several key arguments as to why some individuals react uncivilly to police orders and therefore why assaults occur. It contextualises these findings according to key concepts of the police role, police legitimacy and the occupational police culture. The thesis seeks to demonstrate that the nature of the police role and public expectations indicatively and necessarily bring police officers into conflict with the public. Such actions and requirements create an underlying increased risk for all officers of facing violence but most certainly those officers who engage with the public on a regular basis by attending initial calls for assistance. This is why the decision was taken to limit the scope of this study solely to frontline response officers. Other studies have analysed violence towards police officers from a societal, offender-led matrix, which focuses on the nature of the assailant and the importance of location in relation to assaults. The following study, conversely, argues that there are internal factors relating to the nature and structure of policing in the current political climate that generates danger and in some cases an increased risk of violence. Alongside the background and goals of the offender, factors such as the internal police structures, emotional stressors, austerity and choices between action and non-action might all affect the risk of being assaulted and these influences are often discounted or overlooked in other work on assaults (potentially due to access to police officers and qualitative data). This work prioritises these key factors relating to assault incidents in order that recommendations and possible solutions can be considered. This study develops a distinctive analysis of current risks to police officers from both outside influences and internal factors.

Some police officers perceive that the police force is becoming increasingly reactive due to higher workloads and increased public call demand, including calls to manage minor arguments or respond to incidents more readily associated with other emergency services or partner agencies. These can include welfare and assistance calls and can place additional emotional stressors and pressures on officers. The initial hypothesis for this study is predicated on the under-reporting of incidents due to a bravado-dominated parade room, which serves judgement on officer actions and interrogates decisions to arrest for assaults, especially where they are deemed to be low level or non-injurious or which occurred due to a person striking out or resisting arrest. The hypothesis also suggests that conflict between officer and citizen is far more common during incidents involving male officers both as a result of their representation amongst frontline officers in comparison with female officers but

also as a direct response to cultural values, informed by traits of authority and masculinity. Moreover, it is expected by the researcher that there are differences in how conflict in adversarial incidents and assistance calls escalates. These assumptions are tested throughout the chapters in this study.

Each individual officer has a policing style which dictates how they respond to workload demands, police/public encounters and changing dynamics during both adversarial and assistance-based incidents. It guides which types of incident officers want to attend and which ones they fear attending as well as determining their reaction to both using force and being assaulted. This style might be influenced by the extent to which officers adapt to and perform informal cultural rules and actions, socialised in the parade room. This study commences from the position that there are similarities and commonalities between officers according the way in which they act and approach incidents, which helps to explain the impact of styles on the risk of confrontation. The thesis explores Lyng's concept of 'edgework' and whether in following a desire for action, police officers sometimes push the boundaries of acceptable force or instruction, whether in order to make an arrest, provoke a reaction or reassert their authority. To some extent, police officers learn how to approach incidents and control people through socialised tutoring from police constables, training and parade room discussions. The impact of parade room learning and taught actions might determine the outcome of incidents by guiding the approach and response of an officer to a potentially violent incident. These learned behaviours may also influence how officers react to assaults and workplace stressors.

The research also considers the role of the police, from the starting point of Egon Bittner's seminal work on the police role. The thesis explores the extent to which non-negotiable force is applicable to and suitable for use by officers during mental health incidents and in non-crime private disputes either in public or private locations. This study considers potential recommendations for police officer training around a wider understanding of assistance and welfare; positively influencing how police officers respond to being assaulted; and the coping mechanisms of officers after dealing with emotionally demanding encounters. This study draws on self-constructed differences between adversarial incidents related to crime and control, and welfare encounters which are *a priori* about providing assistance rather than the use of force and criminalising of behaviour. The thesis problematises these incident types and analyses how each encounter creates an increased risk of assault. Policing is by nature a risk-based occupation and this statement highlights the need to research assaults. The research serves to identify factors which increase the chance of compliance or risk of aggressive non-compliance.

1.5 Originality Statement

This study makes an original contribution to the work around assaults and violence against police officers in England and Wales in relation to the reasons why some assaults occur and the way in which conflict escalates during police/public encounters. It also examines cultural responses and reactions to assaults amongst police officers, prior to presenting practical solutions which could reduce risk to frontline police officers.

The thesis uses a multi-methodological approach to study assaults, utilising concepts and ideas from various academic disciplines including criminology and sociology. In doing so, this study provides analytical depth in considering the multi-faceted nature of violence towards police officers. Whilst this study analyses quantitative data both from national sources such as the Home Office and local sources (Lincolnshire Police datasets), it does so in order to offer a background context and foundation for the more detailed analysis of qualitative data collected through participant observations and interviews with serving police officers. To this end, this research is conducted from a privileged position of an 'Inside Insider' (Brown, 1996); by studying police officers in a real world environment, carrying out their role in serving and protecting the public, and upholding the law and using force. The present study examines assaults from a new perspective by providing a new focus for analysis and the scope for the future development and focus on this topic.

This study is very timely in its production with a renewed internal police force and political focus on police officer safety and the use of force. It provides a modern focus on assaults, considering risks to police officers in the current social climate, including a focus on risks to police officers during periods of austerity and public service cuts. It examines the effects of officer wellbeing on the risk of assault and conflict escalation. Moreover, the study takes account of existing criminological and sociological concepts such as 'edgework', occupational police culture, and police legitimacy. It proceeds to analyse these concepts in relation to police assaults, questioning the extent to which an understanding of them can assist in our wider knowledge on assaults and conflict escalation. The focus of the study is on policing in England and Wales and thus compares quantitative data from Lincolnshire Police with studies conducted on assaults against police officers in forces in England and Wales. Where necessary, studies are examined in the literature reviews and the conceptual chapters, which focus on policing in other countries such as the USA, though the context of US frontline policing is different, due to factors such as the routine carrying of firearms by frontline police officers. To this end, the relationship between the public and police in nations outside of the United Kingdom are likely to be contextually different and the data from studies in these countries need to be understood within these frameworks.

Overall, this study provides a nuanced analysis of assaults against police officers, utilising a broad methodology which provides a scope for the study to go behind the quantitative data and consider, in depth: the reasons why some police officers are assaulted; how conflict escalates during some police/public encounters; and the way in which police officers react to confronting violence.

1.6 Chapter Structure

This thesis is split into eight chapters (six substantive, an introduction and a conclusion). Following this introduction, the first chapter explores the existing literature on assaults and focuses on what is currently known about the extent of and factors which influence the risk of assaults. It outlines different definitions of an assault against a police officer and sets the boundaries by which assaults are defined in this study. The second chapter also considers the difficulties in accurately recording the true number of assaults against officers and the varied reasons why different records suggest vastly different recorded and reported figures of assaults and why some officers choose not to report having been assaulted. The final section of this chapter analyses what is known about current risks to police officers at distinctive incident types. The third chapter presents the theoretical concepts which underpin the thematic analysis. The chapter considers existing and key work on the role of the police, the occupational police culture and police legitimacy. It analyses and critically engages with these concepts as well as considering how these concepts are important in helping to explain assaults against officers. Chapter four considers the methodology in greater detail and looks in more depth at the research site, the methods for analysis and data collection, and challenges the position of the inside police officer researcher carrying out police research.

Chapter five is the first of three analysis chapters and provides a detailed overview and analysis of the quantitative data on assaults gathered by Lincolnshire Police. It describes and analyses temporal, situational and personal characteristics of assaults that occurred in the period of this study, providing the structural bedrock for the two key analytical chapters. Chapter six analyses the cultural factors connected to police assaults, focusing on backstage talk and the dramatisation of violence as well as how expected and learned behaviour affect action and decision making. Moreover, the chapter draws on cultural traits considering the extent to which officer action is guided by the informal parade room values and socialised learning on how to undertake the policing role. This chapter presents a discussion on non-action amongst some police officers where, in spite of being assaulted, no arrest is made. In the final substantive chapter (chapter seven), the modern role and structural demands on the police are analysed in the context of austerity. It also focuses on

officer perceptions of an increase in assistance calls and private space incidents and how these different situational dynamics affect levels of risk and danger. The thesis concludes by bringing together the key threads of the argument, detailing any recommendations that could assist in reducing the number of assaults. In order to provide the backdrop against which the analysis of this study is built, the next chapter discusses what is currently known about the extent of assaults and defines what is meant by aggressive non-compliance and an assault against a police officer. This chapter provides an opportunity to discuss the two continuums and ranges of behaviours. It also focuses on previous studies on assaults, contextualising where other research has determined assaults most readily occur.

Chapter Two: Literature Review

Defining and Measuring Assaults against Police Officers

2.1 Introduction

In order to contextualise the findings of this study, it is important to detail and analyse the academic and professional work which has already been undertaken on the subject of assaults against police officers. There are a number of key aims of this chapter, which provides a background to the main study and supports the wider theoretical concepts, which are outlined in chapter three and support the analysis of the research data. Firstly, the chapter focuses on how the law, operational policing and academic studies have defined an assault against a police officer, before providing the definition of an assault and aggressive non-compliance used in this study. Secondly, the chapter problematises the collection of data on assaults and considers the extent of the 'dark figure' of recorded assaults as well as detailing changes in the way statistics on assaults are collected and presented both locally and nationally. Third, this chapter analyses existing work on assaults and conflict and the situational and incident contexts in which they tend to occur. This section of the chapter helps to identify gaps in the knowledge and research, which can be developed within the current study. The third part of this chapter also analyses existing research and findings on the personal characteristics of police officers and assailants most likely to be involved in assault incidents, with a key focus on gender and role.

Overall, this chapter shows why assaults are such a crucial and critical issue to be researched, analysed and recommendations made. There is a distinction in the existing police research and media reports focused on policing when considering the behaviour and actions of police officers and those who attack the police. There appears to be a far greater focus on the use of force by police officers, whether lethal force or use of protective equipment (for example, TASER or spit guards) against assailants in comparison to assaults against police officers. Attacks on officers often become newsworthy when they are of special interest or of a serious nature (i.e. the murder of an officer or a male seriously assaulting a female officer). The following study wants to draw interest and focus onto an area of constant risk for police officers but one which has almost become normalised as 'part of the job'. It shows what is known about assaults, considers aggressive non-compliance according to the modern role of officers and looks to solution recommendations that could impact on the number of recorded assaults. To start this study, it is important to know what is meant by an assault against an officer.

2.2 Definitions of Assaults against Police Officers

The following sections consider the definition of assaults in three key contexts, namely legal definitions and existing legislation on assaults; the operational and policing definitions of an assault; and how assaults have been defined in other academic research, especially UK-based research. The section concludes with the definitions and continuums to be used in this study. Outlining the definition at this stage of the thesis provides the boundaries for the research, shaping and bringing a greater focus on how the research is conducted and presented as well as providing the context for the topics highlighted in the analysis chapters. The ideas and definitions of an assault change according to the context in which it is used and, therefore it can be said to be subjective when used individually by police officers, prosecutors or the public. An assault incident might be defined differently by independent observers. For example, one person might deem a use of force as being intentional and unlawful whereas another might view the same incident and use of force as accidental, unintentional or a reasonable defence in the circumstances presented. Similarly, when considering police officers, one officer could consider a use of force as an assault and subsequently make an arrest; whereas another officer, under the same circumstances, might decide that the technical 'assault' is not worthy of reporting or recording. The way in which assaults against police officers are defined are, therefore, crucial to this study as the definitions used for data collection impact on how assaults are measured and classified, as well as setting the parameters for understanding actions deemed to be an assault.

It is important, initially, to distinguish between wider definitions of workplace violence and violence towards police officers. Police officers occupy a unique workplace context in comparison to other occupations. Implicit in their role is maintaining social order, enforcing the law and dealing with conflict. Often, their encounters with citizens are or become adversarial with an increased risk of confrontation or violence. Police officers also enter into private spaces and arguments and assert an authoritative judgement and order onto the personal lives of others. In doing so, police officers routinely expect to face verbal abuse and threats of violence. Therefore, whilst in other workplace contexts the continuum of violence ranges from verbal abuse and threats of violence to physical attacks, these definitions are often framed by subjective perceptions by those reporting incidents and can cover a wider range of behaviours (Bowie, 2002; Stanko, 2006; Waddington et al., 2006). Verbal threats towards police officers are not included in official statistics on violence towards police officers and therefore do not form part of the definition of assaults and aggressive non-compliance. Indeed, a judge has stated in court that police officers should have thicker skins than persons in other occupations and should not arrest people who swear at them, because it is such a regular occurrence (*Daily Telegraph*, 2011).

2.2.1 The Legal Definition of Assaults

Police officers occupy a special space in that they are legally protected from being assaulted by citizens by a specific piece of legislation (Jerrard, 1994). The original legislation has now been supported by a new law, announced and made a statute in 2018, namely, the Assaults on Emergency Workers Act 2018, which changes the maximum sentence possible for a common assault on any emergency worker, when acting in the function of the emergency role to which they are employed. The main offence of assaulting a police officer is legislated for in the Police Act 1996 (section 89).

The Police Act provided for a maximum imprisonment for assault of six months, but this has been raised to twelve months in the new law. An assault against a police officer as enshrined in law amounts to any offence of common assault. The law creates a clear demarcation in law between police officers and the public, although recent legislation has correctly identified that other emergency workers are also at an increased risk of violence when attending incidents. For more serious assault incidents, which amount to either Assaults Occasioning Actual Bodily Harm (AOABH, s29, Offences Against the Person Act, 1861) or Grievous Bodily Harm (GBH, section 18 or section 20, Offences Against the Person Act, 1861, the section used for arrest and charging depends on the intention to cause serious harm or the recklessness of the action); then these relevant laws are used when charging offenders (Jason-Lloyd, 2005). In court, charges of assaults against police officers are meant to be treated more seriously than other assaults, on the same level, involving two members of the public (Sentencing Council, 2011). These arguments, however, are much debated both in the media and internally within police forces due to reports of allegedly lenient sentences being given to offenders for serious and prolonged assaults (for example, suspended sentences or community orders). Sentencing decisions and the chance of prosecution may both influence the decisions and choices to arrest someone from an assault, which forms a key part of this research. Legally, police officers appear to have their own special context, potentially related to the position of being Servants of the Crown, employed to protect the public.

The Police Act 1996 (s89) defines the meaning of an assault against a police officer, as follows:

“It is an offence to assault or to resist or wilfully obstruct a police officer *in the execution of his duty* [emphasis added] or a person assisting him”

The legal definition of assaults is narrowly framed and accurately defined so that it can be applied consistently by judges. The most important aspect of the definition is the term ‘in the

execution of his duty'. There have been cases in the UK courts where defendants have been found not guilty because the officer's actions were not deemed to have been lawful behaviour or were shown to have failed to follow legal procedure (Parpworth and Thompson, 2003). This study highlights these concepts, arguing that police officers sometimes push the boundaries of force or behaviour in certain incidents in order to effect an arrest or provoke conflict. It is in such cases that legal challenges are brought when a case reaches court. The thesis does not follow assaults through to the court unless an officer was reporting retrospectively on an incident, so the impact of the legal challenges according to an officer's behaviour is not discussed. Moreover, where a police officer feels that they were a factor in the violent outcome of an incident because of their actions then they might choose not to arrest, therefore adding to the total number of unreported assaults encounters and incidents. Police officers make moral judgements on their decisions to arrest and where the officer believes they are culpable for an assault, may choose not to take formal action (Reiss, 1971). Police officers could be challenged in court on their decisions to detain an individual or use physical restraint, and it is for juries, judges or magistrates to determine whether an officer was acting lawfully at the time of the assault (Jason-Lloyd, 2005; Jerrard, 1994; Wilson, 2010). The ability to decide these questions may have been simplified to a certain extent through the introduction of body worn video cameras (BWV), which officers in Lincolnshire are expected to activate during violent encounters, during certain incident types (including domestic incidents) and when making an arrest.

Case law in England and Wales has examined the intricacies of, and definitions contained in, the legislation around assaults against police officers, analysing the meaning of the term '*in the execution of their duty*' and scrutinizing the use of force of police officers against members of the public during an assault incident. In both *Bentley v Brudzinski (1982) 75 Cr.App.R.217* and *Ludlow and Others v Burgess (1972) 75 Cr.App.R.227*, the courts acquitted persons accused of assaulting officers as the officers were found to be acting outside of the execution of their duty when taking control and using force against the accused. Courts have upheld that in some cases, where the use of force by police officers is unreasonable and unlawful, members of the public can use reasonable force in response to free themselves but this force cannot be unreasonable (see, for example, *Dixon v CPS [2018] EWHC 3154 (Admin)* and *Ludlow and Others v Burgess (1972) 75 Cr.App.R.227*). Conversely, in *Donnelly v Jackman [1970] 1 All E.R 897* the court rejected an appeal against a conviction for an assault owing to the fact that the force used by the officer prior to the assault was not enough to interfere with the liberty of the suspect and therefore the action was conducted lawfully in the course of their duty. Similarly, in *Mepstead v DPP [1996] Crim LR 111* the court upheld a conviction for assault by maintaining that a police officer taking

hold of a person in order to make them aware of an instruction was acting within the boundaries of the 'execution of their duty'.

The case law demonstrates the delicacy of the law and the importance of the interpretation of individual phrases in legislation when determining the outcome of cases. It also allows for the fair and equal application of the law according to circumstance when considering court precedence from previous cases. The law also appears to prescribe limits on the discretion of police officers to gain the attention of members of the public and the extent to which force can be used to stop someone or gain their attention. This especially applies where there is no intent to make an arrest or search a person. For example, in *Collins v Wilcock [1984] 3 All.E.R.374* the court upheld an appeal that the force used to attract attention was beyond the level of lawful physical contact; whereas in *Donnelly v Jackman [1970] 1 All E.R 897* the court maintained that a police officer touching a person on their shoulder was not sufficient interference with their liberty. To this end, the law can both support the actions of police officers in encounters with the public but can also prescribe limits on police officer actions which impact on the outcome of assault proceedings.

For the purposes of this study, the law is prescriptive in terms of interpretation of assaults against police officers. In order to fully understand the nature of violence against officers, there is a requirement for a wider and more fluid definition. The preciseness of the legal definition means that it is not applied in this study. The definition is too legalistic and potentially presents a bias because of the loaded categories of right and wrong actions. For example, an officer could be acting according to the law and an assailant is wrong to use force, or an alleged offender is being wrongly detained and a police officer could be acting outside of their lawful duty. This study of assaults against police officers is not seeking to establish the legality or illegality of the actions of either party. All observed and recorded incidents of confrontation or discussions of assault incidents are analysed; not just those proven in court. This study also takes into account the opinions of officers when discussing encounters whereby they were assaulted but the alleged assailant was found not guilty in court or was not charged. Additionally, the legal terminology is too deterministic and has a narrow focus; also individual, subjective definitions and organisational definitions of assaults provide for a wider discussion and richer set of data in order to understand assaults.

2.2.2 Organisational Definitions

Organisational definitions are used in two key ways, namely by police forces to define what is meant by assaults in an internal context and by the Home Office and Association of Chief Police Officers to allow for the accurate and consistent collection of data for review and policy development. The use of different organisational definitions of assaults and subjective

judgements within police forces means that there is no constant agreement between police areas as to what constitutes a recordable assault, leading to changes in recording practices and the number of assaults. It might be argued that as a result it is more difficult to accurately develop policies to prevent attacks against officers.

In 2011, the Association of Chief Police Officers (ACPO) introduced a universal definition across all police forces in England and Wales, which states that an officer is 'physically assaulted by a person' where there was '...a **deliberate intention** by assailant(s) to **directly** harm officer(s) and or member(s) of police staff' (bold emphasis added) (ACPO, 2011, Annex A). This is a broad definition includes all forms of physical violence ranging from spitting and punching to the use of weapons. The intent to harm discounts incidents of resisting arrest or obstructing a police officer, where the assailant may be attempting to escape or prevent arrest. This definition, however, is reliant on the subjective and individual recording of incidents and assaults by police officers and the impact of force policies to encourage open and honest recording. It might still be the case that incidents involving the use of force against police officers are not accurately recorded or reported depending on views about the deliberate nature of the attack, whether the incident occurred whilst controlling an individual during an arrest or whether it was perceived that the assailant was resisting, obstructing or attempting to escape.

It is hypothesised in this study that some incidents, which are not seen as serious or which are non-injurious might not be reported. Even though there is now a requirement to complete a use of force form whenever the police physically control an individual, some lower-level assaults might not be detailed. With regards to the implementation of the defining and encouraging reporting, Lincolnshire Police has a number of policies in place, which include the operation of body worn video cameras, the completion of use of force forms, the supporting of reporting assaults and welfare assistance, and a seven-step investigation procedure for all assaults. Despite this, there remains a perceived 'dark figure' of assaults both internally in Lincolnshire and amongst other forces, and this study aims to provide some understanding with regards to this.

2.2.3 Definitions in Academic Research

In order to analyse data gathered for academic research, it is important that a definition of assaults is fixed at the start in order that the range of data collection is limited according to how it has been defined. The definition can be agreed in two different ways, whether decided by the main researcher prior to the commencement of their study or defined by the lead organisation supporting the researcher, such as the Home Office. There are two key UK studies, namely those by Brown (1994) and Christopher and Noaks (1990), which defined

assaults in two different ways. First, Brown (1994) conducted a Home Office study on assaults and employed a very legalistic definition of assaults based on the way figures on violence were gathered by the Home Office. Brown defined assaults according to the criteria of common assault, AOABH and GBH. Brown also separated out incidents of resisting arrest and obstructing a constable (Brown, 1994). Conversely, Christopher and Noaks (1990) defined assaults based on an officer being 'on duty' at the time of the incident and where there was a deliberate intention to harm the officer, especially where an injury was caused. Christopher and Noaks (1990) gathered their dataset from one police force and therefore were less restricted in their definition in comparison with Brown (1994) but may still have been hampered by how the police force documented and recorded assaults. Research with police forces and the Home Office may also be indirectly affected by those who may wish to affect the conclusions presented. Police forces might request certain results be published if they are the focus of the study and maybe biased about what information can be accessed. Definitions can be guided to present either favourable or unfavourable results depending on the political agenda of the force. There is a detailed exploration of the methodology and challenges associated with the quantitative data for this study in chapter four. Before that, it is important to define how this study terms assaults and looks at violence against police officers.

2.2.4 This Study's Definition

This study has a unique view of the nature of assaults and seeks to define them in the context of conflict, from a compliant incident to the point where physical force is used against an officer. It then aims to suggest why some assaults occur. The research situates itself in the context of conflict and resistance, determining that an encounter is an ongoing negotiation process between an officer and a citizen whereby arrests, assaults and warnings are all potential outcomes. The study then analyses the factors that relate to confrontation and increases the risks of assault. It must be understood that assaults form part of a wider definition of aggressive non-compliance. To this end, this study utilises ranges of behaviour to explore where incidents and encounters are situated both at the beginning and then to consider how they may move along the described continuums according to a range of displayed behaviours and actions from both the assailant and the attending officers. As such, the research questions how incidents can run from being fully compliant on police arrival but where dynamics of the encounter change resulting in aggressive non-compliance and conversely become aggressively non-compliant on arrival but move towards compliance.

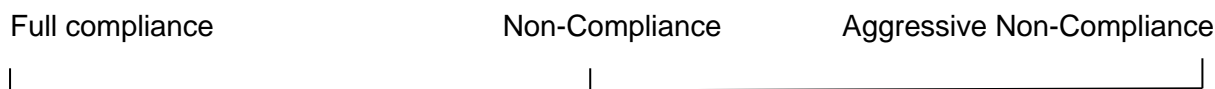


Fig. 1: Continuum of the dynamics of an encounter between citizens and police officers

In this study, aggressive non-compliance is defined as,

“Complete failure by a person to follow the orders of, or a display of violent resistance to the application of control by, a police officer. This includes all forms of physical violence towards a police officer during an incident from resistant actions to an attempt to deliberately harm through actions, such as punching, kicking, biting, spitting to the use of weapons. There does not have to be an intention to harm the police officer. The person must be aware that they are in an encounter with a police officer at the material time of resistance”

The definition encapsulates assaults as well as incidents where a person lashes out whilst resisting arrest or where a person may take hold of a police officer when an associate is being spoken to or arrested. It is important when considering these assaults and violence to look at their every aspect rather than being overly specific and prescriptive in determining factors connected to aggression; it is the aim of this study to provide this wider consideration and analysis to provide a unique observation of risks to police officers, but also detailed recommendations on the reduction of violence. Alongside the analysis of risk, conflict and assaults, this study also utilises another continuum, which takes into account the decision-making process and range of behaviours and choices of police officers during every incident when deciding whether or not take formal police action.

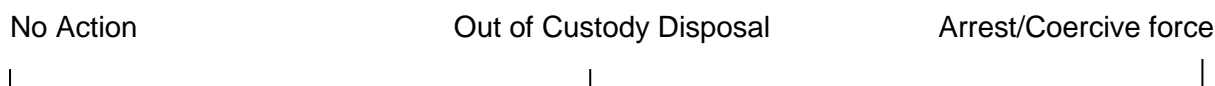


Fig. 2: Continuum of decision making by police officers in encounters with the public

No action means that a person is not arrested or does not receive an out of custody or out of court disposal for their behaviours or offence (such as a fixed penalty notice fine or community resolution). In the context of assaults, no action will mean deciding not to arrest, report or record the assault; for example when a person is taken for hospital treatment. For out of custody disposal, this could mean that a person is taken home or given a penalty ticket for a public order offence. An arrest means formal police action in response to an assault where a person is taken into custody having been cautioned and is interviewed and potentially charged with an offence.

The main focus of the study is on incidents which result in aggressive non-compliance and the subsequent reaction of police officers. The number of incidents resulting in aggressive non-compliance, including those where assaults occur, is likely to be higher than those resulting in significant or clearly defined assaults and, therefore, this study allows for the collection of wider data on aggression and conflict to support the conclusions reached. The main focus of this study is on the first continuum, as it forms the range of behaviours, which highlight coerciveness and resistance. It shows how conflicts and incivility develop in incidents whereby a police officer interacts with a member of the public. The continuum allows for the plotting of levels of resistance displayed by an individual. Police officers may alter their actions in order to respond to such challenges to their authority. The extent to which an officer's behaviour is reliant on the reaction of a citizen forms an important question for this study, with officer's actions in encounters being observed as part of the methodology. The two continuums demonstrate how the consent of the public to police authority may have been eroded due to the risk that all incidents have the potential for conflict (Reiner, 1991).

2.3 The Measurement of Recorded Assaults against Police Officers in England and Wales

The overall purpose of this section is to present data on the recorded number of assaults and also to consider changes to the Home Office Counting Rules and to explore the challenges and difficulties in the accurate measurement of assaults against police officers in official police statistics. Police forces collect data to present to the Home Office according to the National Crime Recording Standards (NCRS) (Home Office, 2003) and Home Office Counting Rules (Home Office, 2019). The initial problem with them is the recording problems according to subjective standards of police officers around the reporting and submission of formal complaints. Indeed, HMIC has often uncovered reports across police forces of failing to record all reported crimes. Once police forces have collated their data, these are sent to the Home Office for publication. In 2013, around 1 in 17 police officers were assaulted in England and Wales. This is based on 7504 assaults (Home Office, 2013) and police force strength of 132,235 (Dhani, 2013). Since the detailing of these figures, the number of recorded assaults has dramatically changed, and there has been a reduction in the number of police officers. Recent figures suggest around 1 in 6 officers are assaulted each year. Table one shows the level of assaults on police officers in England and Wales, from two datasets:

Column 1 shows data from HMIC and the Home Office. These data are based on the figures received from police forces in England and Wales. For a period of time, assault figures were officially published prior to them becoming unpublished data, which had to be specifically

requested from the Home Office (HMIC, 2003; 2004; 2006; Home Office, 2009; 2010; 2013; 2015; 2016; 2017; 2018). These datasets cover all assaults against police officers, including resisting and obstructing police officers, non-injury assaults, common assault, AOABH and GBH.

Column 2 shows data taken from the Office of National Statistics (ONS) official datasets covering crime in England and Wales between 2001 and 2014. These data are based on police recorded crime and cover all incidents of assaults without injury against police constables (ONS, 2019).

Year/Number of Assaults	HMIC/ Home Office	Crime in England and Wales
2001-02	13097	30095
2002-03	14364	33948
2003-04	11630	22189
2004-05	9372	23604
2005-06	12015	22217
2006-07	11499	21749
2007-08	11392	20384
2008-09	10146	17384
2009-10	8175	15781
2010-11	7904	15510
2011-12	7504	15873
2012-13	6648	14527
2013-14	4730	14456

Table One: Assaults on police officers per year period

Since the recording of this information, there has been a fundamental shift in the number of assaults recorded and published by the Home Office. In 2018, the Home Office detailed that there had been 26,295 recorded assaults against police officers. The Home Office used both assaults against constables with no injury and those where injury had occurred, and combined these figures together. In total there were around 18,000 non-injury assaults and 8000 injury assaults against police officers during the period from 2017-18 (Home Office, 2018). All 43 forces submitted information for this dataset. Indeed, for the period 2015-16, the Home Office reported that there were 15,461 assaults on constables but only asked for information on assaults, which did not cause injury (Home Office, 2016). Between 2014-15 and 2017-18 both Home Office data and ONS data showed similar number of assaults without injury on constables. The Home Office data showed a trend from 14,367 assaults without injury in 2014-15; 15,454 in 2015-16; 16,531 in 2016-17; and 18,114 in 2017-18 (Home Office, 2015; 2016; 2017 2018). Similarly the Office of National Statistics showed the figures of 14,364 in 2014-15; 15,470 in 2015-16; 16,576 in 2016-17; and 18,138 in 2017-18

(ONS, 2019). The data show a more consistent approach in the recording of assaults and in the production of information on the risk to police officers. These data show a steady increase in the number of non-injury assaults, which could potentially be explained through the reduction in the total number of police officers on the frontline in England and Wales, therefore showing an increased risk to police officers.

In around 2010-11, when austerity policies were first introduced, the number of documented assaults reduced, suggesting that fewer police officers might not always have a detrimental impact on the levels of assaults. The increase could be related to better reporting and recording by police officers who are choosing to take formal action against assailants. This would show a success in internal police force policies and Federation action in encouraging and supporting the reporting of all assaults against police officers. In Lincolnshire, the Chief Constable submits a victim impact statement to many court files where a person has been charged with assaulting a Lincolnshire officer. The submission of such statements is replicated across police forces in England and Wales (see, for example, the news release from North Yorkshire Police, 2019). Moreover, with the widespread introduction of BWV, police officers may feel more confident in gathering evidence of assaults and the circumstances leading to aggressive non-compliance.

Such data do, however, show the difficulties in accurately measuring assaults. The ways in which data are requested and presented have changed, and official statistics are still reliant on the accurate recording and timely submission by individual police forces. The Home Office (2018) stated in their report that although all 43 forces had submitted information, this was sometimes incomplete and therefore not an accurate representation of assaults. With the recording, it is difficult to make conclusions on the impact of assaults based only on trends. Between 2001 and 2014 there were noticeable reductions in the number of recorded assaults submitted by police forces. The reasons for these reductions could have been due to police officer numbers or the improvement of personal safety equipment and the 'professionalisation agenda' of the police role from the 1990s. The introduction of incapacitant sprays, TASER and spit guards may all have had an impact on reducing the numbers of assaults, especially the numbers of injury assaults (Buttle, 2010; Hughes, 1996; Smith et al., 2007). Moreover, changes to police personal safety training including training, on managing conflict and use of verbal commands, may have affected how some officers approach encounters and subsequently reduce the numbers of assaults as they are able to diffuse violent situations (NPIA, 2009; Smith and Petrocelli, 2002).

The more recent datasets from 2015 onwards show a sharp upturn in the number of recorded assaults, which is contradictory to the above arguments about the continued fall in

the numbers of assaults and the increased protection afforded to police officers. It would be speculative to suggest that the sudden sharp increase is in relation to the public sector austerity cuts and the reduction in the number of officers and the increased pressure on police officers to attend a perceived wider range of incidents including those involving drugs and mental health. It is most likely that the overall and sudden change is related to changes in recording standards and the increased influence of the NCRS and Home Office Counting Rules. There may also be a political agenda, which leads to the Government showing increased concern for the safety of officers during a period of austerity. The lower numbers of recorded assaults, however, might be down to individual police forces. In accordance with Home Office (2018) reports of incomplete figures from police forces, in 2013-14 the figures were artificially low due to the fact that the Metropolitan Police failed to submit any data to the Home Office, which means that the total figure is likely to be around one thousand incidents lower than the true number. Between 2010 and 2014, there was no formal publication from the Home Office on the number of assaults, though data were still collected from police forces. During this time, there was a noticeable downturn in the number of reported assaults. With no formal political recognition of assaults, with data not being formally published, it might have been the case that police forces were neither under pressure to submit data on assaults, nor to ensure the accuracy of such figures due to it not being publically released.

These submissions may skew what is known about ongoing trends of assaults against police officers in England and Wales as available figures are artificially lower than true and valid numbers. By 2013-14, the difference in informal Home Office figures and ONS numbers is nearly 10,000 assaults, showing a gulf in predicting an accurate number of assaults in this year period. More recent data from both the Home Office and ONS on assaults has shown near identical numbers of formally recorded assaults without injury against police officers, allowing the police and public to have more confidence in these data. Politically, police forces may currently be more open to submitting more detailed figures on assaults against police officers in order to expressively show the risk to their officers from attacks in a period of austerity. With a growing media focus on assaults, individual police forces are likely to be increasingly willing to provide data showing an ever-increasing number of assaults against their police officers year on year.

Away from the focus on police forces and counting rules, there may be a connection between the number of recorded assaults against police officers and the number of recorded violent incidents between two citizens. As there are increases in the numbers of violent offences, so the number of assaults against officers may also increase, representing changes to structural and society conditions in which the role of policing takes place. Some

of these structural changes are reflected in the wider analysis but are not the mainstay focus of this study. In 2011-12, there were 2.1 million police recorded violence incidents, which is half the number recorded at the peak in 1995. As the number of recorded violent crimes reduced, it thus appeared that the numbers of assaults appeared to drop (ONS, 2019). Recent figures, however, have demonstrated that violent crime has experienced a dramatic increase in recent years, and at the same time assault figures have increased, potentially revealing the impact on societal and structural changes on the authority of the police and the risk of assault (The Guardian, 2017). This section has demonstrated some of the potential problems in accurately measuring assaults, and the next section considers this in more depth. What it has shown is that assaults are a real and obvious problem, and part of the danger associated with the policing role.

2.3.1 Problems in Measuring Physical Attacks on Police Officers

With the varying terms of reference and methodologies used in collating statistics, and the often subjective recording and reporting of incidents, there are a number of challenges in accurately measuring the levels of violence faced by police officers. This section explores some of these potential issues and to analyse the impact that each may have on the 'dark figure' of recorded assaults. With the data suggesting that there is an ongoing problem regarding assaults, it can be suggested that the official statistics mask the true level of assaults.

The most important explanation for the 'dark figure' of crime is that police officers might choose not to report incidents, especially where the assault is low level and non-injurious, or where there may be debates or arguments regarding whether an assault was intentional or the assailant was aware of what they were doing. For example, some officers might view a person lashing out at the point of arrest as 'part of the job' or a risk of the role and a natural reaction to the deprivation of liberty and subsequently they take no action. These may impact on an officer's decision to report or arrest when they have been physically attacked. It might be the case that a police officer does not wish to show that they have been affected by an incident or be questioned informally in the parade room over why they chose to arrest for a lower-level incident where someone resisted arrest. Furthermore, with a perceived increase amongst officers of attendance at mental health incidents, a person who becomes violent whilst being detained for treatment might be taken to hospital for treatment, rather than being arrested and, therefore, the assault may go unrecorded. With each incident and encounter, an officer has a number of decisions to make. One of these is the decision to take formal action, make an arrest and for what offence someone should be arrested. Where an officer is arresting for a more serious incident (such as GBH), an assault against a police

officer may be seen as minor in relation to the potential sentence for the other offence and, therefore, be ignored, downplayed or discontinued. Similarly, where an officer perceives that the sentencing for assaults is inadequate, then they might choose not to arrest for minor incidents. Each of these has a key impact on the number of unrecorded assaults. It is one of the objectives of this study to explore the extent to which these circumstances impact on an officer's decision making regarding assaults; although it is hypothesised that the acceptance of assaults as 'part of the job' and the influence of cultural values, pressures and stories have the greatest impact on an officer's choice.

Reiner (2000) defined the occupational police culture according to key traits and characteristics, two of which were machismo/masculinity and bravado. Decisions not to arrest a police assailant may be linked to notions of masculinity. Whilst the concept is discussed more fully in the following chapter, it is worth noting at this time the way in which the decision to report an assault is dictated by an adherence to internal expectations and informal behaviours as defined by a common occupational culture. In the parade room and after incidents, some police officers may feel incapable of articulating their fears about the risks associated with the police role (Stanko, 1990). Subsequently, an accepted reaction to minor assaults or one connected to resisting arrest may be to show no concern or emotion, indeed being dismissive of the dangers and presenting an attitude creating and substantiating a perception of violence as 'part of the job'. Police officers may have to demonstrate to others that they are unaffected by emotionally challenging or violent incidents to avoid being ostracised by their peers (Brown, 2000; Goodey, 1997; Stanko, 1990). Those officers who do not fit in with the culture or do not adopt and follow the informal rules could find themselves marginalised or forced out of roles where there is a demand for toughness and physicality (Westmarland and Yearley, 2001).

By internalising emotions, police officers could be said to be coping with the demands of the role as they display no outward reaction. In fact, the masculine bravado may add to emotional stressors and impact on some officers' approach to future incidents, potentially placing them at a greater risk of assault (Goodey, 1997; Pogrebin and Poole, 1991). Due to the demands of the role and internal, informal expectations, some officers may not choose to report incidents of aggressive non-compliance, which result in the use of physical force against them. Instead, they could choose to either over-dramatise the incident to other officers in the parade room (see van Maanen's (1973) discussion of war stories) in order to generate a shared understanding of risk or to make themselves out to be a 'strong' officer, unaffected by the challenges of the role.

The difficulties in measuring assaults may also be related to the definitional challenges outlined in the previous section. Depending on the boundaries set by studies and official publications, different results may be produced on the extent of the problems, either over- or under-representing the phenomenon (Zedner, 2004). Datasets might be used to manufacture results to support conclusions which can be biased or support an existing viewpoint (Sykes, 1974; Watson, 2006). The presentation of inaccurate data can create differing conclusions, leading to poor policy decisions that have an adverse effect on police officer training and safety, especially where the policy dictates that an officer should enforce a law or instruction on a person. These erroneous decisions made on data could threaten the authority of the police; affect the tactics used by the police; or damage community relations (Boleyn and Little, 1990; Miller et al., 2000). Statistics by themselves and quantitative information cannot explain the full context in which conflict occurs or why citizens display aggressive non-compliance. The use of force by officers or assaults against officers can only be understood by analysing the situational encounters in which they occur, to consider how different factors interplay in explaining violence and assaults. These include verbal words, non-verbal communication and the approach of each party in the encounter. Official police reports or quantitative data may mask or eliminate certain factors that acted as catalysts for aggression. There are a number of potential problems relating to the collection and analysis of quantitative data. Despite this, the figures on assaults provide a basic understanding of assaults that can be developed with the introduction of qualitative case studies and interviews. Within this initial understanding, the data do indicate some repeat locations and conditions under which assaults tend to occur more regularly, and this chapter now turns to consider what the previous literature has concluded regarding these factors.

2.4 Police Encounters and Assaults against Police Officers

This study focuses on incidents and encounters whereby officers are placed at an increased risk of being assaulted, and it seeks to evaluate whether adversarial incidents or assistance calls present different risk factors to the attending officer. The role of the police means that they frequently attend volatile incidents, which have the potential for conflict to escalate resulting in aggressive non-compliance and where force and control have to be used against citizens. Any incident has the potential for conflict to happen at any stage during the policing process, from the initial interaction to the decision to arrest or another policing outcome. It has regularly been argued that the point of arrest is the most common moment when force is used against police officers, although incidents may previously have shown signs of resistance; conflict; and aggression (see, for example, Brown, 1994; Moxey and McKenzie, 1993). This section considers the complex variables in each encounter that can affect the risk of being assaulted. In order to fully understand assaults, each individual factor and

characteristic needs to be carefully examined to understand how each one relates to the risk of conflict escalation or de-escalation (Crawford and Burns, 2002). This section considers the situational factors relating to the assaults and findings from previous studies on aspects of the policing process and incident types, which present the greatest risk for police officers. Whilst these studies provide an important understanding of assaults, it is the aim of this study to build upon and develop these characteristics by considering the interplay of concepts and emotions on the outcome of incidents. The literature identifies a number of recurring situations where there is a high level of interaction between police officers and members of the public and where it has been concluded that assaults are most likely to occur. This section presents these key situational and incident factors, and begins to draw a comparison and bifurcation between different incidents that police officers are asked to attend.

2.4.1 Assaults, Non-Compliance and Public Order Policing

Police officers are used in the maintenance of order during times when there are expectations that there might be a breach of the peace, widespread disorder or civil unrest including political protests, illegal raves and football matches. Acting as a visible representation of the State could lead to police officers becoming the focus for attacks (Emsley, 1991; King and Brearley, 1996; Klein, 2012; Smelser, 1962). In order to suppress or prevent violence, police forces apply a number of different tactics, which are regularly updated. These tactics, including the wearing of full-body protective armour and helmets, might create the conditions for violence to occur, if the crowds are able to dehumanise the officers and consider them solely as a repressive power (Smelser, 1962; Waddington, 1993). As Waddington et al. (1989) argued "Far from being innocent bystanders or victims, the police usually play a significant role in forestalling or provoking disorder" (1989:11). Police actions within these incidents have the potential to reduce the likelihood of aggression and lead to order being restored or maintained. Conversely, an officer's behaviour can lead to reciprocal incivility turning a peaceful gathering into violent confrontations (Reiss, 1971).

Whilst public order incidents are one of the key themes outlined in the literature for the likelihood of police officer assault, they do not form an integral focus of this study. The dynamics of these incidents and the collective approach of both the crowds and police officers are separate to the main aims and objectives of this study. This research considers police/public encounters and how the actions of individual officers and assailants influence and impact on the risk of conflict escalations. Public order incidents occur on a larger and potentially unobservable scale, and violence during these incidents is often directed to the police as a whole rather than towards individual officers. It would also be difficult to pinpoint

the catalyst for the use of force from either side. The conditions for violence and confrontation as well as the potential political motivations might not be immediately identifiable; including the fact that attacks against officers may be more widespread, happening in areas not covered by a single researcher. The conditions and factors related to these incidents should form the basis of another study focusing solely on public order incidents and tactics.

2.4.2 Assaults and the Night-time Economy

One of the most common locations for the repeat victimisation of police officers is in the street, most notably outside of pubs and clubs on weekend evenings (Brown, 1994; Christopher and Noaks, 1990). In their study, Christopher and Noaks (1990) found that 58 per cent of assaults occurred in the street with 13 per cent happening on licensed premises. Additionally, both Brown (1994) and Christopher and Noaks (1990) found that the majority of people involved in assaults had been drinking prior to the incident. The presence of the police and the expectation that they impose order, prevent violence and control people, places them in direct conflict with people who have consumed alcohol and often have displayed prior violence. Both of these factors can influence how an encounter develops and its potential outcome. The number of police officers on duty in the night-time economy is hugely disproportionate to the number of people occupying the same space. As such, the police might not be able to effectively control and deal with increased levels of aggression or where a tense atmosphere is directed against the police as they involve themselves in private disputes and fights as well as protect vulnerable people and provide assistance (Brown, 1994; Christopher and Noaks, 1990). The aggregation of factors such as alcohol, tension and heightened emotions can lead to the lowering of inhibitions and reduce people's ability to reason or understand given orders, or the necessity of actions being taken against them. These people might react aggressively or negatively towards the use of force by police officers, causing an incident to spiral and deteriorate towards assault (Batton and Wilson, 2006; Burns and Crawford, 2002; Waddington, 1999; Waddington et al., 2006; Westley, 1970).

To substantiate the risks associated with the night-time economy and the prevalence of alcohol in non-compliant encounters, Christopher and Noaks (1990) determined that the most common time for assaults was between 11pm and midnight. The temporal factors relating to assaults in Lincolnshire are presented in chapter five, though it is hypothesised that the modal time for assaults will be slightly different to the findings of Christopher and Noaks. As the constitution of the night-time economy has changed, including the extension of drinking hours (enacted in the Licensing Act 2003), so have the risks to police officers

changed, as larger numbers of people leave nightclubs later at night. In making the observations for this study, it was often noted that nightclubs in the towns and one city of Lincolnshire were not generally busy until around 1am and, indeed, some did not open before 11pm, when Christopher and Noaks had stated most assaults occurred. In their dataset on assaults within the force, Hampshire Constabulary (2017) found that nearly fifty percent of assaults against police officers (47 percent) happened between 9pm and 3am, indicating a connection between assaults and the policing of the night-time economy.

There has been some growth in the 'business of pleasure' in town centre areas, where there has been an increase in the number of pubs and nightclubs within small areas (Hobbs et al., 2005: 91). In order to maintain order and prevent crime, there have been changes in police tactics relating to this environment, including an increased number of police patrols (Hadfield et al., 2002). The prevalence of alcohol, however, may encourage people to push the parameters of decency in their search for hedonism (Hayward and Hobbs, 2007). Citizens may transgress normal behaviours, including being verbally challenging and physically violent due to the presence of alcohol. As police officers intervene, they might become the targets of frustrations and aggression (Hobbs et al., 2003; Lister et al., 2001). As a consequence of the binge-drinking culture, there is a perception amongst some police officers and door staff that violence and assaults are an inevitable part of the environment (Lister et al., 2001). Due to the downturn in the economy and the availability of cheaper alcohol in supermarkets, there may have been an increase in people drinking in private dwellings, leading to an increased risk to police officers attending incidents in private settings. In these environments alcohol may be linked to with other factors in creating the potential for violence and the use of force.

2.4.3 Assaults and Domestic Violence

The risk to police officers from aggressive non-compliance in private settings might come from the presence of alcohol but also where prior violence has already occurred or due to police officers not being in control of their spatial surroundings and not being aware of the escape routes, leaving themselves open to assault (see Fagan et al., 1980; Rabe-Hemp and Schuck, 2007). Johnson (2011) highlighted five factors related to assailants, which appeared to predict an increased risk of officer assault during domestic incidents. These were employment status, co-habitation with the victim, alcohol consumption, offences of criminal damage, and existing hostility towards the police (Johnson, 2011). In order to best protect themselves from assault, police officers need to be aware of these underlying and background factor and their potential risk on the chance of being assaulted. During some reports of domestic assault or incidents in private dwellings, it can be difficult to differentiate

between the 'victim' and 'offender', especially following calls received from someone outside the property or where those inside the address do not wish to engage with the police or make a complaint. Police officers have to make subjective decisions on the circumstances they are presented with. Choosing to make an arrest or remove a person from an address can antagonise those present, leading to an increased risk of assault. The risk of conflict also depends on other factors including both officers and the public being unprepared for the incident, or where police officers decide on their tactics prior to arrival based on the details of previous incidents. These choices can affect how police officers speak to people and apply order to the situation. Conversely, police officers might not have accurate information associated with the risks at the address, providing people with the ability to quickly accelerate an incident towards a high level of violence (Ellis et al., 1993; Waddington et al., 2006). Whilst some studies support the view that domestic incidents carry an increased risk for police officers, other research has challenged this viewpoint, concluding that other policing activities carry a much greater risk of violence, including robberies and making general arrests (see Ellis et al., 1993; Hirschel et al., 1994).

The Lincolnshire Police policy on domestic violence calls, for instance, encourages officers to take firm and positive action against those who commit domestic abuse. Actions should always be justified and should be done in order to protect the victim. This effective response based on positive action should be applied at all times, even where there might not be enough evidence to support an arrest. Positive action in these cases can include removing someone to another address or providing support information to an alleged victim (Lincolnshire Police, 2018). These behaviours and decisions by officers, especially during third-party domestic calls (when no-one in the incident address calls the police) might lead to an increased risk of negative reaction and resistance. If a person is asked to leave an address when no criminal offences have been committed could mean that they feel dehumanised and stressed by intrusive tactics, causing a violent opposite reaction to the choice of the police officer (Geller et al, 2014).

2.4.4 Assaults in Police Custody

After making an arrest and controlling a subject, the risk of facing aggressive non-compliance and being assaulted is not necessarily reduced. Even when handcuffed, a person may still become violent and attempt to resist or break away from officers; while controlling a suspect an officer could also be injured. The custody suite initiates further risk for officers as the detainee is released from his/her handcuffs and searched, either before going into, or after being placed into a cell. Both of these present opportunities for an arrested person to strike out against officers. Deehan et al. (2002) studied the behaviour and

actions of those who had come into custody as well as the risk of verbal or physical attacks against police officers. Their study concluded that those who came into custody under the influence of alcohol were most likely to be non-compliant throughout the 'booking-in' process, reacting violently to being controlled by police officers (Deehan et al., 2002). Detained persons may see the custody desk as their final opportunity to resist the control of police officers, especially where they feel that certain officers have relaxed their concentration, have not completed an effective search, or might not be monitoring changes in their demeanour or behaviour. Therefore, if police officers are not adequately monitoring or controlling and potentially where a person is under heightened stress with a sense of frustration if they believe they have been wrongly stopped and arrested (Geller et al, 2014). Officers might feel safer in the custody environment, leaving themselves at risk of assault. Detainees may come into custody who are suffering from mental health difficulties and which present differing risks to officers, either from being assaulted by or controlling someone who is threatening harm towards themselves or others. As such, incidents involving those in need of assistance, welfare and care present dangers to officers.

2.4.5 Assaults and Mental Health

There are two key arguments which develop from the consideration of assaults and mental health and within the broader concept of the risks associated with police attendance at assistance calls. There is a perception amongst officers and suggestions in the literature that police are attending a greater number of assistance calls, especially those relating to mental health (Charman, 2018). Dealing with mental health issues, though, has long been a part of the police role with recognition in the 1980s and 1990s that there was a noticeable increase in police attendance at incidents where mental health was an underlying factor (Engel and Silver, 2001; Towl and Crighton, 2012). These increases are linked to changes in the provision of mental health care from health-funded institutions to community care (Engel and Silver, 2001). In England and Wales, the period of austerity from 2010 may have caused the reduction in spending on mental health care with a greater priority on community care or in people not being able to access treatment, thus, placing an increasing burden on the police and other frontline emergency services to cope with any increasing demand. The policing of mental health represents a significant workload and it is argued that mental health issues are prevalent amongst those who come into contact with the criminal justice system through arrest and detention in custody, whether related to behavioural difficulties or drug and alcohol misuse (Kane et al., 2017). It has been noted that these incidents often take longer to resolve and should be dealt with by correctly trained staff (Kane and Evans, 2018). Kane and Evans (2018) claimed that police-public encounters involving mental health create a lot of risk both for the police officers and the person involved. Officers generally attend

assistance calls when the actions and behaviours of the individual concerned are creating a risk of harm either to themselves or others. Therefore even prior to attendance there is an underlying risk for the officers (Kane and Evans, 2018).

The key risk for police officers at assistance calls may be based on officer action and the way in which police officers approach and communicate with an individual (Kane and Evans, 2018; Weston, 2016). The literature points towards officers learning how to resolve these incidents on the job. Mental health training is a neglected aspect of wider learning in policing (Weston, 2016). Therefore, police officers respond to calls using whatever tools are available to them, including the use of force and protective equipment in order to control someone, which might not be appropriate in the circumstances, but which conforms to broader cultural leanings and adaptations (Reiss, 1971; Weston, 2016). Despite seeing the humanitarian and moral concerns about the welfare of citizens or the questions around the legitimacy of force in these circumstances, police officers may still approach a situation in a negative or overly assertive manner (Weston, 2016). As such, the officer could criminalise people with mental health issues or blame or belittle them during an incident, thus creating the risk that an incident could result in violence (Kane and Evans, 2018). Police forces may be left to deal with situations and incidents for which they have received no specialist training and so are ill-equipped to effectively manage such encounters (Towl and Crighton, 2012). Therefore, in the way police officers approach incidents relating to mental health and use specific policing tactics to attempt to resolve them could leave them open to an increased risk of resistance and assault.

Even being approached by an officer or stopped by the police can cause negative stress and further mental injury due to misunderstandings or perceptions of unfairness. In turn, people under such stressors might react aggressive during some incidents, especially where people have existing mental health issues and subsequently have further psychological reactions to being stopped. In response, police officers might need to re-evaluate how they approach encounters with members of the public (Geller et al, 2014). Assistance calls, especially those involving mental health or drug abuse form an important part of this study when considering the dangers of the policing role. It is hypothesised that mental health and/or drug use are important personal characteristics when analysing risk, but that this will also be coupled with the way in which police officers approach these incidents and their knowledge and ability to positively control and resolve them.

When considering mental health and the potential impact on assaults, it is also critical to assess and evaluate the effect of a police officer's mental health on incident outcome and conflict escalation. Existing data and studies show that there is an important link between

mental health, wellbeing and the risk to frontline police officers in encounters with the public. Recent literature has examined the effects of organisational and role stressors on police officers and their performance at incidents with an increased focus on police officer welfare and wellbeing (Police Foundation, 2019). Despite more engagement with officer wellbeing, studies have repeatedly found low morale and increased stress amongst police officers, especially those officers in frontline roles (police constables and police sergeants). The stressors have been linked to two key strands, namely role stressors (for example, dangerous and traumatic incidents) and organisational/management stressors (internal change, management support and available resources) (Lieberman et al, 2002; Police Foundation, 2019). In a number of studies organisational/management stressors were seen as more damaging to police officer wellbeing than operational role stressors with a greater impact on officer wellbeing resulting from shift changes and internal policy changes (see, for example, Brown and Campbell, 1990). The impact of such stressors was heightened where there was a noticeable lack of communication or consultation on policy changes or where organisational changes increased the workload levels of officers (Biggam et al, 2007).

As with occupational cultural traits, stressors associated with the police role appear to affect individual officers differently according to rank, role, gender and working location (Biggam et al, 2007; Brown and Campbell, 1990; Lieberman et al, 2002). Similarly to cultural traits and values, it has been argued that stressors and burnout can affect the attitudes and behaviours of some officers, including a sudden lack of reaction after using force or being subjected to violence (Kop et al, 2010). Stressors can affect police officer behaviour as some officers internalise and repress ongoing anxieties as they perceive that they should have strong coping skills and strategies against the dangers and stress of the role (Gudjonsson and Adlam, 1985). Eager to maintain a 'macho' image officers may keep private thoughts to themselves, carrying around the 'scars of conflict' for a long period of time before the effects of incidents begin to affect their performance during subsequent encounters (Lowenstein, 1999). Repression of anger can be seen as a coping strategy when undertaking a demanding role but this can lead to negative outcomes in the future (Hakan Can and Mendy, 2014). Whilst it was not initially thought to be a key focus of this study, the effect of stressors on frontline police officers appear to have some explanatory effect on why some assaults occur. Police policies can alienate officers both from the force and the public through the tactics they are asked to employ during incidents, leading to conditions whereby conflict can escalate (Stevens, 2008). The analytical chapters (especially chapter 7) examine the effects of policies on officer actions especially around domestic incidents and third party calls, where, policies designed to protect people can create risk for police officers (cf. Stevens,

2008). The ability to cope and manage stress may be part of the physical and psychological characteristics of officers, which could add to our understanding of some assaults.

2.5 Assaults and Personal Characteristics

Studies on the use of force against police officers have often focused on the personal characteristics of both the police officers and assailants in order to explain resistance and assaults. This section considers these factors in order to provide a background understanding as to why certain officers and members of the public are most likely to be involved in violent encounters. Whilst not a key focus of this study, these personal characteristics may affect how people interact during incidents. The purpose is to provide a foundation on which a full analysis can be based with regard to how these factors combine with the role of the police and police approach and incident management in explaining aggressive non-compliance. The first subsection considers characteristics relating to citizens who use force against police officers.

2.5.1 Public Characteristics

Whilst not a focus of this study, due to the difficulties in obtaining informed consent from assailants with regard to interviews or comments, it is important to note what is currently known about those who assault police officers. In three key UK studies on assaults, similar conclusions were reached on the profile of common offenders. Each found that the assailants were predominantly white males, in their mid-20s and with previous convictions but not necessarily for violence-related offences (Brown, 1994; Christopher and Noaks, 1990; Moxey and McKenzie, 1993). The report from Hampshire Constabulary (2017) showed that 72 percent of assailants were men. In the majority of cases, the assailants did not have any previous conviction for assaulting a police officer, suggesting that the use of force might not always be deliberate or a recidivist action, but rather part of the ongoing encounter (Christopher and Noaks, 1990). The motivations for violence and non-compliance could be attributed more to escape attempts or in reaction to the use of force rather than due to a dislike of authority (Brown, 1994; Toch, 1969). Christopher and Noaks (1990) noted, however, that one third of the assailants they surveyed admitted to having had violent impulses towards a person in a position of authority. Therefore, a dislike of the police, whilst not a key contributor to the outcome of an incident, might have been the basis for the conflict and resistance displayed during an encounter, depending on how the person was approached, communicated with and controlled.

The findings of the three studies show key reflections with wider sociological theories of violence. Violence is often inextricably linked to young men as both offenders and victims

(McClintock, 1963; Stanko, 1990). The link between younger men and violence may stem from life changes and periods of social and economic frustration and tradition (Meyer et al., 1979). These inadequacies may be linked to inequalities between or economic pressure on young men, and the requirements to provide, or display their masculinity in order to protect their own identities and self-esteem (Batton and Wilson, 2006; Christopher and Noaks, 1990; Meyer et al., 1979). Young males may become involved in gang subcultures as a way of finding a shared identity and experience, which are dominated by cultural traits of toughness and learned responses to challenges including aggression and violence (Quinney, 2001; Wolfgang and Ferracuti, 1967). To this extent, there are some connections with the occupational police cultural values, which tend to suggest that police officers remain resilient in the face of violence and reassert their authority through the application and use of force (Reiner, 2000). When two such dominant cultures clash, the conditions might be created whereby the risk of conflict increases as neither side wishes to back down in a demonstration of masculinity and authority. This concept of 'contempt of cop' is explored in chapter three (Waddington, 1999).

2.5.2 Police Officer Characteristics

The findings from previous studies on assaults are compared to the findings from the Lincolnshire Police dataset in chapter five. This will help to highlight any fundamental differences or similarities in temporal and location factors relating to assaults between studies conducted in the 1990s and this study from the 2010s. The most common finding in these studies on assaults was that male police officers were more likely to be assaulted than female officers (Brown, 1994; Christopher and Noaks, 1990). Similarly, Hampshire Constabulary (2017) noted that 79 percent of assault victims were male officers. This could be related to differing internal and informal expectations on both male and female officers around the confrontation of violence as well as the dominance of machismo and bravado in the personalities of some officers. Alternatively, the gendered difference in assaults may be explained by the variance in the number of male and female officers in frontline policing roles. As the numbers of male and female officers equalise, so the gender divide in the official statistics may become less significant. Both Grennan (1987) and Rabe-Hemp and Schuck (2007) found that neither gender was more likely to be assaulted during police incidents. Indeed, gender may not be an important factor when analysing why someone chooses to resist or assault an officer. It might be the case that some assailants see females as easier targets to assault or resist in order to escape. Other studies, however, have asserted that female officers may not engage with or adopt the informal cultural values to the same extent as male officers, and employ different tactics in order to de-escalate a potentially violent confrontation (see, for example, Milton, 1972). Through interviewing

serving police officers, this study addresses the extent to which officers of both genders affirm, reject or act according to internal shared cultural values.

Other characteristics of police officers have also been found to have some influence on the risk of being assaulted. Several studies discovered that more experienced officers were most likely to be assaulted and face resistance at the moment of arrest (Brown, 1994; Christopher and Noaks, 1990; Crawford and Burns, 2002). Christopher and Noaks (1990) acknowledged that this result may have been due to the prevalence of officers with five to ten years' service on the frontline in comparison with those who have more or less frontline service. During a time of public sector cuts, police forces may not be readily recruiting new officers and therefore the number of officers with limited service may be decreasing in comparison with more experienced officers according to current figures. After around ten years of service, the numbers of officers who have been assaulted tends to reduce (Christopher and Noaks, 1990). This may be due to longer-serving officers moving into specialised or investigatory roles which do not necessarily bring them into direct conflict with the public. If police forces instate a policy meaning that officers of all roles and ranks can be deployed to and initially deal with adversarial incidents, then the proportion of more experienced officers being assaulted and the proportion of non-frontline police constables being assaulted could both show increases.

It is important to consider explanations for why research findings often suggest that more experienced frontline police officers are more likely to be assaulted in the course of their duty. More experienced police constables may feel more confident in using physical force to control people, thus becoming more involved in enforcing the law and maintaining order; they may also have greater consideration for public safety and less fear for their own immediate safety. Having also been involved in a number of incidents where their authority has been questioned, they may be less tolerant of those who do not show any deference to their will and public order. Moreover, the increased focus on public and tactical communication in initial police training might mean that newer, less experienced officers may approach incidents differently to those who are more experienced and thus reducing the risk of assault (Peacock, 2010). Conversely, other findings suggest that less experienced officers are most likely to be assaulted due to their inability to pre-empt danger and react appropriately to challenges to their authority (see Carmichael and Jacobs, 2002; Stobart, 1972). Where necessary this study reflects on officers' characteristics, insofar as they provide an explanatory analysis of the increase of any risk of confrontation within an encounter. It also looks beyond the observable and recordable characteristics of officers in order to understand the risks associated with the police role. Recent studies have outlined the increased demand and workload of police officers and their hidden impact on the mental

wellbeing of officers who suffer from low morale and depression, which may create work-related problems that are connected to stress (see, for example, Elliott-Davies and Houndmont, 2017). Indeed, these emotional stressors can impact on an officer's behaviour during an encounter.

2.6 Conclusion

This chapter has outlined, analysed and detailed what is already known about assaults against police officers, their extent and the conditions in which they generally occur both on a social and a personal level. From what has already been written and produced on assaults, there is a clear issue within policing, which needs to be the focus of research, but which also requires further understanding and analysis. By definition, assaults are complex, depending on the context in which they are being described, who is being assaulted and whether the term is being defined according to the law, organisations or academic research. In policing, assaults are part of a wider process associated with non-compliance, challenges to authority, resistance and often verbal abuse. Assaults against police officers are many and varied, taking place in a wide range of different policing contexts. The actions of police officers and assailants within these social structures and interactional settings need to be acknowledged and analysed in order to determine the extent to which they influence the risk of a police officer being assaulted.

This study analyses assaults on a wider spectrum of conflict and aggressive non-compliance, in order to understand the way in which assaults occur as part of the outcome of an encounter. It is thought that this will provide a greater level of detail and analysis as well as allowing a broader observations and actual lived experiences to be included in this thesis. According to the quantitative data, there is a real and obvious issue of assaults against police officers, as determined by both media reports and official statistics. What is clear, however, is that there is no agreed way of collating accurate figures on assaults and that as a result of subjective recording, there is a possibility of a 'dark figure' of assaults. Without looking behind the data, there would be no method for recognising and understanding the reasons for and extent of the problem. This thesis analyses a prevailing shared culture of non-action from police officers in regards to assaults and considers why some officers choose not to officially record assaults. With regards to the types of incident and personal characteristics, there appears to be a number of common traits and themes which crop up when looking at the existing research. These include incidents that create risk (even if this danger is different when considering both adversarial and assistance calls); and the characteristics of both the assailants and the police officers who are assaulted. This study also analyses the reasons why these incidents present risks, outlining and determining the

conditions in which assaults and aggressive non-compliance are becoming increasingly common. The analysis for this study is thematic and built on the hypothesis that a number of concepts can help explore and understand interpersonal conflict and why some incidents result in an assault against a police officer. This study now turns to consider these concepts.

Chapter Three: Conceptual Chapter

Situating Aggressive Non-Compliance in Police Encounters with the Public

3.1 Introduction

Existing theoretical concepts can assist in explaining why conflict escalates during some incidents. The purpose of this chapter is threefold, focusing wholly on four key ideas. This chapter analyses the nature of the police role, especially in the context of how it shapes the activities of frontline police officers. It also considers the 'occupational police culture' as well as the authority and legitimacy of police officers when attending incidents and interacting with members of the public. The chapter outlines and defines these concepts, analysing them in the context of assaults before hypothesising the extent to which they assist in understanding assaults against police officers. Whilst chapter two assessed what is currently known about assaults, this chapter is more theoretical, focusing on selected concepts, which could affect and relevant to our understanding of assaults against police officers.

This chapter considers how the role, craft and informal internal values of police work lead to conflict escalation in encounter with the public and the way in which police officers maintain order through the use of force, directional orders and discretion. The police role is risk-based, with any incident potentially resulting in aggression and an assault, but factors such as officer expectations, values and behaviours can increase the risk of aggressive non-compliance during incidents and after the moment of arrest. Police power and authority can only exist (in the context of the police in England and Wales) where there is consent from the public to defer to their decisions (Reiner, 2000). Where police officers are not seen as being legitimate or proportionate in their actions, then there is an expectation that some people do not respect their authority or decisions, leading to resistance and assaults. Even where the public perceive that the police are enforcing an unfair law, then their target for aggression is often the officers enforcing this law, as they are a visible representation of the State.

This chapter first considers the role of the police in relation to the use of force, power and conflict with the public. It considers the unique position of the police in upholding the law and this role sometimes brings them into direct conflict with citizens during encounters. This section also discusses the authority and legitimacy of the police when making decisions during incidents. Second, this chapter analyses the concept of an occupational police culture, focusing on those traits most readily associated with frontline police officers. It considers how cultural values and informal learned and shared values can influence officers' actions and behaviours during incidents, and identifies the characteristics which are most likely to affect the risk of assault. This section introduces the concept of 'edgework' (Lyng,

1990). It considers whether this sociological concept can be applied to policing to explain why some incidents result in aggressive non-compliance. Third, this chapter draws on the work of Waddington (1999) and his concept of 'contempt of cop' as well as the discussions of Tyler (2003) on police legitimacy. It then considers these concepts in relation to adversarial contact between the public and the police, therefore helping to establish the framework within which the data are analysed. This chapter also makes reference to the role of the police in providing welfare and assistance to the public, and how these incidents can increase risk to police officers. The conclusion considers how each of these concepts may be important to explaining episodes of aggressive non-compliance and provides an analytical hypothesis, which the analysis chapters discuss.

3.2 Police Conflict in the Maintenance of Order and Law Enforcement

At the time of the formation of the Metropolitan Police in London, Sir Robert Peel conceived of the Peelian Principles, a rhetorical set of rules that sought to develop a positive relationship between the police and their public through the actions of those who chose to become police officers (Ramsay, 1971). These principles suggested that the police do have the power to use force on citizens, but only when negotiation and persuasion have failed. In any instance when force is used, a minimum and reasonable amount of force and control should be used to restore order and prevent further crime. The main attribute outlined by Peel, however, was that the police were representative of the public and that the police were the public (Boyd and Skelton, 2012). Whilst the nine Peelian Principles may underpin policing by consent in England and Wales, it has been questioned whether they were proposed by Peel or have been the basis for the development of textbook literature interpreting the initial principles and core tasks of the Metropolitan Police (Lentz and Chaires, 2007).

Police actions can only be legitimate and consensual where there is public approval, which is shown through citizens' observance of the law and deference to authority. Where there are challenges to the authority of the police, there is often a lack of acceptance of the implementation of the law, demonstrated through resistance to police officer action. This resistance can stem from unmet public expectations on the police to solve crime or reduce disorder; from socialised community and generational opinions of the police; or from prior police contact. Each of these conditions can lead to the questioning of police authority and legitimacy in dealing with crime and disorder, and create the conditions in which there is greater resistance towards the police as a whole (Zander, 1979). It is important during periods of austerity and changing times for the police that these original principles on which policing in England and Wales were developed are not forgotten (Boyd and Skelton, 2012).

In order to understand the role of the police as well as the emergence of some of the cultural traits and values, this section begins by considering the derivation of police powers and their impact on police/public conflict.

Police power is closely connected to political power, in that it is derived from the necessity to enable the “production of intended effects” (Russell, 1986: 19). Outcomes of control and order are achieved either through direct physical power, by inducement or by influencing opinion. The achievement of power through physical force is most closely associated with the police and the military, acting as the coercive arm of the State (Russell, 1986). Each of the strands, however, can be equally applied to the police role. In some incidents, police officers use physical force to coerce people to follow an instruction or to enact the law through an arrest. Police officers sometimes give people positive or negative inducements during encounters including the option to leave an area rather than be arrested. Police forces as a whole also influence public opinion and action through what Russell terms as ‘propaganda’ (1986: 19). This can be through influencing legislation, releasing stories to the media or the publication of crime prevention adverts and videos.³

Police powers to use force are prescribed and authorised by the State, which holds the “monopoly of the legitimate use of physical force within a given territory” (Weber, 1918 translated in Gerth and Wright-Mills, 1970: 78). Police officers have the unique ability to use lawful force in any situations against citizens (Rowe, 2008). This power can be used insofar as it is prescribed and restricted by the same law which authorises it (Weber, 1918). Whilst other occupations such as prison officers can use force in specific and restricted circumstances, commonly connected to the confines of their role and workplace, police officers have a broader ability to use force in all areas of national jurisdiction where it is necessary to maintain a prescribed social order (Klockars, 1985; Weber, 1918). The law, however, becomes powerless and meaningless without public support and their submission to its effects and requirements (Reiner, 2000; Russell, 1986). Police officers’ powers are defined according to their demonstrating the threat of coercion and force through the symbolic power of their uniform and protective equipment alongside the actual power to use force insofar as the State empowers them to do so (Arendt, 1986; Russell, 1986). Police officers act in the capacity of the State, enacting the intentions of the State through suitable sanctions, including the use of force and control, as well as arrest (Manning, 1997).

The ability to use force does not mean it should or even *can* be used during every incident. Handcuffs, batons and TASER are visible means of control and suggestive of an ability to

³ In Lincolnshire, such campaigns have included prevention of domestic assaults and dramatic videos on what are known as the ‘fatal four’, which are factors which increase the risk of being involved in fatal road collisions.

quickly apply coercive solutions to violent behaviour. During most incidents, where there is an increased risk of violence, the presence or showing of this equipment is sufficient to allow a potentially aggressive encounter to become compliant. The majority of incidents attended by the police require no formal police action to be taken (Rowe, 2010). As such, the main concern of the police is to restore situational order through negotiation and persuasion of outcomes with different groups (Bittner, 1975; Katz, 2002; Rowe, 2010).

The seminal work on the unique role of the police is that of Egon Bittner (1975). Bittner argues that police officers apply the law and impose a situated order in socially structured circumstances (Bittner, 1975; Katz, 2002). The public expect the police to attend and deal with certain incidents due to their unique ability to apply force as a last resort (Bittner, 1975). Some police encounters are “non-negotiably coercible” and cannot be resolved through verbal communication or reasoned argument (Bittner, 1975: 41). Physical force (violence) only manifests itself where there is a failure of police officers’ authority to restore social order through negotiation and persuasion (Arendt, 1986; Dahl, 1986). Bittner argues that one of the key roles of the police is to attend and resolve “something that ought not to be happening and about which someone had better do something now” (Bittner, 1975, 1990: 249). This can include both the crime prevention, and the law and order functions of the police as well as the police acting in their role as a social service (Punch, 1973; 1979a). As such, the public have certain expectations of the police role and police action in response to crime and need. The police need to achieve and complete these aims in order to remain legitimate and authoritative and be in a position to define their role and capabilities (Manning, 1997; Reiner, 1991). Ericson (1982) corroborated this view arguing that the police restore order through their actions.

The focus of the police role is on fighting crime, but it also draws upon their social service function. Ericson, however, stated that police officers chiefly see themselves as crime fighters, despite a remarkably small part of their work involving crime-related work and public interaction (Ericson, 1982). In his work on public order policing, Bryett (1991) stated that physical force is intrinsic to the police role, as the public expect that the police will attend everything that they can physically cope with. The function of the police, therefore, is a complex dichotomy between their compassionate, welfare role and the application of force in order to gain compliance (Bryett, 1991). Despite this separation between the two roles, chapter seven problematises this crude bifurcation of police roles.

The use of force by the police and their authority to coerce citizens through the threat of arrest can lead to increased risk of assault and conflict where the law is vague and where decisions to arrest or take formal police action are predicated on an officer’s discretion and

his/her understanding of the terms of the legislation. Ericson (2007) cites a number of criminological texts when referring to police officers using their discretion to deviate from legal rules and boundaries in order to use force, search, and arrest people. Sanders et al. (2010) referenced public order legislation and its application in the night-time economy as key examples of this legislation. The law details offences for the use of foul and abusive language as well as threatening behaviour in a public place, and which is within the sight and sound of other people (see, for example, Public Order Act 1986). It is at the officers' discretion to decide whether an offence has been committed and when an arrest can be justified. Police officers are able to decide when an individual swearing in the street or towards an officer reaches such an adequate level as it is necessary to criminalise it (Ashworth, 2003). When a person disagrees with this choice, they may become resistant, leading to an increased risk of aggressive non-compliance. An officer's threshold for arrests under laws similar to the Public Order Act 1986 could be influenced by his/her policing experience or the guidance of others when choosing when an arrest is proportionate for the offence of swearing.

The prevailing language developed from an over-arching culture might create a rule book which teaches officers how to respond to witnessing such behaviours (Ericson, 2007). Any differences in definition between police officers can lead to the law being applied unequally. An offence for which one officer makes an arrest, could oftentimes result in an instruction to cease and desist from another. Even though police officers cannot apply all of the law, all of the time, the public expect it to be applied fairly and consistently (Reiner, 2000). Any movement away from this practice could create a demarcation between the public and the police as to the fairness of the invocation of the law and, subsequently, to increased resistance to its application. Reiner (1991) argued that the police operate in the "shadow of the law" but where exercising authority over citizens is a key aspect of the role (1991: 107). Policing in England and Wales is underpinned by the mantra of 'policing by consent' whereby minimum force is used to resolve disputes and public confidence is based on the police completing their social-based functions (Reiner, 1991). Reiner argued, however, that the symbolic authority of the police has been steadily eroded due to controversies around police misconduct and misuse of force, meaning that the public are less respectful of the police uniform (Reiner, 1991).

The public give their unconscious support to certain groups to undertake work that far exceeds what other people would willingly do and complete (Hughes, 1962). One of these groups of people is the police, who are paid to attend events, which ordinary people would not wish to encounter, such as deaths or those with the potential for violence. This argument reflects what was termed by Everett Hughes as 'dirty work'. Although Hughes' (1962) study

focused on German soldiers during World War Two, the concept appears to apply to the role of the police. Force is necessary to resolve some of these incidents, even where there is morally ambiguity about its use (Dick, 2005; Waddington, 1999). Police officers sometimes believe that the use of force is necessary for the greater good of protecting the wider public, but could have reservations about its application (Dick, 2005). For example, officers may use physical force against those defined by their marginalisation from societal norms, such as users of psychoactive substances; or those who could present a danger to the public but are unaware of their actions, including those with mental health issues. In doing so, the police informally criminalise behaviour that does not reflect public sensibilities (Waddington, 1999). The stereotyping of groups as a 'criminal underclass', thereby marginalising them and judging their behaviour, can create conditions in which the police are seen as an enemy, leading to increased resistance to their instructions or actions (Waddington, 1999).

From a Marxist perspective and the work of the New Police Studies, this model of law enforcement, has started a low-intensity war against those stereotyped as a criminal underclass (Neocleous, 2000). According to Neocleous (2000), the police stop people who are more likely to be available in public space, leading to the ostracising of certain people and latterly resistance from individuals. The targeted application of certain laws and police powers can foster thoughts of repression in certain people and, therefore, a backlash against police actions (Marenin, 1982). The demarcation and ostracising of certain groups, distances the police from the Peelian Principles of the police as representatives of the public. The demands for autonomy and liberty through human rights legislation could lead to challenges to any law which prescribes against these rights and behaviours, in turn leading to resistance against the authority and legitimacy of the police to apply these laws (Machan, 1983).

3.3 The Impact of Police Authority and Legitimacy on Conflict Escalation

The police can only be as effective as the public allows, and this is dependent on acceptance of their authority and legitimacy (Dahl, 1986). Where police actions are not seen by the public as being fair and proportionate to the circumstances or to the law which they are trying to enact, there is an increased risk of aggression and conflict (Arendt, 1986; Russell, 1986). Without legitimate compliance from the public, the police are more likely to resort to force as a coercive method of restoring order and obtaining support for the law (Lee et al., 2015). As Sunshine and Tyler (2003: 516) stated, "legitimacy....is the fulcrum of the relationship between the police and the public". If the police are seen as legitimate then their authority is accepted and people are more likely to obey the law (Sunshine and Tyler, 2003; Tyler, 2006). Resistance to the police could be indicative of the public's perceived lack of

police legitimacy in upholding the law. It might be argued that these public opinions of the police are sometimes based on the behaviour and actions of the police during encounters with the public (Lee et al., 2015). The extent to which people obey the law and respond positively to police direction differs according to the context in which force is applied and an individual's connection to that incident (i.e. whether they are the direct focus of police action and whether they agree those formal actions are justified; or whether a close acquaintance is being controlled by officers) (Tyler, 2006).

Procedural fairness in the application of order affects the extent to which police behaviour is viewed by the public as legitimate (Tyler, 2006). There are a number of factors, which could influence how a person reacts to police contact, both in the immediate situation and in the future. These include: where a person feels unfairly and constantly targeted by the police due to their lifestyle choices; where someone has had a negative encounter with the police; or where a person has received an official sanction for their behaviour after witnessing someone receiving a warning for similar behaviour. Whilst many people obey the law due to their own internalised morality, societal norms and the fear of repercussions, the fairness of police procedure still has a bearing on either preventing or escalating conflict and judging how some people react to police contact (Tyler, 2006). In his work on legitimacy, Tyler (2006) argued that citizens expect neutrality in decision-making, with police officers making unbiased choices that reflect the circumstances of an incident. People also want to be part of the process, receiving communication about what is happening and knowing that their views and opinions are listened to, if not respected (Tyler, 2006). When police officers act in this manner, it shows respect for a person as an individual as well as his/her rights (Machan, 1983; Tyler, 2006). It might be the case that people accept intrusion into their personal lives if the police exercise their authority in a fair and equal way (Tyler, 2006; 2011). The maintenance of legitimacy is a fluid process which occurs throughout an incident, where the practice of procedural fairness is constantly judged and re-evaluated by citizens (Lee et al., 2015). From these arguments, it can be hypothesised that an officer's behaviour during an incident can affect its outcome, as to whether a person is compliant or non-compliant, and whether this response to the police officer's actions changes throughout the encounter.

It is not always possible for police officers to act in such a way that allows them to listen to and understand every point of view in an incident. As Bittner (1975) argued, police officers attend incidents with a high risk of violence, and which can require an immediate display of force. Decisions to take formal police action are often based on allegations made by one person, with the arrest and subsequent interview allowing the alleged offender the right to reply. This response to any allegations happens in police custody and not at the moment of arrest and caution. Therefore, a person who disagrees with the reason for his/her arrest or

who denies the allegation may react to the police officers detaining them rather than listening to their counter-argument. Chapter two highlighted that domestic incidents are a source of an increased risk of assault against police officers. Work on police legitimacy provides suggestions as to why this is the case. When officers attend a report of domestic abuse, on entering the residence officers tend to separate in order to speak to the different partners in the address. If one party makes an allegation of assault, then an immediate decision is normally taken to arrest the other person, and in order to prevent further conflict, coercive control is used such as handcuffing an individual. At the point of arrest, the alleged offender is given a police caution⁴ and is often not given the chance to respond. Without being listened to, the procedure could be seen as unfair, thus leading to an increased risk of resistance.

Another area in which the legitimacy and authority of police officers are challenged is in the night-time economy. There are other underlying factors, which can affect the public's perception of legitimacy in this context. For example, where a person's judgement and ability to reason is clouded by alcohol consumption, a person could react negatively to police control, even when the reason for this action is being explained to them. Deference to authority in the night-time economy can be difficult to achieve and is a location where officers face regular conflict and resistance. Whichard and Felson (2016) argued that after the consumption of alcohol, young males sometimes react aggressively to the fear of loss of their liberty. This reaction was termed by Waddington (1999) as 'contempt of cop'. Waddington argued that resistance to police action can lead to the use of force by officers who seek to humiliate people who pose a challenge to their authority (Waddington, 1999). Where an officer's position of power is threatened, some seek to quickly reassert their authority over the situation through the use of force and control. These actions can be taken without explanation or negotiation, thus leading to a downward spiral towards aggressive non-compliance, excessive force or assault. People may offer equal physical resistance to the use of force by officers. To this end, there is sometimes a self-fulfilling logic to the use of force, insofar as any control used by police officers can lead to an equal and opposite reaction. Especially with regard to cultural masculinity, neither side wishes to submit to the authority of the other, as this can equate to a sign of weakness (Waddington, 1999).

⁴ Known in policing and to the courts as the 'when questioned' caution. The terminology of the caution being: "You do not have to say anything; but it may harm your defence if you do not mention, when questioned, something which you later rely on in court. Anything you do say may be given in evidence". This is provided to assailants after an officer provides the reason for arrest. An officer may also state this caution to a person during an incident, just prior to asking evidential questions in order to establish an offence.

The escalation of conflict in any context could potentially be more likely where there is an audience. The visibility of an incident can have both a direct and indirect impact on resistance to police officers. Directly, a person being arrested may resist or friends can become involved to try and assist an escape (Toch, 1969). Without the support of the crowd for police actions, outside parties sometimes become involved where they perceive that the use of force is unnecessary or unjustified (Toch, 1969). Indirectly, videos of arrests can be posted on social media and edited to distort the events to try and show that the use of force by the police was disproportionate. On both a local and national level, these videos can affect how some people interact with the police in future encounters. It is important to note, that much of Toch's understanding of violence towards police officers, places the blame solely on citizens who react negatively to police officers who are attempting to maintain social order. This study argues, however, that for a conflict to escalate, it is necessary to consider the behaviour and actions of all those involved in the encounter. In certain circumstances, police officers provoke a reaction to justify an arrest either through their use of force or language.

Police officers sometimes apply their own informal attitude tests when deciding when to use official sanctions. Especially in public order situations and offences, where a lot of the evidence is based on words heard or actions seen by police officers, discretion becomes key to their ultimate choice (Sanders et al., 2010). Decisions to arrest could be more readily based on those who are contemptuous of an officer's authority rather than the nature of the offence (Engel, 2003; Worden et al., 1996). Depending on their workload and attendance at calls, police officers can often dictate their own activities and processes through discretionary choices, determining how police policy is enacted on the ground (Reiner and Newburn, 2012). This is despite the fact that people have an increasing resource to the police complaints procedures regarding police behaviour, such as internal complaints procedures and the Independent Office for Police Conduct (IOPC).⁵ For example, an officer could decide not to submit a crime report for an offence where they do not believe an allegation was made or where they do not wish to investigate the crime.⁶ These actions can create circumstances whereby someone can challenge the authority and legitimacy of the police to be able to effectively deal with crime.

The introduction of new technologies such as body worn video cameras (BWV) might limit the police's discretion during incidents as they record the actions and behaviours of all the

⁵ Formally the Independent Police Complaints Commission (IPCC)

⁶ This is contrary to the National Crime Recording Standards and Home Office Counting, which suggest that a crime report must be recorded where a person states that an offence has been committed unless there is evidence to suggest it has not occurred (Home Office, 2019).

people involved in an encounter. The cameras assist the police in gathering evidence to support or challenge complaints from the public but they could also legitimise police behaviour, as officers refuse to push the boundaries of justifiable force and action relating to arrest, stop and search, and violent incidents. Police officers can alter their behaviour, as they are concerned about their overuse of force or how their actions might appear to the public, courts or senior police managers (Ariel, 2016; Brown, 2016). Cameras are self-regulating, and enforce discipline amongst police officers, and it has been claimed their presence has caused constructive reductions in complaints of illegitimate police violence (Ariel 2016; Brown, 2016). The cameras, however, do not always affect the use of police discretion in choosing who to stop and when to take formal action. Some police actions are influenced by manifestations of occupational cultural values and traits. The adoption of a unique set of cultural and shared values is most readily observable in the actions and behaviours of frontline police officers, where teams and shifts tend to have closer bonds and combined goals as well as having the discretion to choose whether or not to use formal police actions to resolve incidents (Ericson, 2007; Newburn and Reiner, 2012).

There are varied conclusions in the literature regarding the effectiveness of BWV in reducing the risk of conflict during incidents. Lister et al (2018) focused on the perceptions of officers who often argued that the cameras lowered the risk of assault at domestic incidents as potential assailants calmed down knowing that they were being filmed. Whilst Taylor et al (2017) concluded that from an offender's perspective the cameras should reduce the chance of violence from both police officers and suspects, there was still a danger of increased aggression from some citizens in response to being stopped and subsequently filmed or being recorded in private arenas. Indeed, random control tests done in other police forces, have shown that the rate at which force is used by police officers does not generally reduce after the introduction and cameras and that the number of assaults increased against officers wearing body worn video cameras (Ariel et al, 2016). This latter figure may derive from greater confidence amongst officers in reporting an assault where there is supporting evidence (Police Professional, 2016). These results still demonstrate, however, that the introduction of cameras is problematic if predicated on hypothesis that they will readily reduce the rate of assaults (Ariel et al, 2016).

3.4 Occupational Police Culture and Police Behaviour

Bayley (1995) suggested that the behaviours associated with an occupational culture excuse some police actions, encouraging the abuse of their position and misuse of force by some officers. In turn, this can reduce police legitimacy and lead to a negative social context in which police officers enact their role (Bayley, 1995). Indeed, Reiner (2016) argued that there

are common observable traits in how police officers deal with violence. In an organisation with impressionable young officers and a hierarchy dominated by a masculine environment, achieving any cultural change is difficult and long-standing characteristics remain that guide police actions (Bayley, 1995; Reiner, 2016). As well as influencing police actions, cultural pressures and values can influence officers' reactions both as a shift (solidarity and secrecy) and individual non-action (bravado) (Reiner, 2000). This section analyses cultural traits and their influence on police actions, as well as any subsequent conflict escalation designated along lines of gender. It describes how newer officers are socialised into a set of internal values, which influence the desire to use force, leading to the stereotyping of certain groups and how officers react to challenges to their authority. As Bayley and Bittner (1984) suggested in their work on policing skills, police officers perceive their role as a specialist craft that is learned from experience, patrol work, decision-making and from other officers. Police officers can push the boundaries of acceptable force when dealing with conflict, in an attempt to maintain order. The reproduction of social norms and order are a key facet of policing, which requires controlling violence and disorder, whilst trying to minimise the risk of injury and attempting to avoid provocation of the public (Bayley and Bittner, 1984).

3.4.1 Edgework and Police Actions

Before considering the traits of a police occupational culture, consideration is given to the concept of 'edgework', a sociological concept which has many defining characteristics that make it similar to the traits suggested of a police occupational culture. The concept as coined by Stephen Lyng (1990; 1992) was based on work with skydivers. Lyng (1990) reported that some skydivers put themselves in situations of greater risk, where there were observable threats to either their physical or mental safety. Lyng (1990; 1992) argued that some people are able to control what appears to be unmanageable and at the extreme ends of their discipline, in order to test themselves, and achieve goals, which seem to be unobtainable. People artificially increase their risk whilst simultaneously seeking to maintain control (Lyng, 1990; 1992). Similar to Hughes' (1963) concept of dirty work, where individuals completed tasks that others would not want to be involved in, edgework determines that to outsiders, some people are able to control the uncontrollable through their actions and behaviours. Controlling the uncontrollable might be directly applied to police officers when faced with extreme violence and risk or when attending highly emotional jobs. Edgework is also linked to theories of a police culture and the extent to which some officers push the boundaries of acceptability when dealing with incidents (Waddington, 1999). Some officers take risks at incidents or test limits of acceptable force due to an internalised belief that those who take greater chances during encounters are more likely to be rewarded and revered in the parade room. In relation to mountain climbers, Simon (2002) found that some

climbers felt that taking greater risks would give them a higher standing within their respective social group.

The concept of 'edgework' is, therefore, could therefore be important in explaining the behaviour of some police officers. Police officers involved in incidents of aggressive non-compliance or who secure more arrests by placing themselves in deliberate danger to save others might be more highly revered and talked about in the parade rooms at police stations. Some officers may place themselves in high-risk situations in order to receive greater prestige following a positive outcome. Moreover, as officers' progress through their career, they may not receive the same satisfaction from a complaint arrest and therefore seek out those that present a challenge, where force is required and there is an increased risk of assault. As a result, some officers may push the boundaries of the force they can use during incidents or take deliberate risks before seeking to reassert control over an encounter.

Police officers push themselves outside of their comfort zones in order to challenge themselves and increase the adrenaline rush from performing these actions (cf. Lyng, 1990; Simon, 2002). For some officers this means attending an increasing number of potentially volatile and risky incidents, where there is a likelihood that the officer will resort to using a mechanism of control. Whilst such incidents, present an increased risk of conflict and assault, some officers may be more willing to attend them, following an internalised demand for a mission and action. The need to adhere to and perform cultural working values as defined by a sense of excitement and bravado can lead to officers more readily attending incidents where incivility is extremely likely. Police officers may be judged by other officers on how they confront and control potentially violent incidents. Such judgements are made using the critical lens of masculine expectations of the frontline policing role (Reiner, 2000). Much like the occupational police cultural values, men and women have different uptakes of the principles of 'edgework' indicating a cultural bifurcation in its nature and application (Lois, 2001; Sklansky, 2007). It might be male officers who more readily resort to force and female officers who rely on their communication skills in order to minimise the risk of conflict. To this end, there may be some officers who purposefully escalate conflicts during incidents in order to secure an arrest and test their skills, or because they do not know how to resolve an incident peaceably. As Klockars argues

"In any police agency there are officers who are well known for their ability to walk into an out-of-control situation and stabilise it peacefully. There are others of course who can turn any situation into a riot. The skill of such officers is [in] knowing how to work in ways that minimize the use of force" (Klockars, 1999 cited in Sparrow, 2015)

Waddington (1999) argued that by pushing the acceptable boundaries of action, police officers explore the limits of the law, whilst neutralising and justifying their behaviour. This is referred to as creating “edges of corruption” (Waddington, 1999: 158). Police officers justify the use of additional force during incidents in the context of a person deserving this attention and reaction. Force may be more readily used when the authority of the police is directly challenged (Waddington, 1999). The defence of force as necessary in the circumstances also applies even when it is morally questionable.⁷ The internal and public expectations for police officers to be assertive and authoritative in every situation can be said to be actively connected to the reasons some incidents move from compliance to aggressive non-compliance. In being assertive, some officers may push the boundaries of what the public see as necessary and legitimate actions in resolving or controlling conflict, increasing the officer’s risk of being assaulted.

3.4.2 Cultural Values and Actions within Police Work

There is a long-standing debate in the academic literature, which considers the key characteristics and inherent nature of an occupational police culture as well as the extent to which socialised informal values influence the actions of police officers during incidents. This culture has been defined as an internalised set of values and norms, to which new officers are socialised into during their training and especially during their tutored phase of development (see, for example, Adlam, 1982; Brown, 2000; Chan, 2003; Kappeler et al., 1994). This study takes into account the traits associated with the frontline police role, as studies have argued that those who work in specialist police roles have a separate cultural norms and that there is a demarcation between ‘response’ and ‘management’ cops (Newburn and Reiner, 2012; Reiner, 2000). The concept of an occupational police culture is highly contested both on its characteristics and influence on police behaviour. The first seminal work conducted into a culture was Skolnick’s (1966) work around the ‘working personality’ of police officers. The term ‘occupational culture’, however, was not formalised until later academic works (Reiner, 2016).

Since this work, there has been an increasing interest in attempting to explain the working practices and decision-making processes of police officers (for example, Chan, 1997; 2003; Charman, 2017; Reiner, 2000; 2016). Skolnick (1966) argued that police officers develop a unique way of interpreting the social world in which they uphold and enforce the law. This is based on the premise that policing is an inherently risk-based role. Police officers are under pressure to achieve results in preventing crime and exercising authority over the public

⁷ This can include use of force against people with mental health issues, dementia and young people, or even where the assailant is a person of the opposite gender to the officer (especially male officers using force against female suspects).

(Skolnick, 1966). In response to danger, police officers develop an internal solidarity, which aids in the shared understanding of their role. It is argued, however, that this solidarity isolates police officers from the public and leads to an innate suspicion of those the police encounter (Skolnick, 1966). These internalised views of the public can be both positive and negative. They are positive in that they can lead to the effective use of police powers, especially regarding stop and search, and the questioning of people's accounts. Negatively, however, it creates a division between police officers and the citizens they serve, especially those who are in regular contact with the police.

Norms associated with a frontline occupational culture have been modified, adapted and expanded in various academic studies, but most notably in the work of Robert Reiner (2000). Reiner formalised the observable traits of an occupational police culture and characteristics, which along with the traits of Skolnick's 'working personality, have remained by and large accepted as the key definition of the working culture of police officers (Waddington, 2012). Alongside Skolnick's (1966) established traits of isolation, solidarity and suspicion, Reiner (2000) suggests other qualities of a frontline street cop culture, which allow for a focus on law enforcement and crime fighting (Kirby, 2013; Loftus, 2010; Reiner, 2000). These include a desire for action, machismo, bravado, conservatism and an authoritarian personality (Reiner, 2000). It is argued that socialisation into and adoption of these traits can influence and guide police actions during incidents, which may trigger aggressive non-compliance. Ericson's (2007) view on culture is that whilst there are collective codes of behaviour amongst police officers, such as the code of silence, the main culture is a field of knowledge developed from the experiences of officers and the language of officers, which emphasises rules and ways of seeing, which to a greater or lesser extent, officers adopt when fulfilling rules in practice and in actions during incidents. The next subsections consider those traits, which the study suggests have the greatest explanatory potential as to why there is confrontation and resistance during some police/public encounters.

3.4.3 Desire for Action

According to Reiner, police officers view themselves as the thin blue line between societal order and anarchy (Reiner, 2010). Officers are guided by a sense of mission and wanting to demonstrate positive and observable outcomes as a result of their actions. Any actions or results performed in the pursuit of action and the achievement of a mission are seen by officers as effective policing, whereas anything external to this is not seen as a fundamental part of the police role (Reiner, 2010). Comparatively to the work of Lyng (1990), police officers may seek out incidents that provide an adrenaline rush and dismiss the more mundane aspects of the role. In his ethnographic study with French police officers, Fassin

(2013) found that a desire for action and confrontation often manifested itself in the overuse of force or in misplaced stereotypes of societal groups. Fassin (2013) argued that approximately ten percent of the time during each shift was spent dealing with calls from the public, which is far removed from the public perception of the police role and how police officers describe their role. It contradicts the artificial authenticity shown on reality television about constant incidents over the course of one evening. Indeed, an internal study by Lincolnshire Police in 2019 demonstrated that only twenty percent of policing time was spent attending incidents. After long periods of inactivity, attendance at any incidents can lead to misplaced bursts of energy and the use of force without justification in order to maintain their presence and an appearance of order (Fassin, 2013). This can lead to negative reactions, where this force is seen unlawful or the presence of the police is seen as unnecessary or an unlawful invasion of personal space.

Ericson (1982) stated that much frontline police patrol work is boring and involves having potential powers but without any incidents to attend. Much of their work is directed at the lower end of the spectrum with minor crime and incidents, which often result in informal outcomes (Ericson, 1982). This view is supported by Skolnick and Fyfe (1993), who argued that patrol policing mostly comprises periods of boredom interspersed with brief moments of excitement. When connected to cultural norms, officers may apply too much force, when viewing themselves as being on a mission to apprehend criminal (Skolnick and Fyfe, 1993). When presented, therefore, with a potentially violent incident, some officers may use too much force or take risks that place them at increased risk of assault. In these circumstances, police officers may use 'recipe rules' in order to justify actions and protect against complaints, even if these rationales could set the police against the public if an officer exaggerates or downplays the reality of their actions during an incident (Ericson, 1982). Skolnick and Fyfe (1993) identify this as a training problem with new and existing officers, whereby these officers can enter a conflictual encounter at the wrong level and without considering their actions, potentially leading to the misuse of force and confrontation, thus creating the risk of assault or police brutality.

3.4.4 Suspicion and Distrust

Tensions exist between the police and certain citizens and groups (Fassin, 2013). This distrust fosters a 'them' and 'us' culture, creating an internalised and hidden police institution, which defends officer's actions against criticism from outsiders and those who do not understand the police role (Hahn, 1971; Reiner, 2000; Waddington, 1999). Chapter four considers the extent to which police officers are honest in their responses to questions from external researchers. Previous studies have shown distrust between police officers and

certain groups, thus influencing decisions to apply the law. For example, it has been argued that police officers are increasingly adversarial to those who defy authority or lead unconventional lifestyles (Prenzler, 1967; Reiner, 2010). Fassin (2013) uncovered tensions between the police and younger people, with their suspicions of this social group affecting how police officers approached certain encounters. Suspicion and stereotyping can create public representations of the police as delivering selective justice, challenging the legitimacy of police officers in certain communities (Fassin, 2013; Kirby, 2013; van Maanen, 1978).

In his work on frontline police officers, van Maanen (1978) argued that the police categorised people they encounter. These labels included the 'know-nothings', the 'suspicious individuals' and 'the assholes'. In determining which group a person falls into, a police officer decides the way in which he/she approaches and controls any incident involving them. Moreover, the work of Engel and Calnon (2004) found that some police officers racially profiled people who were stopped in vehicles and that the ethnic background of the driver influenced the outcome of the traffic stop. It was determined that the natural suspicion of some officers affected their decision when deciding who to punish for traffic offences (Engel and Calnon, 2004). Negative stereotyping affects police/public relations and detrimentally impact on the authority of the police. Such decisions and labelling of people according to an informal group can lead to conflict escalation. The immediate stereotyping of people, however, can make police officers more aware of risks and enable them to implement tactics that can diffuse potentially violent situations. Stott et al. (2009) argued that group profiling allows police forces to effectively police large-scale public order incidents. Dividing groups and analysing personalities within that group minimises the risks associated with increased violence due to the homogenous grouping of the crowd (Hoggett and Stott, 2010; Stott et al., 2009). In order to prevent violence, police officers need to determine quickly those most likely to be aggressive and this can only sometimes be achieved through having natural suspicion and quickly being able to define a person's character (Stott et al., 2009).

3.4.5 Machismo, Bravado and the Authoritarian Personality

The police force has always had a predominance of male police officers, which has led to the argument that there is an inherent 'cult of masculinity' in frontline police ranks, which is predicated on the notion of being a 'real man' and ostracising those who do not conform to these cultural values (Brown, 2007; Burke, 1994; Waddington, 1999). Brown (2007) argues that an over-arching culture dominated by masculinity creates an informal focus that favours being on patrol and attending action-filled incidents over and above completing paperwork and gathering intelligence. Herbert (1998) defines such behaviours as protecting the 'headcharger' masculine policing ethos. This is a somewhat defensive cultural trait against a

wider police force move towards mechanisms of professionalism and an increase in the number of female police officers (Brown, 2007; Herbert, 1998). Machismo influences police officer actions in wanting to attend and deal with hazardous incidents. Herbert (1998) found that those who stayed in the station or were wary of danger were often labelled 'station queens'. Moreover, Franklin (2005) argued that the machismo in police forces is a version of hypermasculinity, which is based on resistance to female officers, a desire for action and group secrecy and bonding. This brand of loyalty means police parade rooms have a code of silence against public complaints, with police officers being reticent to report their colleagues for aggressive behaviour (Chan, 2003; Franklin, 2005). Officers' unconditionally support their colleagues through their rejection and denial of allegations (Kleinig, 2011). The fear of being ostracised or of reporting colleagues for perceived wrongs allows for the occupational informal working rules of the police to be maintained (Kleinig, 2011). The role of the frontline police officer demands toughness, a restriction of emotions and a non-feminine status, which leads to an authoritative personality, defensiveness and cynical behaviour (Burke, 1994; Franklin, 2005; Kappeler et al., 1994; Reiner, 2010).

There is a gendered divide between what internally are seen by police officers as being male and female roles. Female officers are often viewed by male frontline police officers as being more nurturing and better communicators; whereas male officers viewed themselves as more physical and willing to confront violence (Franklin, 2005; Westmarland, 2001). In her key ethnographic study, Westmarland (2001) found that to be accepted into the specific social world of the police, female officers needed to prove themselves in terms of emotional toughness and a willingness to interfere in potentially aggressive disputes. As such, male officers may be used more often by sergeants and control room dispatchers to attend violent domestic incidents, or to execute warrants against well-known criminals, or incidents where there is a potential risk of injury. By contrast, female officers are more readily used for crimes involving vulnerable victims and children (Westmarland, 2001). These gendered deployments of officers persist despite the training given to every officer so that they are able to attend and resolve every type of incident. Chapters five and six consider in more depth how gender affects the chances of being assaulted. Male officer perceptions of their role as being dominated by the need for action, control and toughness may facilitate the pushing of boundaries of acceptable behaviour (Kirby, 2013; Newburn, 2007). The extent to which male and female officers conform to cultural values and beliefs might influence how officers behave during encounters with the public.

3.4.6 Occupational Police Culture, Police Action and Conflict

The microcosm of police officer actions during incidents can reveal how officers are guided by cultural values and norms. A minor action during an incident may result in a major and observable alteration in the dynamics of an encounter (Goffman, 1967; Katz, 2012). It is difficult to control the influence of socialised learning and discretion on frontline officers who are often not under immediate and direct supervision. This makes it challenging to hold officers accountable for their actions during an encounter (Reiner, 1995). A desire for action and being hidden from management can create an overbearing violent culture, leading to confrontation in some incidents. Police officers exaggerate aggression based on the fact that the use of force is intrinsic to the police role (Bryett, 1991). Therefore, the need to prove themselves to other officers, as well as not to submit to challenges against their authority demonstrates the potential influence that informal cultural values can have on the actions and choices of police officers when in conflict with the public.

Even with the modernisation of police forces, cultural changes are difficult to achieve, which is shown in the widespread rejection by frontline police officers of some police policies (in favour of informally accepted ways of performing the role) and the clear distinction between frontline officers and senior management (Loftus, 2010).⁸ The behaviour of police officers continues to mirror historical cultural traits such as the sense of mission (Loftus, 2010). Despite the argument that there are some potential variations between police force and department cultures, characteristics such as a sense of suspicion and internal defensiveness against external challenge appear to be relevant to every area of the force and to every officer (Skolnick, 2008).

The extent to which cultural traits and norms influences police action has been questioned with several arguments suggesting that the concept of a culture is manufactured by academics to critique police behaviour, which is not widely understood to outside observers (see, for example, Cockroft, 2007; Prenzler, 1997). There are a number of criticisms of the extent to which officers are socialised into a set of informal values and beliefs as well as the homogeneity of cultural traits among all frontline response officers. Alongside the gendered divide between male and female officers, it has also been argued that officers are not guided by internal expectations of other officers and use culturally manufactured talk as a support mechanism, which encourages officers to talk openly about their experiences and to share

⁸ An informal comment often heard in police parade rooms whenever new policies are introduced, is that senior managers have no knowledge of the frontline role, as they have not been involved in it for a number of years.

understanding of danger and risk in backstage areas.⁹ Shared cultural understandings bring meaning and a definition to the role rather than being a checklist and recipe for behaviour in front-stage interactions (Fielding, 1994; Myhill and Bradford, 2013). In this sense, a shared culture is a positive influence for police officers for understanding the rejection of authority and violence against them. It allows officers to share coping mechanisms when they have been assaulted or have been attending highly emotional incidents. There is a clear demarcation between the canteen culture and the working culture (Waddington, 1999). Both Cockroft (2007) and Waddington (1999) challenge the over-deterministic idea of the influence of police talk on subsequent action. They suggest that whilst officers discuss incidents they have attended, this does not necessarily equate to the internalisation of learned behaviours, which are then employed during incidents (Cockroft, 2007; Waddington, 1999). The over-arching culture only exists to celebrate police action and legitimise the use of force in morally challenging circumstances (Dick, 2005; Waddington, 1999).

If an occupational police culture does exist as observable traits in police behaviour, it might not apply equally to all police officers (Waddington, 1999). The background and personal characteristics of each individual officer may guide how they interact with internal police values and their decisions to seek out action or use force against citizens. Those officers with previous experience of conflict situations such as prison officers or members of the armed forces might feel more comfortable in asserting their authority and presence during a situation and in confronting aggression with the use of force and control. Conversely, those from other backgrounds not readily associated with violence, such as university graduates, are likely to react differently to aggressive incidents, especially if they have never previously been involved in confrontational encounters. The role, however, might be more demanding for these people to learn the skills of applying force and resisting aggression. Despite this, theories relating to a homogenous police culture may have been exaggerated (Prenzler, 1997).

Different cultural divisions may exist between police forces, especially between more rural police forces and larger urban forces. In more rural forces, there may be fewer officers per shift who rely on different values and policing styles than officers in city-based forces, where officers may regularly patrol with another colleague.¹⁰ Ericson (2007) refers to differences across police organisations of “the cultures of police work” (2007: 368). Internally, police

⁹ By backstage and front-stage, here it means the separation between those areas where police officers are not in direct view of the public such as the parade room or canteen in the police station (backstage), and those where police officers are interacting with members of the public during live incidents and in patrol cars (front-stage).

¹⁰ Being on patrol with another officer is known in policing as being ‘double-crewed’. This appears to be unique to policing as even in other emergency services this term is not readily used. For example, ambulance crews who work together often do not refer to themselves as being ‘double-crewed’.

forces are structured in different teams and departments who have varying goals and targets. Different cultures appear to exist between frontline police officers and those who work in child protection or the Criminal Investigation Department (CID), where the culture may be victim-focused and reliant on support to explore every detail of an investigation (Reiner, 2000; Sklansky, 2007). Furthermore, officers in investigatory departments do not face the same dangers as frontline officers and so may not display the same solidarity as is present amongst response cops. From this chapter onwards, whenever an occupational police culture is discussed it concentrates on the traits and definitions as they apply to frontline officers, who are the focus of this study.

This study focuses on the influence of cultural values and norms in creating an informal rulebook which acts as a guiding mechanism for police officer action and therefore the extent to which socialised behaviours impact on an increased risk of assault. The research takes into account and examines the extent to which individual police officers are distinctly influenced (to a greater or lesser degree) by informal working rules and norms. It also acknowledges the cultural gap between management policies, management ranks and street-level police officers (see, for example, Myhill and Bradford, 2013; Prenzler, 1997; Reiner, 2000). As new specialisations develop in police forces, it is expected that any occupational police culture will naturally show variations in the working rules of officers and their traits between roles¹¹ (Sklansky, 2007, Waddington, 1999). As more female officers are employed as frontline officers and undertake police training, and the diversity of police officers increases throughout police forces, there are likely to be fundamental shifts in the influence of the long-standing traits of any occupational culture, including machismo, bravado and authoritarianism. This may mean that the original schema of a culture to which all police officers were supposedly unified and socialised, becomes weaker as distrust and competition between cultural sub-groups and departments grows (Prenzler, 1997; Sklansky, 2007). This critique is analysed in the context of assaults in considering why some police officers are more likely to face aggressive non-compliance than others.

3.5 Conclusion

Power is exerted by police officers through two specific mechanisms, namely the threat of coercion and the use of actual coercion and force. Similarly, during most incidents, public compliance is achieved through negotiation and persuasion, but there are occasions when police officers have to resort to the use of force to obtain this compliance with the law. The role of the police and the powers available to them are structured in such a way that allows

¹¹ For example, more recent new specialist departments in police forces include Cyber-crime specialists and Counter-Terrorism Officers

them to enforce the law and maintain a socially structured order. In meeting these aims and public expectations, police officers are at risk of being attacked and coming into conflict with citizens. Conflict and confrontation can occur due to the public's reaction to police actions, which might be viewed to some citizens as being illegitimate or disproportionate to the circumstances; or who dislike the way officers approach an incident and how they assert their authority. The nature of the modern policing role also increases the risk of assault during certain incidents. Whenever the police enter a private dwelling, any force used or order applied might be resisted by persons who wish to defend their right to a private life and their own personal space. Moreover, during encounters with people who are under the influence of drugs or suffering from mental health issues, their inability to rationalise police instruction or a lack of knowledge of how to approach these incidents, can increase the chances of an officer being injured or harm being caused to a citizen. The aspects of private disputes and incidents involving drugs and mental health concerns are analysed in chapter seven.

The legitimacy of the police may be questioned in the way police officers communicate with certain communities or stereotype certain people as well as their own effectiveness and balanced approach to dealing with incidents. Furthermore, with a reduction in the overall police numbers across England and Wales since 2010, officers may now be less visible on the streets and, therefore, have become more distant from the public, who are unaware of the demands on policing. To this end, the police could be accused of not reflecting the needs of the community or acting on its behalf. People might not have any local investiture in their policing, making it increasingly likely an officer's authority could be challenged during an incident. The way in which the law is applied, if perceived to be unfair, might cause more resistance from people in their response to the police action. Whilst the police have to make choices between formal police action and out of custody resolutions, the way in which these decisions are perceived by the public can lead to resistance (if police officers arrest one person for swearing and give another person a warning for using the same words).

It is hypothesised that those officers who adopt and act according to the informal occupational cultural values will be at the greatest risk of being assaulted. It is also likely that cultural values and traits impact on how police officers talk about confronting violence; how officers approach incidents and assert their authority; and the way in which officers use their discretion to make decisions about whether or not to arrest someone for an assault. The craft of police work and internal police officers' expectations about control could explain conflict escalation during a number of police/public encounters. Moreover, the concept of 'edgework' theoretically sheds light on why some officers may push the boundaries during incidents in an effort to control a person through the use of force. The application of the

concept of 'edgework' on police actions is considered in the context of studied observations in chapter six.

The concepts of the police role, legitimacy and police culture form the analytical framework for the qualitative data in this study. It is imperative to consider how each of these can influence conflict escalation in live incidents and, therefore, the extent to which they explain some assaults against police officers. The concepts of role and culture are significant to this study as they provide the basis on which the continuum of compliance is analysed and understood. The next chapter considers the methodology employed in this study, which includes the data collection methods. The mixed methodology allowed observations to be gathered, whereby the influence of cultural values and officer perceptions of authority could be analysed about assault and non-compliant incidents. Policing is best understood after the event, by observing incidents and witnessing how police officers interact with the world around them (Manning, 2013). Manning (2013) argued that qualitative methodologies offer an explanatory functionality for analysing the core roles of policing.

Chapter Four: Research Methodology

Researching the Police from the Inside

4.1 Introduction

This chapter explains the methodology employed in this study and justifies its rationale. It also reflects on my personal experiences in researching police officers and observing live police incidents, including discussing the elements of cognitive dissonance, bias and the difficulties associated with writing about colleagues. The challenges of researching police 'from the inside' are contextualised and compared to other academic work both by those serving in the police and by external researchers. The study used three main research methods to gather data, namely quantitative data, including drawing on crime data and archival reports of assaults documented on police systems; observational fieldwork and participant observation resulting in case studies and reports on live incidents of conflict and assaults; and interviews with police officers about their experiences of being assaulted. This chapter explains selection process for these three methods and explains why they are the most suitable for answering the research questions. It analyses the strengths and weaknesses of each method in generating valid and generalisable data. This chapter begins by introducing the research design and the fieldwork setting before considering the aspects of the ethnographic approach to police research, which has been employed to great effect in other studies of police work (Banton, 1964; Skolnick, 1966; Cain, 1973; Reiner, 1978; Punch, 1979b; Hobbs, 1988; Holdaway, 1983; Brewer, 1991; Young, 1991; Westmarland, 1998 are seminal examples). This first section examines problems of access, building trust and rapport, and the choice between overt and covert methodologies. Most importantly for this study, it analyses the potential of 'going native' and 'becoming academic' and therefore being able to partition the roles of police officer and researcher to ensure the validity of the data and subsequent conclusions. This chapter will also review the process of ethical clearance undertaken through the University of Leeds and some of the considerations, risks and decisions examined when deciding on the focus of the research process.

The chapter then discusses the different approaches to conducting qualitative interviews as well as observing how interviews can be used to generate in-depth material that makes sense of the observational fieldwork findings. The triangulation of research data has a number of key benefits over using a single methodology when studying policing, police incidents and assaults. This methodology can be replicated between different force areas to test the findings and further enhance the research on this topic. The quantitative data provides a broad picture of the trends of assaults against police officers over a number of years and gives an indication of the context in which most assaults tend to occur. By

contrast, the use of qualitative data from observations and interviews provides a far deeper insight into social processes and the nature of conflicts between the police and public, exploring in depth the situational, personal and cultural factors, which influence the outcome of an incident. It delivers a real life description of non-compliant incidents and enables officers to be questioned about their experiences and opinions of violence against themselves and other officers.

It is important at this point in the thesis to restate the research questions as it allows the remainder of this chapter to explain the chosen methodology and how the data gathered through their use best address and answer the questions.

1. What is the relationship between the occupational police culture and assaults against police officers?
2. To what extent do the approach and behaviour of police officers towards encounters and efforts to control incidents and violent individuals minimise or increase the chance of being assaulted?
3. How do the institutional and structural contexts of frontline policing affect the risk to police officers of being assaulted?
4. To what extent do changes in the structure of police work due to austerity and legal, procedural and policy changes increase the risks of officers being assaulted?

The use of participant observation allows for the provision of a 'thick description' showing the reality and nature of police work and encounters with the public. The observation of officers during incidents enabled the research to focus on police officer decisions to use force and the extent to which the attitudes and actions of officers influence the outcome of encounters and increase the risks of being assaulted. The interviews with serving police officers facilitated the exploration of cultural traits and informal working practices and their link to assaults as well as analysing the impact of austerity measures on officer stress and workload on subsequent risks of being assaulted. Before considering these methodologies in detail, this chapter focuses on the chosen research design and the fieldwork site.

4.2 Research Design

Lincolnshire Police was chosen as the fieldwork site as this is where I serve as a frontline police officer. The research site allowed me to continue my full-time role and conduct research whilst both on and off duty. Being a constable (and latterly a sergeant) in Lincolnshire Police during the research period and analysis phases also meant that I had a detailed understanding of the nature of the organisation, its people, the geography of the area and the contexts in which the policing takes place, as well as the demographics and

characteristics of the population the police force serves. It also officer facilitated ongoing access to both the quantitative data and to officers for both the participant observation and interviews. My position fostered the building of trust and rapport with the subjects, leading to valid and rich datasets. To balance this argument, however, this chapter considers the potential criticisms an 'insider researcher' could face while studying the people with whom he/she works. These are analysed in the context of my experiences of conducting the research and engaging with research participants.

Before the fieldwork commenced in June 2014, the question of whether the force would be anonymous in all the publications was discussed with the Chief Constable as well as other members of the Senior Management Team (SMT) who supported the project.¹² After consultation with both parties it was decided that the force would be named as long as the identities of individual officers, who were the subject of observations and interview participants, remained anonymous, unless certain exceptional circumstances applied. The Chief Constable felt any attempt to keep the force name anonymous would be over-ridden by people's ability to search for the researcher on the force website and in local media. The force could also be identifiable through its description in this study.

The observational fieldwork period was scheduled to take around two years to complete but in reality took place between June 2014 and October 2015. During this period of time, fifty observational reports were completed, although there were a number of incidents that were not written up within the fieldwork notes because they did not add any unique material to the thematic analysis (e.g. where similar conversations or reactions had already been noted in another report). The observations were conducted whenever I was on an official shift or on additional duties such as policing football matches or on scheduled training. The shift pattern in Lincolnshire means that officers were on duty for six days out of every ten and carry out two early shifts (usually 7am until 5pm); two late shifts (2pm until midnight or 5pm until 4am on weekends); and night shifts (11pm until 7am or 9pm until 7am on weekends). As a result, it is not possible to accurately state the number of hours of observational fieldwork undertaken, but the shifts afforded me a greater access to police officers and incidents that may be unavailable to external researchers. The observations were supplemented by the interviews that took place towards the end of the observational fieldwork period. This allowed me to interview two officers who had been captured in the observations to understand their meaning of an assault and how they react to violent incidents.

¹²The Chief Constable changed during the full period of the thesis; aspects of the research were raised with the new Chief Officer Group after taking up the post.

Utilising Lincolnshire Police as the host organisational setting for the research project provided access to both urban and rural areas including one large city, some large towns and villages, as well as a range of different policing contexts including response and neighbourhood policing; night-time economy policing; traffic policing; and the policing of transient populations, especially during the summer months. Each of these roles and changes to the communities involved could affect the extent to which people respect the authority of police officers in Lincolnshire. The majority of the observations were recorded in one policing area, where I was primarily based as a serving officer during the period of the study. Observations were recorded across a number of policing activities from discussions in the parade room, to 'constant watches' in custody¹³ and from night-time economy policing to violent domestic incidents as well as incidents involving mental health concerns.

4.3 The Fieldwork Site

The population estimate for Lincolnshire according to the Office for National Statistics in 2017 was 751,200. There is an unemployment claimant rate of around 1.5 percent of the local population and an unemployment rate of 6 percent. 55 percent of the local population are aged between 20 and 64 years old, which is close to the national average of 58 percent. The overall crime rate in Lincolnshire in 2017 was 51.1 offences per 1000 people. This figure has been increasing year on year from 2014-15 when there were 48.2 recorded offences per 1000 people (Research Observatory for Lincolnshire, 2018). Whilst this has then been increasing, it is not an overall high or dramatic increase. Based on the most recent census in 2011, 7.1 percent of the population of Lincolnshire were born outside of the UK (Research Observatory for Lincolnshire, 2018). The majority of the population (around one-quarter) work in the public service or administration sector with around one-eighth working in the manufacturing sector (Research Observatory for Lincolnshire, 2018). Lincolnshire also has a large summer transient population with high numbers of visitors from Spring to Autumn visiting and holidaying in places such as Lincoln and Skegness.

Lincolnshire Police is based on a hierarchical structure with a Chief Constable at the head of its rank structure. There is a Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) who holds the Chief Constable to account for the actions of the police force and the service provided and can raise the policing precept for Council Tax to assist in the force budgeting. During the study period in February 2015, there were 837 police constables, 201 sergeants, supported by 247 special constables and police community support officers (PCSOs) and volunteer PCSOs. As of 2018, the Chief Constable of Lincolnshire has stated that Lincolnshire will have

¹³ A constant watch is when a prisoner is deemed at high risk of self-harm, of a medical episode or it is believed they are concealing an item that an officer is asked to watch them from outside of the cell throughout their time in custody. Normally prisoners are monitored through CCTV cameras.

between 1060 and 1100 officers, a decision affected by the reduction in central Government funding in real terms.

Lincolnshire Police is one of the lowest funded forces in terms of budget per population and area size in England and Wales. It has undergone periods of transition due to funding and budget cuts, which has seen a reduction in the number of frontline police officers on shifts across all policing areas and districts. Furthermore, since the start of the study there have been moves to collaborate with both neighbouring police forces and other emergency services. All of the recent changes to the structure and formation of Lincolnshire Police make it an interesting place to conduct this study as it allows for a focus on the effects of austerity and reductions in officer numbers on the risks associated with assaults. Lincolnshire Police carefully manage their resources to ensure the right number of officers covering each area including large urban populations and more rural areas. At some of the smaller stations, there can be as few as one or two officers covering large geographical areas, meaning that when an officer activates their emergency button, support from other officers can be a high number of miles away. As the nature of frontline policing changes and there are increasing local and national demands placed on fewer police officers, the nature of confrontation and resistance may evolve and change.

Lincolnshire Police are also introducing new technologies to police officers across all ranks and specialisms. These include mobile phone work tablets (known as Mobile Data Terminals or MDTs). Due to these tablet devices, it is expected by police management and the public that officers spend an increasing amount of time on visible patrol, bringing greater engagement in the public through cumulative patrolling time. Officers will no longer have to return to the station to update incidents or submit paperwork, though as chapters three and six infer, the reason for returning to the station could be to speak to colleagues in order to talk through incidents and events rather than to always complete policing tasks. Any increased visibility may improve public perceptions and confidence in the police but might also increase the risk to officers of facing resistance and non-compliance if they are stopping to, detaining or even speaking to a greater number of people. Lincolnshire Police has also introduced body worn video cameras to all frontline officers and other roles who attend addresses to make arrests or speak with individuals. The study was conducted too soon to effectively monitor the impact of body worn video cameras on conflict de-escalation and so this technology is not included in the overall analysis but is commented on in the study's conclusion.

Lincolnshire Police has a mix of male and female frontline officers from varying backgrounds, ages and experiences, which could all feed into the analysis of assaults and

reactions to these occurrences. Just from those interviewed, there were officers from a military background, those from university backgrounds, those who had been both police staff and police officers and some who had worked across a number of different police forces. This differentiation between officers provided a good opportunity to consider how officers from different backgrounds and experiences asserted authority and approached incidents; and to consider how each spoke about assaults and incidents. Both the area and the force allowed for rich data to be gathered; forming part of the overall analysis.

For frontline response policing, the force splits officers into five individual shifts, identified as groups A to E. The number of police officers per shift, both constables and sergeants, is decided according to the needs of each policing area, its demands and risks. In key areas, such as the only city and larger towns, response policing is supported by the Crime Investigation Department (CID), other investigatory departments and frontline specialisms such as traffic policing, armed response vehicles (firearms) and dog units. Often there is only one shift on duty at any one time, with a short crossover period between shifts at handover. On Fridays and Saturdays there are two police shifts from 9pm until 4am with one shift responding to incidents and the other policing the night-time economy. This allows Lincolnshire to cope with any additional demand from increased calls and the effects of alcohol on people in town and city centres. On New Year's Eve or for specific events such as Christmas markets or large-scale football matches, the response officers are supplemented by Police Support Units (PSUs), who are trained in responding to large-scale public order incidents.

In October 2015, Lincolnshire Police introduced new policies relating to recording and investigating assaults against police officers. This policy was introduced as a result of internal findings suggesting that the reporting levels of assaults were lower than expected and assaults against officers were not being investigated in the same detail as other crimes, with statements and court files not being completed in enough detail to ensure prosecutions or 'adequate' punishments for offenders at court. The new model of investigation outlined a seven-step process for recording and investigating assaults. Further initiatives have been introduced into Lincolnshire regarding the wellbeing of officers and supporting those who have been assaulted or injured while on duty, with the view that this encourages formally recording assaults. The Chief Officer Team has been vocal in publicising serious assaults against their officers on local media forums including the force website and the Chief Constable provides an impact statement for case files on assaults to be presented to the judges or magistrates during case hearings. This change in focus occurred at an opportune moment for this study and demonstrated a renewed focus on preventing and understanding resistance and assaults, which connects and supports one of the main aims of the study and

is reflected in the conclusions and recommendations of this thesis. Participant observation was used to supplement and to add to the full detail of aggressive non-compliance during incidents.

The Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner (OPCC) for Lincolnshire release a public facing document referring to the policing plan and main strategic aims of Lincolnshire Police. The most recent publication covers the period from 2017-2021. The key operational and strategic aims for better community engagement and crime prevention; an accountable police force that works for all people; and the protection of vulnerable people and victims. This includes a focus on the encouragement of reporting of historic offences, a joined-up partnership approach to mental health and a focus on issues which affect the communities of Lincolnshire including anti-social behaviour and rural, wildlife crime. The report acknowledges the unique position of Lincolnshire in having large urban areas as well as extended areas of rural landscape. There are differences in community requirements from the police in both the urban and rural areas including exposure to drug-related offending and rural offending including machinery thefts from farms. The Lincolnshire Plan from the OPCC aims to deliver a fair and equal service to all of the local communities.

4.4 Participant Observation

The primary research tool used in this study was participant observation. The term 'participant observation' is synonymous with the ethnographic research tradition, although ethnography can include other research methods such as interviews and documentary analysis (Madden, 2010; Noaks and Wincup, 2004). Ethnography has its roots in anthropology and the detailed study of different cultures and tribes (Brewer, 2000; Hammersley, 1993). These early ethnographies were conducted by interpreting letters and documents, which meant that there was a distance between the researchers and the subject groups. Later research studies started to infiltrate the culture of hidden societies (van Maanen, 1995). Moreover, Geertz's studying of cock-fighting in Balinese culture in the 1970s and wider anthropological work on Balinese villages and people were seminal works on the use of ethnography and participant observation in understanding cultural traits of population groups (Geertz, 2000). Widely praised by social scientists for overcoming many of the limitations of quantitative research, which were critiqued for only scratching the surface of social and cultural relations, ethnographic methods soon made their way into other social science disciplines, first on a micro-level and then on a macro-level in larger studies, which considered in great detail the distinctions between specific culturally defined social groups (Hammersley, 1993; Madden, 2010; Wolcott, 1999).

The use of ethnographical studies in 'sociological criminology' was championed by researchers from the Chicago School in the 1930s. Sociologists at the University of Chicago used ethnographic methods to uncover and detail the interpretive and explanatory stories told by different 'subcultures' in cities. Ethnographies aim to study people in their natural environment in order to understand their 'rituals' and 'routines'. They explore how people identify and situate themselves within a wider global setting, providing key details and analysis of a set field (Jorgensen, 1989; Parker, 1974). The ability to understand how an actor defines his/her own social situations and relationships can only be developed through observational fieldwork (Rock, 2001). Van Maanen (1995: 4) defines ethnography as a "...study of the culture(s) of a given group of people more or less share". The exploration of cultures through reasoned seeing and hearing is achieved through mixed methodologies, interpretative enquiries and, most notably, through participant observations (Madden, 2010; Wolcott, 1999; Van Maanen, 2006).

Early forms of ethnography focused mostly on the validity of "being there" but often excluded the impact of the researcher on social behaviours when compiling texts (van Maanen, 1995: 7). Realist observations and ethnographic methods were challenged by the criticism that participant observation needed to be more layered and reflexive, which was representational of the experiences and impact of the researcher on the social world (van Maanen, 1995). Ethnography means being involved as a participant in the daily lives of those being studied (whether overtly or covertly). In order to do this, the researcher needs to experience their world from an insider perspective rather than from an outsider one, to be able to fully appreciate its nuances (Jorgensen, 1989; Parker, 1974).

Ethnography allows the researcher to better understand human social behaviour through "cultural patterns" (Wolcott, 1995: 83) when compared with purely quantitative methodologies. The process of writing, however, is predicated on how the researcher interprets and understands the field and the inhabitants of the social world (van Maanen, 1995). It might only be possible to separate fact from fiction in a social environment by spending a large amount of time in the field, allowing for the development of "first-order" facts and "second-order" theories and interpretations (van Maanen, 1979: 541). First order facts detail the fieldwork setting and the social and political interpretational comments made by those being studied, and then underpin the explanation of the patterns within the data (van Maanen, 1979). In this way, the meaning comes from first-hand experiences rather than by searching the data for results that fit a certain hypothesis (van Maanen, 1979).

More recently, the use of ethnographic methodologies has somewhat declined in criminological and sociological research due to ethical problems, especially with regard to

the use of covert methods and claims that it is unscientific and does not always produce valid and useful results (Hammersley, 1993; Noaks and Wincup, 2004). It has been declared unscientific as it relies on subjective interpretations and untestable conclusions reached by the researcher (Herbert, 2000; Schwartz and Schwartz, 1955). Herbert (2000) argues that two different researchers, studying identical social arenas could theoretically attach two alternative meanings to the same observed behaviour. Brewer (2000) argues that ethnography describes the 'common sense' meaning that it is unscientific in its conclusions and also in the way in which data are collected. The researcher can be selective in what they record. This creates a 'crisis of representation', whereby not all behaviours and cultures are accurately captured, thus skewing the results (Brewer, 2000). Despite these criticisms, ethnography can often be justified as the most appropriate methodology for a study. Ethnography pushes researchers to work hard to understand a social world and to justify their conclusions through the collection of detailed and substantiated information (Herbert, 2000; Noaks and Wincup, 2004). Fixed realities can be uncovered through participant observation where small events can establish cumulative understandings of wider social processes or structural relations (Brewer, 2000). The fieldwork environment associated with observations can test quantitative data through interpreting the behaviours of social actors in set circumstances, which is not possible by using other methodologies (Herbert, 2000). Certainly in police forces and with regard to assaults, participant observation can be used positively to look at behaviours during incidents where data suggest there is a higher risk of assault.

4.5 Ethnography and Police Studies

Ethnographic methods have been employed to successful effect in order to illuminate the inner workings of police forces (see for example, Banton, 1964; Skolnick, 1966; Cain, 1973; Reiner, 1978; Punch, 1979b; Hobbs, 1988; Holdaway, 1983; Brewer, 1991; Young, 1991; Westmarland, 1998). Participant observation has been invaluable in providing a detailed understanding of the working practices of police officers, as well as allowing researchers access to often hidden backstage areas of policing such as the parade room and training environments; areas which have often been concealed from wider public audiences and academic researchers (van Maanen, 1978).

The fundamental shift in criminology and especially in police ethnography has been a move away from studying and observing deviant groups, to focusing on the cultures, values and perceptions of criminal justice agencies (Noaks and Wincup, 2004). This shift towards the ethnographic tradition in criminology started with the Chicago School in the 1930s who studied the nature of marginal groups, gangs and offenders through the use of ethnography

including life stories and oral histories (Wincup, 2017). This work influenced interactionist frameworks and labelling theories including the work on deviance and most notably associated with Howard Becker in his work *Outsiders* (1963). Academic work on interactionism focused on the process of labelling from public authorities including the police (Wincup, 2017). In the 1970s and 1980s, Jupp (1989) suggests that public policing was moving into a phase of controversy and low public confidence, where police powers were questioned and research sought to hold police forces and officers to account for their actions (Jupp, 1989). This shift moved research to studying deviant groups to researching deviance in the police. In order to study the internal workings of the police, there was an increase in academic research that used participant observation, linked closely to symbolic interactionism and understanding how people reproduce social orders (Hester and Eglin, 1992; Jupp, 1989). Drawing on the work of Herbert Blumer (1969), when connected to policing, symbolic interactionism influences the way police officers label certain actions as criminal and stereotype some communities, which result in more authoritative interventions being used against them (Blumer, 1969; Hester and Eglin, 1992). As such, it was important to study police officers' actions and the public's potential negative responses of the public to the use of police discretion or force (Hester and Eglin, 1992).

There are a number of potential pitfalls when using participant observation to study police officers, despite the benefits regarding the richness of the data. The first is accessing and the building trust and rapport with people who are suspicious of outside influences (see, for example, Brewer, 1991; Punch, 1979b; Westmarland, 1998). There are also difficulties in minimising the distance between the researcher and police officers in terms of knowledge and understanding of the police role. Once access is granted, this becomes a multi-layered and continual process of maintaining access both to senior management and the officers being studied. Formal gatekeepers may restrict access to a police force or certain areas of the force in order to protect information from being discovered. For example, Maurice Punch (1979b) conducted his ethnographic study of the police in Amsterdam after his applications to the Home Office were rejected. Moreover, Brewer (1991, 1993) in his study on policing in Northern Ireland, found that access had to be constantly renegotiated with successive Chief Constables as they were replaced. In the end, one Chief Constable limited access to certain areas of the force (Brewer, 1993; Lee, 1995).

In her two ethnographic studies on police culture, Chan (2003, 2012) found that the early rapport she had established with newly recruited officers changed as the participants were socialised into an occupational police culture and informal working practices. Chan found that the officers were less willing to take part in the research (Chan, 2012). Therefore, outside researchers could find it difficult to build relationships and rapport with officers and

might be marginalised from the social world they are studying (van Maanen, 1981). For studies on police officers, it may be necessary for the researcher to spend a considerable amount of time becoming a normalised presence in their chosen social world before starting to uncover in-depth and reliable data (see, for example, Brewer, 1991; 1993; Westmarland, 2001). For internal researchers, problems exist with regard to collecting objective and valid data, maintaining a rapport with potentially emotional subjects or the decision to use either overt or covert methods and the potential impact on colleagues and the police force if they were to discover that they had been the subject of a study without their knowledge (for example, the seminal study of Holdaway, 1983). I took all of these aspects of research into consideration when deciding to study assaults against police officers in Lincolnshire.

4.6 The Experiences of the Researcher

When conducting the fieldwork for this study, I had to be aware of the potential problems regarding access, rapport and trust and the emotional ramifications of involving myself in a particular social (sub)culture and the risks were of 'going native' or, alternatively, 'becoming academic'. The most important of these with regard to my position is the danger of 'going native' and problems of 'becoming academic', including the ability to maintain cognitive dissonance in the performance of both roles. Going native implies that a researcher loses sight of their objectivity in the social world and becomes influenced by the inherent working cultures and traits of the people being studied. This chapter also considers the converse to this point and examines my difficulties in 'becoming academic' and objectively analysing the gathered data. As Rock (2001) identified the purpose of observation is to be able to understand the social arena by becoming immersed in it, but only to the extent of remaining capable of analysing the data from an outside perspective. In conducting this study, it was important that the observation reports eliminated any bias and critically analysed the actions of all those involved in assault incidents. The following section explains some of the choices made during the period of this study and the personal experiences of studying police officers from within.

4.6.1 Overt and Covert Ethnographic Methodologies

As a serving police constable at the time of this research,¹⁴ I found myself in a similar dilemma to that of Simon Holdaway when, as a police sergeant, he conducted his study into the British Police by covertly observing his own shift (Holdaway, 1983). The key decision to be made was whether to conduct an overt or covert study of the police officers in Lincolnshire. I made the choice early on to carry out an overt study, informing those being

¹⁴ Although I was a sergeant at the time of writing up the thesis.

studied that the research was taking place, allowing them to withdraw their consent. The decision was underpinned by the potential ethical problems arising from covert research, including difficulties for the researcher and the risk of harm to people in the social world (Bulmer, 1982; Lofland, 1961). When any work is published, it can cause harm to those who have been covertly observed and quoted, and other researchers could be blocked from accessing the same officers in the future because of their distrust of the research's motives (Erikson, 1967). Personally, any covert study could have created problems for my position within the contours of my shift as I would have been studying close colleagues without their prior knowledge and acceptance of the research. Moreover, there could be distrust from any of the shift groups that I could be attached to in the future, resulting in difficulties in working with them on a professional level. Covert actions may have left officers feeling betrayed or with the sense that I was acting as a police officer under false pretences solely to obtain the material I needed to complete this study. Holdaway (1983) had similar concerns about publishing his work after studying officers covertly, due to the potential harm for the officers he was supervising and who later became the focus of his study. Likewise, I felt that publishing a covert study would make my position as a police officer in Lincolnshire untenable.

Whilst overt research is seen as being inherently 'good' and 'open' for certain groups such as inner city gangs and the police force, accessing both the group and then the relevant information may be more difficult to achieve using this approach (Lofland, 1961). These challenges are connected to difficulties in knowing who to approach and discovering whether people are receptive to being studied, especially where the research topic is emotive, dangerous or upsetting. There are also challenges in deciding how to approach all the serving officers (so they all have knowledge of the study) and, therefore, to obtain their permission to be studied without asking all of them to sign a consent form to be observed. In this study, the decision was made to use an opt-out system, whereby an email was sent to every officer in the Lincolnshire Police (via a central email address) and any persons not wishing to take part was asked to email me direct and state that they did not wish to be included in this study. Every person interviewed was also given the option to opt out or to remove their interviews from the study at any time before publication. Using this email system, three officers withdrew their consent to be studied (two traffic police officers and one frontline officer).

I felt that 'rich' data could be obtained by informing police officers about this study. Due to my professional role as a serving police officer, I believed that officers would remain open and honest with me, as they would trust that I would reflect, accurately, their comments and actions. As such, I did not expect that anyone would change their behaviour simply because

of my presence. I was also regularly present in police stations and therefore was able to immediately address any concerns about this study or any sensitivities about discussing an emotive subject. I was able to assuage any concerns that officers had that they could be identified from their words, especially where they had been critical of other officers. This was done by providing detailed information sheets and a discussion with all the interviewees about anonymity and confidentiality. After realising that their observations would make no reference to the location of an incident, more officers were open to suggesting incidents and examples that could be added to the study, drawing my attention to assaults, which had occurred throughout the county and were also open about stating their direct views about how some assaults had occurred.

Van Maanen (1978) argued that some officers create a 'presentational canopy' when acting in the social world. This presents a certain vision of the 'self', which calls into account the accuracy of their responses and, therefore, what is known about the social world (Loftus, 2009 van Maanen, 1978; 1989). Conversely, I found that officers provided a lot of data and quotations on assaults and the use of force, which then had to be scrutinised, corroborated and analysed for emerging themes. When it was observed that an officer was presenting a uniformed version of him/herself in the parade room, these actions were analysed in light of the research knowledge on police culture. This study presented challenges with regard to deciding which talks to record and which not to include in the thesis, as, at the time the comments were made, all quotations were potentially important to the overall findings. For example, during one TASER requalification training session, five officers shared their experiences of being assaulted, whilst others spoke openly about witnessing similar incidents. I was selective about what I recorded and wrote one observational report citing the key examples. The incidents chosen were those that could offer valid data that could be used to answer the research questions. Described occurrences that did not offer any new information to the study or were off topic were not included. My position as a police officer and my ability to transition across and speak to officers in every area of the force was useful to gathering the data, although there could possibly have been drawbacks to insider research on police officers.

4.6.2 The Position of the Researcher, 'Going Native' and 'Becoming Academic'

I held two very differing positions and perspectives throughout the duration of the study, namely a frontline police officer and a researcher. I was put in a position of cognitive dissonance, in that I had conflicting views between the mutual values held with other police officers and my position as a researcher. I undertook to assist within policing incidents and to carry out my regular duties whilst attempting to recall encounters and establish enough data

for a research study. It has been argued in some academic studies that there is a requirement for distance between the researcher and the social world and that a failure to create this separation can lead to a lack of objectivity and authenticity during the data collection and analysis (Jorgensen, 1989; Norris, 1993; Pearson, 1993). Norris (1993) stated that a close connection to the fieldwork site may lead to the researcher being unable to carry the full narrative away from the fieldwork setting and make it understandable to a wider audience. Moreover, Miller (1952) argued that any research can be negatively affected either by police officers attempting to influence what is written about them or trying to suppress the recording of information. Additionally, senior managers can attach their own authoritative meaning to the results of an inside researcher in order to dismiss any intended interpretations of the data or in order to protect their force and officers (Miller, 1952).

My position as an insider researcher could create potential criticisms for this work, as it could be argued that my commitment would be directed towards defending the actions of other police officers, therefore preventing a valid analysis of the data. Conversely, it could be stated that in an effort to avoid this critique of the thesis, my natural analysis would be to overly criticise officers' actions, again invalidating the conclusions. Whilst there was a risk of analysing the observations as a police officer and not as an objective researcher, I attempted to reduce the chances of this occurring by introducing a number of safeguards and strategies. These were introduced in order to minimise the impact of the emotions during an incident and the situational context in which the research took place. I analysed the research data away from the research site and conducted interviews whilst off duty (meaning I was not in uniform). All of the observational reports were written up when at home from active duty and after a period of reflection or rest from the demands of police work (although notes were sometimes written down after the event whilst on duty, especially when quotations needed to be accurately recalled). Moreover, I did not know all of the officers who were the subject of the observations and did not feel the need to defend their actions or consider not including their incidents and actions in the data.

Creating this distinction between the roles of a police officer and a researcher ensured that, as far as possible, bias was eliminated from this study. Police officers frequently react immediately to events and physical stimuli in order to minimise risk and then recall events shortly after they occurred for witness/arrest statements or to give their grounds for arrest in custody. Alternatively, it is important for researchers to step away from the fieldwork settings in order to interpret and reflect on their observations. At the start of the research, distinguishing between the two positions was challenging, and there were numerous times when I began to analyse some information as a police officer, considering what I would do and why an officer had reacted in the way he/she did, rather than focusing on how these

factors affected the risks of assault. Moreover, it was initially difficult to write detailed observational field notes in a highly 'thick' descriptive manner instead of in a style similar to an evidential police statement. Police statements require a different and increasingly legalistic format, focusing on the evidence of a criminal allegation and the point of arrest.

By focusing on my role as a police officer whilst on duty, I was able to construct more detailed observational reports when off-duty and away from a police station, rather than trying to write a police statement followed immediately by a research report. The temporary notes made on-duty provided the foundations for the more detailed reports, thus avoiding the challenge that I was leaving too much time between the incidents and writing them up, thus creating inaccuracies in the details. Often after making an arrest, there would be a lengthy delay before writing the arrest statement. This experience in the police role also assisted me into being able to recall details after an extended period of time. This presented the challenge of 'becoming academic' and objectively reflecting on the incident, writing the Observational Report in the manner of a 'thick description' according to ethnographical academic practice and not according to the rules of police evidential statements and reports. I had to be reflective and focus on whether an external person viewing the same events would concentrate on the same detail and factors in reaching similar conclusions on the nature of assaults. I found that at the start of the research, for the first ten to twenty Observation Reports, I needed to revisit them in order to rewrite and re-state certain parts of the incident to make them more descriptive rather than reading like a police report.

The challenges of police work and research were acutely highlighted when judging between carrying out my duties as a police officer and assisting colleagues in making an arrest and trying to observe the minutia of every single action throughout the encounter. Again, this was a demanding aspect of the research at the beginning, but I became accustomed to discussing incidents with officers after an event to gather more details about what happened; their reflections; and as time progressed I better understood which key events to observe during an encounter. I was also able to view CCTV footage from some incidents if it had been captured in order to support my knowledge of the incident. As the research progressed, I found that the officers were more becoming comfortable with the research happening around them and would comment on incidents that I was not present at and which they felt may have assisted within this study. Police officers became happier to discuss incidents they were involved in, even directly after the incident, as I increasingly became treated as a police officer who just happened to do a PhD. There were even times throughout the research when I was solely a police officer, and other officers had forgotten that they were potentially being studied.

Throughout the observations, I was committed to collecting valid data and detailing incidents wherever conflict escalated or de-escalated during encounters. My overall goal was always to collect data which furthered the understanding of aggressive non-compliance. I had to overcome the cognitive dissonance of showing concern for my colleagues after being assaulted, but also trying to obtain the necessary information to complete the observational reports and add to the analysis. This became a skill in diplomacy and asking careful questions, which demonstrated empathy, but drew out important details of how officers perceived an assault had occurred. Despite the potential challenges associated with my position, the ability to speak to police officers immediately following an emotional encounter and over an extended period of time highlighted my privileged position during this research, and the potential that this would lead to richer data than may otherwise have been available to an 'outsider'. Being what Brown (1996) defined as the 'Inside Insider', which is a researcher employed by or part of the group being studied was a positive in this study and added to the validity of the data being gathered. Having a detailed knowledge of the inner world of the police allowed me to avoid many of the potential complications of securing and maintaining access and, thus, gaining the trust and rapport of those being studied.

4.6.3 Trust and Rapport

Trust and rapport are crucial elements in any working relationship in any given social world. Maintaining a connection with those being studied should allow for accurate and valid knowledge to be gathered and presented. After gaining access to the research site through the gatekeepers, suitable access also has to be granted by those being studied. On entering the social arena, it might be the case that the researchers have to reiterate the aims of the study to the participants in order to allay any fears about their intentions (Lee, 1995). Norris (1993) challenged this view, suggesting that all ethnographic research necessarily involves deceit, as researchers do not always reveal the true aims of their study or construct false opinions in order to generate a rapport with certain participants. Conversely, to prevent any harm to the participating group, it could be important to provide the full agenda to those under observation (Herbert, 2000). In this study, I ensured that I was fully open with direct participants and any officers who asked me informally, about the extent and breadth of the research, and the fact that aspects of officers' actions and cultural values would be important to the conclusions. As the research progressed, I found that I only restated the aims of the study when asked and that I would not always remind people of the research after incidents or comments were made.

Establishing trust and rapport means revealing the aims, discussing personal circumstances and being open with those being studied (see, for example, Ditton, 1977; Sanders, 2005). It

also means spending time in the social setting, talking with people and observing behaviours without actively engaging in research (see, for example, Humphreys, 2008). It could be that a researcher spends time listening to people talking or watching their actions in order to see and understand truthful behaviour before recording his/her data. This prior knowledge and connection to the research arena means that it is often more straightforward to maintaining access to the participants (see, for example, Winlow et al., 2001). In this study, trust and rapport was more readily established due to my role as a serving police officer and the shared understanding I had with the experiences of others. All of the officers I observed and interviewed were receptive to the aims of the study and what I wished to achieve. They were supportive of a study which could be beneficial to improving the safety of officers in both Lincolnshire and other forces. Aside from the 'opt out' email sent to every officer at the beginning of the study, I was not challenged on the aims of the research nor my intentions for the work throughout the research phase or afterwards.

During this research, there was no question that any of the officers changed their actions, approach to incidents or natural talk in the parade room due to my presence in order to prevent a critical assessment of their behaviour. To change how they approached incidents could have placed that officer, another officer or a member of the public at risk of injury. If there were to be any noticeable changes in how the officers acted, they would have materialised in the backstage areas while they were talking in the parade room or police cars. I found that officers openly discussed violent incidents and were honest about their emotions despite my presence. In most of the parade rooms where my observations were made, I was a moral presence and part of the normal chat and banter, thus making officers conclude that they had no reason to change how they approached me or how they described incidents. For example, when in a vehicle with another officer, we would speak openly about the research and the incidents in which he had been involved. He offered his own analysis and opinions on why police officers encountered violence, drawing out his thoughts on the masculine-dominated culture and the confrontational mentality of some officers (both of which are key themes in the analysis chapters). Furthermore, assaults and violent incidents are often discussed in the parade room. I did not have to guide any of my conversations with officers into talk about assaults, as this topic was readily brought up in the parade room and became invaluable data for this study.

The methodological approach to this thesis was similar to that of Maurice Punch (1979b) and his study of the Dutch Police. Punch (1979b) quickly discovered who to patrol with, in terms of who would provide the 'richest' and 'best' data. These relationships developed from an initial rapport with officers into friendships and informal talks (Punch, 1979b). Whilst this approach could limit the number of people willing to provide information, if they felt that the

researcher did not appreciate their opinions, it would show that the researcher understood the social field and could identify those who would add value to the data. This may mean sacrificing some observations in favour of watching particular officers or incident types. In this research, there were a number of regular officers I observed and accessed, who enabled me to generate a significant number of observational reports based on both the conversations I had and the encounters I witnessed. This regular access to officers was crucial to the data collected.

4.6.4 Access to the Fieldwork Site and Participants

For some researchers, access to the research site is the first issue to overcome in any study. It is being discussed as the final section of this chapter as for this study it was the simplest aspect of the methodology for this study. I was able to negotiate immediate access to the fieldwork site with the chief officers and was allowed to commence the study whenever I was ready. I was also able to renegotiate continued access to officers after the Chief Constable was changed. The incoming Chief Constable supported this study and was keen to utilise both the study and my knowledge in order to learn how research can impact on practice. The initial access was achieved by firstly approaching the Chief Constable, who agreed to the topic for this study before its scope and nature were determined with my local Chief Inspector. These initial conversations also allowed me time to discuss the extent to which I felt the research would impact on my frontline policing duties and to convince Lincolnshire Police that I could achieve both consistency in my work as well as complete the study. I presented the Chief Inspector with a copy of my research proposal, so that the force was aware of the research questions and methodologies. Throughout the initial phases of this study and during the research fieldwork, I submitted regular feedback on the emerging findings and the progression of the work. As well as this, I was in regular contact with senior officers to check whether certain terms or labels could be used in the final thesis. No restrictions were placed on the findings or on how they were to be published, and I was able to present my work at strategic boards and police conferences to receive feedback and to make officers aware of my conclusions.

The key difficulty with having such free access and already being immersed in the social world in question, meant that encounters and talk that commonly happened prior to the commencement of the fieldwork phase, were not noted or recorded. Sometimes it became a frustration that so many incidents were occurring before I had been granted ethical approval from Lincolnshire Police and my academic institution to begin the fieldwork. Being a response officer, I was aware of the contexts in which policing takes place and felt that I could identify the truth from those occasions when an officer might be exaggerating events

or where I thought that a participant was telling me what they thought I wanted to hear. This ability resulted from my experiences of talking to frontline police officers and being involved in parade discussions where stories of encounters are often overstated. This meant that I did not have to spend too long in the chosen fieldwork site in order to understand it, influencing and underpinning the pragmatic approach used to gather the research data. The use of existing sources and knowledge reflects the approaches used and decisions taken in other ethnographic studies. In Parker's (1974) seminal study of delinquent males, he used the knowledge he had learned as a youth worker to approach and access gangs that would have been beyond the reach of outsider researchers. Moreover, Sanders (2005) used contacts from her previous employment as a social worker to negotiate access to her research site and participants through an outreach programme run by the NHS for sex workers.

In total, 51 Observation Reports were recorded, which included a mixture of detailing incidents that I witnessed in person and episodes of observed descriptions of encounters by police officers in parade room discussions. A wide range of incidents were recorded, as well as numerous officers commenting on 'jobs' they had attended or assaults they had endured. The majority of these observations were recorded in one divisional area of the force. In this area, there are around eighty officers across five shifts that became the main focus of the Observational Reports. There were many other incidents and comments during the fieldwork phase which were not officially recorded as observations as to do so would create a dataset which was impossible to analyse in the time allowed or to be able to see emerging themes clearly. Those recorded were incidents and quotations which added significant value to emerging trends and added to understanding assaults. Towards the end of collecting the observations, I commenced the interviews with serving officers. This allowed me to ensure that the emerging trends were reflected in the questions being asked.

4.7 Conducting Qualitative Interviews with Police Officers

The use of qualitative interviews in criminological and sociological texts was couched in the work of the Chicago School, which used interviewing techniques to develop life and oral histories of subjects, most notably, in studies such as Shaw's work on *The Jack-Roller* (Jupp, 1989; Wincup, 2017). The use of qualitative interviews in the criminological context was extended and developed through feminist research in the 1960s, through to the 1980s (Wincup, 2017). The use of interview techniques allowed for the exploration of key themes, the setting of agendas based on important areas of research as well as the construction of knowledge of the social world and the actors within it (Wincup, 2017). As with ethnography and participant observation, the focus in the 1980s was on concerns with police behaviour

and police/public relations. To this end, qualitative interviewing techniques were used to explore the social world and test the effectiveness of tactics (Jupp, 1989). Interviewing has been used effectively as social and conversationalist ways of collecting data, which allows the analysis of the use of language, reflections on experiences and the emotional meaning given by participants to their social environment (Kvale, 1996; Wincup, 2017). Interviews were used in this study to enable an exploration of the meaning officers give to assaults and the emotional decisions taken to arrest or release a detainee and officially record an assault. The interviews were designed to elicit the best and richest information from each participant in order that the results could be contextualised the broader understanding of assaults and officers' reactions to violent encounters.

Obtaining a representative sample is the starting point for conducting interviews, although the sampling of police officers provided challenges for this study. Whilst some officers agreed to be observed as part of a larger group where it would not be known whether they were contributing directly to the findings, when approached to be interviewed, singularly, some officers refused. This was often because the officers felt that they would have nothing important to add or that they feared being ostracised for sharing their thoughts, or felt that they might be recognised. Pearson (1993) argued that a common reason why people refused to be interviewed was the risk that they might be identified by peers. For example, whilst discussing an interview with one officer, he stated his concerns about being recognised, fearing that some other officers would criticise his responses or react negatively to him if he described another officer's actions. This was despite our talk about anonymity and the use of quotations. Other officers did not respond to the emails, despite a repeated request to interview them. In total, twenty police officers were approached to be interviewed (fourteen male officers and six female officers); with eleven interviews being conducted, one of which was a pilot study (PC-1).¹⁵

Most of the interviewees were selected from the Lincolnshire Police injury assault dataset. This database, which is also the one used in chapter five for the analysed quantitative data, provides the collar number of the assaulted officer. Twenty police officers were approached and asked if they would assent to being interviewed in the study. The choice of twenty officers was made as I believed that with the time available to gather data, write up interviews and analyse the information, twenty interviews would be sufficient. Accordingly, I believed that data and opinions from twenty officers would provide rich and valid data that added to and engaged with understanding assaults against police officers.

¹⁵ As the interview with PC-1 was a pilot study, none of his responses are included in the analysis.

The use of the injury assault dataset allowed me to identify officers who were repeat victims of assaults between 2011-14 (i.e. an officer who had reported being assaulted more than once); as well as noting police officers in Lincolnshire who had been assaulted once during the four-year period; and some officers who had not reported being assaulted during this time. This would provide the study with a widespread and broad set of opinions on assaults according to the experiences of individual officers. From the twenty officers approached, eight had been assaulted on two or more occasions; six officers had been assaulted once; and six officers had not reported being assaulted. Four of the officers who were asked for interviews had also been observed during live incidents in the participant observation phase of the fieldwork. Fourteen male officers and six female officers were approached to be interviewed as this split between men and women reflected the ratio of male and female officers in Lincolnshire Police at the time of the study.

Each officer was approached through a personally addressed email, which contained details of the interview and a copy of the informed consent form. The officers were then free to respond as they wished with no pressure on them to participate. The emails were sent separately so no person could see who else had been approached. I felt that this selection process was the best to use in order to gather the richest data on assaults. Rather than randomly sampling officers where there is a chance that all officers could have been repeat victims, assaulted once or never assaulted, this choice allowed me to gather a range of officers all with different experiences of being attacked and in attending and controlling violent encounters. Having background knowledge of the officers also allowed for the selection of officers of varying experiences, ranks and stations, enabling a study of tactics according to location. In their responses to research questions, a broad range of potential influential factors on assaults could be explored before considering the key themes during the data analysis.

In total, eleven interviews were conducted with officers. This was due to a combination of three key factors. Firstly, there were those officers who refused to be interviewed (for personal or professional reasons) or felt that they could not add anything meaningful to the research. Secondly, there were difficulties relating to shifts and geography which meant that some interviews could not be arranged during the research period. Thirdly, after eleven interviews, I realised that the same thoughts and themes were appearing throughout. The data gathered in the first eleven interviews appeared to be rich enough to add to and develop the core themes and arguments of the study. To conduct any more interviews would be to continue to add repeated findings and comments and would not have enhanced the study or provided too much data or trends to be analysed effectively during the timeframe of

the thesis. The recommendations for this study consider additional developments for research on assaults in the future.

The interviews were arranged around my own shifts and were conducted at times and locations that were agreeable to the interviewees. The original pilot was done during a night shift whilst both me and the participant were on duty and available for deployment. This meant that the interview was rushed and at time interrupted by the police radio reporting incidents and asking for resources. Even though we were told to update the control room that we were committed and not deployable, the interview did not flow well as we were both listening to the radio in case a call for urgent assistance was received from another officer. The remainder of the interviews were, therefore, conducted when the officers were off-duty and when I was on annual leave, on a rest day or during the day before a night shift. The latter times allowed me to interview officers on opposite shifts, meaning that they were on duty when I was on a rest day. The interview phase was, therefore the most difficult of all the aspects of the methodology, as it was heavily reliant on the respondents and on finding mutual times and locations to conduct the interviews and then to transcribe them.

The setting of each interview can influence the data gathered. For example, Sanders (2005) found that her interviews were often hampered as they were conducted in busy settings with a number of interruptions, which made gathering personal information more difficult as people did not want to open up with other people around. This is comparable to my first experience of interviewing when the responses from PC-1 were often very short and very matter of fact rather than thickly descriptive and analytical. My pilot interview only lasted twenty-five minutes and did not offer any responses that enhanced the observational material. My other interviews were conducted in a variety of locations including a public house; a coffee shop; my own house; with others being conducted in various locations in police stations, including: an interview room; meeting rooms in police stations; a canteen in a busy police station; and a sergeant's office. Most of these locations provided anonymity from our roles, allowing us to talk openly about assaults. Whilst not ideal, when the interviews were held in police stations, I made sure that I was not in uniform and that the interviews took place away from other officers and that, if an officer was on duty, he/she had permission to turn off his/her radio. The interview in the canteen proved somewhat troublesome as during the discussions an Inspector entered the room. This did not seem to affect the responses given, but some more controversial topics were omitted until later in the interview after the Inspector had left. It also did not appear that the Inspector was aware of the purpose of our conversation, thus not affecting the anonymity of the participant in providing data for this study.

During other interviews conducted in police stations, I also noticed that whilst on duty, some of the respondents would check their watches even though I had specified that the interview would take around one hour to complete. Towards the end of some of these interviews, the answers appeared rushed or limited after initially offering detailed and valid data. Wincup (2017) noted the challenges associated with qualitative interviewing and argued that locations and private space can become a critical problem. Having little control over the environment in which the interview takes place can affect the data collected when there are distractions (Wincup, 2017). For this study, the choice of location was controlled by the participant but the overall ambient environment could be determined by me by my decisions not to wear uniform and to conduct the interviews when both the interviewee and I were off-duty. Overall, the information and data provided were valid and rich with officers providing open answers to the emotive subjects. I felt that the participant officers wanted to accurately portray their feelings regarding assaults to a serving police officer because of the potential positive outcomes and recommendations as a result of this study.

Before conducting the interviews, I developed an interview schedule based around themes that would supplement and substantiate the main themes from the observational data as well as allowing the officers to offer an opinion on the factors relating to assaults against police officers. The first pilot interview was conducted around one year after the start of the observations. In my first interview with PC-1, I stuck very rigidly to a structured set of questions as there were a number of questions I had to ask on around ten separate themes. The questions, although mainly open, did not allow answers to be encouraged and developed, producing overly structured responses. If replicated throughout the study, the interviews would not have generated 'rich' and comparable data. Moreover, alongside the paperwork to be signed and explained at the start of this interview, the time it was conducted, while the officer was on duty and in uniform listening to the police radio, meant that its structure was too similar to a police interview rather than a research interview. This fact was borne out in the direct and often stunted responses given by the interviewee.

After this interview, I tested how long it would take to transcribe the interview data before addressing my concerns about the interview schedule, including the fact that for each theme I had set too many questions, which sent the conversation into certain directions rather than providing an opportunity for an open conversation about assaults. For the first research interview (PC-2), I updated the interview schedule, creating a more fluid structure with fewer key topics and questions. I opened with one general question and only noted questions under each title if the respondent did not give a full answer from which further questions would naturally emerge. The new structure allowed for more informally structured conversations, which led to a number of topics being discussed, which I had not previously

considered. These themes were then inserted into later interviews, such as the impact of police policy on the risk of conflict during encounters. I found that semi-structured interviews allowed each interview to comprise unique directions and topics but generated comparable data in each interview.

To analyse the data, I decided to make the best use of a naked analysis technique, which meant reading through the data collected and looking for emerging trends and themes that could be developed and presented as arguments. The starting point for this was to consider the four criminological and sociological concepts from chapter three and consider the extent to which the data corresponded to, reflected and developed them. For example, I looked for any examples from both the observational and interview data of officers performing according to cultural traits or defining police actions according to characteristics such as bravado, chivalry or masculinity within the context of reaction to assaults. I also explored themes of officers being described as, or being, witnessed to push the boundaries in their approach to incidents. In reading through each observation and interview transcript, I was searching for key and repeated information that would indicate why conflict escalates during some police encounters with the public. In focusing on the quantitative data, I freely analysed the data by looking for trends in the figures and then comparing these findings with previously studies conducted on police assaults.

In conducting an open analysis of the data, I was able to maintain a broader view of any emerging themes and trends. Policing is a continuously evolving service where changes in the economy, society and internally with forces, could all have an effect on officers and the risk of assault. This proved prevalent for the present study as themes emerged which were not predicted nor hypothesised when commencing the thesis. These themes included the impact of austerity on assaults including a detailed analysis of incidents involving mental health concerns and psychoactive substances. Furthermore, during the writing up of the study, Lincolnshire Police and police forces across England and Wales started to show a greater focus on officer wellbeing and stress. I decided to reflect this change in this study and draw attention to the potentially impact that internal and external stressors can have on police officer behaviour and, therefore, the risk of being assaulted. Inadvertently, throughout the observations and interviews, the reaction of police officers to be being attacked and also the impact of personal stressors came to the foreground and have become a crucial part of the understanding of conflict escalation and some assaults.

I had to make a decision whether or not to record the interviews, or to attempt to note down all the responses verbatim whilst maintaining a conversation. Reiner (1978), in his study *The Blue Coated Worker*, argued that tape-recording interviews allows the words to be listened

to repeatedly, as well as allowing meanings and emotions to be attached to the replies. Reiner tape-recorded his interviews but allowed the respondents to turn off the tape if they wished to do so due to concerns about confidentiality and the safety of the final interview transcript (Reiner, 1978). In my interviews, a Dictaphone was used in every case to accurately capture the answers when transcribed, rather than trying to annotate the noted responses days or even weeks after the interview. If an officer had asked, the Dictaphone would have been switched off, but this never materialised in any interview. The use of a recording device allowed eye contact with the respondent and I was able to take only quick notes on any inflexions or nuances of replies, or any follow-up questions I wished to ask. The interviews were written up away from the research site, and often a number of days after the initial interview due to policing shifts. Once written down verbatim, the interviews were sent to the officer to check with an attached comment in the email that the respondents could alter the comments made or withdraw their consent up to the point of this study's submission.

The interviews generated valuable data for this study. As both the interviewer and interviewees were police officers, I felt that all of the interviewees were relaxed and open when discussing the topic. Respondents appeared to trust how their data would be used in the study and that I was aware of the contexts and emotions of which they spoke. I found a good rapport with all officers, even those with whom I had never worked before, due to our shared experiences of frontline policing. This position, though, was not without its problems and respondents often took for granted that I knew what certain terms meant and therefore they did not need to elaborate on their responses or go into detail, expecting me to fill in the gaps. Common quotations throughout the interviews were based on respondents saying comments similar to, 'I'm sure you have experienced this' or 'I am sure you would agree?' I tried not to offer an opinion in response but instead probed them further to add more detail to their answers or to support their comments with real-life examples. The interview participants demonstrated through their use of language and engagement in response that there was trust, rapport and camaraderie between them and me, which added to the value of the data. It was sometimes difficult and challenging, though, to ensure that participants developed their answers and spoke in depth about topics rather than accepting that I would 'fill in the gaps' or know the incidents being referred to or understand a brief explanation of the opinions given. The provision of fuller answers was achieved through careful probing of answers but this was not always possible due to time constraints or even noise levels where some key points were not correctly heard and so further questions were not asked.

There were several problems during the interview period that needed to be solved throughout. First, I found that some officers questioned why they were being interviewed

when they had never been assaulted or had not recently been attacked. I explained to them both by email and prior to the interview that to balance the responses about the causes of assaults, it meant interviewing both officers who had been assaulted and those who had not. Each of these groups could have had conflicting views on how confrontation occurs and develops in an incident and the extent to which an officer's actions can influence the outcome of an encounter.

Second, I found that I was often being asked "Was that the right answer" (PC-3, Female Officer; PC-6, Female Officer). Some respondents wanted to know whether their opinions were similar to my own views, or to the answers of the other interviewed officers or whether they corroborated with my other research findings. It appeared that some participants wanted to ensure that they were not crossing the line, that they were providing answers that could be considered to be 'corporate' and following the trends, professional norms and themes of other participants. It was important, therefore, to reassure people of the confidentiality of their response and that there were no right answers to the questions; that, as a researcher, I was interested in their opinions on assaults against police officers. In response, I always outlined that I wanted to know their opinion and had no initial thoughts about what I wanted them to say. As I guided the interview topic areas, I was careful not to influence their responses or ask loaded questions about assaults in a search for set answers.

Third, even though most officers were willing to open up about their thoughts on assaults, training and other set topics, some officers denied remembering or were unwilling to divulge information about assaults against them or incidents involving other officers. This may have been due to their not wanting their actions to be analysed, or that they had personal friendships with the officers and did not want to appear to be blaming officers for an assault, especially if they felt that even though the interview was anonymous they could still be identified from the incident described. To ensure the interviewees and research participants were protected from harm, it was important to ensure confidentiality, anonymity and informed consent throughout the study and data collection.

4.8 Confidentiality and Informed Consent in Ethnographic Research

A key aspect of any research study is for the researcher to ensure that harm does not come to any of the people who agree to participate. This means guaranteeing that responses are anonymised in any written publication with identities being kept confidential from the reader. Throughout any study, there should be a process of informed consent, which is sought from all the participants apart from in exceptional circumstances (British Society of Criminology,

2012). Anyone taking part in research should be allowed anonymity, which should be maintained at all times (Humphreys, 2008; Norris, 1993).

For this study, the exceptional circumstances were in not being able to obtain any consent from the citizens involved in the incidents so that they could be included in this study's observational reports. These individuals were unable to give their consent due to their aggression, their state of intoxication and elements of the judicial process throughout the criminal justice system meaning that it was unlikely they would engage with a researcher, nor would I have been given permission to informally speak with any person in a custody suite; the demands of the police role meant going from incident to incident on occasions with no time to process incidents in between. For the purposes of this study, this is one of the core reasons why the focus is on police officers both in the observations and interviews. Furthermore, in none of the observational reports is any individual referred to by name, only by their gender or descriptor such as 'young', 'older', 'stocky'. This presented a potential problem about whether or not this would jeopardise the rights of the individuals concerned to control the information used about them. Despite this, the freedom and privacy of the individuals are in doubt because of their arrest and the chance that they may be publicised in the media (Norris, 1993). Moreover, due to the potential numbers of people who are detailed in an observational report (the assailants, anyone who assists them and crowds of onlookers), it would have been unrealistic to explain to everyone about this research study and ask for them to sign a consent form, whilst still being a frontline police officer. In this respect, the study of the public and their actions was covert, but were covered as collateral in the ethics submission.

The need for anonymity in this study was especially pertinent when studying police officers. The way in which officers' actions were described or quotations used could have led some officers to fear repercussions, either from their fellow officers, senior managers or Chief Officers; principally if an officer was critical of force policy or stated something which could have been construed as misconduct. This is why, as far as this research allowed, all of the police officers are referred to only by their gender, rank and years of service in the observational reports. In the transcribed interviews, all the officers are referred to by an alphanumeric code (i.e. PC-1, PC-2) and in the analysis chapters this is supplemented by the officer's gender. The reason gender has been included is that gender and masculinity are key themes in the context of assaults and the research draws on the differences in responses to questions by male and female officers. Stating the gender of an officer does not allow anyone to be identified. After each interview, the questions and answers were transcribed and the transcriptions saved on a data stick in a secure locker in a police station, on a secure university network or on the police network. The same actions also applied for

every observational report. The full research data could only be seen by myself and on request my supervisors, thus minimising the risk that anyone mentioned in the study could be identified. It was not possible, however, to maintain full anonymity for this research due to the fact that other officers in Lincolnshire may have recognised the incidents detailed in the observational reports, or could have known the officers who were interviewed and worked out their identities from looking at the language used or responses given. This could not be avoided because of the nature of the data being collected. Overall and certainly outside of Lincolnshire Police, the officers observed and interviewed cannot be identified.

There are limits on how far confidentiality can be guaranteed in any study. As Punch (1979b) found, there are times when a researcher witnesses or is told about police misconduct. These circumstances can raise concerns about what should be done with the information. Being close to one's research subjects makes it morally difficult to decide whether or not to report misconduct (Punch, 1979b; Holdaway, 1983). This choice creates a dilemma between fair and ethical practice and the pragmatism of some research. Some of the 'richest' data may come from descriptions of excessive use of force or where officers have breached force policy in dealing with the public. For a researcher, the benefits of maintaining a rapport and gathering honest data through not reporting misconduct may outweigh the need to inform the research gatekeepers. Whilst conducting this research, however, I felt duty bound by the rules and ethics of Lincolnshire Police as well as my duty to report any disclosures of misconduct. I determined that if an officer was to report misconduct or excessive force in his/her interview, the recording would be immediately stopped, the recording exhibited and submitted to the Professional Standards Department. Similarly, if an officer spoke about a live case¹⁶, then the tape would be stopped and submitted to the investigating officer.

These rules were included in the informed consent forms and this information was presented to the officers at the start of each interview. Each respondent read and signed this form at the start of each interview. In none of the interviews did I consider that any of the incidents described amounted to misconduct, and so none of the recordings were stopped for this reason. It is important to acknowledge, however, that some participants may have been defensive in their answers, not wanting to be culpable for giving an answer that resulted in another officer being under investigation for misconduct. Certain officers may also have restricted their answers as they wanted to maintain a professional working relationship with me without compromising my position through the reporting of officer behaviour, which contravened the law or professional norms. During the interviews, I felt that officers were being open and honest about their experiences and some officers reported events which

¹⁶ Meaning a case that had not been resolved through either an informal procedure or formal police action.

could be construed by others as pushing the boundaries of acceptable behaviour. Although it cannot be ruled out that other officers were not more restrictive in regards to the answers they provided. Overall, the answers provided indicated an candidness in explaining the actions of officers, though a reluctance on occasions to question their own behaviour during police/public encounters.

In January 2013, I undertook to complete the preparation and completion of an ethical review required to be able to study assaults against police officers. The main discussions and ethical points raised on the clearance form are those previously discussed in this chapter on overt methodologies, confidentiality and anonymity as well as the reporting of misconduct. I considered each in depth, discussing them, where necessary, with senior management in Lincolnshire Police and referring to previous studies conducted on police forces in England and Wales. This led to the completion of a detailed analysis of each point for presentation to the Ethics Committee. The letter of acceptance and ethical clearance is contained within Appendix D of this thesis. I was fortunate enough that I passed the ethical review with only minor amendments and clarifications based on the original submission of my form. The process, whilst demanding of careful attention, detail and time, was completed relatively swiftly once the form had been submitted. It allowed me the full scope to pursue of the research, using my chosen methodology and participants in an organisation, which is often hidden from some researchers.

The form submitted detailed the high risk nature of the study with the focus being on violence against police officers and the use of participant observation, which would mean observing live incidents of conflict between the public and police officers. I was able, however, to justify this method based on my already held position as a police officer. In order to gain ethical clearance I also had to justify the potential collateral that the research could contain participants from vulnerable groups such as persons under 16 or those suffering from mental health concerns. It was important to note that police incidents can involve people from all backgrounds but that their identities would be protected throughout the study through the use of only vague descriptors in any discussion and the removal of location data.

The ethical form also analysed and detailed the main risks and concerns for the progression of the study. In particular it covered any reported allegations or observations of police misconduct and the set process that I would follow should anything be witnessed or spoken about in interviews. Any allegations would be reported to senior managers and any tapes pertaining to misconduct or live police cases would be sent to the relevant authorities as evidence. The most important ethical point to note and examine was that it would not be possible to ask all 'participants' for consent to be included in the study. This was because

some of the individuals mentioned in the data were persons: under arrest; who were detained under the mental health act; or were formally processed by the police. In such incidents, it was not practicable to ask people to sign a consent form or explain the research to them. In order to gather valid data, it was crucial to include such persons and incidents in the study. To protect them, they are described by only basic characteristics such as their gender or age.

4.9 Conclusion

This chapter has explained the choice of methodology used in this study and any potential problems and pitfalls of using these methods to study police officers and aggressive non-compliance. It discussed how any methodological questions were attended to during this research, my experiences throughout the study, as well as the benefits of my position in studying this emotive subject. The use of three methods and a combination of both quantitative and qualitative data collection methods were chosen in order to collect the most valid dataset possible to answer the research questions. The methodology provided data that were comparable to previous UK studies on assaults against police officers, but also aimed to develop the understanding of conflict escalation through the use of participant observation and interviews with officers. This allowed assaults to be studied from the perspectives and actions of police officers and created a reflective explanation as to what influences a violent outcome during some encounters.

In order to study the cultural talk and interactions between, police officers and to consider the effects of the police role on the increased risks of assaults, it was necessary to observe police officers both in the police station and other private 'backstage' areas (Goffman, 1967), as well as during their encounters with the public. My position as a police officer along with my understanding of behaviours and emotions of colleagues meant that I was able to observe incidents, interpret actions and analyse the factors explaining assaults and therefore consider recommendations that could reduce the level of violence towards officers. Moreover, the methodology could be replicated by other researchers seeking to obtain data on police officers, police forces and the use of force. Every attempt was made to reduce criticisms of bias and to defend the way my observations were recorded off-site, not allowing other officers to influence how they were written down. I did not want to compromise my dedication to this study, nor did I want to jeopardise my knowledge of conflict and resistance by deliberately undermining my research through generating non-valid results. Even though this research was presented to senior management officers and Chief Officers, I did not allow any reactions or opinions to detract from the key findings presented in the study.

The interviews supplemented the observations added details and first-hand examples of assaults. The interviews made sense of some of the quantitative data, providing a context to the gendered divide in victimisation, and how different situational factors affect the risk of assault. Despite concerns of solidarity towards serving police officers and my position as a researcher, this study does not resolve to marginalise the impact of police behaviour or to shy away from analysing the impact on force policy with regard to the increased risk of assault during certain incidents. The next chapter provides a foreground to the quantitative data from Lincolnshire Police and considers the context of assaults against police officers in Lincolnshire.

Chapter Five: Quantitative Data Analysis

The Extent of Violence against Police Officers in Lincolnshire

5.1 Introduction

This chapter serves as contextual to the main findings chapters by presenting data on what is known about assaults in Lincolnshire Police. It analyses quantitative data drawn from Lincolnshire Police crime recording systems to explore factors which appear to increase the risk of conflict escalation in police encounters with the public. In doing so, this chapter considers the nature and extent of assaults, and examines the temporal and personal characteristics that, to some extent, explain the likelihood and risks of assaults. It identifies the factors that are connected to aggressive non-compliance. In order to fully understand assaults and consider the impact of cultural socialisation, informal values, internal expectations and the role of the police on officers, it was crucial to consider intangible factors such as where assaults occur as well as the nature of both the officers and the assailants. This chapter argues that there are identifiable background risk factors that increase the likelihood of police officers facing aggressive non-compliance when dealing with conflictual incidents. These include, amongst others, the prevalence of alcohol and the police process of making an arrest and securing the suspect.

Temporal, structural and personal factors help explain the conflict and resistance in some incidents and the move from aggression to compliance in others. Policing can be seen as an unnatural social function where uniformed individuals are given lawful permission and powers to enforce order through instruction to encourage an implied social order. Any aggression in response to police direction, in certain social situations such as the night-time economy, could be an expected part of the social function of the police. It could be argued that in situations where police officers are outnumbered, such as in town centres on a Saturday night, that a greater number of people choose to respect and follow police orders.

The next section considers the extent of the assaults in Lincolnshire and draws comparisons between the figures from the National Crime Recording Standards dataset and the assaults recorded on the injury database. It explains the 'dark figure' of the level of violence faced by police officers, which focuses on the problems regarding recording and reporting assaults. This chapter discusses the nature of assaults against police officers, considering the extent of their injuries and the time lost as a result of violence. The last substantive section analyses the temporal, situational and personal factors relating to assaults. In doing so, it considers the months and times of the assault incidents, the locations of the resistance and the characteristics of the police officers involved in the recorded incidents. This chapter

begins to consider how these factors relate to theoretical concepts. Where necessary and possible, these data are compared to previous studies on assaults, as highlighted in chapter two.

5.2 Reporting and Recording of Assaults against the Police

One of the complexities associated with identifying the total number of assaults against police officers is the under-reporting of these incidents. Any data collected by police forces are reliant on the subjective recording of the incidents' details by police officers. Chapter two explored the general under-reporting of assaults on police officers. This chapter develops these arguments and analyses the various factors, before chapter six considers the impact of cultural traits and informal working practices on officer decisions not to arrest or officially record an assault. This study argues that some officers still see assaults as 'part of the job' and, therefore downplay the effects of assaults unless they result in a serious injury. There are several key reasons why police officers do not report or record an assault. First, as previously suggested in chapter three, internal police expectations stemming from informal cultural values do influence some officer's behaviours and choices when deciding whether to take formal police action when assaulted.

Second, some police officers do not see the purpose of completing administrative work for assaults when they do not perceive the assault as serious. This could be underpinned by their being tired of having to record and document every incident of assault when it occurs. Where police officers perceive that they face violence at more incidents, the decision to arrest could be based on the seriousness of the assault or other factors such as the person who is attacking them or the nature of the assault (e.g. spitting). Moreover, where an assailant is under arrest for a more serious offence, then the officer sometimes chooses to have the assailant's violent reaction to their arrest taken into consideration (what is known in policing as a TIC) during charging or sentencing rather than formally arresting them for this crime.

Third, as is shown by the quantitative data, officers often have no visible injury as a result of an assault and so choose not to report the incident. As chapter six argues, assumed internal expectations from fellow officers can influence others not to arrest for an assault when they have not been physically injured. It could be seen as a weakness from officers if they arrest for a minor assault, and fear being ostracised by their colleagues for arresting someone who was resisting arrest or who was potentially not in control of their own actions (e.g. those suffering from mental health issues). This decision-making process is analysed in both chapters six and seven (Brown, 2000; Goodey, 1997; Stanko, 1990). In conclusion, the

context of the assault often influences decisions to report or record. If the assailant is in need of medical care then any act of aggression can be overlooked in favour of medical treatment.

Fourth, as argued by Lister et al (2000) in their paper on the culture of door staff in the night time economy, victims of assault can have their own actions scrutinised in the statements they provide to the police. By connecting this argument to police officers, it could mean that supervisors watch body worn video footage if there is a formal complaint to the police or a court can scrutinise the officer's actions at the point of arrest. To avoid this, officers can choose not to report an assault, especially where they feel culpable for the outcome of an incident. If an officer believes that owing to his/her own actions during an incident then an assault occurred, the decision could be taken not to arrest someone for reacting to the provocation. Each of these factors impacts on the number of unrecorded assaults. It is still important for this study, however, to consider the extent of assaults against police officers in Lincolnshire, in order to highlight the reasons for and background to this study.

5.3 The Extent of Assaults against Police Officers in Lincolnshire Police

This section considers the background of the data alongside the total number of assaults recorded by Lincolnshire Police. These data are drawn from two sources, namely the official statistics sent to the Home Office and the number of injury assaults recorded on the Health and Safety database. The reasons for any discrepancy in the data are also considered.

Lincolnshire Police produces annual data on the levels of violence against police officers, focusing on the extent of assaults. The reason these data are produced, is that it allows the submission of these results to the Home Office as well as allowing the force to monitor its trends and performance. This information is produced in two different formats. The first database compiles every assault recorded by police officers in Lincolnshire according to the National Crime Recording Standards (NCRS) (Home Office, 2003; 2019) and reported as criminal offences, and which lead to formal police investigations. These data are used to consider trends in offending behaviour, both locally and nationally, and to reflect on the police's performance with regard to crime production. The second database records all of the injuries that happen to police officers and staff in Lincolnshire from all types of events, including those where an assault was the main precursor to the injury. The data from this database form the basis for the analysis in this chapter. The reason this database is used is that these statistics contain more information about the nature of assaults including temporal, situational and personal factors. These data were also more readily available and extractable from the police systems, and can be structured into categories to make the analysis easier. The analysis is based on 383 injury assaults recorded between April 2011 and March 2015. It is important to note that between 2013 and 2015, the database was

updated and some categories were changed or removed. It is shown where this is the case and the number of assaults displayed is lower than 383. The first table shows the number of assaults recorded on both databases in Lincolnshire between 2011 and 2015.

Year	A: Official Statistics	B: Injury Assaults	B as a % of A
2011/12	153	103	67%
2012/13	172	104	60%
2013/14	168	92	55%
2014/15	178	84	47%

Table Two: Assaults against Police Officers and Police Staff in Lincolnshire Police

Table two demonstrates a marked change in the number of assaults resulting in injury, from over two-thirds in 2011/12 to below one half in 2014/15. It is argued that there are a number of reasons for this reduction, including Lincolnshire Police encouraging the reporting of all assaults by officers so that they can be investigated and there can be a clearer picture of the risks involved to officers during incidents. In doing so, an increased number of minor or low-level assaults could have been recorded. Conversely, or as a result of this change of policy, constables and sergeants could have been choosing not to complete the official injury at work paperwork when there were no serious injuries. Increased administration could lead to the falsification or invalidation of the data, which should be reflecting the true extent of assaults. Moreover, the number of officially recorded assaults could have been related to the National Crime Recording Standards (NCRS), which dictate that all recordable crimes need to be detailed on police systems, regardless of whether they are subsequently investigated (Home Office, 2003). In comparison, the number of injury assaults could have fallen due to the wider introduction of personal safety equipment such as the PAVA incapacitant spray and TASER, which allow the quicker control and resolution of an incident where an officer is faced with aggression.

There have been important policy changes in policing, which have sought to encourage the increased reporting of assaults and ensure officers' reflect on their decisions and rationale to use force over negotiation. The National Decision Making Model (NDM)¹⁷ governs the decision-making process of police officers and the justification of police actions, including the use of force. As a result, some officers are more restrained in their approaches and decisions to apply force. The issue of morality and legitimacy in the use of force at certain incidents are considered in more depth in chapter seven. The 'professionalisation agenda' of

¹⁷ The National Decision Model is designed to be used in the majority of police decisions and is based on the development of information, the choice of actions, policies and procedures, risk management and creating contingencies, so that decisions related to an event can be reviewed. The use of force forms completed by officers after using physical control or protective equipment contains a section on each element of the NDM and the considerations of the officer in accordance with each section.

policing is also having an influence on decisions to record assaults. Bannon (1976) argued that the move towards professionalisation in the police means a move away from employing police officers based on their physical size and ability and towards those who communicate and reduce confrontation, but who are also less tolerant of violence. Changes in recruitment policies could mean that perceptions of assault as 'part of the role' are eradicated. This chapter now moves on to consider the nature of assaults, where they are most likely to occur and, latterly, the characteristics of the locations and officers involved in the incidents.

5.4 The Nature of Assaults against Lincolnshire Police Officers

This section focuses on the data on police encounters with the public where officers are assaulted, focusing on the nature of assaults, the levels of injury caused and the amount of time lost as a result of any injuries. The purpose of this section is to consider the overall impact of assaults on the wellbeing of officers and to study the risks involved for police officers when detaining an individual but also from open hand and weapons-based attacks. The pie-chart shown in figure two below shows the moments during police encounters when assaults against police officers in Lincolnshire occurred during the study period.

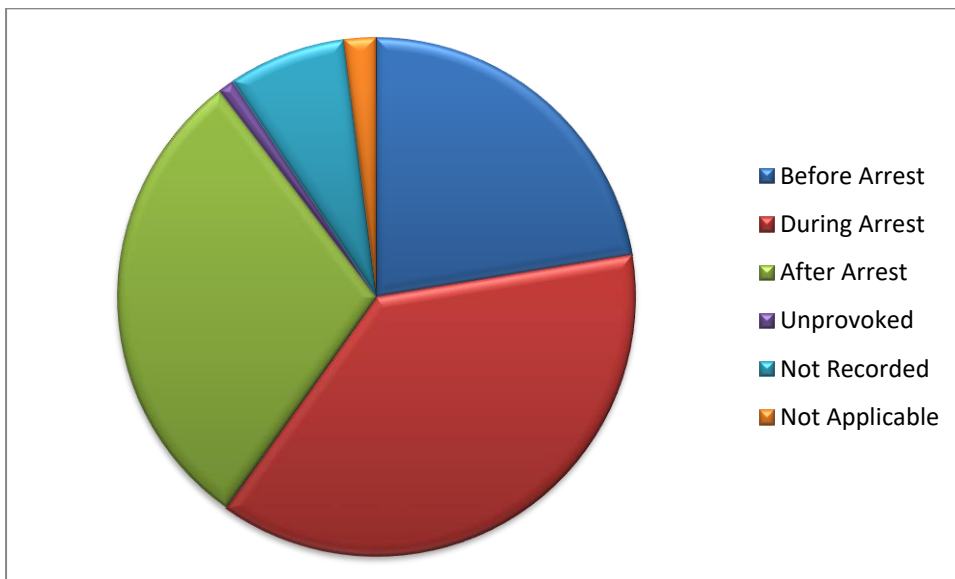


Fig. 3: Pie-Chart Showing Incidences of Assault as Part of the Police Process

The majority of assaults (37.5 percent) occurred at the moment during an encounter when an arrest was being made for another offence, in comparison to 29.8 percent, which happened after an arrest for a different offence, such as when transporting a person into custody or when escorting a person to a police vehicle. Moreover, only 22.4 percent of recorded assaults were committed prior to an arrest being made. People who assault an officer whilst being stopped and searched fall into this category. Overall, 67.3 percent (two-

thirds) of all assaults occur after the use of force by officers in making an arrest or taking someone into custody. Therefore, assaults occur more readily later in the police process, once a formal decision has been made to deprive someone of his/her liberty. At this point, the risk to officers appears to increase, as people could strike out and resist the arrest, or make an attempt to escape.

Any individual frustrations at being arrested can also become focused on the officers who, in conjunction with the arrest, could miss non-verbal cues of potential conflict as they mistakenly believe that a person is compliant and under control. The decision by an assailant to react to an arrest demonstrates a potential lack of respect in police officers and their ability to make fair and equal choices regarding the application of the law (cf. Tyler, 2003). Chapter seven argues that changes in society have affected the police role and therefore altered risks to assault. As the level of respect between people in society and towards the police appears to diminish, it is likely that assaults at the point of arrest or after arrest could increase. In the immediate moment of arrest or just after arrest a person could aggressively respond to what they perceive to be an unfair decision or where they feel disrespected or that a police officer has not considered their point of view before deciding to make an arrest (Tyler, 2003). For example, a person detained for being drunk and disorderly could point out to the arresting officer(s) other people in a similar state of intoxication and displaying comparable behaviour for which they have been arrested. If ignored or dismissed by an officer, then a person could become aggressively non-compliant and resistant of arrest. The following table substantiates these arguments, outlining the nature of the assault against each officer.

Nature of Assault	Total Number of Assaults	Percentage
Resisting Arrest	128	42.8
Restraining the Assailant	50	16.7
Struck	32	10.7
Kicked	25	8.4
Bitten	23	7.7
Fall	5	1.7
Road Traffic Accident	3	1.0
Broken Glass	2	0.7
Foreign Body	2	0.7
Trapped	2	0.7
Collision	1	0.3
Forcing Entry	1	0.3
Lifting/Handling	1	0.3
Searching	1	0.3
Not Recorded	23	7.7
Total	299	

Table Three: The Nature of Assaults in Lincolnshire Police, 2011-2014

If a person has already been displaying violence as part of another incident then as a result of transference of behaviour, any aggression becomes directed towards the officers seeking to control him/her, leading to resisting arrest and a potential assault. An individual can also strike out at officers if the level of force used by the police officers is restrictive or painful, or where they or another person perceive that it is unfair. For example, a person could suggest that handcuffs have been fastened too tightly or, in applying an arm lock, the officer has caused unnecessary pain. Furthermore, as Toch (1969) argued, other people become involved in some police incidents where they believe that the force used is illegitimate or unnecessary. It is argued in chapter seven that decisions to resist arrest are connected to incidents where an arrest and conviction could be severely detrimental for a person, or where individuals do not believe that the policing mandate stretches to certain incident types such as personal disputes in public areas. In these circumstances, any formal police action is sometimes resisted, especially if the group believe that the incident could be resolved through the regulation of their behaviour (Levine et al., 2012). The data from Lincolnshire Police show that many assaults involved more than one person, including some incidents where between three and six assailants were involved. The figures demonstrate that in some incidents, other people become involved in assisting a person who was being arrested, or that officers sometimes attend incidents where they are heavily outnumbered and where any increased tension and aggression becomes focused on them.

The levels of injury noted, as well as the moment at which the majority of assaults occur, leads to the conclusion that most assaults in Lincolnshire are unplanned and in reaction to police intervention. Moreover, as the following table suggests, there are very few assaults incidents that result in officers having to take longer periods off work as a result of an injury.

Days Lost	Number	Percentage
Major	8	2.1
No Time Lost	311	81.2
Over 3 days	16	4.2
Up to 3 days	24	6.3
Not recorded	24	6.3

Table Four: Number of Days Lost Due to Injury

It is important to state, however, that there are some incidents where officers have been away from duty for a prolonged amount of time due to an injury caused by an assault. The data also do not take into account 'presenteeism', where an officer comes into work despite sickness or injury, because they do not want their shift colleagues to suffer from staffing levels that are below minimum requirements. In this respect, assaults and injuries are judged by police officers on the nature of the physical and visible harm than any mental health or psychological effects. When deciding to make an arrest and take time off work, an officer could view whether there are any visible or significant signs of assault when determining their final choice. A cultural value of bravado amongst police officers could lead some officers to minimise the actual and real effects of an assault where there are no visible injuries, leading them to take no time away from work to recover from the incident. Indeed, some officers shortly after being assaulted are likely to respond to other public calls for assistance.

These data mask any psychological harm that results from assaults, whereby an officer can wait for up to six months for blood test results for communicable diseases after being spat on or bitten. An officer could be present at work but suffering from mental health issues as a result of the assault. These impacts are not reflected in these data. Every assault injury that results in sick leave costs the police in lost time, sometimes costs associated with spending money on treatment, and potential difficulties in resourcing shifts, meaning that some officers have to work longer hours or cover shifts for absent colleagues. The cumulative effect of this is that the changing of shifts can be detrimental the health and wellbeing of other officers. The impact of any injury is often felt across different areas of the force. If an officer is absent from his/her shift, the number of deployable officers is reduced, other officers have to conduct his/her investigations and manage his/her workload, as well as potentially attending more incidents every work shift. As a result, stress and exhaustion levels could increase,

leading to a greater risk of officers making mistakes at incidents leading to confrontation and violence or the misuse of force.

The impact of emotional and workload stressors on officer action is considered in chapter seven. Serious assaults can also result in longer-lasting mental trauma that could affect and officer's ability of to return to frontline duties. Some officers who have been assaulted could lose their confidence to approach violent situations or, conversely, resort to using force more quickly to pre-empt any resistance, thus placing themselves at an increased risk of both using unnecessary force or provoking a violent reaction. Despite any physical injury, the psychological impact and considerations such as safety, risk and personal wellbeing can all impact on what decisions an officer makes after being assaulted. The following table shows the natures of the injuries caused based on recorded incidents.

Injury Type	Number of Injuries per type	Percentage
Abrasion	29	7.6
Bite	23	6.0
Bodily Fluid (spitting or blood transfer)	3	0.8
Burns	2	0.5
Concussion	1	0.3
Multiple Injuries	17	4.4
Other	24	6.3
Bruising	148	38.6
Dislocation	1	0.3
Fracture	11	2.9
Gun Shot	1	0.3
Laceration	46	12.0
Loss of Consciousness	2	0.5
Crushing	2	0.5
Foreign Bodies	1	0.3
Sprain	47	12.3
Unknown	25	6.5

Table Five: The Natures of Injuries

A range of injuries are sustained by officers as a result of being assaulted. With the finding that most assaults occur during or after an arrest and are the result of a person resisting arrest, it is unsurprising to see that the most common injuries are bruising and lacerations. There are injuries, though, that indicate the seriousness of some assaults including fractures

and gunshot wounds. Some officers were also injured by carrying or lifting a prone assailant who had been resisting arrest. Whilst assaults only occur at a small number of the total number of recorded incidents, they have the potential to have a significant impact both on an individual and an organisational level. With the overall numbers of frontline police officers falling, it is important to consider the context in which assaults occur in order to try and obviate any increase in the numbers of assaults. For whatever reason a person assaults and injures a police officer, these data illuminate questions and issues about assaults that need to be addressed through understanding the processes and factors that influence conflict escalation. To provide a greater indication of the factors connected to assaults, it is necessary to consider the temporal, personal and situational characteristics.

5.5 The Temporal, Situational and Personal Characteristics of Officers Assaulted in Lincolnshire

The following section is analysed in three subsections, which explain the main characteristics of the times, locations and persons involved in recorded assault incidents. It outlines the locations where officers are likely to face an increased risk of assault and the characteristics of the officers most likely to be involved in violent encounters. Each subsection is important for developing a preliminary understanding of the nature of assaults, before the two main analytical chapters examine the extent to which the occupational police culture and police role explain why some assaults occur. The first subsection considers how temporal factors can increase or minimise the risk of assault.

5.5.1 Temporal Factors relating to Assaults

The following table outlines the percentages of assaults by month in Lincolnshire over the study period and indicates that assaults are not always dependent on factors relating to either weather conditions or activities at different times of the year.

Month	2011-2012	2012-2013	2013-2014	2014-2015	2011-2015	Total Number of Assaults
Jan	5.8	4.8	6.5	4.8	5.5	21
Feb	3.9	11.5	9.8	4.8	7.6	29
Mar	9.7	8.7	7.6	10.7	9.1	35
Apr	10.7	4.8	6.5	8.3	7.6	29
May	3.9	11.5	5.4	13.1	8.4	32
June	9.7	8.7	8.7	8.3	8.9	34
July	14.6	13.5	8.7	6	11	42
Aug	12.6	10.6	7.6	7.1	9.7	37
Sep	2.9	6.7	10.9	13.1	8.1	31
Oct	11.7	7.7	12	4.8	9.1	35
Nov	3.9	4.8	9.8	11.9	7.3	28
Dec	10.7	6.7	6.5	7.1	7.8	30
Total	100	100	100	100	100	383

Table Six: Assaults by Percentage in Lincolnshire by Year and Month 2011-2015

In order to scrutinise these data more fully, the following table produces the same data but split into quarterly periods.

Year	2011-2012	2012-2013	2013-2014	2014-2015	2011-2015	Total Number of Assaults
Quarter	Percent	Percent	Percent	Percent	Percent	N=
Q1	19	25	24	20	22	85
Q2	24	25	21	30	25	95
Q3	30	31	27	26	29	110
Q4	26	19	28	24	24	93

Table Seven: Assaults by Quarter 2011-2015

The time of year does not appear to be an immediate key factor in understanding assaults and the escalation of conflict. Factor such as, the location of the assault, the police process and nature of both the officer and the assailant have more explanatory value in determining why some assaults occur. The quarterly periods do display some marked differences between winter and summer, but the separation in the number of assaults is not as great as

would have been expected if the time of year had an impact on increasing the risk of assault. The level of assault by quarter remained stable, but there were differences in the modal months for assaults. For example, in 2014/15 the spring months saw the most recorded assaults, whilst in 2013/14, there were more recorded assaults in the final three months of the year than both quarter two and quarter three, which include the spring and summer months. Despite some lay expectations and hypotheses that the month of the year has a bearing on the number of assaults, this pattern is not replicated in these data. These findings corroborate those of Brown (1994), who concluded that no one month was more likely than another to see a substantial increase in the number of assaults against police officers. As such, this study argues that assaults owe more to other factors such as incident types and demands, personal characteristics and officer or public behaviour.

As a whole, however, there was a slight increase in assaults in around July and August, and 79 out of 383 assaults occurred during these two months. The reason for this slight increase during these months in compared to the others, is likely to be related to an increased number of people consuming alcohol during longer 'drinking hours'. This factor coupled with what Finney defines as "permissive social environments" (2004:1), can lead to an increased risk to police officers of facing aggressive non-compliance. When the annual trends are examined, there was a general decline in the number of assaults in the summer months from 2011 to 2015. It might be the case that changes in alcohol consumption have resulted in people drinking more at home, buying fewer drinks in the town centre and leaving earlier, therefore not becoming intoxicated. Longer periods spent consuming alcohol can produce feelings of aggression even within friendship groups, leading to flashpoints and conflict in public spaces. With reduced drinking and attendance in town centre social spaces, the risk of any aggression can decrease, thus leading to fewer incidents for police officers to control (Barton and Husk, 2012). Whilst chapter seven shows how austerity has impacted on an increased risk of assault, in certain circumstances, an economic downturn can reduce risks to police officers of assaults related to increased alcohol consumption. Lincolnshire Police policies have also sought to proactively identify individuals who might become involved in violence, in turn deterring them from the night-time economy through notices to leave and banning orders. Moreover, two shifts cover Friday and Saturday night shifts, allowing for greater numbers of officers to police large crowds, with the aim of minimising any risk to officers of confronting violence on their own and enabling the quicker control of individuals involved in violent confrontations.

Certain months, including October and March also saw relatively higher number of assaults compared to other months. These trends are potentially linked to significant events such as Easter Bank Holidays and Halloween. Following on from this argument, however, should

indicate that there would be noticeable increases in incidents of assaults around other Bank Holidays and important annual dates such as Christmas and New Year's Eve. These trends are not represented in these data, with lower numbers of assaults recorded in December and January in comparison with most other months.

In terms of the times at which assaults occurred, there was at least one assault for every hour of the day, although there are certain definite times that present an increased risk to police officers of being assaulted. The following table shows incidents of injury assaults grouped into four-hour periods of time from midnight onwards. There were five recorded incidents where no time was noted.

Time	Number of Assaults 2011-2015	Percentage
12am-4am	124	32.8
4am-8am	19	5.0
8am-12pm	24	6.3
12pm-4pm	46	12.2
4pm-8pm	56	14.8
8pm-12am	109	28.8
Total	378	100

Table Eight: Times of Assaults in Lincolnshire during Four-Hour Periods in 2011-2015

The data show a significant increase in recorded assaults between 8pm and 4am, with 61.6 percent of assaults occurring between these times. When broken down by hour, the most common time for assaults was between 2am and 3am (44 assaults). It can, therefore, be stated that alcohol, drugs and the night-time economy are strong indicators of potential violence, and where present in an incident, increase the risk to police officers of aggressive non-compliance.

These times, however, show a fundamental change from earlier studies on police assaults. The research by Christopher and Noaks (1990) found that the modal time for assaults was between 11pm and midnight. It is likely that this discrepancy can be explained by the growth of the nightclub culture and extended drinking hours. Certainly, Hampshire Constabulary (2017) demonstrated through their data, that assaults were most likely to occur between 9pm and 3am, which is a similar modal period of time to this study. It shows a development of a binge-drinking culture, especially on weekend evenings with people drinking for longer periods of time and potentially becoming involved in fights later in the night due to their lowered inhibitions. The police officers in this study often informally reported in off-the-record discussions that people were coming into the night-time economy later in the evening than previously, altering policing styles and deployments. There would be a noticeable change

between early evening drinkers in pubs who would leave at around 10pm, and younger people going out to night-clubs at around midnight. Certainly, a number of the participant observation reports for this study that recorded incidents of assault and resistance in the night-time economy, occurred between midnight and 4am. The greatest risk to police officers in the night-time economy is around closing times when large groups of people gather in front of licensed premises and where there is a possibility of people displaying hedonistic behaviour that transgresses social norms, including fighting and swearing (Hobbs et al., 2003; Lister et al., 2000). Furthermore, the increase in the numbers of CCTV cameras in the past two decades in urban centres could mean that police officers are being directed towards more incidents that previously might not have been witnessed. As a result, police officers intervene in more risk incidents and could be split between simultaneous incidents, leaving fewer officers to control a potentially violent person. Both of these factors support the night-time economy as a key risk in explaining assaults.

There are other reasons why the most likely times for assaults are in the evening and overnight. The nature of criminality, to some extent, changes from the daytime to the evening, with an increasing likelihood of both domestic incidents and burglaries during these times. A force such as Lincolnshire has main roads running through it that are patrolled during the evening. If police officers locate a vehicle linked to burglaries, then attempts to stop the vehicle might be resisted, as the people seek to escape, leading to their ramming police vehicles or violence at the moment of detention. As shown in chapter two, domestic incidents have an increased risk to police officers as a result of prior violence having occurred and the potential presence of alcohol influencing someone's behaviour. It is argued in chapter seven that attempts by police officers to remove an individual from a property can be seen as illegitimate, thus leading to aggressive non-compliance and efforts to control that individual. Each of these situational contexts appear to present an increased risk to police officers of being assaulted due to efforts by some of the people involved to resist or evade the officers, to prevent their removal from a vehicle or dwelling, or where individuals turn their aggression onto the officers. The location data on assaults support these findings.

5.5.2 The Location of Assaults in Lincolnshire Police

The following table shows the location of all recorded injury assaults against police officers in Lincolnshire between 2011 and 2015.

Location	Total Number of Assaults	Percentage
Police Custody	66	17.2
Street	181	47.3
House	67	17.5
Other Public Place	54	14.1
Not Recorded	15	3.9
Total	383	100.0

Table Nine: Location of Assaults in Lincolnshire Police 2011-2015

There is a noticeable split between assaults in a number of locations, suggesting that violence can occur at any time during a police/public encounter and process from the initial communication to someone being placed into a cell in custody. The data propose that the approach of police officers, their actions during the encounter and the factors connected to the assailant are often better indicators of resistance and challenges to authority than the location in which the incident occurs. Moreover, the type of incident appears to have a greater influence on aggressive non-compliance. Whilst the street is the most common place for assaults, they are likely to be closely related to the incidents that occur in this location, rather than the location itself. Individuals in the street can be under the influence of alcohol or drugs or they could be displaying mental health issues. Police officers can only detain a person under the Mental Health Act when that person is in a public place, which is often the street. Additionally, a lot of policing encounters occur on the streets, any of which can lead to aggressive non-compliance. Stop and searches under section 1 of the Police and Criminal Evidence Act (PACE) 1984 have to take place in a place to which the public has access. Attempts to stop a person and subject him/her to a search in full view of the public, especially if he/she is in possession of stolen property or drugs, can lead to increased resistance and assaults in an attempt to escape or to avoid the detection of these items. Some people also become violent and resist officers when being arrested in full public view due to the embarrassment of being handcuffed or in order to defend their masculinity in front of their peers (Toch, 1969).

The risk to police officers does not end when a person reaches custody. Despite a limited chance of escape, some people resist police actions, especially if they do not agree with the grounds for their arrest or if they believe that the force being used against them is too aggressive. Assaults recorded in custody at Lincolnshire Police custody suites include the custody sergeant being spat on or officers being kicked when placing someone in a cell. Some people also transfer their aggression at perceived injustices onto the police officers in the custody environment. Where a person thinks that they should not have been arrested or that another person should also have been arrested, then there is likely to be an increased

risk of someone striking out or verbally challenging an officer, especially where alcohol is involved (cf. Deehan et al., 2002). Any emotions felt by an assailant of not being listened to can exacerbate the risk of aggressive non-compliance in the custody environment as the actions of the police are not seen as being legitimate (Tyler, 2003). Any actions and behaviour in custody from a detained person can be an extension and continuation of their manner and behaviour prior to their arrest.

There are different locations contained in the 'other public places' category in table nine, where continuations of risk and behaviours can be evident. These include where officers take a person to hospital for treatment, escort military personnel back to a base, attend nursing homes to deal with persons suffering from dementia who have become violent, or when taking people with mental health concerns to a nominated unit. The extent of the police role, both 'adversarial' and 'welfare-based' functions brings police officers into potential conflict with people and all incidents can have factors, which increase the risk of assault and non-compliance. These listed location where assaults have occurred indicate the risk to police officers of undertaking roles more suitable to other agencies such as the Military Police and mental health professionals. Chapter seven extends these arguments analysing changes to the police role and public sector roles in times of austerity and how these alterations have affected the risks of assault. One of these factors is the personal characteristics of the officers involved including their gender and role.

5.5.3 Personal Characteristics of Police Assaulted in Lincolnshire

This section considers the personal characteristics of the officers involved in assault incidents and to provide an initial indication of the risk to officers according to their gender and role in the police. This section also details the rationale for the focus on frontline officers throughout this study. In order to contextualise the findings relating to the police role, the following table provides details of the numbers of officers in Lincolnshire Police by year and their respective number in each of the three key frontline roles of constable, sergeant and inspector. These are the roles and ranks most likely to respond to calls from the public.

Year/ Rank	All Ranks	Constables	Sergeants	Inspectors
2011	1236	957	188	59
2012	1171	893	185	62
2013	1158	879	180	60
2014	1111	842	180	63
2015	1011	759	174	66

Table Ten: Officer Numbers in Lincolnshire Police by Rank, 2011-2015

Table ten shows that, whilst there has been a reduction in the number of frontline officers, the numbers of recorded assaults with injuries have fallen, and the total number of recorded assaults also remained static during the same period, with only a slight increase. With a reduction of nearly 200 police constables and 235 officers of every rank, it was predicted that there would be a greater increase in the numbers of assaults. It can be argued that the levels of assaults are not predicated fundamentally on the total numbers of deployable units, but officers could still perceive that their safety was being undermined by the reduction in officers and the risk of attending violent incidents alone. These data indicate that there are other factors during an encounter which can explain why some incidents result in an assault and not just the numbers of available and deployable officers. The next table breaks down the officer data into three main categories, namely the gender of the officer involved, the roles of the officers and their rank at the time of the assault.

Gender	Number	Percentage	Role	Number	Percentage	Rank	Number	Percentage
Male	277	71.9	Police Officer	345	89.6	Police Constable	312	81.0
Female	108	28.1	Special	15	3.9	Detective Constable	4	1.0
			Police Staff	24	6.2	Police Staff	24	6.2
			Volunteer	1	0.3	Inspector	4	1.0
						Sergeant	22	5.7
						Special	12	3.1
						Detective Sergeant	1	0.3
						Not Recorded	3	0.8

Table Eleven: Table Showing Police Officer Characteristics from Assaults in Lincolnshire 2011-2015

It is not unexpected that these data reflect that police constables are considerably more likely to be assaulted compared to other ranks. Frontline police constables initially respond to the majority of calls received by the control room and conduct foot and vehicle patrols both during the night-time economy and whilst on general shifts. In this regard, they are most likely to enter high-risk conflictual encounters with the public and use force against citizens. This finding corroborates those found in other studies, namely Brown (1994) and Christopher and Noaks (1990) who both stated that constables were at the highest risk of assault. Police staff also appears in these data. This group includes PCSOs who are routinely on foot patrol and have been known to come across incidents in progress or be called by a member of the public to help assist in an incident. Moreover, this category denotes front desk staff at police stations who deal with inquiries from the public. It is recorded in the data that front desk staff are at risk of assault from people spitting or trying to punch them across the desk in response to advice they are given. The figures demonstrate that whilst frontline officers are

the most likely to be assaulted, that the risk of aggressive non-compliance exists for every rank and role that involves interacting with members of the public.

The figures clearly show that male officers are assaulted more frequently than female officers. This gendered split in victimisation was replicated in the data from Hampshire Constabulary (2017) whose male to female divide was 79 percent to 21 percent. It could be the case that this discrepancy can be explained by the ratio of male to female frontline police officers in Lincolnshire Police at the time of the study. When compared with the numbers of male and female officers in Lincolnshire in 2015, the assault ratios are very similar. Indeed, in February 2015, 70.5 percent of officers were male and 29.5 percent female. It could be concluded from these data that there is an equal balance between the number of male and female officers, and thus between the percentage of the numbers of assaults against each gender each year. As the ratio of male and female frontline police officers change over time, the trends in assaults should be monitored to see if they continue to reflect the ratio difference between male and female officers. As one officer bluntly stated in her interview when asked about the gendered divide in assaults;

“...you definitely see more men in the job getting assaulted I think than you do women but then there’s a lot less women than there are men” (*PC-6, Female Officer*).

This study, however, argues that there are other reasons why male officers are more likely to be assaulted. Chapter six analyses the qualitative data in the context of the occupational culture and draws on interviews where interviewed officers of all genders noted that they believed male officers were at greater risk of being assaulted due to their mannerisms and behaviours during an incident. A masculine-dominated culture, which leads to the development of informal police values and practices, can influence officer actions during incidents as well as the amount of force used. These informal practices could explain the gendered divide in the assault figures when coupled with observations of how some male officers approach violent incidents and discuss them in ‘backstage’ areas (van Maanen, 1973). There appears to be a stronger internal parade room expectation on male officers to dominate and control incidents and to confront potentially aggressive citizens.

Before analysing the impact of occupational cultural traits and values on assaults, this chapter considers the potential reasons for the higher numbers of male officer assaults. First, if there are a higher number of male officers on each shift compared to female

officers¹⁸ then it is more likely that male officers will be deployed to more violent incidents or incidents where there is an increased risk of resistance and, therefore, an amplified chance of being assaulted. Even without taking into account the approach of male officers or two male officers attending an incident, any chances of assault are enlarged due to continued attendance at these incidents by deployable male officers. Second, it can be argued that citizens are more likely to assault men than women. Other studies have shown that men are more likely to be involved in violence than women (Goodey, 2000; Toch, 1969); and commonly held social norms indicate that males should not be violent towards females. The same may hold true in police/public encounters. It is expected that during incidents where conflict is present, male assailants will readily assault male officers in a challenge to their authority or in an effort to prove their strength and masculinity. It was argued during the interviews that taller and more heavily-built officers (normally male officers) were most likely to be assaulted as people liked to challenge these officers and prove themselves by resisting them and being aggressive. When asked if there were any officer characteristics that would make them more likely to be assaulted, PC-2 answered;

“Size, particularly from experience in life, larger people tend to get assaulted more than small people because people like to challenge larger people” (*PC-2. Male Officer*).

It could be the case, however, that when resisting an officer, some people just see the representation of the uniform and its meaning and authority rather than the gender of the officer and target a female officer with force in order to escape as the assailant believes that they are easier to manipulate and evade through force. As Reiner (1991) asserted, the police had symbolic authority through their uniform and warrant cards, which has slowly been eroded and diminished. For Reiner, the police are no longer symbols of authority, with the full respect of the public, leaving the risk to police officers that they have become the focus for violence whenever they attempt to assert their position through the use of force, regardless of their gender. Consent from the public for the police to maintain control through the use of minimum force is not respected by all, meaning that some people challenge this authority and resist officers through aggressive non-compliance (Reiner, 1991). Moreover, when under the influence of alcohol, some people do not notice the gender of the officer and strike out in resistance. The impact of gender on the aggressors' decision-making can only be fully ascertained through in-depth interviews with people found guilty of assaulting police officers, which this study does not aim to do. It can be hypothesised that if there were to be a

¹⁸ Some policing shifts recorded in the observational data had only one female officer in comparison to five male officers as well as two male sergeants.

large increase in female-related violence in the national crime figures; that the proportion of female officers assaulted would also increase.

Thirdly, however, this research does argue that male and female officers do sometimes approach potentially violent incidents using different styles, affecting the overall risk of assault. For instance, the qualitative data in chapter six shows that there is a perception amongst some police officers that male officers are quicker to use force or make arrests without fully explaining their rationale for doing so. Some female officers have a much more communicative style, which will naturally and readily have a calming effect on an incident. PC-8, whilst not distinguishing between genders, acknowledged that some officers were better at talking to people than others and sometimes the way in which he spoke to people angered them leading to hostility.

“...there are some officers who are maybe not considered as tough who can talk to people better” (*PC-8, Male Officer*).

In policing, the style and approach of any officer as well as their ability to effectively communicate and equalise power within an encounter, affects the risk of being assaulted. Westmarland (2001) argued that male officers use and justify force differently to female officers. She draws attention to internalised perceptions of male officers that female officers are often not used to confronting aggression. In agreement, Stanko (2006) stated that violence is often seen as a masculine trait with male officers more confident in applying force. Officers in this study argued that whilst not a commanding and all-encompassing trait of male officers, there were those that saw confrontation of aggression as more suited to their role and abilities, and that some male officers saw aggressive non-compliance and asserting their authority as crucial parts of the policing role. In comparison to female officers, one officer stated;

“Some officers you see, they do like to fight, I think.... whether it’s testosterone because you don’t really see the female police officers trying to fight with people and that whole sense again of “I’m the one in charge and if you don’t do what I tell you to, I’m going to make you”” (*PC-6, Female Officer*).

“...there’s still a culture in the police that the men are stronger than the women and that you know the men will deal with the big blokes that are fighting” (*PC-6, Female Officer*).

The quotation suggests that some male officers often place themselves in danger of assault in defence of a male colleague or because they believe that it is part of a male officer’s role

to confront the often male aggressor in domestic violence incidents or more generally on the streets. The cultural impacts on gendered expectations are explored in more depth in the next chapter. The views expressed suggest a connection between masculine traits and patrol work and how the application of force is sometimes dominated by a male officer's desire to blur what Waddington viewed as the "invitational edge" (1999:149) between reasonable force and sometimes unnecessary force. Blok and Brown (2005) submitted that female officers are much more likely to follow procedure than their male counterparts, thus making the pushing of boundaries a masculine-dominated cultural trait. It is important to note, however, that what is deemed unnecessary force is a subjective concept, with definitions changing between police officers, the public and researchers. Police officers often consider that the force used in any incident is proportionate to the circumstances even though it sometimes leads to resistance and assaults. Some officers, however, could push the boundaries in the belief that they are legally protected.

Lastly, Westmarland (2001) drew attention to the differential deployment of female officers to incidents in comparison with male colleagues. These decisions are often taken by the force control room or the sergeants on each shift. Informally amongst shifts in Lincolnshire it was noted that even where a male officer was trained to deal with victims of serious sexual offences, female officers were often sent as a first point of contact regardless of whether the victim specifically asked for a female officer. It was acknowledged by a number of the interviewed officers that this disparity in bifurcated gender roles in policing was a source of frustration, but could explain why male officers were more readily assaulted. As stated by one officer;

"...there is that natural divide then you do end up dealing with female with female and male to male but what annoys me is when a male officer will almost push past you to get to the suspect and almost leave you so that you have to go and speak with the victim" (*PC-5, Female Officer*).

Westmarland (2001) supported this view, arguing that there were perceptions in parade rooms that female officers were better at dealing with and talking to vulnerable victims and children, and were thus not sent to as many violent incidents as male officers. Brown's (1998) work substantiates these arguments, by suggesting that female officers are affected by their lower numbers in any force. This representation impacts on their treatments in the role. Brown discovered that female officers were often given safer patrol areas or dealt with more routine jobs, with male officers deployed from police stations to more urgent and potentially violent incidents (Brown, 1998). The ongoing perceptions amongst officers of

differences in the skillsets of male and female officers continue to perpetuate the gendered differential in the risk and chance of assaults.

5.6 Conclusion

The purpose of this chapter was to highlight observable and recordable factors which influenced the chance of an officer facing aggressive non-compliance and being assaulted. This analysis was based on the temporal, situational and personal indicators of violence and resistance. There are a number of factors present and events which happen during an encounter which underlie an increased risk of being assaulted. When these factors are coupled with the impact of informal working practices on police action, as well as the nature and structure of the police role and police legitimacy, the way in which conflict escalates in some incidents comes into sharper focus. The times at which incidents occur have a bearing on the risk to police officers. Other temporal factors, however, do not have such an influence on explaining assaults. It is argued in this study, that the time factor only has a bearing on assaults due to the situational factors relating to incidents and the presence of other dynamics such as alcohol, drugs or prior violence. The policing incident type can also impact on assaults, but the nature of the policing process from the initial interaction until after the arrest indicates that the risk of assaults exists at any time during an encounter and in a number of different locations. This suggests that the structure and nature of the incident or encounter have more influence on assaults. Certainly, Hampshire Police (2017) have noted that more work is required on how police behaviour during incidents impacts on the risk of assault. Role and gender, though, have a strong bearing on the risk and chance of assault. These risks and dangers are best understood within the context of the prevailing cultural values in policing. The next chapter considers the influence of this culture on police talk; as well as the way in which unwritten rules and informal working practices affect police action and police non-action, in front stage areas and therefore how such choices influence the risk of assault, and the predictability of an officer's reaction to being assaulted.

These data indirectly suggest an influence of cultural values and behaviours and the reaction of police officers to being assaulted. It can be inferred from the data that there is likely to be 'presenteeism' amongst officers as well as judgements by officers on the seriousness of an assault by the physical injuries rather than any longer lasting psychological or mental trauma. These actions akin to bravado and sometimes dismissiveness of the impact of assaults can affect the future actions of some officers when confronting violence. Chapter seven analyses the influence and impact of emotional stressors and workload on the risk of assault.

Chapter Six: Qualitative Data Analysis 1

Occupational Cultural Traits, Informal Values and Police Action

6.1 Introduction

This chapter considers the extent to which the cultural traits and values of the police, outlined in chapter three, shape the actions of police officers during encounters, as well as their subsequent reactions to being assaulted. This study has hypothesised that cultural values and informal values influence police behaviour with regards to: police talking informally away from the public; action during police/public encounters; and decisions by police officers when choosing whether to use force or to arrest someone for an assault. This chapter draws on the two continuums and ranges of behaviours (defined in chapter two) to analyse the observations and interviews. The concept of an occupational culture is closely linked to the authority and legitimacy of police officers to apply order and control to a situation. The chapter also considers how officer perceptions of authority and internal role expectations can increase the risk of aggressive non-compliance.

This chapter focuses on three inter-linked and mutually reinforcing traits of the occupational culture, as understood and defined by Reiner (2000), namely, masculinity, authoritarianism and the desire for action. These characteristics have been selected as they were observed through the interviews and participant observation case studies as having the greatest influence on police interactions with the public and the adaptations of these traits, sometimes guiding both how officers talk to each other and act during an incident. It is important to reiterate that most police/public encounters are compliant, and that there are potentially violent incidents, where conflict can de-escalate into compliance. In most incidents compliance is easily gained as people defer to the authority of the officer and the inferred threat of the law symbolised by the police uniform (Dixon, 1997; Ericson, 2007). For this reason, understanding the reasons why some people do not obey the orders of the police and resist formal action, in spite of the risk of punishment is important and makes for an interesting topic to be studied.

This chapter begins by considering how conversations and descriptions of violent incidents between officers in the police station structure how some officers understand their roles and develop shared understandings of aggressive confrontations. It also examines the extent to which officers talking about and dramatising incidents is a method for teaching or impressing views of authority and a desire for action on other officers. The second section challenges Waddington's (1999) argument on talk and action, which expressed that police discussions in the parade room did not influence action. It focuses on how cultural values of masculinity

and authoritarianism create frontline working practices that affect policing styles and how some officers choose to approach incidents. The final substantive section focuses on how the adoption of perceived internal cultural norms sometimes shapes an officer's use of discretion and decisions not to make an arrest after being assaulted. Police customs and shared behaviours influence both positive and negative actions, and their impact on police decision-making. The conclusion considers how far these observations can be used to guide police policy and training when determining how best to approach higher-risk incidents.

6.2 Cultural Talk and Police Behaviour

This section argues that cultural traits and values such as masculine bravado shapes how some police officers discuss violent incidents. It demonstrates how the discussion of violent encounters dominate parade room talk and discussions as well as showing how internal role expectations amongst police officers (especially male officers) dictate how officers sometimes respond to questions about assaults whether based on actual or figurative events, including their attitudes in response to confronting danger and being or nearly being assaulted. The observational data determines that male officers are most likely to amplify and over-dramatise their actions during incidents. Some male officers exaggerated their own actions during incidents, minimising the risk of assault in an overstatement of masculine bravado. The same officers readily demonstrated through talk and movement the importance of authority and control of the public as key policing functions. The following quotation is from a male officer who explained why he sometimes does not arrest for an assault or where there has been resistance. It provides a descriptive overview of how some officers engage in talk as a representation of risk and role. At the time of making the statement, the officer was discussing violent confrontations with other officers.

Officer 1: "I would not arrest for resist arrest unless there was some form of assault involved"

Officer 2: "Even then I probably wouldn't arrest for resist as if they are assaulting me, I've probably given them a dig first"

Observation Report 15: Discussion of Resisting Arrest.

The story ties in with the work of van Maanen (1973) and the importance of war stories. The theme of resisting arrest was a natural part of the conversation of the officers in the parade room at the time. The use of language and admittance to the use of force to potentially exacerbate incidents highlights the safer environment of the parade room in which to discuss actions and behaviours with other officers who have knowledge of the risks inherent in their

role. This story highlighted policing actions which are at odds with the normal mundane police patrol, and demonstrated an extreme type of behaviour and level of risk (Rantatalo and Karp, 2018). Any such comments by officers in public could receive negative reactions and undermine the professionalism and fairness of the police role in upholding the law and applying force where necessary. The Peelian Principles of policing by consent could be undermined by such open discussion of the use of force in controlling the public. Without authority and legitimacy, the police will not often have the support or obedience from some citizens who deem it acceptable to challenge police uses of force and direct instructions (Hawdon et al., 2003). Away from the public, however, the same officer feels comfortable in expressing such views of his own actions. In another conversation, the same officer quickly established that he had seldom been assaulted, adding “I don’t let them assault me, I’d hit them first” (Observational Report 16). These comments and other similar statements from other officers indicate an important reason as to why some officers choose not to report assaults. In feeling that they have either provoked the assaults or displayed equally aggressive behaviour towards an assailant, an officer could decide that they do not wish to be challenged at court, were ‘deserving’ of the assault or do not want to come under investigation if a counter-allegation is raised post-arrest. Despite admitting these actions in the parade room in front of others, the officer could feel comfortable that he will not be reported to senior managers, relying on a sense of camaraderie and solidarity with fellow officers (cf. Reiner, 2000).

The observational reports outlined above inform how officers make sense of their role when discussing incidents in the backstage areas (Waddington, 1999). Backstage stories and tales of action and control strengthen internal expectations and the importance of cultural values, with stories often exaggerating officers’ actions and associated risks (Holdaway, 1983). Conversations and statements, like those made by the officer in observation report 15, demonstrate the use of cultural talk to amplify and glorify risk and danger as part of the role and latterly as a way of minimising or downplaying the chance of being injured or assaulted and to justify police actions towards the public. Oftentimes, the stories told by officers in the parade room do not strictly bear resemblance to the truth but act as a way of perpetuating cultural norms (Westmarland and Yearly, 2001).

In both Observation Reports 15 and 16, the officer articulates the same thoughts, maintaining that force is an important part of the policing role and in upholding control over incidents. The two comments indicated the significance of self-presentation and self-definition to other officers (Goffman, 1959). Other officers describe this officer as proactive, the definition of a frontline officer who is willing to use force and confront violent situations. Such talk thus upholds this presentation of self and creates a character that the officer plays

when in uniform (Goffman, 1967; Waddington, 1999). The officer's words appear to be an exaggeration of the officer's authority and how the officer perceives his role and position in asserting control over the public (Ericson, 1973). The officer is keen to stress that he does not play by the 'legal' rules, uses his discretion and is not structurally uniform or compliant in the way in which he uses force or controls situation (Ericson, 2007). To this end, the officer is designing his own language of experience around the use of force, which demonstrates how he practices and fulfils actions as rule-setting and guidance (Ericson, 2007). Practicing police skills allows an officer to restate how they understand and interpret the cultural values and creates justification and reasons for their words to officers and for their actions with the public (Ericson, 2007; Taylor, 1992). Waddington (1999), however, argues that using these words is a way of understanding the role and does not reflect on how the officer interacts with the public during incidents. The use of language often augments the desire for action amongst male police officers.

The data reveal a clear distinction and observable separation between how male and female officers engage with talk and discussing violence. Gender may impact and influence how people perform their roles and present themselves in the parade room, potentially affecting how far it can be said that some officers interact with cultural traits and indications of how well some officers fit in with the demands and internal expectations of the frontline police role (Westmarland and Yearly, 2001). Cultural talk and storytelling could be used by officers as a way of sharing experience between older and younger officers (especially male officers) (Rantatalo and Karp, 2018). Out of the officers observed during this study, females tended to be more subdued and conservative in how they spoke about violent encounters. Female officers spoke more factually about incidents and discussed them more calmly, whereas male officers were more readily expressive and dramatic, appearing happier to discuss violent encounters with other officers. The observations indicated that female officers appeared more aware of the risks associated with the role and their potential impact. The following observation shows how some male officers emphasise their discussions of non-compliant encounters. The report details a male sergeant discussing an incident where he had to deal with an aggressive male;

“Officers from two different shifts were sat in the parade room around shift changeover time. The conversation was focused on incidents that the late shift had attended when talk turned to a violent confrontation. The incident discussed was a caller who had concerns for the safety of a female who lived in the same block of flats. When officers arrived, they located a female inside the flats but could only reach her by forcing entry. The attending officers decided to detain the female under the Mental Health Act. As officers moved to take hold of the female, a male in the flat

became aggressive towards the officers. As the officers describe this moment, the male sergeant takes over the story as he is asked about the male and being assaulted. The male sergeant states clearly that he face-planted the male in order to get him to the ground, sparking a reaction that led to the sergeant being punched.”

Observational Report 13: Parade Room discussion of an Assault.

Throughout the discussion and when asked questions, the male sergeant spoke in a controlled manner. When the conversation moved to his actions, however, he immediately became more expressive in detailing his use of force, shouting the words ‘face-plant’ across the parade room, indicating a pride in confronting violence and asserting authority over an aggressive individual, despite subsequently being assaulted. Much like the male officer in Observations 15 and 16, the male sergeant is creating a persona, demonstrating his ability to confront violence and control incidents. The comments he made are unlikely to be a true reflection of every aspect of the incident. As opposed to Waddington (1999), it can be argued that the sergeant is passing his thoughts on to the other officers of how he believes police officers should assert themselves whilst on the frontline. In describing his actions in front of the other officers, the male sergeant can emphasise his use of force, influencing and socialising other officers (most likely newer officers who are keen to make an impression) towards his own perceptions of how officers should behave in similar encounters. In this way, the sergeant, who can affect and influence the behaviour of the officers on his shift due to the formal policing hierarchy, explains his art of policing through exaggerating his use of force (cf. van Maanen, 1973).

The backstage area allows officers to talk openly about the reality of policing, describing and detailing the nature of the frontline to all those present in that social arena. The incidents discussed can amplify the expectations of how officers should ‘successfully’ resolve similar incidents where violence is predicted (Rantatalo and Karp, 2018). As Ericson (2007) argues, the police culture is a game relating to language where previous experience of violent incidents guides and sets precedence for what should be done when faced with similar situations. In the retelling of this incident, the sergeant creates an impression of what he expects from other. To this end, the sergeant is able to set a ‘parade room agenda’, which informally influences other officers by suggesting and informing them of expectations with regards how they should react in similar circumstances. It is then the decision of others as to the extent to which they adhere to these informal cultural values in their approach to violent incidents. After leaving formal policing training, learning is done ‘on the job’, from more experienced officers to those younger in service (cf. Chan, 2003). This learning can come

from one-to-one discussions or from sharing direct experiences of incidents through a 'backstage' demonstration.

The next observation shows the gendered differences in the extent to which some male and female officers engage with cultural talk and language about violence. The incident described involved a female officer who was pushed by a male when intervening in a fight between two men. The male who assaulted the female officer was later located and arrested. Later during that same shift, a male and female officer both separately described the incident in the parade room. The male officer talking is a sergeant with a number of years of frontline policing experience. The female officer speaking was, at the time, in her two-year probationary period. The ways in which both describe the incident show direct gendered comparisons in the use of talk and engagement with masculine bravado.

“She [the female officer] talks in a very matter of fact way about what happened. She speaks in broad statements with little or no emotion.

The male sergeant becomes very dramatic in the way in which he acts out the incident. He describes that the people in his van saw an argument. They intervened. He states that the officers broke it up. Whilst he is saying this he is striding around the parade room, acting it out. Suddenly he turns and says 'AND THEN' with his two hands stretched out in front of him. He makes a pushing motion in a big grand action. As he does this he shouts the word 'WHAM!'”

Observational Report 41: A Male and a Female Officer Describe the Same Incident.

Differences in talking about and dramatising incidents are influenced by both gender and length of service. The male sergeant defends his rank, displaying a readiness for action underpinned by an exaggerated version of his masculinity. The female officer appears to display a restrained method of discussing incidents, emphasising a potential concern for the outcome of the encounter. Her language remains within professional boundaries. As Heidensohn (1989) argued, female officers are less likely to interact emotionally with cultural traits and adhere to the expectations of other officers. This substantiates a finding of this study that the female officers were more likely to display behaviours in both front stage and backstage arenas which are less informed by an association to cultural norms and informal values. As such, female officers often isolate themselves from cultural working practices, which can lead to their being ostracised from the frontline. Brown (1994) supported this viewpoint, stating that female officers are often marginalised by a masculine-dominated culture, making them less likely to engage with it. The bravado shown by some experienced male officers does not seem to be expected from frontline female officers, who talk more

cautiously about violent incidents. Increases in the recruitment of female officers and officers from different backgrounds could lead to a fundamental shift in any internal cultural practices, especially the way in which violent incidents are described and scrutinised by officers in the parade room.

The data show that some officers exaggerate their stories and actions, using them as a 'mask of toughness' to prove to other officers that they are used to confronting danger and demonstrating to others that they were not fearful of injury. This finding supports the work of Holdaway (1983) who argued that some officers spoke in such a way as to not let fear permeate the impression that they were giving to other officers. Officers can internalise emotions when describing incidents, repressing any fears that could affect their future decision-making (Burke, 1994). The ability to suppress feelings of anger, frustration or of being scared during a violent incident is sometimes a short-term reaction. For some officers, continually downplaying risk and internalising fear can lead to their becoming disinterested or dismissive of potential violence, causing them to take risks around force and control. Alternatively, the cumulative effects of repression can express themselves during a future incident, leading to an officer being unable to confront violence. The combined stressors of any informal cultural values and the demanding for bravado in the face of fear can have a negative impact on officer behaviours. The following observation validates the arguments about officers minimising the risks of incidents when discussing them with others. The incident involved a male and female officer who attended an address to speak with a male. On returning to the station, the female officer spoke first about the incident.

"The female officer entered the parade room saying that they had arrested the male they went to speak to about a minor traffic offence and calmly suggested that this was because he had tried to assault the male officer. She went on to talk frankly about the encounter and how after entering the address, the assailant had refused to speak with them and pretended to be asleep. As the male officer went to wake him up, the male on the sofa became aggressive, kicking out at the officer and throwing his arms around. Shortly after the female officer finished explaining the incident, the male officer entered the parade room from the custody suite and was immediately asked about the incident and nearly being assaulted. The male officer was instantly dismissive "If he had hit me, I would have kicked him"

At the same time, the male officer pointed to his steel toe-capped boots to indicate that this would have hurt."

Observational Report 35: Description of a Near Miss Incident.

Even though there were only two other officers in the parade room at the time the incident was being discussed, the male was quick to dismiss the increased risk inherent in the encounter, affirming that he was fully in control and orchestrated how he would have subdued the male through the use of force if necessary. Through his storytelling, the male officer constructed an impression and the details that he wanted other officers to know about what happened regardless of how closely this account matched the reality of the encounter. His dismissal of the incident went against the officer's usual demeanour. He is not normally known for being involved in violent confrontations or for his (over)use of force. In comparison with the observations, the officer did not expose the negative aspects of the incident or, when he talked about them, he reduced them to an inconvenience in the role, choosing instead to emphasise his capabilities of reducing the risk of aggressive non-compliance. The male officer, rightly or wrongly, assumes necessity in defending his abilities in the hope that these actions will be shared amongst other officers, therefore positively affecting how he is viewed in comparison with his peers. Even male officers, who do not always demonstrate a desire for action when in conflict with the public, still appear to be bound by culturally informed conversation in the parade room. Such dismissive behaviour shows the importance of socialisation and the adoption of presentational traits in how some officers define themselves in the parade room and to other officers.

The use of stories is an important way for police officers to share their understanding and solidarity of the dangers of the role (Shearing and Ericson, 1991). Shearing and Ericson (1991) argued that the occupational police culture creates a story book for officers, socialising them in the 'art of policing'. In this study, officers regularly noted that certain types of incidents were more readily discussed in the parade room than others. As one officer stated when asked to describe the incidents spoken about between officers;

"Anything of particular violence, anything that is particularly upsetting... Anything where other officers have been assaulted" (PC-4, Female Officer).

The same officer also noted some colleagues enjoyed discussing the outcome of incidents "*especially if they catch somebody at the end of it*" (PC-4). Incidents where officers could demonstrate their abilities and receive plaudits from colleagues, were those most commonly discussed, regardless of whether the other officers wished to hear the story. When asked whether talking about confronting violence led to the reverence of certain officers, the interviewed officers were often very dismissive;

"I don't think so, no. In fact some of them are very much, not scorned but you get the odd tutting and eyes rolling" (PC-4, Female Officer).

“I don’t think so....no I don’t think so” (PC-6, *Female Officer*).

Whilst conversation appears to be important in sharing stories and understanding of risks and violence, it is not always viewed as a positive aspect of police parade room discussions. Despite this, violent incidents often become part of ‘policing folklore’. At one station in Lincolnshire, a noteworthy incident from New Year’s Eve in 2010 is still discussed and is prefixed with the term “The Battle Of...”, whenever it is mentioned. The circumstances of the incident are shared between officers, and newer officers are socialised into the mythology of the encounter. Whilst the factual accuracy of the story is likely to have changed since it occurred and the story has been passed between generations of officers who were not present, the incident is still used as a positive example of how officers were able to control a highly violent and provocative incident. The following quotation shows the extent to which some officers over-dramatise violent incidents, discussing violent incidents in-depth. In contrast, the officer explains that not all officers behave in the same way.

“Some do, yeah there’s the certain type of people who want everybody to know everything about a job. Some people can keep quite quiet and want to deal with it their own way and don’t really want to talk about. It [violence] gets glamorised quite a lot by certain people” (PC-3, *Female Officer*).

The experience of the officer can also impact on how they engage with the talk and impress their thoughts onto other, potentially new, officers. One officer discussed how ‘older’ officers often spoke about different eras of policing and the differences in the way violent incidents were previously approached. As the officer noted when asked about the stories told in the parade room.

“When you hear stories from the past about how public order policing was dealt with in the early 1990s, which is probably the earliest reference I can use from cops I’ve dealt with, those days are perhaps still revered a little bit amongst cops” (PC-9, *Male Officer*).

Such stories can influence how some officers perform the role when in direct conflict with the public (Holdaway, 1983; Shearing and Ericson, 1991). The policing tutor phase provides an opportunity for teaching expected behaviours and reactions during and after violent or emotionally demanding incidents. This is a teaching and learning process that Charman refers to as “organisational socialisation” (2017: 92). It is argued that the influence of both the tutor and other officers in a multi-faceted and informal approach is often important in explaining how people learn and develop as police officers (Charman, 2017). The following quotation demonstrates the influence of officers in the development of new officers who

learn from observed behaviours and make decisions based on officers they aspire to follow. The officer also noted that this learning process is an ongoing one that develops from both talking and watching another officer's behaviour during incidents.

"I think some younger, early 20s male police officers might look up to the older, more hands on cop. As a [older] man, I have been doing the job for eight years and I often look at some of the female officers who are able to calm the situation before it becomes violent...and I admire them" (*PC-8, Male Officer*).

Some frontline police officers continue to pursue and maintain a uniformed character closely connected to the adoption of learned behaviours (Goffman, 1967). Frontline policing is changing, however, with the increased recruitment of female officers and the professionalisation of policing through the introduction of foundation police degrees. These changes could lead to a cultural shift whereby different skills are prioritised, discussed and revered. Both the observational and interview data support the view of Waddington (1999), insofar as the talk and conversation in the parade room are a way of sharing experiences and making sense of the role. Conversely, the same data challenge this argument, showing that such informal conversations constitute conditional coaching for those officers who aspire to be viewed as assertive and controlling. It appears to be necessary for some officers to assert a dominant perspective of the self as unaffected by violence and always in control. These behaviours can then guide how officers act when approaching an incident and confronting conflict during an encounter.

6.3 Masculinity, Action and the Police Role

Sub-cultural traits of masculinity, authoritarianism and action can influence the behaviour of some police officers during incidents. Frontline officers, in particular, display observable behaviours consistent with the adoption of cultural values and working practices that subsequently influence how they respond to and approach encounters. The following section builds on the findings and hypothesis of chapter five, which sought to explain the gendered nature of assaults and therein why male officers are at a greater risk of being attacked. It considers the cultural influences on the actions of police officers, analysing the perceived internal role expectations as they adapt to the demands and dynamics of the role. Drawing on Skolnick's cultural dimensions, this section focuses on the importance of officers' actions and perceptions of authority in explaining hostility in some incidents. The first focus is on the gendered division of labour and the positioning of masculinity in police actions and behaviours.

6.3.1 Masculinity, Gender and Assaults

During the interviews, it was female officers who most commonly discussed the role of gender in explaining some assaults. It was widely observed that the gendered difference in assault figures were often socially structured and determined by officer attitudes towards chivalry and authority. As Westmarland (2001) found, there is a highly gendered division of labour between male and female officers, which has affected their deployment to different incidents. As shown in chapter five, these values still appeared to influence the decisions of sergeants and the control room in the deployment of their resources to incidents, with male officers seen as more suited to confronting violence. This can create a bifurcation in frontline policing in assigning different roles and incidents to male and female officers (Westmarland, 2001). Alongside the deployment of male officers to more potentially violent incidents, actions on attending the same incidents can exacerbate an increased risk of being assaulted. The data indicate that chivalry and machismo partially explain the higher number of assaults against male officers. Where male officers see themselves as protectors, then they could place themselves in danger of being attacked in defence of a female colleague (Bell, 1982). In frontline policing, there has been no apparent major shift in the culturally chivalrous actions of male officers not placing females in danger, with male and female officers reporting that men often deal with people who are perceived as most likely to be violent. In his description of being assaulted, one male officer reiterated the customs surrounding gender roles at higher risk, adversarial incidents. In his example, the officer described attending a domestic incident with two other officers (one male and one female). On attendance and entering into the property, the two male officers apprehended the alleged male offender, whilst the female officer spoke with the female caller.

“The male upstairs was drunk but when he spoke to us he seemed perfectly calm and OK. My colleague arrested him for a domestic assault. We brought him downstairs and as we got him downstairs his wife spoke to him from the kitchen at which point he tried to get into the kitchen. We had to stop him and...He became violent and then he smacked my head into a wall causing my head to split open” (*PC-2, Male Officer*).

Asked to elaborate on the factors, the officer felt had contributed to the assault. He stated that the failure to handcuff the aggressor and not keeping the male and female separate from each other were important reasons for the assault outcome. The officers became the focus of the aggression from the male. Any existing frustrations and feelings of anger were deflected from the female onto the male officers. When arresting the male in his own house, the officers were also asserting their authority over him, minimising his ability to control and

dominate his own personal space. The initial decision for the male officers to approach the named assailant started the chain of events that led to the assault. The actions of the officers at the commencement of any encounter are sometimes determined by pre-set and socialised working practices and sometimes influence the outcome of incidents and the increased risk of assault. The male officers demonstrated a pre-existing chivalry in their actions by choosing to approach the alleged male assailant and leaving the female officer to speak with the female in the address, thus leaving themselves open to a greater risk of assault. This is despite the arguments raised in chapter five that female officers are equally capable of making arrests and dealing with alleged aggressor. The permeating cultural values still appear to set gendered roles when attending potentially violent incidents (cf. Westmarland, 2001).

Differences in policing styles and the potential adherence to cultural values and norms were key points addressed during the interviews. Contrary to the discussion by female officers of gendered differences in assaults, it was the male officers who were most likely to describe their perceived differences in the skill sets of officers. Officers often maintained a clear contrast between female and male officers, with a focus on female officers being better communicators and superior in their ability to calm incidents. In comparison, male officers were sometimes viewed as having enhanced skills in using force and controlling potentially violent situations. Whilst not directly referencing gender, the following officer infers these perceived gendered differences in acknowledging that different officers have opposing strengths;

“I think different cops will deal with stuff differently. So you might have somebody who is quite big who is very good at getting hold of somebody and keeping hold of somebody but you might have somebody who isn't particularly big but is very good at talking to people...” (*PC-7, Male Officer*).

Research on other security sectors, including regulated door staff, recognised that female personnel had abilities such as reducing levels of physical confrontation. Some previous studies have argued that the communicative qualities of some females were more suited to non-aggressive styles of conflict resolution (Hobbs et al., 2007; Monaghan, 2003). Despite acknowledging the abilities of female officers in reducing risk, the data indicate that male officers were more likely to confront aggression and, therefore, put themselves at increased risk of assault. Conversely, one officer argued that regardless of gender, officers should react in the same way to aggression and when defending other officers. The quotation highlights another cultural trait, that of solidarity:

“I think you are expected to deal with something when it presents itself. If there was a violent situation I would expect a colleague to, male or female, to just effectively dive straight in there. If I was dealing with some violence and could see some colleagues just stood in the background I would be pretty peeved off” (*PC-9, Male Officer*).

This quotation substantiates the findings of Hobbs et al. (2007), who stated that female door staff were often required to transgress traditional gender norms and apply their own interpretations of masculinity in how they approach incidents. Whilst policing attracts people with a range of skills and backgrounds, frontline policing often retains and attracts people whose behaviour and attitudes most closely match defined cultural traits and values, including a hedonistic desire for action and authoritarian defiance, which makes them more willing to risk injury and harm. Female officers, who remain on the frontline, rather than specialising, could be those who are best able to conform to informal working values and expectations amongst frontline officers, which stem from a male-dominated culture. Those female officers who are perceived by supervisors and other officers as not possessing these skills and abilities or who are unable to adapt are sometimes guided towards other roles such as investigative ones or those that deal with vulnerable victims. The positioning of male and female officers, during violent incidents, upholds and maintains long-standing customs and practices. Whilst these initial decisions can increase the risks to officers of being assaulted, the way in which some officers assert their authority and order during an encounter can influence its outcome, either positively in de-escalating conflict or negatively in leading to aggressive non-compliance.

6.3.2 Masculinity, Authority and Assaults

The use of authority by police officers maintains power relationships within incidents but, if always respected by the public, should lead to consensual and compliant outcomes to every incident. The way in which officers assert and demonstrate their authority during encounters also has a gendered bias. The following quotation highlights the gendered differences in the assertion of authority, especially around decisions to use force.

“I think male officers are more likely to get hands on more than female officers” (*PC-8, Male Officer*).

The law provides police officers with the power to use necessary force where appropriate; it does not determine in what circumstances it should be applied. When discussing authority during incidents, as with PC-8 above, a number of officers drew parallels between authority and the imposition of force. These assertions are contrary to the fact that authority in police

encounters is not solely represented by force, but it can come from the meaning of the uniform, the use of language and the respectfulness of the public towards police orders.

Decisions to use force are guided by the National Decision Model (NDM). This is a circular model, which provides the rationale for what action is taken during incidents. The sections of the model include gathering information, an understanding of policies and procedures, the decision to take action and the subsequent review of this decision. One of the possible outcomes from this model is that officers decide not to take any action. It was agreed by some of the interviewees that the behaviour of a police officer can sometimes influence the cycle of events leading to non-compliance. One officer in particular (PC-8) spoke earnestly about changing the way he approached people. This officer noted how his previous actions sometimes led to confrontation and conflict during incidents, even when other officers had previously calmed the situation. Due to changes in his personal life, the officer had altered his approach to incidents to be able to minimise the risk of harm.

“...Before then I was quite aggressive when I went to jobs. I looked down, well not looked down that’s the wrong word but I looked at people who hit their wives or females that had hit their husbands or children as crap really, you know, they shouldn’t do that sort of thing, they didn’t deserve my respect and I used to get into a lot more physical confrontation with people when I had that attitude..... I have mellowed a lot more and I think that’s the reason why I’ve gone a long period without being assaulted now because I’m a lot more easy going, I’m a lot less confrontational and I do try and calm a situation when I can but I am always prepared to get stuck in if I have to” (PC-8, Male Officer).

Outside influences can positively affect how officers approach the role and potentially violent incidents. They can also negatively impact on the response of some officers to the demands of an encounter. Chapter seven analyses the effects of emotional stressors on the risk of assaults, but it is important to state that an event such as a divorce could lead to a male officer attempting to assert his masculinity or authority over an incident in proxy of not having control of his personal life. Despite the potential that some officers can change the way in which they approach incidents, there are still internal demands and cultural values which dictate expected behaviours. This is reflected in the officer’s use of the phrase “get stuck in” within the quotation above.

The use of force is a way of defining power relations in an encounter and the data indicate a greater demand on male officers to confront aggression with equally assertive actions. The following two quotations show a bifurcation of officers’ actions developing from social norms and public expectations.

“I think we [female officers] are less likely to run in and get hands on as quick as a male officer but I think that’s just a sex thing, you know. It feels less natural for us [female officers] to do that” (PC-3, *Female Officer*).

“I get a lot of people saying to me, “you’re on your own” or “you’re a female on your own” and there’s still this culture that females are weak maybe, that they’re not as strong as their counterparts. So yeah sometimes I’m treated differently...” (PC-4, *Female Officer*).

The data show that decisions to demonstrate authority through force are learned behaviours manifested from both internal police expectations as well as public beliefs. These findings reflect the work of Pierre Bourdieu and his essays on ‘field’ and ‘habitus’. Bourdieu defined the field as the environment occupied by the actor or the subject, and the habitus as the learned behaviours or actions that are taken for granted which create power imbalances, social structures and hierarchies. There are rules of engagement accepted by those who interact in the field (Swartz, 1997). Police officers use the field and learned behaviours to engage in terms of when they should apply force and, in turn, how these actions create a power imbalance over those who challenge them. In comparison, the work of Berne (1968) analysed transactional ‘games’ that occurred in encounters and the possible power imbalances that were created through the different approaches and position of those involved. The outcome of each transaction has a number of possible outcomes based on the motivations of those involved (Berne, 1968).

During the majority of police/public encounters the officer seeks to equalise the status between them and the citizen in order to reach an agreed and compliant outcome. In non-compliant encounters, police officers use both the threat of coercion and force to manufacture a superior position over the person they are interacting with. This communicatory and transactional imbalance is necessary in order to effectively enforce the law and maintain order. Some citizens, however, refuse to submit to the authority of officers, creating unstable relationships and increasing the risk of aggressive non-compliance. Without consent and compliance, confrontational incidents can escalate. These incidents can occur as a result of an officer deliberately provoking an emotional reaction through their use of language or where officers become the focus of aggression after intervening in an incident. One officer also argued that some officers dismiss the need for compliant communication in favour of wanting to confront an individual and use force.

“Some officers you see, they do like to fight, I think. It is quite rare but there are people that, I don’t know, sometimes it is as if they are even trying to cause a fight, causing them to have a bit of a scrap” (PC-6, *Female Officer*).

As Bittner (1975) suggests, one key aspect of the police role is the ability to use force to resolve an incident through coercion and control. The personality and abilities of the officer could guide the extent to which officers seek to use force or want to physically control a person. The above quotation also corroborates the findings of Fassin (2013), which focused on the desire for action on the part of police officers, especially after periods of mundane and routine patrol work (Fassin, 2013; Reiner, 2010). After long periods of patrolling without attending any incidents, officers could believe that they are not performing their role of preventing or detecting crime. When finally called to an incident, an officer will sometimes deal with this in an overly assertive manner, chasing an adrenaline rush or pushing the boundaries or using force (Reiner, 2010; Waddington, 1999). As outlined in the above quotation, some officers employ tactics to deliberately intensify some incidents or citizens' reaction, so that the encounter results in confrontation. These tactics can include using force before any verbal communication, or a number of officers turning up in order to assert control over one person. Such behaviour is reminiscent of Lyng's (1990) concept of 'edgework'. When applied to police work, some officers could chase an adrenaline rush, which tests their skills whilst delicately balancing the use of force with their own safety. The interview data reflected that different officers had different skillsets meaning that certain officers were better at confronting violence. Such statements, however, were often coupled with suggestions that some officers pushed the boundaries of what is 'acceptable' or 'reasonable' which the interviewed officers often did not see as positive officer characteristics. The data suggest that officers viewed those who were too aggressive in a negative way, despite acknowledging that it continued to be an accepted and discussed trait in parade room discussions and internal police expectations. As argued by two officers when asked whether some officers were better at controlling incidents than others.

"Personally I think if you can go through your whole career in the police and never get assaulted you did something right. It doesn't mean you don't get involved in anything. I mean sometimes we say to be a good officer you've got to have complaints and in a way you say to be a good officer you've got to have had complaints and be assaulted or you don't get stuck in but I don't agree with that" (PC-2, Male Officer).

"I think some do push it, I do think some do use excessive force sometimes...I just think it's just the nature of it. I think people do it because they show them that they're the boss.... I think we needed to be authoritative but I think to be pushing people away to the point that you end up pushing them over, I think is a bit too excessive really" (PC-7, Male Officer).

Officers can over-assert their authority and position for a number of reasons. There are some officers who believe that such behaviour is expected of them. Newer officers are often socialised into a frontline where officers expect to be assaulted during their career and where internal pressures from other officers dictate that they should confront aggression with similar aggression and the use of force to maintain control and order. It is often said between frontline officers that if you are getting complaints from the public around the use of force that this means that the officer is performing well in the role. As van Maanen (1972) suggested, police officers learn on the frontline how to perform the role and the style of the job. The lessons learned in a parade room teach newer officers survival skills when confronted with aggression (van Maanen, 1972). There are other officers who wish to assert their authority over people and incidents, in order to maintain power imbalances and because they do not like dealing with certain situations. When discussing incidents where officers most readily exerted and demonstrated strong authoritative reactions to individuals, the interviewees regularly detailed encounters in the night-time economy. The following two quotations demonstrate occurrences in the night-time economy where officers have reacted aggressively to groups of people either due to frustrations or in an attempt to assert control over a situation.

“I’ve seen cops; when I’ve been talking to groups of people who have been fighting or squaring up to each other and I’ve had a reasonable conversation with them; I’ve seen other cops just barge in and start pushing people out of the way and that can make a volatile situation more volatile” (*PC-9, Male Officer*).

“I’ve been in town before on a Friday and Saturday night and I’ve been stood with a particular colleague that doesn’t like people who are drunk...I’ve got a colleague who I’ve seen on occasions, firstly just look away from people, not acknowledge them, not be polite to them. I’ve then seen him tell them to go away when they refused to or not left... and it’s gone from being friendly to my colleague threatening to arrest them for being drunk and disorderly, to them taking umbrage with that, to then being arrested, to then them resisting the arrest” (*PC-8, Male Officer*).

The frustrations of officers during patrol work, or the role they are being asked to undertake, can lead to some officers pushing the boundaries of reasonable action or reacting aggressively to any challenge to their position or authority. Some officers dislike certain duties or shifts including the policing of the night-time economy, where short periods of action are interjected into longer periods of boredom awaiting incidents whilst dealing with questions from drunken people (cf. Fassin, 2013). These frustrations become focused on assailants during moments of action, similar to how a person’s aggressive behaviour can

become focused on the police when officers interfere to stop a fight or prevent a crime being committed. These behaviours by certain officers can be heightened when dealing with people of different generations (e.g. older officers and younger people) or through tiredness in the role, a feeling of repeating the same shifts, continually witnessing the same actions from the public and a sense of having 'heard it all before'. In such circumstances, an officer could react in an overly assertive manner to those who approach them.

Such displays of power might be seen by other people as unnecessary or disproportionate to the circumstances. In front of the public, though, it can be argued that police officers want to show that they are in control of a situation. In such circumstances, officers seek different ways of reasserting dominance including the resorting to force, believing that what they are doing is demonstrating the control and strength of the police or defending the reputation of the police whilst proving themselves to other officers. The following observation supports this argument. It describes an incident where the police were called to a street to a male under the influence of drugs and alcohol who then challenged the authority of the officers in front of witnesses.

"The male seemed undeterred by officers as he walked towards his back door saying that he needed to go back inside. Another male colleague stood blocking his way. The male asked the officer to move saying that he could not stop him going inside. The male officer replied that he could and would do officers found out what was happening. The male answered

"So you think you're a big man?"

As the incident progressed three officers come to speak with the male in the garden. The male lashed out at officers before he was taken to the ground and handcuffed. Whilst restrained on the floor the male continued to resist and other officers attended and pinned him on the patio. A male officer gave the male a distraction strike in the form of an open handed slap to his face and pinned his head down as the male resisted and attempted to get back up. His legs were also pinned with a baton. The male continued to be abusive to officers and was arrested for assault. As the officers waited for a van to arrive to transport the male, an officer pulled the hairs on the male's back, further antagonising the situation."

Observational Report 42: Officers' Authority Challenged in the Street

The observation details how officers sometimes respond with what other officers could perceive as undue force, especially in circumstances where a person has been non-

compliant. These actions are a way of attesting that they are dominant within the power relationship, especially where there has been a challenge as to who was the dominant party within the encounter (Reiss, 1971). There are numerous factors which could influence an officer's decision to use force as well as the type of force used. These include the incident type, the person, the circumstances of the encounter and the extent to which the officer believes their authority has been challenged. As Reiss (1971) claims, force is unnecessarily used in different situations and for multiple reasons including the need to reassert authority and gain co-operation for another part of the policing process. Despite the introduction of BWV, officers can still push the boundaries in incidents to self-edit or control what is filmed (Ariel et al, 2016). In this case, even with cameras present, the officers could have pointed the camera away from the full incident, eliminating evidence of the uses of force.

In observation report 42, it can be reasoned that the use of additional force post-arrest is due to numerous factors; it reasserts that the officer is in charge of the incident and the final outcome as well as ensuring that the male becomes compliant for when he is moved to the police van. From the data, this study argues that some decisions to apply force are dependent on the officer's perception of self, his/her authority and not wanting to show weakness in front of either their colleagues or to a non-compliant individual. As one officer stated in his interview when asked about whether he had seen officers pushing the boundaries of reasonable force and action;

“I see quite regularly [on] Friday and Saturday nights, certain officers will be kicking people down the street. Now it looks quite bad when they're pushing them and I've seen people be pushed and they've ended up on the floor and you think 'that's really an assault from the other side'...” (PC-7, *Male Officer*).

The data indicated that some officers push the boundaries at the edge of acceptability and reasonableness during incidents (Waddington, 1999). These officers seek protection from the meaning of the uniform and the solidarity of their colleagues to support and substantiate their actions during an encounter. The interviews highlighted that the majority of officers felt comfortable in challenging their colleagues both during a live incident and afterwards about their behaviour, but there were many interviewees who stated that they had never had cause to, examine another officer's actions or when they had questioned their colleagues, had accepted their justification for the use of force;

“I have seen them maybe get an arm lock on and keep that arm lock on a bit longer than maybe necessary and I have told people and at the time of the incident, “Hey come on, leave it now, calm down” that sort of thing... I've challenged officers as well on their behaviour” (PC-8, *Male Officer*).

“I did challenge the officer afterwards for his use of force, in fact pretty much straight away challenged him but he justified that he had seen something that I hadn’t seen and I don’t doubt at all his credibility” *(PC-9, Male Officer)*.

As Reiner (2000) argued, due to the nature of the role and the risks associated with policing, officers between shifts develop a form of solidarity, which could allow for the officers to challenge or question the actions of others, but not necessarily report them to their supervisors or to an internal complaints department (commonly known in policing as Professional Standards). Indeed, the ability to question an officer’s behaviour was seen by one officer solely as a pre-requisite of having known them and worked alongside them and was not done when the officer was unknown to them. As stated by this officer when asked who he would feel comfortable in challenging:

“I think officers I know, I don’t think I would be the same if I was covering somewhere and they worked differently but yeah certainly someone around here I would have no difficulty in challenging” *(PC-9, Male Officer)*.

Whilst the ability to challenge colleagues in private spaces such as the parade room encourages teaching and learning, the desire not to report to supervisors or to higher ranks creates solidarity between officers. This could be seen as a noble and important part of developing strong shifts that work closely together and is something, which is possibly replicated in other workplaces. In policing, however, the failure to challenge or reprimand could lead to some officers continuing to push the boundaries during incidents, placing both themselves and their colleagues at an increased risk of being assaulted. In the following example, a male officer appears to escalate a conflict during the incident after it had been calmed down, after misunderstanding the circumstances.

“We had a situation where there was a bit of a fracas in town. We turned up and managed to part the parties...People were heading their separate directions and we were just there as a presence. Then one of the party saw one of his friends across the road and so ran across to his friend....one of the officers saw him running across to his friend, just grabbed hold of him and said “I’ve told you to leave this fucking area” and banged him up against a nearby shop window and arrested him and he was put in the back of the police car and I wasn’t very happy with what I saw, it wasn’t an ideal situation and I just thought we’ve got this situation under control and then you’ve got another officer who has just come in. I don’t think he was even present when we were dispersing them and he’s just come in at a higher level” *(PC-4, Female Officer)*.

Earlier in the interview, when asked whether there were any reasons why she felt some officers approached incidents more aggressively than others, the officer replied

“...I mean some officers are just aggressive by nature and it’s very much an “I’m in uniform you’re going to do what I say” sort of thing...” (PC-4, *Female Officer*).

The arguments expressed in this section support the work of Waddington (1999) on the ‘contempt of cop’. There is a readiness in some officers to want to use force and to redefine power relationships through control, or sometimes humiliation when their authority has been challenged. It must be acknowledged that in some cases, assaults are unavoidable and are predicated on the desire of the assailant to cause harm or escape; the way in which officers approach incidents can expose them to the possibility of assault. The way in which officers communicate with a person, whether the officer allows a person to justify his/her actions or explain a situation, or how an officer responds to questions or verbal abuse can all affect whether a conflict escalates or de-escalates (Tyler, 2003).

Through their actions and behaviours, officers demonstrate their own subconscious bias and feelings with regard to social order and norms. The use of force or engagements by one officer during an encounter can have an impact on the risk to officers both in the immediate vicinity and aftermath of that incident but also in the longer term. An individual could react aggressively to behaviours during an incident, which could be targeted towards any officer. In the future, however, a person sometimes loses respect for the police, either through the outcome and how they feel they were treated during a previous incident, or because they hear third hand how an acquaintance was dealt with. When they are next stopped and spoken to, the individual could challenge the authority of the officers, as they no longer believe that the law is applied fairly and equally. One officer noted that the ways in which some officers positioned themselves during an incident could affect its outcome and have consequences in the future.

“...I think that some people go into situations and incidents far too aggressively...where that’s not warranted or not needed”

“I think some police officers think they are better than the people they are dealing with” (PC-8, *Male Officer*).

Where some officers repeat these behaviours in a number of incidents, then (as shown in the data), there is an increased risk of being a repeat victim of assault. The quantitative data show that 48 percent of all recorded incidents involved an officer who was a repeat victim of assault during the four year research period. In total, 66 police officers were assaulted on

more than one occasion at two distinct incidents. Of the repeat victims, 43 were male officers, 17 were female officers and 6 were unknown¹⁹. These findings reflected those found in the observations. Out of all 50 recorded observations, 76 of the officers involved in the incidents were male and only 9 female officers. Of these some of the observations involved the same officer being assaulted or involved in an incident of aggressive non-compliance. In arguing, that those officers who more closely adhere to the cultural values are sometimes at greater risk of being assaulted, these data indicate that repeat victims are more likely to justify the values and rules through their actions and the way in which they engage with the cultural and similar the way in which cultural values influence their decision-making and approach to the public.

This section shows that the way in which officers discuss and rationalise their authority sometimes influences how they then react to both verbal and physical challenges from the public. Internal socialisation and learning as well as internal police expectations can guide subsequent actions and behaviours during incidents and increase the risk of assault. The over-arching language of this occupational culture leads to working customs and norms on the frontline relating to the gendered division of labour within incidents and different internalised police officer expectations between male and female officers on how violence and aggression should be confronted. Assaults by definition, involve at least two persons and whilst the assertion of authority or force on a person can sometimes influence the risk of reciprocal incivility, the converse holds true that the behaviour of a person towards the police can also exacerbate a situation, promoting a different outcome (Reiss, 1971). During on-view incidents, whereby police officers are visible to the public, wherever there is a challenge to their legitimacy and a refusal to defer to authority, the officer often has to re-establish dominance through the use of force and control (Reiss, 1971). The next section analyses the influence of assailants on conflict and how reactions to different officers can alter the course and dynamics of an incident.

6.3.3 Gender, Assailants and Assaults

Before considering how the adoption of cultural traits may affect non-action it would be useful to briefly consider how aspects of masculinity and authority influence the actions of people towards police officers at incidents. Whilst the focus of this study is on police officers and how their role and culture affect the risk of being assaulted, it is important to reflect that at some incidents, the thoughts, opinions or actions of a person are the main factors in understanding conflict. When considering in chapter five why male officers are more likely to

¹⁹ This included where an officer had since retired or left the police and so the recorded collar number was no longer attributed to a particular officer.

be assaulted, it was argued that social norms (men not assaulting women) applied equally to police/public encounters. In the interviews, however, there were differences of opinion on the extent to which the gender of the officer affected people's reactions to them. As one officer stated, there are some people who assault officers regardless of the officer's gender.

"There is [sic] probably ten percent of men, aggressive violent men that don't care whether or not it's a male or female officer stood in front of them, if they're going to assault them they will. But members of the public that are causing a problem do have more respect for women officers I believe and will listen to them" (PC-3, Female Officer).

In some cases, when a person is looking to assert *de facto* authority over an incident, then any officer could be assaulted. In these circumstances, the officers are defined by their uniform and role rather than their gender. Furthermore, people under the influence of alcohol or who are unaware of their surroundings could equally challenge and resist both male and female officers. Another officer also argued that during some incidents, if an assailant has taken the decision to resist or attack an officer, then whichever officer engages with him/her is at an increased risk of assault.

"...I think it comes down again to that individual person, as in not the cop, as in the person who is assaulting, the assailant as it were because they just seem to, sort of, once they've made up their mind I think that's what happens" (PC-7, Male Officer).

A person's decision to challenge the power relations inherent within any police encounter means that often police officers will not back down from the confrontation, especially in front of a crowd or other people (cf. Waddington, 1999). Where the authority of the officer is actively challenged by a suspect in public view, the "tacit consent" between the police officer and citizen is broken, leading to an officer requiring reassertion of their dominance, power and authority over a situation in the face of aggression (Ericson, 2007:375). The following incident involved two young male officers arresting a person for a public order offence.

"The young officer tells other officers that a second male became involved in the incident. He comments that the male tried to grab him in a headlock to prevent him from making an arrest. The officer makes light of this initial assault, and demonstrates his toughness by stating that he punched the male. On witnessing the assault on his colleague, the officer describes how the second, stockier male officer came into the encounter, punching the male and then delivering a knee strike to him".

Observational Report 16: Resisting Arrest and a Friend Assisting Him.

Following on from the work of both Toch (1969) and Waddington (1999), when making arrests in public, police officers are at an increased risk of assault from the friends of any arrestee as well as any concerned persons who disagree with the force being used by officers and want to disrupt or obstruct the police either through filming or by attempting to distract an officer from controlling a person. Resistance to arrest or involvement in an incident could be more likely where the officer is male, taller, appears to be stronger and the incident is in a public setting. The potential effects of being controlled by a taller, stronger officer could look to other people as being more oppressive or disproportionate than a smaller officer using the same amount of force. As with any reported or witnessed criminal offences, it is the officer's discretion whether to use formal police action to arrest. This applies to any assaults or incidents where someone resists an officer, and is aggressively non-compliant, as well as where someone obstructs an officer making an arrest. Decisions to arrest or take alternative action could be dictated by the likelihood of punishment as well as cultural norms influencing decision-making and shared reactions to assaults based on injury and danger.

6.4 Assaults, Culture and Non-Action

The final section of this chapter analyses the data with regards to how cultural talk, conversations and socialisation to cultural norms can affect police decision-making, especially with regard to whether or not officers take formal police action against assailants. These pressures often arise when assaults are low-level or by someone not readily defined as a typical offender (children, female on male assaults, people with mental health issues). The socialisation into learned and set behaviours in the parade room appears to teach officers to repress pain and the immediate impact of lower level assaults, with some officers being questioned about their decisions to arrest. Much like the knight in Monty Python and the Holy Grail, the phrase 'tis but a scratch' rings true in the masculine-dominated bravado of the parade room and an officer's behaviour post-assault. As shown in chapter seven, decisions to suppress pain and feelings of anger, frustration or worry after being assaulted can permeate an officer's actions in the longer term when dealing with violent confrontation. The ways in which some officers adopt occupational cultural traits and informal working values legitimises negative reactions to assaults such as not making an arrest or the overuse of force in retaliation. When asked whether there was an agreed way in which officers should react after being assaulted, one officer replied;

"I think everybody's different, some police officers are very manly, bravadoish [sic] people and it's water off a duck's back to them, even if you can see that it's not really the case. Some officers are a bit shocked. I know some police officers that have

never even had a fight before they started this job so when they come and they get assaulted it is a bit of a shock, it is a big deal and you have to look after them and make sure they are OK and keep their confidence” (PC-8, Male Officer).

The above quotation highlights, to a certain extent, the lack of congruence between officers in their engagement with cultural values, between those who are keen to wear a ‘mask of toughness’ in the face of violence and who often view assaults as ‘part of the job’, and between other officers who might never have seen a fight or been attacked before and who show a high level of emotion when facing their first assault. These latter officers could be those who are most susceptible to parade room socialisation in how to react to these incidents. It is argued by this study, however, that with changes in the recruitment standards for police officers and the professionalisation of police training, that there should be a noticeable cultural shift in reactions to assaults if more and more officers who have never previously been witness to violence are increasingly join the police. As it stands, though, the data point towards a greater number of officers for whom assaults are an occupational hazard and where there is a growing expectation that people will strike out at officers at the moment of arrest and/or in custody for various reasons. These insular beliefs can create a larger dark figure of assaults as officers choose not to record every assault. As one officer staunchly remarked when asked about assaults being part of the role

“I think it’s just the nature of the role we’re dealing with. If you’re dealing with violent people for living, we get paid to put ourselves in those situations. I think if you’re not prepared to put yourself in that situation then you’re probably in the wrong job” (PC-9, Male Officer).

As with other aspects of engagement with cultural values, there appeared to be a gendered divide with regard to the options available to officers post-assault and their decisions whether to arrest. Whereas some female officers said that they had not arrested someone after being assaulted (where the assault was unintentional or occurred in custody after another arrest), other female officers interviewed for this study, stated that more arrests should be made for assaults against police officers. The following two quotations were from female officers who were both asked about police officers’ reactions to being assaulted and whether enough action was taken afterwards. The second quotation does however reveal the distinct opinions that officers have when defining what they believe constitutes an assault and what constitutes someone resisting arrest. The latter offence of resisting arrest is often seen by police officers as being a ‘lesser’ offence and a more justifiable response to being detained and for someone having their liberty removed.

“I don’t think we lock up enough for assaulting police officers. I suppose the drivers for us are injury, demeanour of the individual and whether or not that particular officer is bothered and wants to pursue a complaint” (PC-3, *Female Officer*).

“I personally think that if anybody assaults a police officer or tries to do them harm then they should be arrested for that offence. However, if you’re trying to restrain somebody and they’re kicking out or hitting out there’s not always that intention to assault you, it could be accidental, so I think you have to look at it like that” (PC-6, *Female Officer*).

The definition of an assault or someone resisting arrest appears from these data to be highly subjective, with officers describing the constitution of an assault in different ways when asked during this study. As highlighted by PC-6, there were differences between what officers’ perceived to be an assault and what they perceived to be someone resisting arrest. After technically being assaulted, an officer assesses the severity and actions of the assailant against their own internal measure and definition before deciding whether or not to take action. For some officers, resistance is expected from those members of the public who challenge the officers’ authority. The police appear to be encroaching on more areas of people’s personal lives and situations such as cyber-based offences, domestic incidents and those suffering from medical issues in public spaces. Each of these incidents carries a risk of assault and resistance, which officers have to take into account when attending. The need to appear professional, tough and the ones unaffected by tragedy guide how officers behave during and after incidents (Burke, 1994; Franklin, 2005). Due to the demands of the role, officers can habitually become desensitised to violence, death and risk, including assaults. The interviews revealed that some police officers come to ‘accept’ reasons why people react aggressively to police interaction and involvement. As one officer noted

“A lot of the time they were just pushing me away so it was more of a resist and I can understand why some people would resist arrest. They get their liberty taken and they don’t always agree with why that is happening” (PC-8, *Male Officer*).

Such honestly-held beliefs by police officers explain why officers do not arrest when, by legal definitions, they have been assaulted. One observation noted the following when officers were discussing a ‘golden era’ of policing

“One officer spoke clearly about the changes he had seen around assaults and interaction with the public. He noted that once upon a time, if anyone touched the uniform of an officer without permission they would have been arrested for assault.

He then sadly noted that in modern policing, decisions to arrest for assault were based on the level of danger, the type of force used and the level of injury.”

Observation Report 51: Discussion of the ‘Golden Age’ of Policing.

In creating narrower definitions of what is an ‘arrest worthy’ assault, officers create a barrier for the public in their understanding of the true risk faced by police officers. Hidden assaults disguise the accurate number of assaults against police officers in England and Wales. The observations illustrated a number of occasions where assaults (according to the law) occurred but where an arrest was not made. The following example describes one such incident.

“As the male goes into the van he hits of his head on the back of the cage. He is unhappy but still does not understand that we are just taking the decision out of his hands and are going to take him home. As we come to shut the cage door the male sergeant is at the handle and other officers stood outside close to the door. The male uses his legs to stop it from shutting and then kicks out, kicking the door openly quickly which is caught by an officer to stop it hitting them in the head”

Observation Report 45: Male kicks a door towards an officer.

In choosing not to take formal action against assaults, police officers could inadvertently encourage people to push the boundaries of their own behaviours in future encounters with an officer. Just as the actions of an officer can lead to a retrospective reaction from an assailant during future incidents, so a decision not to take action can also lead to people using force in the future. For example, if a person pushes an officer during an encounter and is not arrested, then in a future incident the same assailant could push another officer or use even greater force if they believe they will not be arrested. The limits of acceptable force used against officers can then define hostility and resistance during some incidents. These opinions and decisions are sometimes based on the reactions of other officers and local supervision to an assault, as well as the support given to an officer after an assault. A bad experience in response to an assault such as no charges being brought, or the officer not being asked whether or not he/she needs any ongoing support could mean that an officer would decide not to arrest when he/she is next assaulted. The following observation shows differences in definitions of assault between two officers who were present at the same incident.

“...the male started to kick out and refused to get to his feet. Officer’s wanted to try and control his legs and prevent him kicking out and carry him to the van if

necessary. As this happened the officers took hold of one leg but before the other can be grabbed, the male jumped up on his spare free leg and proceeded to kick out with it. He connected with three or four kicks to the arm of the officer before they were able to put him back down on the floor, apply limb restraints and carry him to the van. Even at the back of the van, the male laid down on the step up and had to be picked up and placed in it. He tried to kick the officers again but they stepped out of the way.

The male was arrested for two assaults and was taken to custody. Whilst waiting to take the male into custody, the discussion between officers turned to debating the second arrest with one officer jokingly exclaiming

“I wouldn’t have arrested him [for the second assault]”

He witnessed this as a cheap arrest, done by the officer to ensure they had made an arrest during the month.”

Observational Report 37: Differences of Opinion between on an Arrest for Assault.

Even with structured formal policies around making arrests for assaults and accurately recording all crime, the informal working values of the parade room can influence an emotionless reaction to serious violence, leading to an under-representation of assaults in the crime data (Reiner, 2000).

6.5 Conclusion

Cultural norms and values influence both talk in the parade room, behaviours during encounters as well as decisions to take formal action after an assault. The research hypothesised that there would be shared empathy between officers regarding the use of force and the challenging of officers. The data highlight that solidarity in the parade room means that officers often question the actions of others as a shift but feel uncomfortable if it is an officer they do not know or where the officer provides a justification for his/her behaviour. Therefore, officers sometimes unintentionally legitimise the actions of people who push the boundaries in terms of the force they use. Cultural talk is important in understanding assaults, of supporting officers who have been assaulted and in creating impressions of officers, which often means downplaying risk and disassociation from danger (Goffman, 1967; Reiner, 2000). Cultural values and socialisation do not appear, though, to impact equally on every officer, with a seemingly masculine bias to over-dramatising events and reactions to violence. Conversely to Waddington (1999), socialisation of norms sometimes affected police action and, therefore, the outcomes of incidents. Masculinity and

chivalry influenced how some officers approached incidents, especially where there was the potential for violence. Officer's own perceptions of authority affected the risk of violent confrontation where they were challenged by citizens. Informal working practices also appeared to affect decisions to make an arrest, whereby lower levels of assault or incidents where the assault was part of resistance to arrest, were sometimes dismissed as not worthy of formal action. How police officers respond to and are socialised to cultural values and norms continue to affect the numbers of assaults and how reactive some people are to the authority of the uniform. The legitimacy of the police to fairly apply the law and adequately reduce conflict also explains why some people resist formal police instructions.

Chapter Seven: Qualitative Data Analysis 2

Public Sector Austerity, Vulnerability and Police Assaults

7.1 Introduction

This chapter considers the nature of the police role in the contemporary public sector environment and analyses the effect it has on police officer actions and the risk of assault. There have been two key developments, which are the main focus of this chapter. First, since the start of this study, the police and other public sector agencies have faced continued austerity cuts, which had a detrimentally impacted on the number of available frontline staff. With new crime demands, including cybercrime and broader public protection, this has led to challenging decisions for police forces with regards to the use of those resources and the number of available frontline officers. There has also been a greater focus on the policing of 'vulnerability' and 'risk', especially mental health, drugs and domestic abuse-related incidents (HMICFRS, 2017; 2018). Indeed, in late 2018, the Chief Constable of Lincolnshire Police announced potential frontline cuts due to budgetary gaps. Second, these cuts have led to a perceived broader policy shift within public policing towards the greater prioritisation of assistance calls relating to 'vulnerability' and private disputes and away from volume crime response and investigation (HMICFRS, 2018). In 2018, around 21.3 percent of all calls to Lincolnshire Police were crime-related, with an increase in calls about vulnerability and mental health.

The aim of this chapter is not to suggest that this type of assistance call are a new part of the police role, but instead it aims to analyse the shape and impact at both an officer and an organisational level of these incidents in terms of what police officers do and how they do it. These structural changes and increasing demands on police officers lead to increased risks to police officers with regards to conflict and assaults. What the police do and what incidents they attend are inter-related to the 'how' of policing, including the way in which those who approach incidents, respond to the changing dynamics of encounters and the reactions of officers to violence. Approaches to incidents may differ according to whether it is an adversarial call or an assistance encounter.

This chapter commences by discussing the impact of austerity on policing and assaults against police officers, considering how violence can manifest itself within this context. This section focuses on officer numbers, single- and double-crewed police units, as well as the emotional and workload demands on police officers. It concludes with an overview of the public sector impact of austerity in terms of perceived changes on the role of the police in attending more calls, including those related to mental health and psychoactive substance issues. The second section looks at the 'vulnerability agenda' and the extent to which it

impacts on police assaults. It analyses how 'assistance and welfare-based calls' might lead to conflict and assault. It argues that there is an increased observable risk to police officers at assistance-based calls that differ from those associated with adversarial incidents. The final section analyses the adversarial function of police work and considers the distinction between adversarial and assistance based calls. It is important to note that crude definitions of adversarial and assistance incidents are used in this chapter for analytical and structural purposes, and that often the demarcation between the two incident types is often vague. Austerity has had an impact on the majority of public sector organisations, including police forces. The effects of austerity impact both organisationally and individually on officers, and create a risk of assault in certain circumstances. These potential impacts are the first focus of this chapter.

7.2 Assaults and Police Policies in a time of Austerity

The past decade has seen a prolonged period of public sector cuts, which have led to visible changes to frontline policing, including backstage areas and elements of police forces that are not visible to the public. These include reductions to the police estate, a reduction in the total number of frontline officers and reductions in police staff. Moreover, there have been changes to both police pay and pensions, which have had a direct impact on police morale and wellbeing (Police Federation, 2017). The period of austerity has witnessed a number of clear changes to both governmental and police policy but has also impacted on operational policing and the nature of risk at the frontline level. The former chair of the National Police Chief's Council (NPCC) noted in 2015 that the police needed to re-evaluate its approach to meeting demand and develop a new understanding of its role and purpose during the time of austerity (NPCC, 2015). New crimes and cuts to budgets have led to changes in the challenges of policing and the way in which police officers and forces meet the needs of the public (NPCC, 2015). It is the purpose of this section to consider policy changes and alterations to the police role due to austerity, and then to analyse the extent to which these changes have increased the risk of assault. These important factors to be raised in this section include officers attending incidents together, as well as their workload and emotional demands.

The role of the police in England and Wales has been subject to continued scrutiny both externally from the public and politicians as well as introspectively by forces themselves, reviewing the best structure to implement to achieve policing goals and also balance resources between frontline requirements and specialist functions. This split of police officer resources has been critical in recent years with a careful balance between responding to public calls as well as ensuring a focus on new and emerging crime trends such as

cybercrime and historic sexual offences. More recently there has been a renewed focus on the educational development of police officers with the introduction by the College of Policing of the Policing Education Qualifications Framework (PEQF) and the expectation that all new police officers will have or will undertake a foundation degree qualification as part of their initial police training (College of Policing, 2019).

The introduction of the initial police officer degree programme and more structured qualifications across different ranks reflect previous studies and reflections on the role of the police. The 1990s saw two major publications on the subject, namely those by Sheehy et al (1993) and the Posen review (Home Office, 1995). There were also published reports on police training by HMIC (1999) and the Audit Commission (1994), which considered the general patrol function of police forces. Sheehy et al (1993) focused on the pay, roles and responsibilities of all ranks, looking at the interface between the police and the public at frontline, constable level. The report concluded that certain ranks should be removed and pay directly related to role and responsibilities including risk pay to those in danger of assault or working unsocial hours (Sheehy et al, 1993).

The Posen report (1995) started from a different premise to consider the roles of the police and whether some functions could be privatised in order to allow frontline officers to focus on fighting crime. Such functions included: the transcription of interviews; dealing with stray dogs; and noise pollution. Other roles were considered but initially discounted including privatising custody suites, attendance at sudden deaths and controlling public events (Home Office, 1995). In the 2010s, however, some of these functions were privatised or transferred to another lead agency in Lincolnshire and other forces where frontline officers no longer attend all sudden deaths (except in certain circumstances such as suspicious deaths or suicide), allowing local councils and highways authorities to marshal major events. In addition, an outsourced company (G4S) undertakes some back office functionality in Lincolnshire including the role of custodian in custody suites (overseen by a Police Sergeant). Despite a number of independent inquiries into the roles and functions of the police in the 1990s and in spite of detailed recommendations, the reality of changes did not match the change rhetoric and developments to policing were not always forthcoming (Alexandrou and Davies, 2006). In order to consider assaults against police officers it is important to consider societal conditions as well as the role of the police, especially frontline officers. This section draws attention to how police functions lead to officers attending incidents where there is a danger of being assaulted.

7.2.1 The Risks of being Single- and Double-Crewed

The data on the safety of officers when attending an incident together are difficult to analyse. Internally, police officers patrolling on his/her own are referred to, in policing, as being 'single-crewed', while working with another officer is known as being 'double-crewed'. These terms are used within this analysis. Throughout the interviews and in some of the observations it was noted that policing 'single-crewed' increased the risk of being assaulted or facing aggressive non-compliance in comparison with being double-crewed. Lincolnshire Police has an internal policy which states that officers should be single-crewed, except where the nature of the incident dictates that two or more officers should attend, or when there are extenuating circumstances such as an officer being tutored. In rural forces such as Lincolnshire, the risks associated with being single-crewed were viewed by some officers as being exacerbated by the fact that in some areas, support from colleagues could be a long distance away. The officers interviewed also stated that being with another officer made them feel safer with a perception that this reduced the chances of being assaulted. One officer highlighted the risks of being single-crewed and making an arrest when he detailed an incident during his interview. The officer spoke candidly about being assaulted after stopping a person on suspicion of drunk-driving.

"It was just a routine vehicle stop, a suspected drink-driver. I did a breath test, ran through all the breath test procedure, even to the point where he followed me around the car as I got the breath test kit out. He was as good as gold and then I just went to put the actual breath test kit down when it came back positive and the next thing I know I came round on the floor" (*PC-7, Male Officer*).

It is sheer conjecture that if the officer had been supported by a colleague then either the male would have been controlled through force if he had resisted arrest or the male would not have become aggressive, if he had perceived that the chances of escape would have been less. Instead, it can only be speculated why the assailant chose to assault the officer. First, the potential outcome may have guided his behaviour. The balance of power during the incident shifted from an assumption of passing a breath test or even not being asked to provide a breath sample to the realisation that he would fail and thus be arrested. On perceiving that he might lose his license or employment when sentenced at court, the assailant quickly had to weigh up his options between accepting arrest and attempting to escape.

With the officer being single-crewed, the chances of escaping increased, and the male might have justified that he could have received a different or lesser sentence for assault compared to drunk-driving. Conversely, in these situations, an assailant can have a sudden

explosive, visceral and aggressive reaction to being stopped by the police (Geller et al, 2004). The individual is not forward-thinking and has no plan for what they will do afterwards and will have no defence in mind when arrested. In the described incident, the person could be said to have an immediate and aggressive reaction to a change in circumstances and acted without considering any consequences. Moreover, Reiss (1971) argues that police officers are most likely to face resistance when taking the decision to use their own discretion and authority to intervene in situations. In this respect, the officer creates the encounter. This includes where an officer stops a vehicle for a routine check (Reiss, 1971). When single crewed, this risk of hostility may be heightened, increasing the risk of assault.

The risk of being single-crewed can be heightened by a number of factors, which were considered during the observations and interviews. The increased risk of assault can occur when an officer attends an address on their own, as the initial call to the police makes no reference to violence or danger or, alternatively, where immediate back up is unavailable and an officer has to decide whether or not to enter into an address. An officer has to decide whether their duty to protect the public by placing themselves at increased risk of serious injury or waiting for back up is the most pragmatic response to these situations. Whilst, however, it might hold true that being double-crewed can sometimes increase the safety of officers, this was not always borne out by both the quantitative and qualitative data. The quantitative data from Lincolnshire Police show that in the majority of assault incidents, two or more officers were present. Similarly, Hampshire Constabulary (2017) found that the majority of police officers who were victims of assault were double-crewed at the time they were assaulted (67 percent). Furthermore, some officers argued that having another officer present can create problems insofar as it might dictate that force is more readily used, which, in turn, affected the outcome of an incident. Some officers felt safer in applying force when responding with another officer, rather than using communication skills.

Due to police policies on single- and double-crewing, it is not possible to draw any firm conclusions with regards to their impact on assaults. Where violence is reported during a call or is expected during an incident, the control room seeks to deploy more than one officer. These incidents are often most likely to lead to the conflict and, therefore, increase the risk to officers of being assaulted. Despite this, not knowing how another officer will react to the same stimuli or challenges presented by an incident, can create the conditions necessary for an assault. Such actions could increase the risk of assault for all officers present at the scene. As argued by one officer;

“...if I’m honest when I first started I would say that my actions have done the same for someone else. I’ve gone in too heavy handed or too robustly or made the

throwaway comments that has caused somebody else to [be aggressive towards me]" (*PC-8, Male Officer*).

The officer is open in acknowledging that the behaviour of police officers and the immediacy of actions and decision-making can affect the outcome of incidents. This response indicates a rationale amongst some police officers that is contrary to the presentation of assaults both in the media, from releases from police forces and from other officers, where the focus is on the assailant, society and an increased danger to police officers. The comments represent what Reiner (2000) argued was the difference in the culture and reaction of management and street cops. The responses of the media and police forces to assaults are likely to be politically motivated in order to show the risk to police officers in times of austerity. During the research interviews, it was felt that officers were more relaxed in privately discussing all aspects of assaults. In the parade room, however, officers were keener to promote that assailants and the nature of society were the key reason for assaults. In observation report 15, the conversation turned to why assaults occurred with officers referring to the fact that "some people just hate us" and that some members of the public were "idiots who just want to try and hurt officers". Despite this, during their interviews, officers in more rural locations inferred that their approach and demeanour could affect the outcome of any incident. Single-crewed officers, in more rural locations, appeared to use discretion and other less confrontational tactics when attending violent encounters in an attempt to diffuse them. Discretion in these circumstances is, for some officers, certainly the better part of valour. The need for these alternative actions becomes most evident where officers on their own realise that they cannot control a person on their own, whether due to the aggression displayed, or the size and nature of the potential assailant. As one officer identified when discussing a violent encounter;

"I knew that he needed to be arrested for criminal damage but I thought that I am not going to do this whilst I am on my own so I just stood talking to him, telling him to take deep breaths. He kept saying that people were after him because he was on drugs and stuff so I kept saying "I'm here" and "I will protect you" so it calmed him down and he kind of saw me as someone who was looking after him as opposed to somebody who was going to try and fight with him" (*PC-6, Female Officer*).

The arguments presented here do not detract from the security and confidence that having another colleague at the same incident invariably brings. This section has served to highlight the risk to officers of being single-crewed and the need for officers to consider different tactics to reduce risk including the development of tactical communication. It does, however, also show the requirement to review double-crewed incidents and the actions taken by

officers to control an incident and how these incidents result in violent confrontation, in order to build upon and explore the premise that double-crewed units are more likely to face aggression due to the fact that two or more officers are commonly deployed to higher-risk incidents. It must be acknowledged, however, that single-crewed officers can often face an increased risk of facing an assailant who can become violent or attempt to escape, as they only have one officer to evade. It is in these situations where officers are most reliant on their knowledge and capability in using force but also in applying tactical communication skills in order to de-escalate conflict or disagreement. Culturally, the actions described by the officer indicate and demonstrate the effects of on-the-job learning and socialisation that comes from experience and working in outlying stations with less busy parade rooms. Contrary to the importance of war stories and storytelling of action in busier parade rooms in towns and cities, officers working in more rural stations could influence values and behaviours through the discussion of protectionist tactics when attending potentially violent incidents. Workload demands, the location of police stations and call volume can lead to officers attending potentially violent incidents on their own, thereby artificially impacting on the risk of aggressive non-compliance.

When patrolling on their own or with another officer, frontline police officers are reliant on the skills taught to them at their annual personal safety training assessments to know how to control potentially violent people. There was, however, a discrepancy in the data as to the effectiveness of the safety training provided and the focus of the delivery. A number of interviewed officers stated that the training was not realistic with regard to the dangers faced regularly when responding to calls and, therefore, some questioned the usefulness of the training, reporting that;

“Some of things they teach you are not very practical when you are out and about. They are good in the training environment...” (PC-8, Male Officer).

Other officers stated that the skills taught during personal safety training were difficult to recall in live situations in comparison to a sanitised and safe learning environment. In reality, taught techniques are often replaced by any method to protect themselves and control an individual. As one officer argued;

“I don’t know I necessarily use what they teach you” (PC-6, Female Officer).

Whilst the training focuses on Home Office approved tactics and does teach officers about communication skills, when attending an incident, these negotiation, communication or safe control skills may be replaced with panic and excessive methods of control when there is a clear and obvious risk to the safety of the officers or when an officer wishes to reassert

his/her authority over an individual. In these cases, an officer may refer to the rules and techniques taught in training as a justification for their actions even if they have not been accurately applied (Ericson, 1982; Waddington, 1999). The inability to recall appropriate tactics can lead to officers entering a situation at a higher level than necessary, or inadvertently creating the conditions for conflict to escalate through the inappropriate application of force, leaving them open to an increased risk of resistance or assault. Similarly, workload and emotional demands on policing can influence the risk of being assaulted.

7.2.2 The Influence of Workload Demands on Assaults

Workload and call demands sometimes lead to a backlash or unconventional reactions from police officers during incidents, affecting how such encounters are concluded. Heightened stresses linked to the policing role such as attendance at emotional and violent incidents are often not easily resolved through parade room discussions and shared experiences, but can impact on how some police officers approach incidents and make sense of the police role and the policing purpose. In frontline response policing, officers often have little chance to resolve and express their feelings about an incident before being tasked to attend another one. In interviews, police officers often recalled that unresolved emotional stressors from incidents altered how they approached and dealt with subsequent incidents. The core argument of this section is that an officer, who attends a highly emotive incident and then is immediately deployed to another call, may suffer from the cumulative effect of these incidents, especially if the subsequent incidents are perceived by that officer as being trivial. These circumstances may lead to the violent conflict and the officer being assaulted.

At some incidents, officers (especially more experienced ones) may be able to repress emotions or act empathetically without expressing their own feelings. Indeed, such unemotional behaviours may be publically expected of police officers during incidents and suppressed by officers in the backstage areas, even when dealing with and after highly emotive incidents. A cultural trait and expectation between officers that they will remain professional and display certain bravado can lead to officers repressing their emotions and failing to discuss them with others (Reiner, 2000). As a result, emotions of frustration, anger and guilt can build up over time and then released during an incident. This unpredictable reaction may occur after a cumulative development of frustration and tiredness from repeated incidents, or it might occur when an officer attends multiple incidents in quick succession. For example, an officer who attends a fatal road traffic collision or the death of a child may then go into the town centre and confront people involved in an argument. Any underlying anger or guilt from the first incident can impact on how officers later approach and

control someone who has challenged their authority. The officers can be swifter to use force or raise their voice as they feel emotionally vulnerable and unappreciative when attending a new encounter in close proximity to an emotive occurrence. Oftentimes, officers' can feel that the second incident is unimportant when compared to the circumstances of the first encounter, and are dismissive of a person's arguments or actions, viewing them with disdain and unworthy of their proper attention or basic negotiation. As Tyler (2003) argued, these actions and behaviours from an officer can affect whether a person views the police officer as being legitimate in their resultant actions. Where there is a lack of legitimacy, there can be an increased risk of assault or aggression (Tyler, 2003). As one officer suggested:

"That's because we are all human and sometimes you can go to a job where you've seen a fatal RTC or you've seen a baby or a small child that's living in a terrible sort of household or something and within ten minutes of doing that then you've gone to another job where you've got somebody aggressive or something..."
(PC-8, Male Officer).

Such incidents can have a significant and immediate impact on officer behaviour, or the repressed emotions from such incidents may come to the foreground during similar incidents in the future. The interviews suggested that some officers change their behaviour, policing styles or nature due to prior incidents, stressors, the demands of the role or expectations of other officers. For example, an officer who has recently been assaulted could resort to force more quickly at future incidents in order to protect themselves against aggression. Continued exposure to trauma, either towards them or witnessed by an officer can cumulatively affect the future behaviour of officers who could adjust their policing style or could start to react negatively to certain behaviours and incident types. Where presenteeism becomes a factor and officers attend shifts, despite not being either physically or mentally prepared to do so, thus affects the risk of an officer making a mistake, missing non-verbal cues of escalation of aggression and increasing the risk of being assaulted. The ability to recognise symptoms of trauma are more difficult where an officer deploys immediately to another incident after a visceral and instant negative reaction to being assaulted or witnessing a traumatic incident.

Due to feelings of inadequacy or fear, conversely, an officer who has been assaulted could freeze when next confronted with violence as they fear being injured. In response to being assaulted, some officers also change their communication style in order to reduce future risks of attack. Overall, some incidents can profoundly affect an officer, which means that he/she does not cope well with demands at similar incidents, or at encounters which are seen by the officer as being less important.

Officers' preconceptions during deployment can affect the outcome of an incident, especially where they are clouded by thoughts of previous experiences or making sense of the call received. An officer leaving an emotionally demanding incident and deploying to a report of another incident will often be experiencing increased adrenaline or a potential for what is termed as a 'red mist', which is where their decision-making is affected and an officer can become increasingly aggressive. Where, on arrival, the incident is found to be not as reported during the initial call, an officer can alter the way in which they communicate with the people present. Where an officer believes they have risked injury and the safety of others deploying quickly to an incident which is not as first reported, then the officer could be dismissive leading to inadvertent confrontation and resistance. As Skolnick and Fyfe (1993) identified, there are risks inherent in entering a situation unthinkingly and without appreciation of the true nature of the incident. The reporting of an incident can create misconceptions in the mind of an officer due to a misrepresentation of the facts. In response to a report of a large fight between people with weapons, an officer starts to prepare to use force and could unclip their TASER or spray. The officer develops a focused aggression towards the incident, which can cloud their judgement and ensure that they approach the incident more aggressively on arrival. If the incident is not as reported, such actions and preparation can lead to unnecessary conflict and hostility, leaving the officers at an increased risk of assault or of causing harm. Officers who have decided what action to take before arriving at an incident can disproportionately affect the outcome, especially where the circumstances of the incident are different to those reported. This argument was highlighted by PC-7:

"It happens quite a lot and it tends to be the same officers that sort of end up escalating things purely for the fact that they've made up their mind what they are going to do before they get there and when they get there that's how they are going to deal with it no matter what..." (PC-7, *Male Officer*).

Being over-prepared for an incident can lead to officers making snap decisions on action. Conversely, where an officer underestimates the nature of an incident, then they often enter unprepared for the potential risk of aggression. On the other hand, being under-prepared can create difficulties and challenges in regards to assaults. In not recognising or thinking about risk and, on route, developing tactics to eliminate or minimise them can lead to the missing of both verbal and non-verbal cues and behaviours on attendance, therefore making an assault more likely. Not being ready for the actual circumstances of an incident are highlighted in the following observation report. Officers were called to the report of a drunken male outside of a property.

“On arrival, there was only one officer present who hoped the male had gone or that the incident has calmed. There are no people in front of the property and it looks like the officer might be correct. On walking round the back of the terraced houses, however, there were a number of people standing around but it was unclear what had happened. The calm was suddenly broken by a male in a black t-shirt launching himself at the back door of a property. The officer took hold of the male and a member of the public grabbed the male on the other side. The male in the black t-shirt remonstrated with the police officer that the house he was attacking belonged to him. The male is clearly drunk. He suddenly grabbed the other person in a headlock. The officer dragged him away and shouted for assistance. The male was agitated and shouted at the officer. Even when other officers arrived the male was abusive towards them, even though one officer pointed his TASER at him. The male was arrested for being drunk and disorderly and walked to the police van where he kicked out at the officers.”

Observation Report 4: Drunken Male at the Wrong House.

Immediately prior to this incident, the same officers had been dealing with a drunk female in the town centre, which had passed without incidents and the initial thoughts of the officers were that this incident could have been resolved compliantly. Such preconceptions appear to have affected how the male was spoken with and controlled, giving the opportunity for him to become aggressively non-compliant. Furthermore, due to the nature of the call and the preceding incident, the officer decided that they did not need any initial assistance, underestimating the chance of confrontation and aggression both from the male involved as well as local residents who wanted revenge on the male for trying to damage their doors but also the officer for not immediately controlling the incident.

Personal attitudes or problems as well as previous experience impact on the way in which some officers respond to certain incidents. An officer's behaviour may become unnatural or different according to their personal circumstances or life experiences, which directly impact on incident outcomes and, as such, the risk of being assaulted. An officer who had an argument at home before starting his/her shift could internalise his/her emotions as he/she was unable to resolve the situation. Similarly, an officer going through relationship troubles may attempt to bottle up their emotions when at work. Despite efforts to repress them, however, these frustrations can manifest themselves at incidents leading to misjudged uses of force and leaving the officer open to assault or risk of complaint. Previous or current life experiences may also impact on officer behaviour during encounters. An officer who has experienced domestic violence could react negatively to an alleged aggressor during a

domestic abuse call. Moreover, an officer who has recently had a child may react aggressively and unprofessionally towards a person arrested for child abuse, including being judgemental, biased or applying additional force at the point of arrest. Negative personal experiences can influence some officers to take unnecessary risks associated with both conflict and their own personal wellbeing at incidents. Such behaviour might be out of character. As raised by one officer during her interview when asked why some officers take risks at incidents,

“I knew of a male officer who was going through relationship problems and...then a suspect package incident came in on the sea front and he was just so down with his own personal life that once he'd got members of the public cleared away he just approached the package and just picked it up.” (*PC-4, Female Officer*).

Whilst the above quotation is not directly linked to assaults and cannot be linked immediately to the effects of austerity policing, the example highlights how personal experiences affect the reaction of some officers into taking risks not naturally associated with their ordinary policing style. Contrary to the work of Lyng (1990), officers sometimes push the boundaries of what they need to do not to achieve a positive reaction, but as an emotional/emotionless response to a negative ongoing life experiences or continued trauma and therefore repress direct emotion as a coping strategy to dismiss the ongoing effects of the role. People might not rationalise the consequences of their actions during an encounter or when making decisions. These reactions were highlighted in the interview of PC-9 who argued that highly emotional incidents can make subsequent encounters seem less important and more trivial for a number of upcoming shifts. When discussing a recent emotional incident he had attended, the officer stated that afterwards

“...for the next few days you're of the opinion that nothing else, particularly trivial matters are irrelevant” (*PC-9, Male Officer*).

This section has highlighted the potential indirect effects of austerity on the number of assaults against police officers. The outlined risk factors associated with violence are often hidden in broader discussions on officer numbers, pensions and the dangers associated with reduced numbers such as knife crime or terrorism. In terms of assaults, it can be observed from these data that officers are at risk of assaults from being single-crewed due to the unavailability of other officers when attending violent incidents; although it should also be noted that being double-crewed does not necessarily reduce the risk of resistance or conflict and the actions of officers when working with a colleague do sometimes increase the chance of aggressive non-compliance. Moreover, even with fewer officers there are demands on

police officers to attend incidents and potentially a similar number of incidents year on year. The effects of an increasing workload and stressors can create the conditions in which conflict becomes more likely with the legitimacy of police action being questioned if they are dismissive of an incident. It must be taken into account, however, how the nature of the call and personal life experiences can both add to the risk of assault based on emotional reactions and workloads. There is a close interplay between all of these factors in some assault encounters. The other way in which austerity is said to have affected police work is in terms of perceived increases in the number of assistance calls relating to vulnerability and the effects of austerity on other public sector agencies, including the ambulance service and mental health organisations. As a result, police officers can face increased risks of aggression and violence during these incidents.

7.3 Assistance Calls, Vulnerability and Assaults

For the purposes of this section, assistance calls are defined according to two key foci. First, they are incidents involving drugs, most notably psychoactive substances. Secondly, they relate to persons suffering from mental health issues. In policing, assistance calls have a wider meaning, which include safety checks on persons at individual addresses, usually more elderly people or those suffering from longer-term illnesses. However, these incidents are not included in this study, as they rarely lead to conflict. This section focuses on what is loosely defined as the emergence of the 'vulnerability agenda', which has been formulated for the purposes of this study. It has impacted on the contexts in which the police role is enacted and has implications for our understanding of assaults. This section considers risk and vulnerability in terms of mental health, drugs and private disputes. It considers the factors relating to conflict by drawing on concepts such as police culture and legitimacy.

7.3.1 Assistance Calls, Mental Health and Assaults

In the wider context of our understanding of assaults, it is important to consider encounters where mental health is a key factor and to analyse the factors during such incidents which explain violence and police action, as well as police officer decision-making with regard to whether or not formal police action should be taken after an assault. As a result of cuts to public sector social care, there has been a greater demand placed on the ambulance service, mental health wards and the police to deal with people suffering from mental health concerns (Charman, 2018). The police officers interviewed for the study felt that they were now increasingly required to attend non-crime-related assistance calls, alongside calls relating to the prevention and detection of crime. As one officer noted;

“If I looked at ten jobs at least five of those would be mental health and I’m not sure we’re the people to be dealing with it” (*PC-9, Male Officer*).

The data suggest three explanatory factors pertaining to the conflict and resistance within assistance calls involving mental health issues. These conditions are also applicable to persons under the influence of psychoactive substances. First, the medical condition of the person involved in the encounter frequently means that they cannot understand or rationalise police instruction; they have tendencies towards aggressive behaviour; or, due to the effects of drugs or medication, react aggressively to stressful situations involving force being used against them. Second, police officers attending an incident oftentimes have insufficient knowledge or understanding to be able to cope with the demand of this kind of occurrence, thereby placing themselves at increased risk of assault or of escalating conflict during the incident. Third, without sufficient understanding, police officers can become frustrated during these calls and sometimes react to a failure to follow instruction as a challenge to their authority or are dismissive of a person’s needs, which create tensions within the encounter.

Both Reiss (1971) and Manning (2003) argue that officers apply the same cultural adaptations, principles and behaviours in all such encounters regardless of any distinction between adversarial and assistance calls. Reiss (1971) suggests that in all encounters police officers have little time to rationalise what is happening and have to take quick decisions around the use of force in order to protect the interests of all parties involved. In such circumstances, legitimacy of action cannot always be granted as the individual may not be able to defer to the authority of the officer, leading to moral questions around police action (Reiss, 1971). An adversarial approach to assistance calls can create circumstances where the needs of the individual are disrespected and his/her mental health concerns and problems are criminalised (Schulenberg, 2016). The way in which some officers define their own authority could be ill-judged during welfare incidents, where the symbolism of the uniform is not as sharply defined or understood in comparison to adversarial occurrences. These categorisations are used throughout this section to analyse observations.

The categorisations are based on the concepts, observations and interviews in order to consider why assistance calls might result in assault. Chapter two emphasised the risk to police officers at assistance calls, hypothesising how officers might respond to or attribute culpability for assaults. Officers argued that the risk at encounters increased due to factors such as a lack of training and policies geared to coping with these demands. The following quotation supports this view.

“[We receive] no training whatsoever about mental health; very little about our policy as such. There is no uniform policy for how we deal with people on mental health wards” (*PC-9, Male Officer*).

The above quotation corroborates the work of Towl and Crighton (2012), who found that the police were often called to incidents that they were ill-equipped to deal with and therefore which presented challenges to officers in terms of decision-making and understanding the requirements and dynamics of the encounter. To draw upon and paraphrase Bittner (1975), the public’s expectations of the police regarding assistance calls are that the police will deal with what is happening in full public view, about which something needs to be done and for which other services do not have the immediate capacity to deal with; the public are not aware who else they can call, or whether it falls within the remit of the police. The police can be used as the service of last resort as they often cannot refuse to attend a person in need. The police force is often not the most suitable or efficient service to cope or deal with the increased call demands around mental health problems but also with the often complex needs and requirements of the individuals involved in these incidents. Whilst the police can use justifiable force on any persons presenting a risk to themselves, to the police or to other people, oftentimes the force used at assistance calls might be morally questionable and sometimes unsuitable in order to control persons with mental health issues (Towl and Crighton, 2012). As such, officers might be accused by the public and the media of criminalising mental illness (Engel and Silver, 2001). One officer presented the antithesis of these arguments by stating that force is often required at assistance calls due to the increased risk of injury both to the individual as well as the officer. When asked which incidents generated the greatest danger to officers, one respondent replied;

“I was going to say mental health, people with drugs and on drugs, all these things like that is a factor that comes into [increased risk of being assaulted] unfortunately. People become more unpredictable” (*PC-7, Male Officer*).

Persons with mental health conditions can often act in unpredictable ways, resulting in unexpected conflict, violent reactions and the risk of injury to officers. These actions could be pre-determined due to the person’s condition and unfamiliarity of the situation. The approach of the police, how they communicate or their actions taken, might exacerbate the encounter to the point at which force is deemed necessary. Any escalation of violence is sometimes explained by the lack of officer knowledge of the wide spectrum of mental illnesses. Even with training, police officers may still lack the ability to self-diagnose and, therefore, take the most appropriate action to meet someone’s needs. The Mental Health Act 1983 provides police officers with a power to remove a person to a place of safety when it is apparent that a

person is under immediate need of care and to protect the individual or the public. The person can only be detained under this power when they are in a public place. In policy documents, Lincolnshire Police has noted that officers have previously used the power to detain under the Mental Health Act, incorrectly, in private spaces or by tempting a person outside of a property in order to enact the power. These actions can lead to the potential for questions concerning police legitimacy in terms of actions taken and the behaviour of officers, which can sit at the edge of legality in the described circumstances. Moreover, a person displaying normalised behaviour relating to their mental health condition might be detained by police officers as the officer does not have knowledge of the illness or because the behaviour does not readily match public norms. Following utilitarian principles, the police have the duty to protect the public and support those who cannot help themselves, even where this might not be the most suitable course of action in the circumstances presented (Teplin and Pruett, 1992).

The following observation demonstrates the unpredictability of some assistance calls. It recognises how innocuous calls can quickly become violent due to a dramatic and sudden change in a person's demeanour.

“When the officer arrived at the address all appeared calm. The male's behaviour was slightly erratic but nothing which appeared to present a risk to the officer. The male stated he had been in touch with the mental health crisis team but he was not happy with its response. He then commented on his dislike for the team especially for female staff. After a short time the male requested a different officer attend and asked if he was on duty. When told that he was, the male became delirious. The second male officer attended the address with two other officers, another male and a female. The female officer knocked on the door and the male answered. On seeing the female he closed the door and locked it before attacking the officer. The officer pressed his orange emergency button on his police radio and shouted for assistance. Whilst this happened, another male in the address awoke to witness the assault on the officer and he unlocked the rear door, shouting to the other officers. The officer in the address drew his TASER and fired it, subduing the male until he was arrested and handcuffed.”

Observation Report 10: Officer Attacked at an Assistance Call.

In terms of the risk categorisations outlined at the start of this section, the observation highlights several key points. First, it demonstrates that misunderstandings of needs or a dismissiveness of risk can lead to violent outcomes and assaults. The male expresses his dislike for females and makes a specific request for a named officer to attend. This demand

is not clearly communicated and although the male officer attends, a female officer knocks on the door. This is the trigger for the resistance and confrontation demonstrated during the incident. Furthermore, due to dismissing the incident as an innocuous call from a male just wanting to speak with an officer, the lead officer involved in the encounter might not have been actively listening to the male and thus missed the verbal cues of the male or did not take them seriously. This dismissiveness could be related to the time at which the incident was called in (late at night) or that the male had previously been known for similar calls. The failure to believe the male and meet his needs due to a misunderstanding or lack of knowledge about the danger posed by the individual are a factor in why conflict escalated during the incident. In another observed incident involving the same male, officers were able to minimise the risk of escalation by matching his requirements and needs by obtaining some required medication.

In comparison with the conclusions detailed in chapter six, which highlighted the importance of socialised and learned responses to violent incidents, this encounter also highlights the importance of cultural values and traits on the reaction of officers to violence and risk. Numerous officers described it as one of the scariest incidents they had attended, including the female officer, who blamed herself for what happened. Despite this, the male officer inside the address downplayed his concerns about the assault when discussing it with others in the parade room. He had suffered a bruised eye but explained that a cut to his shin had caused more pain. As such, the male internalised and repressed the risk, choosing instead to promote a bravado image of being unconcerned with the demands and dangers of the role and not showing weakness in front of his colleagues. As demonstrated in the first section, these expectations can mask longer-term impacts. Indeed, a male officer interviewed for this study was later assaulted (after the data collection period). During this incident he was grabbed in a headlock and punched. He was initially reluctant to accept the effects of the incident on him, stating that it was not as bad as some other officers had already suggested in other conversations. As a result of the incident, however, the officer suffered a crisis of confidence, whereby he felt concerned and nervous about attending all incidents, regardless of their relation to potential violence. It led to the officer moving into a role that was removed from the front line. It is important to use this example to support the arguments made on how some officers downplay the effects of assaults, which can often have a longer-term effect on their confidence in their role.

Officers must balance the needs of the individual against the risk of harm when attending calls for service, but particularly where they lack suitable knowledge of the risks to the individual. Police officers might not appreciate how to approach or communicate with an individual and, therefore, use more coercive ways to resolve an incident. Similarly, where a

medical condition makes a person violent, officers may often resort to force as a means of controlling the individual and minimising the risk of injury as they would during any adversarial call. The following observation denotes how officers may use force as a means of control, especially where frustrations develop and how without adequate knowledge, the outcome might not immediately be the most suitable for the incident. The encounter refers to a call received to the control room in relation to a concern for safety.

“It is Halloween night when officers are called to a main road to a male in distress who has been witnessed staggering down the road and shouting. The caller believed they may have been hit by a car. Officers were also told the man was profoundly deaf. On speaking with him, the male stated that he had been assaulted and had lost a number of items of property. However, as officers continued to ask questions they noticed that his story changed and a search of the area led to the discovery of a number of personal items. When paramedics arrived the male’s behaviour changed and he became aggressive, shouting that he was being assaulted. He also shouted at the two officers saying that he wanted his belongings back. In response to being told this, he started to lash out with his arms towards the officers. As a result he was pinned to the ground by his arms. The male then started to kick out with his legs and kicked both of the officers. Even though they had technically been assaulted, once he had calmed down the male was taken to hospital for treatment. The male was not arrested for any assault.”

Observation Report 23: Concern for Welfare of a Deaf Male.

This observation demonstrates how difficulties in communication and understanding the exact needs of an individual can exacerbate frustrations that result in the use of force by officers. Due to both communication difficulties and the potential inability to reason instruction, there is an apparent inevitability to the use of force, thus resulting in an aggressive reaction. To control the male, the officers had to place themselves in a position where they were close to the male and where they were at risk of assault. Officers have to decide at what stage risk makes force reasonable to prevent injury or harm, whilst also considering its potential impact on the individual and the incident, as well as public perceptions. In using force against a person in need of assistance, any public bystanders could view police action as being illegitimate in response to the circumstances presented. There are moral as well as lawful considerations when officers’ make choices at some assistance calls, although any frustrations can cloud judgements and influence their actions. Often police are the first responders to incidents, whilst other services mobilise staff to attend. The initial actions of officers, however, can call into question their authority, suitability

and legitimacy to cope with these demands, even if the conclusion reached is appropriate to the circumstances. In the following observation, officers were called to an address to deal with a female who was making threats to harm herself. The daughter of the female had contacted the police as she was unable to control her mother;

“The female was agitated when the officers arrived and continued to be throughout. It quickly became clear that the female required a mental health assessment. A mental health professional had been called and was due to attend. It was unclear what the female might do in the intervening period and this was one of the reasons for the call to the police. The female was initially stood in the front room but soon began to walk around the house. The officers blocked her route to the kitchen and the bathroom so that she could not barricade the doors or access weapons. They started to take hold of her by the arm but the female kept trying to shrug them off and push them away. At one stage the female reached her bedroom and tried to close the door but the officers prevented this from happening and they took firm hold of her. The female refused to engage with the mental health worker and so was detained to prevent a breach of the peace. The female calmed down and agreed to talk with the professional.”

Observation Report 44: Female Mental Health Detention.

This observation demonstrates that where police officers do not have an understanding of a mental health issue, but have a duty to minimise harm, there is often a reliance on the use of force to control an incident. The officers present aimed to control the female until they could hand over her care and treatment to a qualified mental health professional. The female was not following instruction and not rationalising order and authority meaning that the encounter quickly moved towards both verbal non-compliance and latterly aggressive non-compliance in response to the attempts to control her through force. The incident also demonstrates how officers can use the concept of threat and structured choice in order to make someone comply with their orders and instructions. After many different tactics have been attempted but were proven ineffective, one officer makes a decision to notionally ‘arrest’ someone for an offence, such as a breach of the peace. This creates a structured but heavily weighted choice between being arrested and receiving treatment. The choice provides a stark bifurcation between a loss of liberty and a heavily favoured option of following instruction or receiving treatment. In these situations there is only one real choice between deferring to authority and following an order or choosing not to engage and risking arrest. Any notion of policing by consent is removed through the lack of a free-will option on what action to take (Dixon, 1997). The same tactics are often used during the night-time economy when

someone is given the option between being driven home by the police and not returning to any pubs or else being arrested for an offence. As such, police officers give people a structured choice, but which is meaningless in the circumstances as one choice is clearly better than the other.

Much like other observational reports highlighted in this study, the incident also demonstrates the potential effects on police legitimacy. The officers question their decisions to use force and the necessity of it due to both the behaviour and mental health concerns demonstrated by the female and also the police officers' stature. The officers are over six-feet tall and the female only five feet in height. Any use of force to control the female needed to be carefully justified due to the physical differences between them. The female also called the police as a last resort due to the long time the mental health services were taking to arrive. The police were called due to the risk of harm to the female. It could have been that the daughter did not want to see police officers use force to restrain her mother. Any use of force may have been seen as illegitimate and counterintuitive to the goal of protection, and in the shorter-term the daughter may have regretted her decision. In the longer-term, the female might have chosen not to call the police again in a similar situation if she felt that the response received was insufficient, incorrect or illegitimate to her needs. The split-second decisions made by officers during encounters can have further reaching impacts in terms of the legitimacy and authority of the police to prevent harm and protect individuals.

Without callers to the emergency services having sufficient knowledge of the other available services or where there is the risk of violence and resistance, then the police become the key option to resolve the demands of an incident. In the following example, a landlord called the police to help evict a female who has not been paying for her room at a bed and breakfast and who was refusing to leave. The female had been staying at the location for a number of weeks and was known on the police systems, to have mental health problems. The landlord was concerned about her potential reaction if he argued with her about leaving or he did not have any support. This incident establishes how an officer's reaction to violence during an incident might differ from adversarial calls both to being assaulted but also to displays of violence and challenges to their authority.

“As soon as the landlord pointed out the right flat he walked away and back into his own property leaving the officers to attend the flat without him. The officers knocked on the door. A female finally answered the door and shook the hands of the officers but refused to immediately let go. She gripped onto their hands and had to be pushed away. As the officers pushed her, the female moved her hand and grabbed hold of one officer's fingers and proceeded to bend them. The female finally let go

and walked back into the flat, exclaiming that she was going to punch an officer and that she was not going to leave. The female then lunged towards one officer, hitting him in the face. The female was handcuffed and arrested for assault.”

“The female became sexually suggestive to officers when handcuffed but after a short time started to calm down. The officers continued to feel uncomfortable around her. As one officer turned away from the female, she kicked out and kicked him in the spine. The officer walked out of the room and a second officer from the other unit walked in. Quickly, the female started to kick out at him as well and had to be placed into limb restraints. Three officers were assaulted during the incident but they decided to detain her under the Mental Health Act 1983.”

Observation Report 48: Female Detained under the Mental Health Act.

At the end of the incident, the female was taken into custody for a mental health assessment but was not arrested for any criminal offences. There could have been a number of reasons for this, including that the assaults were non-injurious, there may have been no benefit in arresting the female and the officers might have felt embarrassed arresting for an assault in the circumstances. There were four officers present at the incident and, potentially due to ongoing perceptions and expectations, none of them wished to be the first to make an arrest. Throughout, it appeared that the officers were dismissive of any danger or risk from the female and downplayed the inherent volatility of the incident and were laughing at some of the comments being made. Indeed, after being kicked in the back, instead of arresting for the assault, the officer walked out of the room and asked for another unit to walk in. This may have shown disrespect for the individual, as the police did not want to make a decision. The female is not treated according to the same ‘rules’ that other assailants might be, altering the way that assaults carried out by someone with mental health issues are defined and responded to by police officers. The assaults committed in this incident appear to be trivialised and dealt with independently from other incidents of violence. The attending officers separate and define this incident and their response differently to other calls for assistance where there is a potential for aggressive non-compliance or where violence has already occurred. The decision not to arrest an assailant or de-arresting someone after the event shows the policing process of managing the populace, categorising them according to responsibility for actions, blameworthiness and nature of the assault, potentially a labelling process of people who assault police officers.

The decision to use force is counter-weighted due to the size of the female as compared to the physical characteristics of the officers. All the officers present are male and may have felt

uncomfortable using force against a smaller female and one with aggressive tendencies and mental health issues. There are other scenarios where individual factors affect decisions to use force such as choices as to whether to use force against elderly people or children. In protecting others, officers sometimes have to use force to restrain people, morally challenging the officers to consider the legitimacy of their actions but also the appropriateness in the circumstances. Without any formal medical training, officers have a lack of knowledge of other suitable outcomes other than to use physical control. This lack of information with regard to medical treatment might also have an impact on how officers cope with demands relating to people under the influence of drugs. These encounters sometimes have factors connected to conflict and resistance that are similar to those of mental health calls.

7.3.2 Drugs, Assistance and Assaults

Without access to suitable medical treatment and the ability to administer medication at a number of incidents involving drugs and drug withdrawal, police action can become reliant on the use of force in order to control and protect an individual. Persons are taken into custody who require medical treatment or who are awaiting mental health assessments. Once a hospital has provided treatment or a health worker has deemed them suitable for detention, then the ongoing safety and welfare of the individuals falls onto the custody sergeant. The following observation substantiates the argument about use of force as a disguise for treatment and the potential moral dilemma presented to officers in terms of using force to prevent someone harming themselves whilst being unable to provide adequate medical treatment. It surrounds a male brought into custody for driving offences but has shown difficult and challenging behaviour, requiring a mental health assessment.

“Two officers attend a cell in custody soon after coming on duty and find the male progressing through moments of lucidity before sweating profusely, tensing his body and suffering strong headaches. During this time, he would try and claw at his own face. However, when lucid he would engage in conversation with the officers. As the detained person started to claw his face again, the officers moved to take hold of him to prevent any injury. The police were waiting to take him to a secure mental health unit but there were no beds available. After constantly moving between talking to the male and pinning his arms to the ground officers faced a dilemma of finding a longer term solution to prevent further harm to themselves or the individual. They choose to handcuff the male but the longer they were on the more they cut into the male’s wrists. This behaviour continued throughout a period of hours.”

Observation Report 33: Mental Health in Custody.

The officers were unable to offer medical treatment and were unaware of the effects of legal high withdrawal. The observation illuminates the two-handed decision making process of police officers when providing welfare and assistance. On the one hand, the officers can justify the use of force to prevent the male harming himself and others after all other options have been exhausted. Conversely, the officers' risk causing injury by having to leave the handcuffs applied to his wrists. Without sufficient medical training and with frustration at having to pin the male to the ground, the officers appear to have had little choice but to resort to restraint. In other examples, officers have handcuffed people to hospital beds due to the violence displayed and where they have been showing abnormal strength whilst under the influence of drugs, thus preventing medical treatment. These actions prevent harm to medical professionals and allow suitable treatment to take place but, to a lay observer, the decision to use force may appear excessive and call into question the suitability of the police to deal with such incidents, especially in what is supposed to be the safe space of a hospital ward. Despite this, the officers seem unaware of how else to control individuals or to communicate effectively with them. In a custody cell, whilst constantly monitoring an individual, officers are often in close proximity to someone displaying unpredictable behaviour leaving them open to being assaulted. Similarly, in the following observation, officers discovered a male under the influence of drugs in the street and have to decide on the most suitable course of action, when presented with someone exhibiting erratic actions and behaviours.

“A male sergeant requested assistance over the radio stating that he was dealing with an aggressive male under the influence of drugs. Other officers deployed to the scene and on arrival found two sergeants on the pavement with a male handcuffed to the rear and lying prone on the ground. It was explained that the male was under arrest for assault. The officers had come across the assailant curled up on the floor and making no sense. As they approached, he stood up and claimed to be in the army. One of the officers moved closer and tried to take hold of him before he lashed out, wind-milling his arms and hitting the sergeant. The male scratched the officer before he was taken to the floor and arrested. A police van was also requested as transport to custody. It was decided that all four officers present would carry the male to the van. As they picked him up, he started to kick out and kicked the arms of another officer leading to a further arrest.”

Observation Report 37: Drugs and Assault.

This incident shows a clear distinction in decision-making that is inherent during assistance calls between wanting to protect the individual and using force. It highlights the frustrations

emanating often from a lack of knowledge or the unpredictability of behaviour due to the effects of drugs. The above observation, however, highlights the differences in decisions between incidents where a person is aggressive due to drugs and where they are aggressive due to illness, disability or mental health issues. The outcome of the incident also shows some distinction between the response to aggression and violence during incidents involving drugs in comparison with those concerning mental health concerns. Whilst the assailants in Observations 37 and 10 (above) displayed similar behaviour with reference to kicking out at the police, the officers took disparate action between taking the deaf male with mental health issues to hospital and taking the person under the influence of drugs into custody on suspicion of assault. It is important to understand the reasons underpinning the different decisions.

First, in observation 10, the male claimed to have been the victim of a crime, was deaf and was initially labelled as a victim. The incident also occurred late at night and would have resulted in officers accompanying the male to hospital and subsequently into custody. As such the line of least resistance was to allow him to receive treatment and overlook the aggressive behaviour. The officers could have questioned the moral justification of their actions in using force and arresting. The officers in Observation Report 37, however, predicated the decisions made during the incident based on their prior knowledge of the male and that their actions would thus minimise any risk of violence from the male. The officers reasoned that the male was responsible for his own condition and therefore the behaviour that resulted from it. These examples show how the acceptability and culpability of action may influence different police decisions at assistance calls. Incidents involving both drugs and mental health are influenced by the factors and conditions, as outlined at the forefront of this section. The presence of aggressive non-compliance at mental health incidents, however, could be determined more readily by the lack of police understanding or the dismissiveness by some officers of the encounter as not being a fundamental part of the police role. At incidents where drugs are a contributory factor, conflict often appears to be the result of failures of an individual's ability to understand or rationalise police instructions and the effects of drugs on his/her behaviour. The final part of the 'vulnerability agenda' relates to disputes in private arenas which frequently includes domestic incidents. Whilst domestic violence and its impact on assaults were outlined in chapter two, the next section considers officer safety in relation to third-party calls. The factors influencing conflict and resistance during these incidents may come from the unpreparedness of the officers, but also from characteristics more readily associated with adversarial incidents.

7.3.3 Private Disputes, Vulnerability and Assaults

For the purposes of this study, private disputes are defined both as incidents which occur in private dwellings and those happening in public view involving a group of friends. If the latter of these two incidents occurred in private they would be unlikely to involve police involvement. As highlighted in chapter two, the danger of harm to police officers at 'domestic incidents' relates primarily to prior violence having happened, intoxication and entering into an unknown space (see Fagan et al., 1980; Rabe-Hemp and Schuck, 2007). The legitimacy of police officers to be able to dictate the outcome of private disputes might also affect the outcome of these encounters. The policing role, however, demands a restoration of order in both private and public circumstances through resolution, negotiation and, where necessary, coercible action (Wilson, 1968). Ericson argues that, in the context of private disputes, police officer attendance transforms the private arena, making the encounters and conflict that happen there the public property of the State where lawful decisions are taken to restore order (Ericson, 1982: 199). Decisions taken by police officers during private disputes may accord with the law and police policy but may be counteractive to the veracity and nature of the argument. When attending domestic verbal arguments, especially calls from a third party, officers are often encouraged by force policy to take 'positive action', which can include removing one of the people from the address. The decision to remove a person may contravene the wishes of those present and be contradictory to the fact that no one at the address called the police and no alleged criminal offences had been committed. As PC-2 stated, the policy of taking positive action and criminalising behaviour has seen an increase in the risk to officers of being assaulted;

“...we have turned everything into a criminal offence, so we go into people's houses tell them they've got to leave even though they've been having a verbal argument with their partner. We used to say an Englishman's home is his castle, well now the police interfere in far too much that's none of their business, and that causes people to have a general change in attitude towards the police” (*PC-2, Male Officer*).

Conflict at such incidents often occurs in two specific ways. Firstly, there may be an aggressive reaction due to the decision taken to arrest or remove a person and because of the presence of police officers entering into a property and implementing a controlled specific order on people's lives. The smallest argument between partners can lead to aggressive non-compliance on police attendance. As PC-2 later noted in his discussion of third party domestic calls;

“...if we go into deal with something that’s really small our presence escalates it purely by our presence. So I personally think we no longer get to exercise judgement when we go into people’s houses, which causes them to react badly, because we’re always looking for an outcome in somebody else’s house” (*PC-2, Male Officer*).

The mere presence of officers entering a private dwelling and enforcing order without a clear rationale, justification or explanation can inadvertently lead conflict to escalate. Administrative rules and policies around domestic incidents were introduced and advocated insofar as they curtailed “unwanted discretion” on officer decisions (Ericson, 2007:370; Sherman, 1992). The requirement to take formal action in all circumstances where there is a report of a domestic incident can, however, create uncivil, aggressive reactions, which challenge the legitimacy of the police to establish order and increase the risk of assault (Reiss, 1971). The alleged aggressor may have a strong and emotional reaction towards the police or to those they suspect of making the call. This aggression can become directed towards the attending officers if they attempt to calm any anger or if they make attempts to prevent the alleged aggressor from negotiating with or arguing with the alleged caller either through using force or threatening arrest. The following observation details the risk to officers when attending third-party calls, especially where there are pre-existent risk conditions associated with the address including prior violence and an unfamiliar environment.

“Officers were called to an address by an anonymous third party who reported overhearing an argument. On arrival a male shouted at officers from an upstairs window. Officers entered the property to speak to the female who was asked if any criminal offences had occurred. The female broke down stating to officers that it was a malicious call from the neighbours and they were causing her problems. Officers walked over to the stairs and the male appeared at the top of the stairs to intercept them. The male was aggressive and shouted at officers to stop at the bottom of the stairs. Officers explained police protocol but the male stated that the kids were asleep. The officers did not move and the male made his way down the stairs so he stood only two stairs away from one of them. The male made verbal threats to the officers, displaying aggressive non-verbal cues, using the stairs to gain a height advantage over the officers. The man challenged officers to a fight. His partner calmed him down before the male went back upstairs before he shouted at police to sort out his neighbours before he did.”

Observation Report 31: Third Party Domestic Call.

This incident demonstrates how heightened emotions and aggressive tendencies from everyone can increase the risk of confrontation and violence during domestic incidents (Hine et al., 2018). Police encroachment on private environments interacts with aspects of both assistance and adversarial calls, highlighting the potential difficulties and challenges of the crude definitions and distinctions drawn between the two call types for the purposes of this study. Police officers respond to calls to provide assistance and protection to a potential victim and the chance that officers use force against an alleged aggressor. Third-party calls can also create an increased risk to police officers from both parties inside an address. These potentially violent reactions are not always understood by callers. Those at the address could believe that the police have little authority or legitimacy to breach the rights to a private life and to be able to make decisions in private arenas, which impact on those living there. Such decisions and behaviours from officers can provoke reactions from residents leading to resistance and conflict. The risk of angering or upsetting people in their home has to be weighed against the risk of harm to persons at the property if officers did not attend or did not speak to those inside. The modern police role involves an increase demand to encroach and resolve what may previously have been viewed as personal or private disputes. The police are used to solution people's lives, with an increased recourse to the law. The police cannot always refuse to attend these calls.

In these circumstances, police officers have an increased chance of being assaulted as the officers become 'deflectors of risk' whereby they are protecting a potential victim but placing themselves in danger. With the development of the mobile phone market and the number of people with devices, people could be tempted to call the police as an immediate reaction to an incident, whereas previously they would have to walk home or to a phone box to report the occurrence by which time heightened emotions may have reduced and a decision taken not to make the call. So, for example, a person insulted or shouted at in the street or who has had a drunken fight in the night-time economy may now call the police straight away for immediate response. On police attendance, officers could have to make unpopular decision to arrest someone, interfering in a private dispute, therefore deflecting aggression towards them. As Reiss (1971) outlines, when police officers attend private domestic disputes, they have to establish the right to intervene, proving their legitimacy to make decisions and restore order. Where this is not granted or readily defined, then there may be a physical or aggressive reaction from those present, leading to conflict and a risk of assaults.

Third-party domestic calls highlight the crude distinction between what is determined to be an assistance call and an adversarial call. What begins as a call to a violent incident might become an assistance call as the dynamics within an incident change. For example, someone might call the police claiming that violence has occurred in a property, but on

arrival the call has been made to use the police as 'servants of the public' in order to get someone to leave an address. An observation in this study (Report 5) is such an example, whereby a female calls the police regarding a domestic incident only to request that the attending officers remove her ex-partner on arrival, despite him having committed no criminal offences;

"During the call the female admitted to having hit the male and she is also known for assaulting police officers. After a delayed admittance to the property, on entering the property the officers saw a male stood in a downstairs doorway and the female placed herself between the officers and the door. After insulting the male, the female demanded that the officers remove him from the property. After the officers refused the female became abusive towards them before turning around and pushing her ex-husband leading to her arrest. She continued to make threats that she would have the officers killed. As officers loosened their grip the female hit the male sergeant in the chest. It was not a hard strike but the female was handcuffed and taken to a waiting police car"

Operational Report 5: Changing Dynamics at a Domestic Incident.

Conversely, what appears to initially be an assistance call, or the provision of welfare to an individual can quickly become an adversarial incident whether due to misunderstandings of intention or due to the approach of officers. For instance, a person might misconstrue police assistance as an act of detention or arrest and therefore react aggressively to being touched. If a person is drunk and on the verge of committing a criminal offence, such as a public order offence, then police officers might decide on a course of action to take a person home. If the person is led to a police vehicle, then this action might be misinterpreted as being controlled or under arrest, creating the conditions for a negative reaction to the police instruction. In such circumstances, a person may strike out in defence, technically assaulting a police officer. The officer has to take the decision whether or not they use force, invoke powers of arrest or potentially have to accept culpability for the outcome of the incident. For example, if in attempting to get a drunken person to leave town the officer pushes an individual towards the car or grabs hold of them, then the officer may feel responsible for any subsequent assaults, due to his/her behaviour and actions. It is argued that in such instances, some officers are less likely to make arrests. The following two observations demonstrate this point clearly. In both cases, individuals are given advice to return home but, in doing so, this instruction led to violent confrontation and a decision for the officer whether to make an arrest.

“Officers dealt with a drunken person who refused to take advice and go home and was following the police and being abusive. He was placed into a police car but the door remained open as he was being spoken to. The male forced his way out of the car, pushing past an officer before being unceremoniously taken to the floor and arrested. The police drove him round to a police van waiting to go to custody. On being transferred from the car to the van, the assailant tried kicking out at police officers. However, as they were stood out of reach, the suspect tripped and landed flat on his back and onto the handcuffs. As officers could not afford to have officers at hospital and then waiting in custody, the male was released without going to custody and he was given a notice to leave before being taken home.”

Observation Report 3: Night-time Economy De-Arrest of Male.

“Officers witnessed two men fighting who it transpired were brothers who regularly argue. The brothers did not wish to make any formal complaints to police and the situation appeared to calm, though one brother remained agitated as he started to walk away. The male was taken hold of by an officer who, on releasing his grip, advised the male to walk home. After walking about ten metres away from the town centre, he turned around and started to run back towards the officers who were stood between him and his brother.

An officer moved onto the pavement to create a barrier between the two brothers as a visible deterrent. However, the male kept running. He stuttered just before the officer but only to put out his hands to push the officer to the chest. The officer stumbled slightly but managed to take hold and push him against a window. Other officers rushed across and he was taken to the floor and arrested for assaulting a police officer and a public order offence. When interviewed in the morning, the male stated that he did not care that it was an officer in front of him, it could have been anyone and he would have gone through them to get to his brother.”

Observation Report 3: Assault on Police in the Night-Time Economy.

These incidents demonstrate how an initial instruction or order done to the benefit of an individual can still lead to an aggressive response and how officers might take different action on being assaulted and during aggressive confrontation. In the first observation, due to a failure to control the male and prevent injury, the officers take the decision to observe his welfare and take him home, possibly in an attempt to alleviate their risk of receiving a formal complaint. The officers may have felt responsible for causing the negative behaviour and, therefore, took the decision not to arrest. In the second observation, the assailant was

responsible for happened, choosing not to follow the order given to return home and attempting to avenge the earlier fight. Even in this case, however, the assaulted officer did not wish to arrest for the assault, as it was low-level and non-injurious and so decided that the male should be taken home. Other officers made the decision to arrest the male. As such, officer peer pressure during an incident is a further reason why an arrest is or is not made for an assault. It might have been the case that if the assaulted officer wished to arrest but the other officers present did not, they could talk him out of doing so; if they felt that the actions did not warrant detention. Even when calming an incident, the risk of assault continues, as people choose whether to comply with the instructions. Where officers have separated two people, they can themselves become the focus of aggression, as they prevent people from doing what they want. Moreover, there were other examples, where an officer mistakenly believed that an incident had calmed down, only to be injured. PC-2 spoke of an incident where a male had been arrested for criminal damage and was being escorted to a vehicle by two officers. The officer escorting with PC-2 decided that the male was compliant and released his grip to attend another incident. With only one officer controlling him, the male became aggressive, resulting in an injury to PC-2. Some persons can feign compliance in order to develop a faux rapport, thus creating a potential opportunity to become violent in order to escape. Contrary to this, there are incidents whereby an officer might not want a person to become compliant and therefore through omission or action, instigates a reaction leading to an arrest. As such, an officer may agitate a situation in order to justify an arrest.

There is a blurred distinction in policing incidents between the two ideal incident types defined in this study, namely, 'adversarial incidents' and 'assistance-based calls', and the police actions and behaviour used to resolve these encounters. The differences between the two incident types are tenuous at times, despite there being identifiable changes in the types of risk within each. Dynamics can readily change between adversarial control to the requirement for assistance and vice-versa. There have been incidents where a person has caused damage when under the influence of drugs and displayed violence towards officers, but it has become necessary to ensure the person received immediate medical care and so no arrest is made. In some incidents, the demarcation between the two incidents is very blurred and officers make the choice to use force, despite potential negative connotations about their legitimacy or authority, and the emotional and moral impact on officers.

7.4 Conclusion

This chapter has highlighted the risks to police officers of the current context on which public policing occurs and demonstrated the risks to officers of attending assistance and welfare

calls, as well as the potential hidden effects of austerity on incident outcomes. Punch (1972) has long described police work as the 'secret social service' and often the police are termed as the 'agency of last resort', and so the welfare and assistance functions of police officers have long since been accepted in academia. It is important, however, to note the importance of understanding how assistance calls impact on the risk to police officers. The changing public sector context has had implications for the police role and, in turn, for police officers and the risks they face. Amongst officers, there has been a perceived increase in the number of assistance calls being attended especially with regard to mental health. Austerity and policies of caring and supporting people in the community have generated an increased public awareness of mental health. The creation of psychoactive substances (formally legal highs) and the problem of homelessness have also created a welfare issue which is often played out in public. In essence, police are required to restore order in these circumstances and to provide assistance where other services cannot respond. As highlighted in this chapter, police attendance at assistance calls can lead to the criminalisation of mental health issues and related behaviours, calling into question the legitimacy of the police as the most suitable agency to attend and resolve these situations.

The use of force may be both morally questionable and an inappropriate approach for some mental health incidents, risking resistance and aggressive non-compliance but also raises questions around what constitutes the legitimate actions of officers. Conflict during assistance calls might be based on different factors in comparison to adversarial incidents but the way in which officers resolve the situation can be similar to that of adversarial incidents. As argued at the foot of this chapter, the distinction between an assistance incident and an adversarial encounter is often blurred and vague, and every incident has the possibility of switching between the two. The main impact of austerity, though, is on the emotional wellbeing of police officers and, therefore, the impact on both the police role and police-public encounters. Significant stressors in workloads and emotional incidents as well as risks around being single-crewed can affect how incidents are resolved and the chances of hostility. It is important that police forces are aware of these stressors and potential changes in officer behaviour and consider ways in which they may be resolved. As suggested during this chapter, the way in which officers understand the informal cultural values can affect how officers deal with all incidents, including assistance calls. The need to establish control and take quick decisions sometimes leads to an officer asserting authority and order at welfare calls through the use of force. Similarly, cultural traits and reactions can influence decisions whether or not an officer arrests for an assault against them during assistance calls. The next section draws together all of these argument threads by detailing the conclusions and recommendations for this study.

Chapter Eight: Conclusions

8.1 Introduction

This thesis has considered the nature of police encounters with the public and how actions and behaviours of frontline officers both during an incident and in the backstage parade room influence the risk of conflictual escalation and thus of assault. This study analysed assaults from the perspective of frontline police officers, observing their approach to incidents, their reactions to assaults, and how workload stressors and expectations of an occupational culture affected policing styles and the dynamics of encounters. In order to summarise and reflect on this study, this conclusion focuses on the key findings, reconsidering the initial research questions and the extent to which this thesis answers them. It also details a number of recommendations based on the data, which could assist in reducing the number of assaults against police officers.

8.2 Key Findings and Themes

Assaults against police officers are a recurring problem for frontline police officers, which are governed and influenced by the police role, an occupational police culture and the relationship of the police with the public they serve. In times of changing demands, the risks to police officers remains of facing aggressive non-compliance and being assaulted. The true meaning of policing by consent has been eroded in certain aspects of society and during differing incident types (Reiner, 1991). The symbolic power of the uniform is not reflected in public reactions to the police, but for some officers remain a key part of their sense of authority, resulting in conflict during some incidents. The refusal to submit to the authority and will of the police stems from people who wish to escape and take opportunities to do so (Toch, 1969). This includes individuals who use the structural circumstances of the police to take advantage of a chance to assault an officer or to escape. For example, those who are stopped by an officer who is patrolling on his/her own with no immediate recourse for support. There are other citizens who wish to challenge the authority of the police to take *de facto* decisions on their lives, whether to control them or assert an order (Waddington, 1999). This group includes those who conceive the police as having no formal rights or powers to make decisions about private lives in private spaces. Finally, there are those who potentially cannot understand the authority of the police or decision-making at a certain moment, including people under the influence of drugs or suffering mental health issues. In such circumstances, police officers without adequate training can remain open to the misuse of force or provoke a reaction that leads to an assault.

The frontline police role is based on unchanging cultural characteristics and informal working values into which new officers are socialised, the traits of which sometimes influence the way in which officers make sense of their role. Cultural talk influences the way in which officers discuss assaults and violence in backstage areas. The way in which officers describe and emphasise actions when talking about assaults encourages the informal teaching of police working practices between officers and sets expectations of how violent incidents should be approached. Assaults and incidents where force is used develop 'war stories' and tales from the sharp end of policing; myths and legends that are passed from generation to generation and act as a guide-book that explains the excitement and danger of the role (van Maanen, 1973). The traits of the culture are unchanging and rigid about bravado, a desire for action and machismo (Reiner, 2000; 2016). To this end, they are adapted in the field of practice to meet the new demands of frontline policing. As Manning (2003) highlighted, the same principles used to control a potentially violent individual in one incident, are then replicated when approaching someone under the influence of drugs or with mental health issues. Police officers often perceive their role as the crime-fighter, catching criminals and keeping people safe, even if very little of their time is spent on these enterprises (Fassin, 2003). The desire for action and the requirement to maintain authority and reproduce order instructs police action, creating the opportunities for some assaults. An officer's understanding of their role as one of dirty work and danger, leads to a feeling of 'them and us' with the public (Hughes, 1963; Reiner, 2000). The phrase 'the thin blue line', creates a separation between the police and the public (something not foreseen in the Peelian Principles). It creates conditions whereby officers see the need to assert authority over incidents, dictate behaviours and control areas, all of which are required to police effectively, but which also leave officers open to being assaulted.

Research questions 1 and 2:

1. What is the relationship between the occupational police culture and assaults on police officers?
2. To what extent do the approach and behaviour of police officers towards encounters and efforts to control incidents and violent individuals minimise or increase the chance of being assaulted?

The study found that the occupational culture and the setting of informal values and codes of conduct in encounters explain why some assaults occur, but also influences the way police officers talk about and recognise the inherent dangers of their role. It also showed how a sense of mission and a desire for action and adrenaline led to some officers pushing the boundaries of their authority and levels of force when encountering citizens, leading to

violent conflict. The adoption of informal cultural values was greater for male officers, who tended to over-dramatise the use of force, but conversely downplay the effects of injury or assault, especially in front of other colleagues. Female officers were often more factual in their descriptions of assaults but described not having the same expectations on them when it came to confronting violence. Indeed, there appeared to be some *faux* chivalry amongst some male officers to want to lead on arrests when paired with a female officer or to take control of the person deemed as most likely to become violent in any encounter. The use of cultural talk and language differentially impacts on the policing style of officers and how they each engage and perform according to their understanding of the informal values. The extent to which officers respond and adopt informal cultural working practices affects the risks taken and their actions at incidents, potentially increasing the risk of being assaulted.

The demands of the occupational cultural traits around bravado dictated the reactions of officers to assaults, manipulating the decisions of police officers when choosing whether to report an assault or arrest an assailant. Whilst the study highlighted that there has been a slight shift towards an increased reporting of assaults, centralised recording on accurate levels of assaults and of officers not accepting assaults and violence as 'part of the job', too often the prevailing cultural dynamics affected both the outcomes of encounters and generated a dark figure of assaults. The key finding from chapter six was the demonstration of cultural traits dominating police talk. Chapter six was also crucial in showing the bifurcation between those officers who sometimes created conflict in an incident to justify an arrest by pushing the boundaries along the 'invitational edge of force' (cf. Lyng, 1990; Waddington, 1999) and the lack of response of some officers to being assaulted. Both outcomes are underpinned by the same cultural values relating to machismo, bravado and authoritarianism (Reiner, 2000). These behaviours sit at the opposite ends of the two continuums used in this thesis. In not taking action after being arrested, it is argued that officers are acting according to learned behaviours regarding not arresting for 'low-level' assaults. Similarly, in pushing the boundaries, some exert their authority to maintain order, but also act according to guidance received during the telling of stories in the parade room. Overall, though, there was a clear demarcation between how male and female officers understood, discussed and reacted to both the use of force and being assaulted, creating an observable and recordable difference in the reasons for assaults suggested by male and female officers; in their descriptions of violent incidents and the positioning of officers in the parade room and the reverence afforded to officers (most notably, those known for 'getting stuck in' and confronting violence).

Research questions 3 and 4:

3. How do the institutional and structural contexts of frontline policing affect the risk to police officers of being assaulted?
4. To what extent do changes in the structure of police work due to austerity and legal, procedural and policy changes increase the risks of officers being assaulted?

This study analysed the extent to which austerity affected police force internal policy and decisions around police attendance. Chapter two noted the substantial increase in the number of officially recorded assaults, but it cannot be determined whether this is related to changes in the police role, an increasing risk to police officers of being assaulted or better recording practices and Home Office counting rules. Certainly, the data in chapter five show that Lincolnshire Police's assault numbers remained stable throughout the four-year period of this study. To fully understand the impact of the austerity measures, it would be necessary to review assaults over an extended period of time alongside a consistent method of centrally recording assault figures. Chapter seven, however, demonstrated that perceptual changes to the police role, underpinned by cuts to other services have introduced new dynamics and risks to police officers during incidents. These factors were particularly inherent in encounters involving drugs and mental health issues. Frontline officers repeatedly reported increasing demands on them from what is termed in this study as 'assistance-based encounters'. Officers also spoke of the extent to which emotional demands, personal issues, and workload stressors sometimes affected their behaviour in encounters and artificially influenced its outcome.

This chapter shows the risk associated with officers patrolling on their own ('single-crewed') as well as being on duty with a colleague ('double-crewed') and concluded that it is not possible to clearly state that either promotes actual greater safety during an encounter. Certainly officers' perceived that being double-crewed increased safety from being assaulted, but the data suggested that assaults more readily occurred when there was more than one officer present, potentially due to policies around sending more than one officer to reports of violence. Austerity for all public services has created new dynamics within policing incidents, introducing questions about the morality and legitimacy of using force against vulnerable persons, and of criminalising the behaviour of subjects during assistance-based calls who assault an officer but who are in need of welfare. These data showed a number of occasions when police officers were reticent to use force against vulnerable persons, arrest for an assault occurring during such incidents, or where officers were dismissive of the risks associated with assistance-based encounters.

The research questions and findings suggest a number of positive recommendations and conclusions about the safety of police officers in encounters with the public. Assaults are an inevitable part of the risk to police officers in confronting and detaining citizens. With the Emergency Service Workers Act 2018 increasing the maximum custodial sentence for people who assault emergency workers, it would be worthwhile researching the number of assaults when the law is established to see the impact on both a person's decision to attack a police officer and whether it has encouraged wider reporting and arrests for assault if it is likely that courts and judges will give an assailant a higher sentence in court when found guilty of assault.

This study identifies that assaults can occur in any police/public encounter, although there are certain locations and incident types whereby this risk increased. These include incidents involving alcohol, previous violence and where there is a direct challenge to the authority of an officer either during or after arrest. Fundamental to assault incidents are the individual and unique dynamics of each one, which interlink and interject together to increase the danger of conflict, hostility and assault. Each individual trait can lead to circumstances by which an incident moves along through the range of behavioural choices from compliance towards aggressive non-compliance, in the same way that certain officer and public actions can result in a reduction of conflict and an increase in compliance. It is the total mix of all these factors together that affect the final outcome of any given encounter. For example, an officer under stress from a demanding workload and personal problems who has just attended an emotional incident and is then sent straight to another incident could be more likely to be assaulted due to their reaction and potential dismissiveness of an incident, reacting negatively to the behaviours of others when their authority is challenged. An officer might act 'out of character' due to personal stressors, leading to an aggressive confrontation or an increased risk of assault. Under different circumstances, where an officer is less stressed and more receptive to back-to-back incidents, more compliant outcomes might occur.

The observation of the encounters in this study have allowed for an understanding of the impact on the chances of conflict from the nature of the assailant; cultural traits; public perceptions of authority and legitimacy; and the knowledge of police officers about the law, the use of force powers and medical conditions. These factors taken together underpin the recommendations around minimising the risk of assaults and increasing the safety of police officers. It is crucial that the protection of police officers remains on the political agenda both for central Government and within internal force policies in these changing times for all public services. Future studies should continue to monitor frontline police numbers and how police officers are protected both through equipment and by the courts, as well as focusing

on the legitimacy of the police through public confidence figures. The following subsections consider the main recommendations and how they are supported by the data.

8.2.1 Personal Safety Training and Protective Equipment

This study showed that a number of officers interviewed for this study, highlighted that the personal safety training provided yearly to officers was not always realistic for the policing role. There were differences between the officers around the usefulness of such training and being able to recall the training and tactics in the heat of the moment during a violent encounter when there is serious risk of harm. Training in a safe learning environment in the police gym is far removed from the realities of actual incidents whereby taught techniques are replaced by any method necessary to gain control of the situation. A lot of the personal safety training focuses on techniques relating to control and use of force, although there is now an acknowledgement of communication skills and tactics. As Skolnick and Fyfe (1993) argued, the impact of training and a focus on conflict and control could lead to officers entering encounters at a high level, expecting to use force, changing the outcome of an incident. It is recommended that in order to ensure the maximum impact and effectiveness of the training, it is made as realistic to the role as possible, but with a focus on both techniques of control as well as negotiation and conflict de-escalation. The training should also demonstrate awareness of non-verbal communications and the way in which the approach of an officer can affect the outcome of that encounter. This study showed on occasion that the initial interaction between an officer and a citizen influenced the risk that the incident would result in aggressive non-compliance.

It is important that any training concentrates on developing the skills of officers in relation to the protective equipment available to them. Police forces should monitor and review the effectiveness of equipment such as TASER and spit guards with a view to expanding their availability. TASER in particular could influence a reduction in the number of assaults and increase perceptions of safety amongst officers. Since the inception of this study, spit guards have been introduced into Lincolnshire Police (April 2018) and it is important to detail how often the guards are used from year to year (32 times by February 2019) and then make attempts to extrapolate from the data their impact on reducing the number of assaults associated with spitting and biting and on the safety of police officers.

One of the key arguments in the study focused on the safety of officers attending third party domestic calls, entering into private dwellings and the *de facto* power of police officers to enforce order during private disputes and the risk that these decisions can lead to assaults. Observation Report 10: The officer attacked at an assistance call, in chapter seven, outlined how officers are at risk when entering private dwellings from people locking the door, of

officers not knowing escape routes, or from hidden weapons. There are other examples where officers reported being assaulted during domestic incidents and when attending third-party reported domestic calls on their own. It is imperative that any personal safety training takes into account and delivers awareness training on the risks associated with entering into private dwellings and the control of space.

8.2.2 Mental Health Awareness and Drugs Training

Chapter seven highlighted the differing and emerging dangers to police officers attending 'assistance-based calls' involving either drugs or mental health. Whilst the separation of adversarial and crime-related calls from assistance or welfare calls was a crude definitional tool to assist with the study's analysis, it foregrounded the risk of assault and the factors relating to conflict during welfare calls. For some officers, incidents involving mental health and drugs were seen as being more dangerous than other incident types, as the people involved were sometimes more unpredictable. Some officers reported that they had both a moral and lawful decision to make after being assaulted at incidents where a person was under the influence of drugs or suffering a mental health issue as to whether they should make an arrest, take a person into police custody to undergo assessment or whether to detain the person so that the individual could receive medical attention. Furthermore, officers reported being assaulted at assistance calls but taking no action due to the circumstances and the lack of injury caused.

There were other examples where officers appeared dismissive of any risks during welfare calls, treating assistance-based encounters differently to how they would approach calls relating to violence. Such behaviours could belittle the person involved who might need treatment but it also meant that the officers were not focused on their own safety and on non-verbal cues which could indicate that someone could become aggressive. It is recommended that all officers are provided with detailed training on mental health awareness as well as coaching on vulnerability, risk and the behaviours associated with reactions to certain drugs. This training should increase the knowledge of officers in diagnosing conditions but also provide an understanding in how to safely approach incidents in order to maximise the safety of all involved. Such training could also develop effective communication that minimises the risk of harm. It was highlighted throughout the officer interviews that there was a lack of training about mental health and this was detrimental to police officers effectively carrying out every aspect of their role. An increased appreciation of the effects of drugs and mental health disorders should assist in reducing the overall numbers of assaults.

Assistance-based encounters can affect public perceptions of police legitimacy and authority as well as raise moral questions on the suitability of the police to deal with those who are vulnerable due to their mental health issues or drug use. The use of force by police officers against those who are at risk of causing harm to themselves or others may be seen by the public as illegitimate and unnecessary to the circumstances and subsequently affect confidence in the police. These reactions could be affected by the fact that police action in keeping a person safe or removing them from danger is confused with officers making an arrest. Due to changing demands, police forces need to be aware of the results of public confidence surveys, which can highlight the levels of trust in police officers in dealing with a multitude of complex calls.

There has been an increasing focus from the Government between emergency services, starting with the 2014 statutory obligation for collaboration. This has allowed police forces to work closely with fire and rescue services and the ambulance services, to identify synergies between them and to develop best practice and understanding, which could positively impact on reducing the demands of each organisation and the better management of the demands and risks associated with each distinct role. The extent of police attendance at incidents involving mental health issues has increased as a result of austerity measures impacting on the availability of mental health services in hospitals and communities, as well as increased pressure on the ambulance service. The opportunity for collaboration should encourage all of the emergency services to work together with other partners with regard to drugs, mental health and medical emergencies to ensure the most appropriate response that maximises the support given to individuals and also reduces the risk of harm to attending emergency service workers and the individuals requiring assistance.

8.2.3 Cultural Change and Wellbeing

This thesis highlighted the impact of cultural characteristics and adaptations on increasing the risk of being assaulted. Throughout this study there were examples of officers from all backgrounds and experiences dismissing near-miss or 'low-level' assault incidents as an unfortunate aspect of the role and in favour of a display of bravado in front of colleagues. Some officers spoke of pushing the boundaries when using force, or of how they were always in control of an incident where conflict had occurred. Both Observation Reports 15 and 16 outlined in chapter six demonstrated the use of tough talk in confronting violence and pushing the boundaries of authority within an incident.

Police forces need to be aware of the cultural differences that exist between departments, management structures and individual police officers, and to address any challenges arising from this. Police forces should also ensure that they acknowledge the impact of internal

pressures and demands on officer behaviour and the risk of aggression and assault. Positive cultural changes should be sought internally on encouraging the reporting of all assaults by officers, allowing officers to feel comfortable challenging the actions of other officers, and feeling happy to discuss the impact of assaults on their confidence. Although Reiner (2016) argued that cultural change in policing is difficult or impossible to achieve on a large, force-wide scale, I would suggest that smaller changes amongst officers about specific subjects and issues can have an observable impact on police behaviour. These changes can include increased support for officers after being assaulted and encouraging talk about assaults can identify wellbeing needs. With the introduction of body worn video cameras, recording arrests and documenting violent incidents, police forces should feel comfortable in reviewing the footage of assaults in order to understand the sequence of events and being able to focus operational learning on any observed repeated trends.

One of the main cultural changes being observed in policing is an increased focus on officer wellbeing. Whilst positive policies have been introduced to support officers more could be done to monitor the stresses on police officers from both workload and call demands, as well as personal problems, which can affect how officers' perform their roles. Attending an emotional incident and then deploying immediately to another challenging incident can influence an officer's behaviour, changing the dynamics of an incident and ultimately its outcome. Police forces and especially the police control room, need to be aware of the impact of continuous incidents on police officers and, where possible, provide police officers with the time to process incidents and debrief on occurrences before being deployed to another one. This is where sergeants and inspectors need to work closely with the control room to monitor when an officer requires time to recover from an incident before attending another one. Sergeants and other supervisory officers should also receive awareness training on emotional stressors and symptoms of stress in order to provide early intervention to officers when needed.

8.3 Final Conclusions and Recommendations

This study presented a detailed view of assaults from the unique perspective of police officers. It moved the sole focus away from the aggressors and their desire to use force, to considering the full dynamics of police encounters and analysing the extent to which the police role and occupational cultural values and norms increase the risk of assaults against police officers. It acknowledges these previous studies and the work already done on assaults but serves to highlight a new perspective and fresh arguments on conflict and aggressive non-compliance. The presence and actions of an officer and the assailant as well as the location are all critical to fully understanding assaults. Understanding an assault

against a police officer is not as straightforward as focusing explanation on the 'violent' nature of modern society, a drinking culture, or increased police attendance at incidents more suited to other services. To fully grasp the landscape of assaults, whilst it is important to consider societal and structural factors, it is also crucial for police forces to be introspective, understanding the informal culture of police officers, their attitudes and responses to assaults, and the position and role of the police in modern society. Police forces need to be encouraged to analyse assault incidents by speaking with the officer, reviewing BWV and considering trends in their datasets to be able to respond to any changing circumstances identified through introducing new policies, changing structures of response, increasing training or investing in protective equipment for frontline officers.

The hypothesis for this study was based on a gendered divide between male and female officers in terms of their use of force and the way in which each reacted to assaults and made sense of them within the context of their police roles. This hypothesis was proven in chapters five and six when considering the gendered divide in the number of assaults and also through the opinions of police officers and the use of language and presentation in the parade room. The officers who were interviewed for the research often relayed to the interviewer how the expectations on officers about confrontations were held to be different between male and female officers within the context of frontline police officers and how male officers were often quicker to use force or agitate an incident.

This study has gone beyond this initial hypothesis and considered assaults through a thematic analysis of theoretical concepts, linked to policing, such as the police role (Bittner, 1975); the occupational police culture (Skolnick, 1966, Reiner, 2000) and the concepts of 'edgework' (Lyng, 1979); and police legitimacy (Tyler, 2003). These concepts are crucial to this study in developing a new understanding of conflict, confrontation, aggressive non-compliance and the dynamics of police assaults. More importantly, these concepts have been critical in contextualising discussions of police non-action with regards to being assaulted. As such, this study supports and adds to the existing literature as to how both structural and cultural demands affect the risk of assaults and on the number of recorded assaults.

Whilst this study has some limitations in relation to the extent of the methodology, it has enabled the study of an important area of policing but one that normally comes to the media and public attention when an officer is seriously assaulted or killed in the line of duty or when there are political arguments surrounding the safety of police officers. The vast majority of police officers are assaulted during their careers, but the impact of these assaults is often of minimal consideration to the wider public and sometimes to police management. If this study

achieves anything, it needs to be that police forces are more open in challenging courts on the sentencing of those found guilty of assaults and that there is a greater focus on the impact of assaults, on police officers. It would be positive to see officers expressing their feelings after being assaulted so that their supervisors can fully appreciate the physical and mental impact that some assaults have on officers both in the short term and longer term when attending similar incidents. To achieve this aim and in order to have an impact on the police role and the emotional demands on assaults this section concludes by reasserting the key recommendations it makes, with the aim that they encourage reporting but reduce the number of assaults against police officers.

1. Ensure that personal safety training is as realistic to the role as possible and focuses both on control techniques as well as communication skills, monitoring and awareness of non-verbal communication as well as how officers approach an incident.
2. Provide mental health awareness training for all officers, which will assist in their ability to approach, communicate and effectively assist at such incidents to ensure the correct and safest outcome.
3. Provide training to all officers on the effects of drugs, signs and symptoms especially on psychoactive substances.
4. Continue to ensure the availability and introduction of personal protective equipment to all officers in order to make officers safe in their role.
5. Police forces need to be aware of the cultural differences inherent across policing and address any challenges that arise. This enables the police to support officers in the correct way; detailing the importance of reporting and recording assaults; and encouraging open communication between officers and managers on the effects of frontline policing.
6. Police forces need to continue and support a national programme which studies and assists officer wellbeing.
7. Use confidence surveys and other models to study and review the public perceptions of police authority and legitimacy in communicating with the public and responding to calls.

8. Continue to educate officers on their safety during incidents such as being aware of exits during domestic disputes.
9. Collaborate closely with other emergency services and partners around mental health incidents and response to those in need of medical assistance or welfare rather than arrest and force.

8.4 Considerations for Future Research

Each of the conclusions and recommendations create opportunities for further research, to analyse the extent to which the factors explaining assaults remain consistent and focusing on how the risk changes according to the modernising and varying police role. Further studies could develop the findings of this current research. Indeed, research might be conducted which compares rural and urban policing, as well as the response of neighbourhood community officers and frontline response officers in terms of their approach to incidents and reaction to violence. The main research was conducted in a mostly rural force. It would be useful to compare and contrast the impact of risk factors outlined in this study with those discovered by observing and interviewing officers in a larger Metropolitan force. Moreover, the focus of this study is on frontline police officers and additional studies might also include PCSOs, who do not have the same powers of arrest and detention, nor recourse to protective equipment and consider how they react to verbal and physical challenges from citizens.

The methodology employed in this thesis is generalisable to other forces and is one that can be replicated when studying assaults. Assaults should be tracked across a number of years so that the impact of new legislation and policies can be monitored to see their impact on the numbers of assaults. As the nature of frontline policing changes with regards to the gendered split in officers numbers and their backgrounds (BME representation, officers with degree qualifications), it will be interesting to repeat the quantitative element of this study to see the impact on the number of assaults. For the fullest understanding of assaults, it would be useful to repeat aspects of this study across a wider area, taking into account more incidents and interviews. For example, more work on large urban areas with transient populations could be observed to analyse whether familiarity with officers increases or reduces the risk of being assaulted. The data collection for this study was carried out prior to the full introduction of BWV to all officers in Lincolnshire. Lincolnshire had initially introduced cameras in around 2011/12 with the reintroduction of BWV with never, smaller cameras in 2015/16. There is an interesting debate starting in criminological and policing texts on the impact of the cameras on reducing the risk of assault and violence and in minimising the use

of force by officers. In studying assaults, further research needs to be done on their effectiveness in reducing the number of assaults. In England and Wales recorded minor injury assaults have increased slightly in recent years even since the widespread introductions of cameras. It needs to be considered whether this is because cameras have little impact on reducing risk or because BWV allows officers to capture evidence of assaults leading to increased reporting and arrests. Finally, when forces aim for a cultural shift and positive change in every role, these policies and changes need to be analysed in accordance with whether they have a positive impact on officer safety and reduce the number of assaults, an aim which should be shared by all police forces.

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- Donnelly v Jackman [1970] 1 All E.R 897
- Ludlow and Others v Burgess (1972) 75 Cr.App.R.227
- Mepstead v DPP [1996] Crim LR 111

APPENDIX A: INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

Interview Number:-

Officer Pseudonym:-

Gender:-

Introductory Questions

What is your current rank in the police force?

For how long have you been a police officer?

What did you do prior to becoming a police officer?

What protective equipment do you carry on duty?

Approximately, how many times in the past year have you been assaulted by a member of the public?

What do you understand by the term “assault against a police officer”?

What factors tend to influence your decision on whether or not to arrest someone for assaulting a police officer?

Incident of Assault

Please feel free to go into as much detail as possible in the next two questions. I will not interrupt your free recall but will ask follow up questions at the end in relation to what you have described

Can you describe one policing incident where you were assaulted by a member of the public?

OR

Can you describe one policing incident where you witnessed an officer being assaulted by a member of the public?

Topics to be covered if not included in the free recall

- Shift type and other incidents attended
- Background knowledge about the incident- information received about the incident and persons present
- Approach to the incident
- Interactions between officers and the public
- Escalation of the incident
- Did the officer know it would escalate/ sense a change in atmosphere
- What the factors were behind the assault
- How did they try and control the situation- force used
- Would they change anything if they attended again
- Impact on attendance at similar incidents
- Discussions of the incident with other officers- how responded to it
- Any risks taken at the incident

Assaults in General

I now want you to consider assaults in general as we discuss the next topics

Characteristics of Police Officers

General Opening Question: How does the approach and interaction of police officers with members of the public affect the chances of being assaulted?

Key Topics to Cover:

- Characteristics of police officers that may lead to assaults
- Cultural traits- presence amongst officers
- Experience of officers and prevention of assaults or changing the way in which they approach incidents

Training

General Opening Question: To what extent does personal safety training received minimise the risk of being assaulted?

Key Topics to Cover:

- Training received
- Specialist training- PSU; TASER- whether trained and whether changes how incidents are dealt with
- Ability to recall these tactics and training when dealing with incidents of violence

Preparation for Incidents

General Opening Question: To what extent does carrying out risk assessments prior to attending incidents affect the risk of being assaulted?

Key Topics to Cover:

- What information ask for from control room before attending
- What think about whilst driving towards the incident
- Is what is thought about prior to attending different when it is a potentially violent incident

- Do preconceptions prior to attending affect the way you deal with the actual incident

Tactics and Control

General Opening Question: In what ways do you seek to control potentially violent incidents and members of the public?

Key Topics to Cover:

- Tactics which are most effective in dealing with incidents of violence
- Whether some officers are better at dealing with violent people than others- what makes this so
- Risks taken at incidents- do officers take risks, what risks are they and are some more likely to take risks than others
- Whether or not some officers are more likely to use physical force- reasons for this and potential impact- pushing the boundaries of what can do or should be doing
- Does being double-crewed affect how incidents are dealt with?

Escalation

General Opening Question: How do incidents tend to escalate towards violence?

Key Topics to Cover:

- Police officer actions, which may cause escalation
- Public factors which may cause escalation
- Indicators of violence

Repeat Victims

General Opening Question: Do you think that some police officers are more likely to be assaulted by members of the public?

Key Topics to Cover

- Reasons why they believe this to be the case

Shared Attitudes

General Opening Question: What types of incidents are discussed most often in the parade room between officers?

Key Topics to Cover:

- Impact of discussions on officers behaviour at similar incidents
- What aspects of the incidents are concentrated on
- Solidarity between police officers when empathising or discussing incidents
- Common reactions after being assaulted
- Way in which people are described
- Whether those officers involved in violence incidents are more revered or discussed than others- does this affect behaviour at incidents

APPENDIX B: PARTICIPANT OBSERVATION FORM OUTLINE

Participant Observation Form (Number)

Time: 24-Hour Clock

Date: Including Day, Month and Year

Location: Town and Descriptor (street, custody, hospital etc.)

FREE OPEN TEXT OF INCIDENT

Single Factors

Alcohol: Y/N

Drugs: Y/N

Domestic Violence: Y/N

Other Violence: Y/N

Previous Offending History: Y/N

Use of PPE: Y/N

Double Crewed Unit: Y/N

Analysis

Including Key Themes and Comparable Data for all observations

APPENDIX C: UNIVERSITY ETHICAL APPROVAL FORM (REDACTED)

AREA Faculty Research Ethics Committee

University of Leeds

Title of study: **Understanding Assaults on Police Officers- An Ethnography of Violence**

Ethics reference: **AREA 12-057**

I am pleased to inform you that the above research application has been reviewed by the ESSL, Environment and LUBS (AREA) Faculty Research Ethics Committee and following receipt of your response to the Committee's initial comments, I can confirm a favourable ethical opinion as of the date of this letter. The following documentation was considered:

Document	Version	Date
AREA 12-057 Ethical Review- signed.doc	1	16/01/13
AREA 12-057 High Risk Fieldwork RA form.doc	1	16/01/13
AREA 12-057 Research Information Sheet- Participant Observation.docx	1	16/01/13
AREA 12-057 Research Information Sheet.docx	1	16/01/13
AREA 12-057 Research Informed Consent Form Ethnography.docx	1	16/01/13
AREA 12-057 Research Informed Consent Form Interview.docx	1	16/01/13

Committee members made the following comments about your response:

- C19, C15 both dealt with adequately.
- C8 The applicant now makes it clear that only material obtained from interviews with the consenting police officers will be used in the research (rather than material from police and suspect interviews) The ethnographic observation will inevitably include information about the behaviour of members of the public who are not consenting to be part of the study. However, the protocol proposed is sufficient to ensure that this can be done ethically (it is in effect observation in a public place, the main focus of

which is the conduct of the consenting participants). The identity of others observed will be sufficiently protected.

- The consent forms for participants are thorough (although often such forms ask the participants initial each clause to show that they have read them).