Police use of body worn cameras: An ethnographic study of frontline police work in a time of technological change

Declan Falconer

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The University of Leeds

School of Law
Centre for Criminal Justice Studies

Leeds University Business School
Adaptation Information Management and Technology

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The candidate confirms that the work submitted is his own and that appropriate credit has been given where reference has been made to the work of others.

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To my family, I will actually come and visit now. Honest.

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Abstract

Police use of body worn cameras (BWCs) is on the rise globally and, while much of the attention remains focused on the United States of America, many forces in the United Kingdom have equipped their frontline officers with BWCs. A wide range of benefits are envisaged from the use of the technology and there is a body of research which indicates that some of these are realisable. However, there remains an important gap in our understanding of how BWCs are received and used by frontline officers across the breadth of their everyday work. Consequently, the aim of this study was to investigate how BWCs impacted the everyday work of frontline officers.

Based on ethnographic research conducted within West Yorkshire Police, the thesis draws on data from 700 hours spent observing the work of response and neighbourhood police teams, alongside 28 interviews with frontline officers and their direct supervisors. Utilising dramaturgical analysis and sociomateriality, it offers findings on how officers have journeyed from sceptics to embracing the use of BWCs as largely supporting their professional, frontstage performances. Yet, the impact of BWCs is shown to not be felt universally across all police-public encounters. Despite officers coming to see BWCs as generally supporting their work, there is evidence of an increased expectation to perform as they perceive themselves as more visible within the wider organisation. This increased perception of visibility, and potential scrutiny, is revealed to manifest as a tension between performing for present and prospective audiences in some encounters. Furthermore, officers can agonise over even their apparently successful performances after the fact. Such developments are shown to have reinforced the importance that officers place on preserving a backstage environment between police-public encounters. This is particularly significant given that the availability of such time backstage is demonstrated to be challenged by BWCs.

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List of Acronyms

BWC(s)	Body Worn Camera(s)
BWV	Body Worn Video
CCTV	Closed-Circuit Television
CID	Criminal Investigations Department
ESRC	Economic and Social Research Council
N8 PRP	N8 Policing Research Partnership
NPT	Neighbourhood Policing Team
PC	Police Constable
PCSO	Police Community Support Officer
RCT	Randomised Control Trial
WYP	West Yorkshire Police

Chapter One – Introduction

1.1 Introducing the thesis

Body worn cameras (BWCs) are small devices that have captured a large amount of interest with their increasing use by police forces globally (Gaub and White, 2020; Lum et al., 2020). Many variations are available but they share, as the name suggests, the core of being attached to the user's body with the capacity of capturing both video and audio footage from that anchored perspective outward. Beyond this shared origin, the differences between models – and potentially the same model depending on policy – means that they vary in how their recording is controlled, where they are anchored, what period is captured and how data are stored. On the storage point alone there are innumerable different combinations of governing policy and law that dictate differences between countries, forces and even departments or teams – varying all the more as newer models continue to roll out with live streaming capability. However, despite these developments and the surge in interest in the technology in more recent years, the concept of using such technology in policing is not wholly new. British forces considered the idea as far back as 2005 with the Plymouth Head Camera Project but, despite the Home Office publishing early guidance on BWC usage following these early explorations (Home Office, 2007), the technology did not see widespread adoption or generate much initial academic interest. This began to change as a number of high profile incidents in the USA captured media attention, generated civil unrest and provided the impetus for wider demands of police reform in that country (Peck, 2015).

These calls for reform attracted substantial media attention and the same is true of one of the first major studies to be published on the impacts of police use of BWCs conducted in Rialto, California (Ariel et al., 2014) which was covered extensively on both sides of the Atlantic (Schneider, 2018). With such a widely reported focus on policing issues in the USA, and the political will and economic funding put into reform by then President Obama's 21st Century Policing taskforce (Lum et al., 2016), it is hardly surprising that the mainstream narrative around BWCs initially focused on their potential to solve such highly publicised policing problems. Indeed, early reviews of BWC research revealed that many of the perceived benefits of the technology were rooted in some assumed improvement of the quality of police-public encounter for the parties involved (White, 2014). This conceptualising of BWCs as problem-solving devices helps explain the development of a research base which has largely attempted to quantify the impact of the technology by studying reportable

outcomes from encounters, such as alleged police use of force or complaints received (Cubitt et al., 2017; Gaub and White, 2020; Lum et al., 2020).

While the literature has developed further, such as Rowe et al. (2018) providing an interesting contribution to our understanding of BWCs from a wider ethnographic study of police discretion (Pearson and Rowe, 2020), the focus on reportable outcomes largely remains. However, this focus has not yet provided a comprehensive view of how BWCs can impact policing or even the more narrow focus on how they might impact police-public encounters. In their recent systematic review of BWC impacts on police and public behaviours, Lum et al. (2020: 7) specifically considered studies that attempted to measure officer and citizen behaviour – rather than perceptions or attitudes. Yet, the review found that the body of evidence surrounding BWCs remains uncertain with a potential reduction in civilian complaints again (Ariel et al., 2017) being the most reliable finding across the studies the authors considered. As such, the differences reported earlier in BWC research on areas such as police use of force and assaults against officers (ODS Consulting, 2011; Ariel et al., 2014; Ready and Young, 2015; Ariel et al., 2016) remain today. Indeed, even the review of reviews by Gaub and White (2020) show different interpretations of the evidence base with Maskaly et al. (2017) and Malm (2019) deemed to be positive in their reading, Cubitt et al. (2016) somewhat more measured and Lum et al. (2019) more sceptical of what the existing research indicates.

Understanding such variations across research findings – and even the interpretation of the same research – invites an approach that deviates from the assumption that BWCs are problem-solving devices to be measured and judged against such reportable outcomes. Instead, this study takes an earlier starting point of exploring BWCs as a new technology introduced into the particular work context of frontline policing in West Yorkshire Police (WYP). Doing so allowed for a more explorative study of the impact of what remains a relatively new part of mainstream policing in Britain. Harrison et al. (2022) recently highlighted the need for more consideration of the impact on the everyday world of police work in their own study, which utilised a small number of observations, while Lum et al.'s (2019: 100) review of the state of the field highlighted the need for more ethnographic research to explore the impact on 'everyday citizen–officer interactions.' This research adopts such an ethnographic approach, outlined fully in the following section, and explicitly addresses this identified need to provide wider insights into how BWCs are impacting the everyday working lives of officers and their encounters with the public.

This chapter continues to introduce the focus and approach of the thesis in more detail. The following section introduces the overall aim of the research, the specific questions which came out of this aim and the methodological approach taken to achieve these goals. Subsequently, the personal rationale behind the research is explained before the overall structure of the thesis is outlined. The study offers an ethnographic exploration of the introduction and use of BWCs into frontline policing in WYP as a case study for better understanding the variable impacts of BWCs – as reported elsewhere – in the everyday lives of the frontline officers who use them. In doing so, it aims to make an original contribution to our understanding of how frontline officers have responded to new technology, how BWCs have influenced the everyday working lives of police users and the consequences this has for police-public encounters.

1.2 Research aims, questions and approach

The overarching aim of this study was to investigate how police use of BWCs impacted the everyday work of uniformed, frontline officers. To achieve this, and to guide the study, the following three research questions were posited;

1. How, and in what ways, have BWCs been adopted by frontline officers?
2. How have BWCs impacted the organisational visibility of frontline officers?
3. How do BWCs influence frontline officer behaviour within police-public encounters and with what impact(s) on their wider work?

The nature of the central aim of exploring the everyday (Adler et al., 1987) world of frontline officers led to these expansive questions and invited a qualitative design which could access and explore that very world. The relatively new introduction and rollout of BWCs, at the conception of the research, further encouraged an exploratory approach over the creation of pre-determined hypotheses. The focus on BWCs as implemented on the frontline was informed by two longstanding points from the wider policing literature; frontline officers operate in an environment that makes consistent and proximal supervision of their work unlikely and this offers opportunity for them to influence the outcome of new technology and policies in practice (Chan, 2001; Goldsmith, 2010). When combined with the identified gap of the impact of BWCs on behaviours within police-public encounters, it was deemed that an

ethnographic approach would be required in order to enter the world (Robson, 2011) of frontline officers[1] and obtain the data required to adequately answer the research questions.

Before further discussion of the chosen approach, it is important to recognise that the study, particularly in its focus, aims, and design, was shaped through being funded and supported by the N8 Policing Research Partnership (N8 PRP). The N8 PRP is a collaboration of University's and police forces, which emphasises the importance of co-production of research and evidence-led practice. The nature of the funding award meant that the researcher took ownership of the project after initial scoping discussions carried out between the collaborative partner and the project supervisors. The direction of the research was refined from an initial broad focus on BWCs and police-public relations, into the current thesis, through an identifying of the gaps described above but also in discussion with WYP to ensure that the force recognised the relevance and likely benefits of the study's aims for their own organisation. This background to the study brought many benefits – including initial organisational access – but also expectations and resulting limitations on the project design. Understandably, there was an expectation that the study would take place within the force area so that knowledge of the most direct relevance for them could be fed back to the organisation. The substantial investment WYP made into equipping all of their frontline officers with BWCs, shortly prior to the award of the studentship, and the diversity of the force area, combined with the freedom provided to the researcher to locate the research anywhere in WYP helped to alleviate this apparent initial restriction. During the course of the first year of the research, through regular meetings with partners, WYP supported an ethnographic approach to better understand officer adoption of BWCs and their use in police-public encounters.

Data were generated through this ethnographic approach between November 2017 and November 2018, consisting of 700 hours observation in both neighbourhood and response teams and a total of 28 semi-structured interviews with frontline officers and their direct supervisors. While the research was initially designed as an ethnographic case study based in a single location, the site was relocated after just over one hundred hours of research. This was due the distance to the site from the researcher's home location and issues with fully

[1] The use of this term in the thesis encapsulates both police constables and police community support officers as the visible face of uniformed frontline policing over response and neighbourhood teams. Further discussions on the differences between these roles and teams is offered in this section, the methodology chapter and throughout the findings.

embedding in police shifts with university teaching commitments. The reasoning behind the switch, and the implications, are detailed further in Chapter Four of the thesis.

While the observations and interviews were conducted with neighbourhood police teams and response police teams, the goal was not to make direct comparisons between them. Rather, they were both chosen as an encapsulation of the everyday face of uniformed, frontline policing. While BWCs were used by other units, these two facets of policing were described as core users during the initial rollout of the force's BWC programme. Furthermore, it was anticipated that neighbourhood officers would perform more proactive work while response covered the more reactive demands - combining to represent the everyday use of BWCs in a broad selection of police-public encounters. The neighbourhood team was also chosen as a springboard for immersing the researcher into the chosen area as their local knowledge and use of foot patrols could be used to build up important context of the locale. Following an initial period in the neighbourhood team, observations moved to response with the approach in both being to shadow the shift pattern of one group for an extended period to maximise immersion in their team and build trust through familiarity (Marks, 2004).

Observations consisted, for the most part, in following an allocated officer for the entirety of one shift and then – where possible – following a different officer for the following shift and repeating this process by observing different officers for the entirety of a single shift pattern. In a response context, such observations generally involved being in a police vehicle in between calls for service while the neighbourhood tended towards foot patrols with police community support officers (PCSOs). Preliminary written notes were taken in the field and later typed up into full notes following the completion of a shift and upon the earliest possible access to a suitable device. The semi-structured interviews were conducted at the end of the observation period as a compliment to the wider ethnographic design. By conducting the interviews at the end of the fieldwork period it was possible to identify appropriate interviewees, refine questions around gaps remaining from the observations and establish the researcher as a trustworthy figure in the eyes' of the interviewees. The interviews took place during a normal shift in a private room in the station and were recorded, using an encrypted voice recorder, to facilitate later verbatim transcription.

1.3 Personal rationale for the research

This section briefly departs from traditional expectations of academic writing by adopting a first-person perspective to communicate the personal rationale for undertaking the research, in line with the reflexive approach encouraged in ethnography (Davies, 1999). My interest in policing is difficult to date – perhaps germinating at an early age with exposure to nineties television classic The Bill. However, my academic interest in police forces as organisations is easier to credit to my time moving from my legal undergraduate degree into completing my Master of Science in Criminology and Criminal Justice. The timing of my studies was fortuitous, being the year prior to the amalgamation of the regional Scottish forces into Police Scotland, and I was able to take my first foray into social science research through interviewing officers of Lothian and Borders Police to explore their views on the vast organisational change facing them. The experience of conducting that research, and the findings from even the modest number of interviews, stuck with me as I completed my studies and entered the fulltime workforce as a civil servant.

During my time in the British Civil Service, and afterwards while working for a member of parliament, I found myself regularly reflecting on the vast discretion I wielded on the frontline of public service (Lipsky, 2010) – particularly in my role as one of Her Majesty's Inspectors. I could not help but compare my experience with those officers who I interviewed during my master's degree – many of which raised the concern that their job might become less 'human' and more target driven following the amalgamation *if* Police Scotland could get the systems working. That frontline distrust of technology as part of an increasing trend towards managerialism in policing (Cockcroft and Beattie, 2009) was something I increasingly found myself thinking about as technological solutions to perceived police accountability problems became a topic of media attention on both sides of the Atlantic.

This continued interest in policing combined with my experience of working in parliament, on the sharp end of policy making, drove me to want to complete my own academic research. As such, I began formulating some of my own ideas for research projects and considering potential academic supervisors. During the course of this, I discovered what appeared to be the perfect fit for my desire to conduct relevant research on technology in frontline policing in the call to apply for a PhD exploring the impacts of police use of BWCs on public-police relations.

In writing my application, and refined proposal for this project, I found that what was once talked about in British policing as a broad tool with the potential to lead to better justice outcomes and resourcing efficiencies (Home Office, 2007) was increasingly framed as a narrower technological silver bullet for accountability problems (White, 2014). Furthermore, the focus of most research on the United States and evaluating reportable outcomes (Lum et al., 2016) meant that there was an emphasis on the enforcement side of policing at the expense of other aspects of police work. This presented a need to explore the impacts of BWCs across the vast breadth of operational work that constitutes frontline policing in the United Kingdom with the knowledge that even the quality of encounters which result in no formal action or recording can impact the wider police-public relationship (Bradford et al., 2009). These contrasts, alongside the identified gaps discussed above, led me to direct the research more towards exploring the actual behaviour of officers throughout their shift and during encounters with the public. Throughout the research process these early ideas developed into this thesis which draws heavily on the work of Erving Goffman's (1959) dramaturgical approach to demonstrate that the impact of BWCs is felt not only in the moment of their recording but throughout the everyday working lives of officers.

1.4 Structure of the thesis

This thesis constitutes eight chapters, six of them bookended by this introductory chapter and the conclusions contained in Chapter Eight. Chapter Two begins by synthesising research of previous technological and organisational change in policing – highlighting the implementation challenges and often unintended impacts of such changes before turning to a more specific focus on the context of BWCs. The rise in interest, from practitioners and academics, in BWCs is charted and the existing literature on the impact of BWCs is critically reviewed. Chapter Three then presents a theoretical framework to support the analysis and interpretation of the data, drawing on the work of Goffman (1959) and built on an understanding of the breadth of the police role, for exploring the impact of BWCs on police-public encounters and the everyday work of frontline officers. Chapter Four explains and situates the study's ethnographic approach, justifies this methodological choice, details the different steps undertaken and reflects on the experience of collecting the data. The remaining chapters then turn, based on analysis of the generated observational and interview data, to answer the study's research questions..

Chapter Five begins the presentation of the findings by discussing how BWCs have been adopted and embraced by officers, seemingly in line with organisational goals, despite the established difficulties concerning the implementation of technological change in frontline policing. In doing so it charts how and why officers came to use the technology after overcoming their initial resistance. Chapter Six builds on this understanding to explore how the embracing of BWCs has impacted the organisational visibility of frontline officers. In doing so, officer discretion over the activation of BWCs is revealed as a tool for managing the organisation (in)visibility of frontline officers in the face of the new technology. Chapter Seven then concludes the presentation and discussion of the major findings of the thesis through considering the impact of BWCs on officers' behavioural performances in police-public encounters themselves. It ultimately demonstrates how BWCs have blurred the front and back stages of frontline policing but that the implication of this blurring are felt differently in different types of police-public encounter and in those many moments before and after such encounters. Finally, Chapter Eight brings the thesis to a conclusion by summarising the key findings and contributions, offering reflections on the research process, considering the implications for practice and identifying future areas of research.

Chapter Two - Contextualising technological change in policing: Historical impacts, new challenges and the prospect of body worn cameras

2.1 Introduction

Police use of BWCs is on the rise throughout much of the world with many forces already committed to rolling out the cameras while others continue to investigate and consider how they can best be used (Reaves, 2015; Allen et al., 2017). A wide range of benefits are envisaged from the use of BWCs including reduced complaints, better evidence gathering, more efficient justice outcomes, greater transparency, and increased accountability. There is a relatively small, but increasingly growing, body of research in the area which indicates that some of these benefits are indeed realisable (Cubitt et al., 2016)**.** However, the trend of this research to focus on narrow reportable outcomes, within artificial controls, means that there remains an important gap in our understanding of how the use of such technology is impacting the wider experience of everyday police work. By focusing on theories of deterrence whilst using official police data the research is unavoidably concentrating on certain aspects of policing. These aspects are geared around the law enforcement actions which inevitably generate this data while ignoring the important cultural and political questions that arise in any policing development.

Crucial to understanding how BWCs are being used is appreciating the vast array of situations that the police can find themselves in with the many varied communities with which they interact. Indeed, the police are just as much problem solvers as they are crime fighters to the extent that they find themselves responding to the wide ambit of 'something that out not be happening and about which someone had better do something now!' (Bittner, 1970: 132). Alongside this understanding of the broad policing role within the UK there exists a policy recognition of the supreme importance of the relationship between the police and the public from the very conception of the public police until now (Zedner, 2005). This research will therefore explore in depth the impact of BWCs on everyday policing and will delve into the perceptions, and potential realities, of the effects the technology is having on individual interactions and wider relations.

The purpose of this chapter is to contextualise BWCs both within previous technology driven reforms in policing and the very policy situation that forces currently face. It begins by considering the dramatic impact that technology has had on policing before explaining some of the reasons why this has been the case. It then turns to the, often underestimated, problems

that come with introducing new technologies into an organisation such as the police. By then considering these historical difficulties in the context of new concerns it problematises the proposal that BWCs are a 'silver bullet' to difficult community relations. The chapter then turns to specific examples of these tensions coming to the fore and highlights the potential for BWCs to resolve or worsen these depending on the policies adopted and followed. Having contextualised the important social context to the proposed technofix the chapter concludes by considering what evidence we have on BWCs as things stand and what these experiences of previous technological change tell us we still need to know.

2.2 Technology and policing change

British policing has been shaped by a series of reforms brought about by the inevitable shifting tides of politics and through the steady march of technological progress and societal change (Reiner, 2010). Where these changes have come from a time of crisis the pattern has generally been more evolution than revolution and while the changes have never been without controversy, they have tended to leave the police in a better state than they were before (Savage, 2007; McLaughlin 2007; Reiner, 2010; cf. Ellison and Brogden, 2012). However, in cases of technological change the impact on 'frontline' policing has often been more profound if not as immediately apparent – particularly in the more tangible developments centred on communication and transportation (Emsley, 2009). Indeed, these changes have not been limited to just one nation for similar consequences are as visible in the United States as within the United Kingdom (Lanier and Cooper, 2016). The extent of such transformations is particularly evident within the most manifestly direct technological development that operational policing has encountered, the advent of two-way radios and automobiles during the 20th century. Yet, even these advances were only fully realised when supported with the behind the scenes expansion of computer systems and the associated call handling and dispatch centres (Manning, 1992). Taken together they allowed for revolutionary movement in how policing was conducted as the historical reliance on foot patrols gave way to the unit beat system of cars and radios and an increasingly reactive approach to a much wider service base (Reiss, 1992). This, quite rapid, implementation of technology was not without unanticipated consequences as not only was there a notable reduction in police presence on the streets but those remaining public-police encounters were more likely to be in situations conducive of conflict (Holdaway, 1983). Furthermore, the ability to receive and respond to calls from wider areas meant the community connection element of policing, and the associated benefits, were diminished (Manning, 1992). Perhaps

the most significant point is that these changes occurred almost naturally; as the technology became available it was immediately adopted with vigour and hope rather than consideration of the role of the organisation and technologies place within it**.**

In both nations, the extent to which technology ostensibly enabled such a seemingly undirected drift in policing is seen in how later policing strategies sought to return to more traditional methods when considering the question of how to reengage communities that they discovered they had inadvertently withdrawn from (Innes, 2004; Skogan, 2009). Even technology largely associated with innocuous backroom functions has had a dramatic influence on policing through facilitating greater bureaucratisation and centralisation within forces (Reiss, 1992). Reiss describes the difficulties inherent in technological changes allowing for new possibilities being not just possible but in many ways irresistible to the top down leadership structure. Where technology is available as a technofix it is adopted without consideration of the core expectations the police are tasked to meet or how the actual operators might perceive and ultimately use it within their recognised role (Reiss, 1992). The importance of culture in shaping this practice is discussed in more detail below but, as Manning explains, even the proposed introduction of any significant changes begins a 'technological drama' that unfolds through the attempts of management to entwine the technology within normal practice which is then negotiated by the users of that technology (Manning, 1992). This drama is indicative of the fact that technology is not in itself enough to change how policing operates, rather it acts as an enabler and potential instigator. Indeed, technology can be both a push and pull factor as policing simultaneously attempts to keep up with wider developments and societal progress at the same time as trying to specifically target areas deemed important by policy makers. While the introduction of new technology has the potential to have significant impact upon how the police operate the extent and the very direction of this change is not always as envisaged by the initial policy directing it.

The unintended consequences that technological change can exert on the police, as an organisation, are in some ways a result of confusion over what technology is and an over emphasis on it being an intrinsic good which will act as a driver of progress regardless. Rather than technology being understood purely as a physical item or process it must also be considered in the context of the social groups interacting with it and the experience that they bring to bear on its use. This is all the more important in an organisation such as the police which remains at its core hierarchical with the greatest number of officers operating with high levels of discretion in low visibility environments (Reiner, 2010). Low visibility in this sense

refers to the fact that much work is done without the presence of a supervisor, or sometimes even another officer, rather than the wider notion of police visibility in terms of visible 'bobbies on the beat' policing (Goldstein, 1960; Rowe, 2007a). This retained combination of low visibility and distance from command means that diversion from policy goals remains possible either by deliberate subversion or simply by the changes being incompatible or inconsistent with what officers believe they should be doing (Ericson and Haggerty, 1997). To understand how this is the case requires a consideration of the role of police culture in shaping wider practice.

Robert Reiner's classic definition of 'cop culture' has changed very little since the first edition of his important policing text in which he situates the culture around the 'core characteristics' of mission – action – cynicism – pessimism, suspicion, isolation / solidarity, police conservatism, machismo, racial prejudice and pragmatism (Reiner, 2010: 118-132). A full account and exploration of the vast research on police culture is beyond the scope of this chapter but of particular note is the seemingly remarkable consistency reported by different scholars, in different locations and at different times. While the culture cannot be described as static or monolithic, indeed there is increasingly more focus on variations within the police, the core characteristics have broadly remained intact through 30 years of societal change and attempted police reform (Holdaway, 1983; Loftus, 2010; Reiner 2010; Wadding, 2012). This remarkable consistency has been the subject of much academic comment but the variation within the different organisational and operation aspects of police organisations has gained increasing attention since the research of Reuss-Ianni (1983) which explicitly looked at the differences between 'Street' and 'Management' cops in the United States. Understanding how these differences coexist alongside the broader spatial and temporal consistency reported in the core characteristics is key to understanding how police culture can guide practice. Indeed, there is an increasing acceptance that within the police there exists a power structure that means any apparent common culture is tempered. This revolves around the competing interests of the management and the frontline with true change requiring successful navigating of these interests (Reuss-Ianni, 1983; Chan, 1996; Waddington; 1999, Loftus, 2010; Reiner, 2010). Through this understanding of culture in shaping practice it is apparent that while policing has faced many ostensible advances since the work of scholars such as Manning (1992) and Reiss (1992) in the nineties we still cannot hope to understand technology as an agent of change, in an organisation such as the police, without exploring the context within which the technology exists.

Chan's work on police technology and organisational change is particularly effective in understanding how different officers navigate, and make sense of, technological developments within their work environment via 'technological frames' (Chan, 2001; Chan, 2007; Chan and Bennett Moses, 2016). Chan uses the definition proposed by Orlikowski and Gash (1994: 178) of technological frames as 'that subset of members' organizational frames that concern the assumptions, expectations, and knowledge they use to understand technology in organizations'. Evidently, the views of those designing and creating the technology might differ from those who initially commissioned it and, perhaps most importantly, those who ultimately use it. These differing views only become further complicated in a large hierarchical organisation such as a police force where the perceived value and use of this technology may further vary between ranks and specialties. Chan again draws upon the work of Orlikowski and Gash to demonstrate how different needs and expectations of these groups' must be managed during implementation. There are, per Orlikowski and Gash (1994: 183-4) three different, yet overlapping, domains of technological frames;

> (i) nature of technology, people's view of the technology's capabilities; (ii) technology strategy, their views of the organisation's motivation in implementing the technology and (iii) technology in use, their understanding of how the technology will be used and the consequences of this (Chan, 2001: 145).

Where groups find their frames in conflict there is potential for implementation failure and divergent and unexpected outcomes (Chan and Bennet Moses, 2016). Through this framing it is apparent that even where there is organisational command level support, change might still be subverted by those on the frontline as they represent different groups whilst simultaneously demonstrating their attachment to the same organisational culture. Such projects can become increasingly difficult to harmoniously navigate in a world where drivers of change can come from outside of the organisations themselves. In policing terms this can mean a multitude of things, particularly as the public-police operate in an increasingly plural environment (Bayley and Shearing, 1996), but whether the impetus comes from internal pressure, external partners, central government or a relatively new elected role the number of perspectives, and potential for unaligned expectation, continues to grow (Roberts and King, 1991; Davies and Johnson, 2016). Each contribution becomes entwined within the story of technological change and increasingly the media, as informers and reverberators of public opinion, are framing their own assumptions, expectations, and knowledge – as discussed below.

Some of these drivers can be traced to the organisational changes policing witnessed in the eighties which gave rise to different notions of holding the police to account – no longer were they to be held up as a sacred British institution but rather they were to be measured on the same basis as all participating in the market; targets should be set and performance managed (Loader, 1999). The specifics of these drivers are discussed in more detail below, but Chan (2001) describes this as a transition from focusing on the needs of the public as the barometer of performance to a more pragmatic managerialism which is centred on risk management. This development has encountered resistance within policing where it has been perceived as a curtailment on officer autonomy and an internal application of information technology once seen as being reserved for the policing of the public (Ericson and Haggerty, 1997; Chan, 2001). Perhaps more importantly is the seemingly wider failing of this policy apparent in how public opinion, much like the rhetoric espoused by both frontline police and policy makers, has not shifted on what they expect of policing and the disconnect felt between accountability measures and the policing role (Neyroud and Disley, 2008). Indeed, despite the new forms of accountability offered by the growth of managerialism and the ever increasing demands of record keeping the police have been unable to halt the calls for a more transparent and outward looking notion of accountability that requires a reassurance beyond what is reported to what is happening (Ericson and Haggerty, 1997; Maguire and John, 2006).

The recognition of the difficulties inherent in introducing technologies that might initially be perceived as negative developments by users is apparent in how police forces have gradually adapted their rhetoric, if not fully their implementation strategies. There is a growing academic and practitioner focus on ‘bottom up’ development and recognition of the need for cultural change which displays an understanding that technology cannot be an isolated fix to complex problems (Wood et al., 2008). This is a significant development for not only does it show that policy makers and managers are recognising the practical benefits of developing with users, but it is an indicator that the hierarchical structure of policing may not be the immovable object it once appeared. Alongside this seeming flexibility is the demographic change occurring in many police forces as the once ‘monolithically white, male, and reactionary’ police find themselves becoming a more diverse and representative organisation with all of the potential for internal debate and reflection that this opens up (Sklansky and Marks, 2008: 2). It is this reflective potential that must be harnessed during times of wider

reform and, perhaps more importantly, throughout more commonplace and narrower times of innovation.

The cumulative effect of successfully navigating the introduction of different technologies into the policing environment is another important factor which indicates that where organisations have previously demonstrated their desire to make use of new innovations they will be more likely to do so in future (Nowacki and Willits, 2016). This should not be seen as purely an indicator of a specific type of management or a particularly influential policy driver, though both might exist, rather within a changing approach to development it might also indicate a change in how the whole drama is successfully navigated as the positive officer experience drives further endeavours. Ultimately, it has been demonstrated that core to the successful implementation of any new technology into policing is that it navigates the technological drama it finds itself a part of. Furthermore, through considering the history of police resistance to greater scrutiny and changes in working practice it apparent that, in the short term, this successful navigation is not a matter that should be taken for granted where such technological fixes might be perceived as constraining officers or seeking to resolve some wider notion of a cultural crisis.

2.3 An effective image for effective policing

The impact of perceived crises in policing has been mentioned briefly above as often being more limited in its eventual change than that of the introduction of technology, yet at the same time they can provide the potential for a reflexivity that might otherwise be lacking. Throughout the many dramas of technological change in policing there is one thing that has remained constant; the importance placed upon the relationship between the British police and their public. Indeed, this relationship might no longer be as unique as it was once claimed for rather than the emphasis diminishing at home there is a seeming growth in the rhetoric abroad under the auspices of community policing in the United States and elsewhere (Bayley, 2008). However, when looking beyond the sacred history it becomes clear that this crucial relationship has been endangered by the increasingly critical eye the police have found themselves subjected to. This is particularly evident in England where in the post 1950s world one can witness the decline of police legitimacy in what Loader and Mulcahy (2003) term the ‘desacralization’ of the English police. The desacralization thesis essentially refers to the erosion of public faith in the police not only in the sense of not believing in their

capability to perform their job but on a greater level where the police are no longer held up as an essential element of national pride (Loader and Mulcahy, 2003).

The increasing crime rate of the post 1950s world is the core of this amplified scrutiny for it is this which allowed for crime to become politicised as the public's attention was drawn through both the mass media and a burgeoning self-interest from all parts of society in protecting their investments (Doyle, 2011). As 'fear of crime became an established part of daily existence' (Garland, 2001: 152) it became more susceptible to hijacking as a political issue, the legacy of which is still visible in the politics of today (Millie, 2008). In the past, the police enjoyed an organisational visibility that was viewed as a boon with uniforms and marked cars helping to reinforce the fact that the police were public servants while also increasing their operational effectiveness and reiterating their lawful authority (Kelling, 1981). However, this apparent public facing visibility was combined with a mystification of what exactly policing entailed which was gradually eroded as the scope of policing developed beyond local communities where citizen in uniform was no longer an apt theoretical description of what was now a diverse organisation with a wide remit (Loader and Mulachy, 2003). This amplified interest, and scrutiny, culminated in some high-profile events which damaged the image of the police as a group of professionals triumphing over petty individualism such as the various corruption scandals which came to light from Scotland Yard (Reiner, 2010). The reference to the unearthing of the corruption rather than its occurrence here is deliberate for, like so many factors dealing with legitimacy, it is the public perception that ultimately matters. From the personal corruption of the robbery squad committing robberies to the 'noble cause' corruption (Reiner, 2010: 83) of police acting outside of their powers it became evident that the adherence to the common law could not be relied upon as the sole thrust of accountability within the police. As explored above, such concerns resulted in a concentrated effort to implement new forms of internal accountability via the embracing of new information technologies and the principles of managerialism to reduce the barrier between frontline and management that was perceived as problematic. These issues of apparent dishonesty and malpractice within policing coincided with growing concerns of the police purportedly being bound by the rule of law while also operating in a low visibility area where they could very much shape its application. Indeed, as developments in technology facilitated an increasingly responsive approach to policing the façade of transparency became all the weaker as the local 'bobby on the beat' became an officer driving from incident to incident with limited reason to engage in the communities

they increasingly had little attachment to (Bayley, 2008; Davies and Thomas, 2008). Where previously the seemingly high visibility of the police as an organisation, with high numbers of officers on patrol, may have compensated for, or distracted from, the low visibility of everyday policing this was no longer the case.

There is an increasing recognition that proclaimed priorities of community engagement and cooperation are not reflected in the reality of a world where desacralisation has led to demystification and more intense scrutiny of the police as a profession (Bradford et al., 2009; Skogan, 2009; Schulenberg et al., 2015). This interest, both internal and external, is now a well-established part of the reality of policing but officers are increasingly dealing with the fact that their organisations can no longer control the narrative it generates. The 'new visibility' of the wider world in which the police must operate is one of the core drivers for their image problem as almost every incident has the potential to resonate beyond previous spatial and temporal limitations by being recorded on video and distributed outside of mainstream channels (Goldsmith, 2010; Mann et al., 2003). Whilst the importance of a positive and cooperative relationship between police and public has not changed the very different visibility which the police now operate under has altered how the relationship is navigated.

The police no longer enjoy the dominant position they once occupied in their ability to define the narrative of crime in society (Kearon, 2013). Where once they could rely upon a small number of mainstream media sources to uncritically spread and protect this dominant narrative, they now have to navigate an increasingly fractured news media with competing interests, audiences and even agendas (McRobbie and Thornton, 1995). Kearon (2013) proposes that this new reality has resulted in agencies like the police adapting by actively seeking to manage perceptions and adopt a more image conscious policing approach in order to maintain legitimacy. This loss of control over the mainstream media narrative has coincided with technological developments which mean the police now find themselves in an era where frontline policing faces the pressures of a public equipped with cameras and a medium with which to distribute any footage (Sandhu, 2016; Brown, 2016). This new age of visibility means that individual incidents that might have once gone unnoticed can quickly gain attention and compound with negative effects on the organisation as a whole (Goldsmith, 2010). This is particularly evident in events where police use of force results in a fatality such as the death of Ian Tomlinson or the shooting of Mark Duggan which led to an explicit discussion over transparency in operational policing in the UK (Greer and

McLaughlin, 2012; Ellis et al., 2015). The impact of this visibility is perhaps even more evident in the US where a number of high profile incidents such as the shooting of Michael Brown in Ferguson have generated civil disturbances and mobilised calls for policing reform (Bonilla and Rosa, 2015; Culhane et al., 2016). Such responses invariably centre on trust and the need for objectivity in the criminal justice system with technology being seen as both the driver for change and the solution within itself.

Whilst the history of technological developments in policing helps us understand that there is no silver bullet there is no denying, as Kearnon (2013) discusses, the fact that technology has the potential to both reinforce and undermine the legitimacy of organisations such as the police. One solution that has presented itself is not *prima facie* concerned with organisational and cultural reflexivity but rather posits that there is yet another technofix - *the body worn camera*. BWCs can, as the name suggests, encompass a range of products that fit the description of discreet video cameras deliberately attached to a police officer's clothing/equipment in order to record a situation from their approximate point of view. British police forces were some of the first to consider implementing BWCs with the original pilot studies taking place over a decade ago in Plymouth via the Plymouth Head Camera Project. Following the completion of the pilots during 2006 there was an expanded study and further Home Office evaluation which reported that BWCs had demonstrated their potential to be of significant benefit across a range of areas (Harris, 2010). Yet, despite this apparent early endorsement of the technology, to the extent that the Home Office published guidance on BWC usage (Home Office, 2007), there was not an immediate uptake in either camera adoption by other forces or an extensive interest in further studies until the first peer viewed paper was published following work in Rialto, California (Ariel et al., 2014; Hedberg et al., 2016).

Today it is clear that the lull in BWC deployment is very much over as forces in the UK and beyond move past pilots or considerations and engage in full rollout programmes. The Metropolitan Police has committed to the most extensive global roll out of the cameras so far while other forces, large and small, see the technology as a necessary part of policing. Indeed, the force within which this research project is to be conducted, West Yorkshire, has drawn on over £2million from a 'transformation fund' the very nature of which indicates the perceived impact this technology will have. Meanwhile, American forces are experiencing their own 'body camera revolution' as 2015-2016 saw many of the USA's forces begin, or expand on, their own programmes under the direct endorsement of the former President, Barack Obama

(Fan, 2016). To understand how things have gone from a dearth of research and ponderously piecemeal adoption apparent as recently as 2010 to the current situation of BWCs rapidly coming to be seen as something of an inevitable part of the future of policing within the UK, and elsewhere, requires a consideration of the changing policing landscape that forces are facing and the legitimacy concerns discussed above (Lum et al., 2015). Without contextualisation , it might, on the face of it, seem strange that a proposed solution to the consequences of a supposed decline in legitimacy of the public police is the BWC for one prominent factor in that deterioration is the adoption of 'high' policing techniques and power from national security into every day 'low' policing (Brodeur, 2007). The very instrument proposed could be said to be in line with many of the core principles of high policing; particularly the increased importance of intelligence and technological surveillance (Kinsella and McGarry, 2011). Indeed, Cubitt et al (2016) see the arrival of the BWCs in policing as a continuation of the widespread use of closed-circuit television (CCTV) and a further step in the realisation of Foucault's (1977) extension of the panopticon from prison to a system of control for wider society.

2.4 Broad support for BWCs – consensus in conflict?

It is this the to shed visibility on a profession that might otherwise remain enshrouded that has rallied support in groups and communities traditionally seen as hostile to increases in state power. Indeed, while the UK has experienced less dramatic incidents of police (mis)use of force than the USA the narrative has become entwined in discussions over BWC adoption so that what started as primarily an aid for crime fighting and evidence gathering is now increasingly described as an objective witness for accountability (Coudert et al., 2015). To understand the impact that BWCs might have on public relations requires an approach that recognises the importance of how BWCs are communicated to the public and the acceptance that the American narrative has apparently drifted into that of the British. Indeed, Britain and America appear to be at the forefront of BWC development and deployment with much in common beyond these drivers (Fan, 2016). The growth of BWCs in policing can be situated within this search for legitimacy and the seeming objective improvements that technology can provide but it is also reflective of the wider changes that policing within the UK specifically has experienced. The rise of managerialism has already been discussed and indeed is now finding itself under increasing academic critique (Maguire and John, 2006; Neyroud and Disley, 2008; Davies and Thomas, 2008) but it has not occurred in isolation. More recently, within England and Wales, we have seen the advent of Police and Crime

Commissioners which have provided the *potential* for outsider perspectives and the strategic power to influence force policy and direction in a personal way (Lister, 2013). Likewise, the democratic individualisation of accountability means that, in theory, the forces themselves become more accountable to the public via the electorate. Alongside this stimulus for change the forces have seen their operating budgets slashed and expectations increased as the demands of successive austerity focused governments has resulted in a need to do more with less (Millie, 2013). These drivers and challenges have, unsurprisingly, cumulated in a search for an efficient and encompassing solution. Ultimately, this has opened up the possibility for BWCs to enter into the mainstream of frontline policing with seemingly unprecedented support across a broad spectrum of organisations and communities.

As discussed above, where change has been forced upon the police as a remedy to some perceived cultural problem of their own making it has often been met with resistance. Likewise, where this change has been via the provision of empowering new technology it has invariably triggered concern with civil liberty groups or communities which perceive increased police supremacy to be a problem. BWCs, and the discussions around their adoption, might be expected to lead to both of these responses but instead there appears to be a rare convergence of traditionally opposed groups coming together to recognise the potential benefits the technology can offer. This is particularly clear in the United States where civil liberty groups have been the driver for adoption of the technology whilst the police forces, or at least the commanders, have tended to broadly praise the technology (Stanley et al., 2013) with some indication that officers are broadly on board with BWC in theory - though doubt it will impact their behaviour (Jennings et al., 2014). As explored above, the support in the United States can be situated in a period of crisis and unrest as a seemingly constant tide of citizen captured footage of police use of lethal force incidents came to the fore and there was demand for immediate action to curtail this perceived injustice (Pang and Pavlou, 2016). Indeed, this support readily apparent in the wider American public who, according to a YouGov poll, strongly support the technology being used by the police regardless of their political affiliation or demographic group (YouGov, 2015) and academic research now reaffirms that following these incidents there is a great deal of public support for mandated used of BWCs (Culhane et al., 2016). Alongside less dramatic evidence in the UK there is less research but similar trends are broadly reflected in that which has been done such as within the Isle of Wight pilot or the more recent London Met RCT completed by the College of Policing (Ellis et al., 2015; Grossmith et al., 2015). This research seems to indicate that

with greater awareness of the technology the public in these locations become all the more in favour of its adoption but it remains unclear how the nature of the exposure impacts these perceptions (Ellis et al., 2015).

This growth in support for the use of BWCs cannot immediately be said to be indicative of the technology being universally accepted by either the frontline officers doing the policing or that small percentage of society that have reason to interact with officers in their crime fighting role. Indeed, while broadly confirming a general support for the technology it remains the case that few respondents have reason to experience operational contact with an officer, with or without a BWC, and therefore there is an important question as to how individuals and groups with more frequent contact feel (Bradford et al., 2009; Skogan, 2009). As BWCs have moved out of the hypothetical and into the routine reality of everyday policing there is an indication that some of those groups who were initially supportive, such as Cop Block, have since become more sceptical of how the cameras are being used in practice (Brucato, 2015). This is a result of the fact that the proposed techno-fix still relies on the same human beings to operate them as existed before and the inconsistent and underdeveloped policies which are being absorbed into, instead of transforming, the operational culture. A recent study examined forces in the 100 largest cities of the USA on their BWC policies. Whilst there remains heterogeneity in activation instructions there is a clear indicator that the future will see a push for most law enforcement encounters recorded (Fan, 2016). Whilst only a minority of forces had explicit policies in place the majority of those that did indicated a limited discretion model for activation (34 out of 42 forces with policies in place) while the remaining (8) forces all used a far more restricted discretion model of always on except for particular exceptions. Such limited discretion refers to the fact officers have some instructions concerning BWC activation but can largely fall back on their informed judgement. Whilst this might sound like a broad consensus the important differences come in what events are defined as necessary for those within the limited discretion model which generally leaves open that broad area of police work where officers are not actively engaged in what might be interpreted as law enforcement. Such a limited discretion model is also in place throughout the UK but it currently remains unclear how different forces are interpreting the guidance – as discussed below. It is apparent then that this is still very much the learning phase of BWC implementation and forces may want to engage in, and consider the views of, the communities they are policing to deliver the benefits these communities initially envisage (Stalcup and Hahn, 2016).

The initial, perhaps unexpected, support of such traditionally opposed groups to the seeming expansion of state surveillance goes some way to explaining the rapid rise in the use of BWCs that has been witnessed in recent years[2]. However, it now appears that what once seemed to be groups agreeing on the same solution is in fact a series of discussions occurring in parallel but removed from each other. The accountability and disciplinary benefits that were initially envisaged by some civil rights groups are not inherently inconsistent with police perceptions of protection from false complaints; rather it is a matter of implementation. The potential for tension where these expectations clash is seen in the US city of Boston where after a long campaign, opposed by policing unions, BWCs are now being explored with reserved support from a local civil rights group who feel policies are not yet in line with their expectations[3]. As with other technological fixes it appears that the social context has been at times overlooked in the debates as groups and individuals have sought objectivity but wished for it to evidence their view. There now exists a wider, but less coherent, voice on BWCs - what was once talked about in Britain as a potential tool for better justice outcomes and efficiency is increasingly discussed as a panacea for concerns over police accountability as dramatic events around the world, inevitably centred on police use of force, raise the need for an 'objective' witness (White, 2014). This is not simply a broadening of the discussion but rather a blurring of the justification as arguments which were once being put forward in the American policing context are now being transferred directly into British discourse and beyond (see for example discussions of the situation in the Netherlands (Timan, 2016). This apparent crisis, imagined or otherwise, provides an impetus for change that allows for new approaches and techniques to present themselves in the search for a 'silver bullet' solution. Just as the perceived crisis of rising crime rates ushered in an era of 'tough on crime' control measures this new crisis of legitimacy is likely is to present the opportunity for significant change in the wider criminal justice system – BWCs have been offered as a solution to many concerns but, as demonstrated above, it is often the unimagined consequences that have the most significant impact.

2.5 Existing evidence on the impacts of BWCs

There have been a number of reviews of existing research on BWCs in recent years that have demonstrated an increasing amount of evidence available in terms of the impacts of police

[2] See for example http://www.civilrights.org/press/2015/body-camera-principles.html for a list of civil rights groups supporting BWC under particular principles.
[3] See http://www.bpcat.org/

use of BWCs but the field remains in flux with research findings coming from around the world (White, 2014; Lum et al., 2015; Cubitt et al., 2016). As discussed above, there is a clear trend in these reviews of a gap between early attempts at implementing BWCs and the much more recent surge in BWC adoption and research. Yet, despite this gap the posited reasons for why BWCs are a desirable addition to policing have generally remained consistent. It is suggested that as an 'objective witness' BWCs will improve the behaviour of both police and public while increasing accountability and transparency within policing and helping to gather better evidence to improve wider criminal justice outcomes (Jameel and Bunn, 2015). The power of these suppositions in the prevailing discourse is apparent in how the very guidance issued to British forces explicitly mentions the benefits within it;

> In principle, the use of BWV is justifiable for preventing and detecting crime. BWV can collect valuable evidence for use in criminal prosecutions and provides a record to promote integrity and confidence in policing, and objective evidence of controversial events and interactions (College of Policing, 2014: 9)

To evaluate the extent of BWCs achieving these broadly stated desires research has unpacked the nebulous concepts into more reportable mechanisms that are suggested as indicators of change. The most prevalent of these are; external complaints against the police, use of force in police-public interactions, training and management practices and interactions, arrest and prosecution rates (Hedberg et al., 2016).

Whilst public complaints made against the police might initially seem to be a direct indicator of the type and quality of encounter being experienced the relationship is more multifaceted than one might suppose. Complaints are recorded by UK forces as a matter of tracking specific incidents as well as the broader picture and are often seen as a ready marker of the quality of encounters and the legitimacy of the police as a whole (Hedberg et al., 2016). However, this is too simplistic an interpretation of a complex area as not all complaints are equal; rather they can be made for a variety of reasons and with different expectations of outcomes (Walker, 1997; Goldsmith, 1991). Indeed, there is also the very fact that for a citizen to make a complaint one might suppose they retain some sense of faith in the system to expect that it will be processed and treated in such a way as to justify their action (Schulenberg et al., 2015). Yet, there is a consistent historical evidence, via the British Crime Survey, that indicates that the vast majority of people that experience substantial annoyance with the police do not take the formal step of lodging a complaint and even where a

complaint is recorded very few are substantiated and even fewer still result in action beyond receiving a talk with a superior (Smith, 2009). Despite this apparent evidence that complaints against the police require contextualising within the specific locale of study the topic has generated much of the interest within BWC research so far. There are some very practical implications that attract attention to this metric. Firstly, the data is generally already available to analyse as the police record it for their own purposes as they seek to maintain performance standards. Furthermore, even the small number of complaints that are made can cost a great deal of time and money to process and regardless of individual outcomes the very trend of complaints being seen as going up or down can have wider reverberations on public views of the police as effective and legitimate actors (Miller et al., 2014; Schulenberg et al., 2015; Ariel et al., 2016).

Perhaps the biggest academic influence on the field at this point, within both the UK and USA, has been that of a number of studies carried out by a Cambridge based research group which have produced findings, via randomised controlled trials, indicating that police use of BWCs can substantially reduce the number of complaints made against them (Ariel et al., 2014; Ariel et al., 2016) The importance placed on this broad finding is seen in the impact of this particular research as demonstrated in the media attention generated (see for example BBC, 2016) and the fact that the original study in Rialto was cited by both a US district judge and within the high level US policy recommendations (President's Task Force on 21st Century Policing, 2015). The Cambridge based group continues to carry out RCTs around the globe but published work at this time tends to indicate reductions in most sites of around 80-90% of complaints on the previous year (Ariel et al., 2016). Other studies are consistent with the downward direction of complaints, whilst varying quite substantially on levels of change, but one point that is universally apparent is that the police are operating in an environment where not many complaints are recorded prior to BWC implementation (ODS Consulting, 2011; Katz et al., 2014; Ellis et al., 2015; Grossmith et al., 2015; Jennings et al., 2015; Hedberg et al., 2016).

Taken together these findings indicate a 'civilising effect' on interactions between officers but it remains unclear if this is a result of improved police or public behaviour or both although the global RCTs have posited an early answer. The small numbers of complaints, and in many locations officers, means that that the RCTs are adopting a before/after comparison and patrol shifts as a unit of analysis. Therefore, officers experience policing within the experiment as both BWC users and nonusers – it is this that has led to the coining

of ‘contagious accountability’ as findings indicate that both conditions lead to modified behaviour in terms of an ‘observer effect’ leading to a police wide improvement in behaviour as a result of the ‘panopticonic’ qualities (Ariel et al., 2016: 14). Concerns with the applicability of these findings to non-experimental situations are outlined below but while one might question the extent of the impact there is a clear trend throughout the above research that BWCs can reduce external complaints against officers.

Another particularly prominent theme within the research so far is the focus on use of force levels as a barometer for the success of BWCs. This interest is consistent with the media attention that is given to use of force incidents, both with in the UK and USA, but has become particular significant in the context of numerous lethal use of force incidents by American police where footage has been captured and distributed as the perfect example of the new visibility which policing faces (Brown, 2016). The raw power of seemingly objective video is not a new discovery but the prevalence of mobile cameras and the resulting increase in footage of incidents has acted as a driver for reform, as discussed above. It is of little surprise then that this area has attracted a great deal of interest for it is of supreme relevance to both the police and those being policed. Initial studies into this issue seemed to indicate that BWCs were strongly linked to reductions in use of force and policy recommendations reflected this strongly (Miller et al., 2014; Jameel and Bunn, 2015; Ready and Young, 2015; Ariel et al., 2014). However, more recent research has called the inevitability of this conclusion into question as global results have indicated some inconsistencies between different approaches and locations (Barak Ariel, Sutherland, Henstock, Young, Drover, Sykes, Simon Megicks, et al., 2016). In terms of force being used against officers there is again some inconsistency as an early study in Aberdeen and Renfrewshire indicated that BWCs can have a positive impact on reducing use of force while more recent output indicates things are far more complex (ODS Consulting, 2011; Ariel et al.., 2016)

There remains a great deal to be understood about these findings and the seeming differences between locations and how communities are policed. Much like with the findings on police complaints, the study of most import according to reviews carried out so far is one completed in Rialto, California (Cubitt et al., 2016; Coudert et al., 2015; White, 2014; Jennings et al., 2015). While the methods of the research have been discussed briefly above the situation in which the research was carried out is perhaps more interesting still. The then Chief of Police was directly overseeing the research within what was a very small force at a time where previous failings meant that the officers were already under extreme pressure to reform

behaviour from previous years – or face unemployment (Brucato, 2015). Such outside motivations are not addressed in the study itself but do go some way to showing how the RCT model is not capable of capturing everything for by its very nature it excludes in the hope of achieving a repeatable and comparable experimental framework.

As discussed briefly above, there are some studies which focus upon both public and police perceptions of BWCs but again the findings remain more indicators of future research need than enlightening in and of themselves (Cubitt et al., 2016). Some work has indicated that officers are receptive to the idea of wearing BWCs due to the perceived benefits they will enjoy (Jennings et al., 2014), but other studies show that officers are more optimistic about cameras before using them (Morrow et al., 2016). Likewise, there is some evidence of hesitancy within police leadership in adopting cameras for fear of the footage exposing officers and the force to legal action (Smykla et al., 2016). Public perceptions have already been discussed in detail above but again it is worth reiterating that studies so far have focused on the wide public rather than particular communities or those who specifically engage with the police.

Outside of the three main strands above the research is sparser but growing. The initial Scottish studies indicated that there was a positive impact on the wider criminal justice system with more efficient prosecutions and better evidencing gathering which is reflected in the views of many senior American police officers who have adopted the technology (ODS Consulting, 2011; Miller et al., 2014). However supplementary research has been lacking and this potential for impact in criminal justice outcomes is currently best explored in the specific area of domestic violence. Initial College of Policing research in Essex determined that more charges were brought in such cases while officers demonstrated more confidence in success but ultimately more conclusive findings were hindered due the overall small number of incidents resulting in a restrictive sample (Owens et al., 2014). Further College of Policing research in London found that the most commonly recorded mandatory incident was domestic violence but similarly concluded that further research is required to understand the wider implications of these recordings and how they might be utilised (Grossmith et al., 2015). Likewise, the same research found that there was no effect on the proportion of arrests for violent crime but that officers equipped with BWCs demonstrated a slightly lower proportion of charges. The uncertain state of the field, and potential differences in locations, is demonstrated in more recent research in the USA that has and indicated that such usage would not only result in more charges brought for domestic violence but more efficient

prosecutions with a larger number of guilty pleas (Morrow et al., 2016). It is predicted that this area will receive growing attention in coming research (White, 2014; Cubitt et al., 2016).

2.6 Conclusion

Ultimately, there exists a growing body of evidence in support of some of the benefits of BWCs but they have failed to explore the wider impact on everyday policing and police-public relations. In his foreword to the College of Policing guidance on police use of body worn video cameras, Chief Constable Andy Marsh (then of Hampshire Constabulary and National Policing Lead for Body Worn Video) makes explicit reference to the importance of the Peelian Principles in British policing (College of Policing, 2014). The almost sacred status they continue to hold in British policing means that where change occurs they remain the touchstone with which to assess and understand the impact. While some of the importance of the police-public relationship is apparent in existing research indicating benefits such as reduced complaints against officers it remains unclear exactly how the technology is being perceived and used by the various groups most invested in it. Indeed, some research posits that results such as the reduction in complaints are not currently reflected in evidential behavioural changes by the police themselves (Grossmith et al., 2015) and alongside conflicting evidence with other metrics it remains unclear how interactions between BWC equipped officers and the public are impacting the public-police relationship (Cubitt et al., 2016).

Alongside these important, but hard to quantify, background factors the diverse nature of policing itself presents many questions which cannot be be understood within a purely quantitative approach. One finding which the Cambridge based research group have found is that BWCs should operate, by default, as always recording and only from there should exceptions be made to this with a general limitation being placed on officer discretion (Ariel, et al., 2016). As explained in the College of Policing guidance, the laws[4] and policies governing the police in the UK do not currently allow for this but instead fall back on belief in officer professionalism and effectively exercised discretion to ensure that recording is proportionate, legitimate and necessary (College of Policing, 2014). This approach appears more in tune with the reality of policing for when one moves outside the restrictive confines of the criminal law into the wide variety of human behaviour that the police respond to the

[4] Compliance with the Human Rights Act 1998 (HRA), Data Protection Act 1998 (DPA) and Surveillance Camera Code of Practice

very idea of what ought or ought not to be happening is subjective to the individuals involved in the incident. It will not always be immediately apparent at the beginning of an incident whether it is one which should be deemed recordable and therefore it seems consistent for police on the ground to have not simply the power to deal with situations but the discretion to decide when to use such power. It is this reality, both in law and policy as well as an understanding of the importance of police professionalism and discretion, which shapes the research aims of this project to explore exactly how BWCs might be impacting police-public relations. By moving beyond restrictive reportable outcomes and exploring the use of BWCs as they are operating within the traditionally broad ambit of the police a greater understanding might be reached and policy informed.

Chapter Three – A framework for exploring the impact of BWCs on everyday police work

3.1 Introduction

This chapter sets out a framework for exploring the influence of BWCs on everyday police work. To accomplish this, consideration is first given to the foundational studies in the sociology of policing which uncovered the wide scope that police organisations, and individual officers, operate under. More recent evidence is then reviewed to demonstrate the contemporary importance of understanding the diversity of encounters that constitute frontline policing. In the specific context of BWCs, the impact of the cameras requires an appreciation of how varied police-public encounters can be and how officers utilise their individual discretion to pragmatically navigate the personal and organisational challenges of them. Therefore, research must look beyond 'what works' in crime fighting and give due consideration to the power of police to intervene in and, potentially define, a much wider range of situations. Understanding police work as being more than rigid law enforcement requires a deeper awareness of policing as socially situated behaviour. Developments in our understanding of this concept are indebted to those working in the tradition of symbolic interactionism, and this chapter explores its ongoing legacy and continued relevance for studying frontline policing. In line with the tradition of symbolic interactionism, contemporary work on procedural justice is then drawn upon to highlight the importance of the quality of these police-public encounters for the wider symbolic character of the police.

Having established the importance of individual police-public encounters for the wider policing organisation, the work of Erving Goffman is utilised to explore how individual officers adopt different 'roles' in different situations to manage such encounters, alongside how they are perceived by peers and supervision. Building upon earlier discussions of police culture it is then demonstrated how officers have traditionally operated with limited direct oversight in these public encounters and that this low visibility environment has allowed for their individual discretion to define situations and influence outcomes. By expanding Goffman's dramaturgical metaphor to engage with the material functions of the cameras the chapter will demonstrate that this traditional low visibility environment is challenged by the prospect of BWCs. The established framework will explore the impact of this potentially heightened visibility on how officers navigate their various roles across the broad remit of frontline policing in their everyday work.

3.2 The breadth of the police role

From its nascent roots in the 1960s the study of the police has grown to occupy a prominent place within criminology and can now even lay some claim to occupying a field of its own (Reiner, 2010). Such a growth of academic interest has inevitably drawn on a range of perspectives and theoretical frameworks but many of the early studies focused on trying to identify what exactly it is that the police do before a far-reaching switch to a narrower focus on 'what works' in combatting crime (Brodeur, 2010). A complete account of the history of the field is not the aim of this chapter but a consideration of the findings of some of the earliest policing research will demonstrate how the role continues to be misrepresented in media and policy narratives and reveal the implications of this for contemporary policing. Before turning to such developments, it bears reiterating that this study is concerned with the impacts of *public police* use of body-worn video cameras rather than the broader use of the technology by groups which constitute the wider *policing* family and the literature considered necessarily focuses on that narrower group.

The boundaries of the police mission have long fascinated academics and discussions over the scope of their role have produced some of the seminal contributions to the field (Banton, 1964; Cumming et al., 1965, Wilson 1968, Bittner 1970). However, the contribution of such studies – generally recognising the breadth of the police role – continues to be overlooked in policy circuits in favour of the ever-tempting myth that police exist purely to fight crime. This 'sociologically illiterate' (Loader, 2013: 45) reading of the police is problematic for any policy agenda, not least as it conceives of police effectiveness largely in terms of crime fighting. In returning to discussion of the foundational works, and in dispelling the contemporary myth, this section will highlight the importance of acknowledging the seemingly infinite mandate of frontline police practice when exploring the impact of new technologies such as BWCs.

Banton's (1964) study is considered the original empirical exploration of policing in Britain and his focus on the specifics of what the police actually do set the tone for much of the debates that would follow (Jones and Newburn, 1998). In uncovering the previously hidden breadth of the role, he concluded that patrolling officers predominantly spent their time 'keeping the peace', which he defined as responding to a wide range of requests for low-level

assistance and generally walking the beat, rather than enforcing the law and arresting criminals. Wilson (1968) likewise delineated the job of the police into 'law enforcement' tasks and 'order maintenance' with law enforcement, constituting the formal invocation of the criminal law and order maintenance being almost everything else related to intervening in disputes between the public. Meanwhile, the police were said to occupy the concurrent roles of 'philosopher, guide and friend' (Cumming et al, 1965) which again put empirical research at odds with previously accepted views that police work was synonymous with crime fighting. Whilst Jones and Newburn (1998) question the rigorousness of some of these early claims, particularly with difficulties in defining where law enforcement begins and ends, they nevertheless acknowledge the enormous breadth of work that the police respond to. The broad role of the police was perhaps best expressed by Bittner in his oft quoted point that the police find themselves the agency to which people turn when there is 'something that out not be happening and about which someone had better do something now!' (Bittner, 1970: 132). Such a wide conception of the police was reinforced by Bittner on several occasions as he made it clear that their unique position of having a monopoly on the capacity for the legitimate use of force meant that 'no human problem exists, or is imaginable, about which it could be said with finality that this certainly could not become the proper business of the police' (Jones and Newburn, 1998: 13, quoting Bittner, 1974). Taken together, early empirical research uncovered an operational role that was more defined by police *potential* to use their legal powers for maintaining order than the consistent application of such powers in crime fighting. Despite this evidence there continues to be a push for the police to focus on an imagined core task, as the then Home Secretary, Theresa May did when she referred to the role of the police within England and Wales as exclusively relating to 'catching criminals' (May, 2013)

That there is ongoing ambiguity concerning the role of the police can to some extent be accounted for in the notion that 'the locus and mandate of the police in the modern polity were ill-defined at the outset' (Bittner, 1967:699). Yet if 'activities relating to crime control are generally considered basic to the mandate of the police' (Bittner, 1970:123) one might anticipate there to be some sound reasoning for this – particularly with the continued policy pursuit of it. Bittner observed that this was something of a self-perpetuating myth where people are told the police are crime fighters, officers expect to be, training is delivered as such and ultimately resource deployment is focused on crime control. Such a combination of factors means that while there is longstanding evidence of the questionable effectiveness of

traditional police approaches in preventing and fighting crime (Kelling, 1981; Bayley, 1994; Felson 1994) the message that the police exist primarily as an organisation centred on crime control through law enforcement continues to be pushed (McLaughlin, 2007; Reiner, 2010). Understanding the impacts of this mismatch, between the portrayal of policing and practice, provides some insight into just how unknowable the everyday actions of officers are to most of the public. The 'low visibility' policing environment means that police-public interactions are often sensitive, sometimes dangerous but rarely supervised (Goldstein, 1960). This lack of supervision, by either other officers or the wider public, has historically limited understanding of policing in practice by providing a veil over individual officer actions. This low visibility has, in the context of determining public demand for policing, contributed to the sidestepping of empirical evidence and permitted for mystification to creep back in under a crime control agenda (Reiner, 2013). Whether the policing environment may be becoming more visible is explored later in this chapter, but first consideration must be given to the impact of this crime control agenda on expectations of the police and what this means for evaluating frontline policing.

This crime control agenda has been facilitated by a variety of factors, many of which are beyond the direct control of the police themselves (Garland, 2001), but blurring of what constitutes police work is intrinsically linked to the low visibility of the job and the resulting potential to present an image detached from practice. Alongside initial failures to distil a purpose for the police, enshrine it in policy or communicate it effectively, lies continuing muddying of the waters of policing via media portrayals, politicisation and the resulting expectations of those joining the job. Combined, these paint the picture of an organisation of crime fighters acting as a force for good and defending the rest of society against the evils that would undermine it (Manning, 1977). Such 'police fetishism' (Reiner, 2010: 22) allows for the political manipulation and manoeuvring that has so defined criminal justice since it became a hot political topic with which to score points with the electorate (Millie, 2013). A focus on a narrow, crime fighting agenda is intimately connected to and reinforced by the media, in all its forms, as news reports tend to show the exciting and dramatic over the everyday reality of police work (Leishman and Mason, 2003). Meanwhile, television shows and other entertainment mediums have a propensity to present an image of the police as the 'thin blue line' holding back the criminal tide through ingenious detective work and 'no nonsense' policing (Sparks, 1992). Indeed, the line between entertainment media and news reporting is becoming harder to distinguish when it comes to the representation of crime

(Leishman and Mason, 2003). Yet, this reportage and self-labelling of the police continues to contrast with classic academic works that have determined everyday police work 'is boring, tiresome, sometimes dirty, sometimes technically demanding but is rarely dangerous.' (Manning, 1977: 158-159). Such findings are reinforced by contemporary evidence which indicates that, despite a continued push to emphasise law enforcement tasks, the existence of a 'pure' crime fighting cop remains as mythical as ever. This was exhaustively considered in Brodeur's extensive review of what it is that uniformed officers do where he concludes that 'order maintenance' (2010:163) remains the primary demand.

Ultimately, while we cannot be entirely sure of how the police spend every moment of their time we can, with some certainly, conclude that it is not primarily spent on law-enforcement. Yet, the academic debate over what the police do does not end at an acceptance of order maintenance for, as Reiner has observed, 'order maintenance is itself a vexed and complex concept (2013: 166)'. However, even crouching this idea in terms of *emergency* order maintenance, that is the sudden response to things going wrong, leaves an unimaginable amount of potential calls for service or related proactive work to engage in. It is the very breadth of such a mandate that requires officers to exercise their judgement in police-public encounters for, despite performance metrics and political soundbites, few encounters proceed as clear cut 'crime fighting' where officers must simply enforce the law. Synthesising early empirical work in policing with more contemporary explorations has demonstrated that the police have a long history of engaging in work that can be more broadly considered as problem solving than crime fighting and that what crime fighting does exist is as important for its symbolic value in projecting order as much as the practical outcomes of the work itself. Having established the continued breadth of the policing role, and therefore the vast array of tasks that frontline officers might encounter, the next section turns to the practical implications of this for police-public encounters. Exploring how officers utilise their discretion to pragmatically navigate such a broad remit requires a framework that can situate police structures and policy with the reality of their implementation in the, largely unsupervised, interactions which make up frontline police practice. Drawing upon findings inspired from such a framework, symbolic interactionism, will contextualise how individual decision making has previously operated largely unfettered before questioning how the introduction of BWCs might impact this.

3.3 Socially situating police-public encounters

It has been established that the sixties marked a period of significant growth in interest and understanding of the police but the importance of this timing bears highlighting for the 'celebratory' framing and 'harmonious' assumptions of society, towards the police were soon to be turned on their head (Reiner, 2010: 11). As McLaughlin (2007) outlines, the 1960s marked a transformative period for much of Western society and it was the police that stood on the frontline as societal views shifted from apparent consensus to a much more contested definition of 'whose side the police were on'. Within the Anglo-American sphere there was a new sociological attention on the activities of the state's enforcement apparatus which served to increase the visibility of the tensions within society and called into question the merits of previous attempts at understanding criminality (Becker, 1967). During such a transformational period there was growing scepticism towards individualistic theories of crime, of classical and positivist origin, culminating in a shift in focus from the policed to the police. It is within this context that several researchers utilised the framework of symbolic interactionism to underpin their work to explore the significance of police-public interactions and officer discretion in navigating these encounters. Again, a full account of the development of symbolic interactionism is beyond the scope of this chapter but consideration of its continued significance for the study of policing, and wider criminology, requires some discussion of its origins.

With roots in the 'process sociology' of George Simmel and pragmatist philosophy of George Herbert Mead the symbolic interactionist paradigm arose out of the famous 'Chicago School' of the early twentieth century but continues to have relevance both as a direct perspective and for its influence on later theories (Collins, 2014). Indeed, whilst symbolic interactionism is more a framework than theoretical template for enquiry Mead's conception of the self remains a common strand in understanding the wider importance of interactions (Inglis and Thorpe, 2012). Mead took the starting point that individuals shape their interactions with others based on imagined responses to the vast range of options available in even the most commonplace of interactions. He envisaged this apparent self-control as having societal impacts; for as people consider these anticipated responses they check their own actions with consequences in mind and so both shape, and are shaped by, social order as they seek to reach their desired outcome. Such a conception of the self was utilised by the second Chicago

School with new developments in the study of deviance arising from the work of Becker, while Goffman intertwined interaction and Durkheimian ritual as he undertook his studies of everyday face-to-face interactions (Fine, 1995). Most pointedly, for criminology, symbolic interactionism's focus on micro-level interactions and their significance in reflexively shaping the self and maintaining the social order facilitated a shift in the analytical lens which aligned with the societal developments of the sixties.

Becker's (1963) ethnographic study of 'Outsiders' marked a significant shift in focus as it drew upon the interactionist framework to problematise previous understandings of deviance via his development of the highly influential labelling theory. For Becker, deviance does not lie 'in behaviour itself, but in the interactions between the person who commits an act and those respond to it' (1963; 14). Whilst this understanding can be applied to informal rules and responses to social situations it is the implication of formal criminal justice agencies which are of most relevance to this chapter. Becker's research, unintentionally, brought symbolic interactionism into mainstream criminology and paved the way for more critical studies of organisations such as the police by rejecting some pathological notion of deviancy and recognising the importance of human action in defining it. In specific policing terms this meant awareness of the fact that individual officers frequently possess the power to decide which rules to enforce and in doing so who they ultimately label as deviant. Becker's work and the ideas it presented proved influential in many of the early Anglo-American policing studies and directly informed the widespread adoption of ethnography as the chosen social enquiry research method of the time. McLaughlin (2007: 50) describes how the 'first wave' of ethnographic research, in both the USA and Britain, benefited from the widening of the criminological gaze and how access to the patrol officer was used to conceptualise the police organisation as part of a wider criminal justice system.

The research that followed the wider turn from positivism such as Manning (1977), Punch (1979) and Holdaway (1983) was significant for the shift in focus from the police as a sacred institution to looking directly at interactions both internally and with the public (McLaughlin, 2007; Reiner, 2010). Such studies developed a greater understanding of police work as socially situated behaviour and inspired a richer, more theoretically engaged, conception of the police organisation and the culture(s) which guide it. As discussed in chapter two, these studies uncovered the interplay between strategic and frontline discretion in policing reform and outlined some of the challenges that identified police culture(s) have presented for

implementation of policy in practice. However, beyond this seemingly disruptive power of officer discretion there was growing recognition of the more functional aspects. Understanding the functional role of the sharp end of frontline police discretion, that is the decision whether to invoke the criminal law or not, requires an appreciation not just for the breadth of work officers can respond to but the degree of individual interpretation that surrounds each encounter.

Sykes and Brent (1983) looked beyond officers as being driven by rigid guidelines, or even being part of a monolithic organisational culture, and instead recognised how both policy and culture could influence individual interpretation of encounters. The influence of symbolic interactionism is explicit throughout as they highlight the power of officers to define situations and influence outcomes based on these personal interpretations. In making the point that officer interpretation of a situation begins before their arrival, Sykes and Brent highlight how some encounters have already been defined as either requiring 'law enforcement', or otherwise, prior to any interaction between the police and the public and how this can shape what follows. The potential for different interpretations, and inconsistent outcomes, is necessitated by the vast range of situations that officers could be expected to respond to and the varying levels of information provided for any given one. Yet, there is a tension apparent between need for officers to exercise professional, but highly discretionary, judgement to navigate a range of encounters and expectations that such important decisions should be reviewable. Sykes and Brent, like the other scholars considered above, determined that the majority of police work does not involve a formal invocation of the law, despite much of the accountability mechanisms being based on such formal, recorded incidents.

The gap between existing accountability structures, and what the police actually spend time doing, identifies a tension as officers exercise their vast discretion, informed by a range of drivers, to define situations and the service received by the public with little in the way of reviewability where the law is not engaged. This gap was exposed surrounding the turn from positivism as research nurtured an understanding of the police as simultaneously having the potential to exercise formal control whilst also being reliant on informal structures to successfully navigate their interactions with the public. By shining light on the 'low visibility' (Goldstein, 1960) work of frontline policing the true power of officers was seen to be the ability to act as 'gatekeepers' to the wider criminal justice; something that was overlooked with previous positivist conceptions of criminality but remains key to understanding the

significance of police-public interactions today. In a revisiting of discretion in ‘modern’ policing, Bronitt and Stenning (2011: 323-324) recount the four main reasons that discretion remains both a necessary and legitimate part of successfully navigating police-public encounters in achieving wider aims:

> 1. no legislature has succeeded in formulating laws which encompass all conduct intended to be made criminal and which clearly exclude all other conduct;
> 2. failure to eliminate poorly drafted and obsolete legislation renders the continued existence of discretion necessary for fairness;
> 3. discretion is necessary because limited resources make it impossible to enforce all laws against all offenders; and
> 4. the strict enforcement of the law would have harsh and intolerable results.

These points all relate to the limitations of any legal system to exhaustively account for and reasonably enforce on all conduct considered criminal. That discretion proves necessary due to resourcing issues is not something that is likely to change any time soon, particularly in a British context where austerity has seen forces asked to do more with less (Millie, 2013). However, recognition that, even if it were possible, it would not be desirable to strictly enforce the law is paramount when considering police-public interactions. Having established that the role of the police has been, and continues to be, far broader than law enforcement it follows that the more nebulous notion of ‘order maintenance’ requires some flexibility in application. For if the police were to simply enforce without consideration of circumstance and pragmatic ‘common sense’ they would soon face problems in maintaining the support necessary for negotiating order in any given community (Klinger, 1997). The importance of individuals in maintaining this order has recently been reignited as, whilst the field has perhaps shifted once more from interactionist and often critical studies to evaluating ‘what works’ (Brodeur, 2010), there remains interest in police discretion that is ultimately rooted in an appreciation of the complexities of police-public encounters.

The importance of encounters on perceptions of policing is evident in contiuing debates generating interest in groups ranging from academics to the media, the police and, perhaps most significantly, the policed. Much of this is concerned with the use of ‘invasive’ and disproprinate police strategies, such as stop and search, and the perception that these are targetted towards certain marignalised groups without just cause or sufficient explanation

(Bowling and Phillips, 2007). It is notable then, that one of the more influential and contemporary approaches within the study of policing, procedural justice, owes much of its foundation to symbolic interactionism and Becker's development of labelling theory. Procedural justice theory is concerned with how procedures are carried out rather than evaluating the directly anticipated results. It recognises that individuals are interested in more than outcomes and that they care about the treatment they receive and if those exercising power are respecting the rights they are owed (Bradford et al, 2008). In policing terms this has restored attention on the 'everyday' encounters of frontline practice by recognising that these encounters can have extensive impact for more than those directly involved.

The importance of restored attention on police-public encounters is all the more apparent when, again, one looks beyond narrow conceptions of the policing task and acknowleges the powerful role they have in shaping individual, and perhaps wider, perspectives of not only the legitimacy of the police but that of the broader criminal justice system and state apparatus (Bradford et al., 2014). Furthermore, as discussed, such encounters have the potential to shape the social identities of those involved – a point which Bradford et al explicitly recognise as being an important 'rediscovery' of the tradition of labelling theory and symbolic interactionism more generally. Recognition that frontline officers see themselves and their role, based partly on how they are treated by management, strikes true with the contributions of symbolic interactionism and a conceptuilisation of the self which emphasises encounters. It is telling that despite the recent growth of quantitiative research surrounding police-public encounters, there is a renewed faith in the value of exploring the decision making of officers in terms of their lived experience and returning to the roots of policing research in ethnographic methods (Bradford et al., 2014). The interface observed by Bradford et al, between organisational and procedural justice has highlighted the important connection between understanding police-public interactions in the moment and the various unseen pressures driving officers to seek particular outcomes and generate positive impressions. This chapter proceeds to outline how dramaturgical analysis contributes to our understanding of how officers manage such impressions at different times, how they pragmatically exercise their discretion to do so and how BWCs might impact this, but before considering dramaturgy's specific application in the study of policing it is important to consider the wider influence of Erving Goffman in criminology and beyond.

3.4 Dramaturgical Analysis: Key concepts and policing applications

Throughout his prolific career Goffman proved to be eclectic in his approach to social enquiry but remained consistent in his focus on the study of face-to-face human interactions in what he later returned to calling the 'interaction order' (Goffman, 1982). Whilst it is almost impossible to consider in isolation any part of Goffman's myriad contributions to the field the most significant concept for this study is his development of the dramaturgical metaphor as a tool for analysis. This, like most of his work, had its origins in his desire to bring to the fore the study of face-to-face encounters by taking specific examples as generalisable to the much wider scope of human experience. To do so, in this instance, Goffman developed the metaphor with familiar theatre terms being transformed into analytical anchors in the form of; the performance, the team, the region, discrepant roles, communication out of character and impression management (Manning, 1992). Despite these terms appearing to be directly transferable from the theatre there is a depth to the analysis that goes beyond a reliance on the metaphor in isolation. Indeed, each of the principles is further divided as the complexities of the social world are reimagined as theatre and it is this depth that provides such an insightful toolkit for studying human interactions. The following section explores the interconnected concepts of performance, region and team and considers their significance for navigating discrepant roles and successfully managing impressions in different encounters. It is then demonstrated how such a micro-sociological approach to police-public encounters can shed light on the macro-structures of policing by focusing analysis on individual decision making which can uncover the effectiveness, or otherwise, of governing structures. In doing so this chapter will ultimately establish a framework that can explore how the introduction of BWCs is impacting encounters by considering the changing nature of visibility in policing and how this may influence the role officers put forward on different stages.

Of central import to dramaturgy is the concept of 'performance' which Goffman defines most broadly as 'all the activity of a given participant on a given occasion that serves to influence in any way any of the other participants" (Goffman, 1959: 26). Such a broad definition is key to understanding the scope of his work for no distinction is to be made between actors 'performing' in a calculated fashion and the seemingly sincerer encounters of everyday life. Indeed, thinking of people as social actors performing their roles naturally leads to

consideration of the everyday stages on which they do so and to what audience they present. Yet, rather than consider such contextualised acting to be some betrayal of a 'true self' Goffman instead emphasises the importance of recognising the multifaceted nature of the concept as social actors put forward differing parts of themselves depending on the scene they face. Such an idea hinges on humans taking part, almost constantly, in 'impression management' where they try to live up to expectations of an audience according to the scene in which they find they must perform (Manning, 1992). Goffman emphasises how social actors not only keep check of the impressions they are deliberately 'giving' but how they try to respond to those that inadvertently slip through unmanaged or 'give off.' Indeed, there is a tone of deception present and a general unease implied as actors not only consider their own presentation but are constantly considering that of others. Yet, Goffman skilfully moves away from the idea that this seeming subterfuge is to be condemned as purely purposeful and self-serving by emphasising how people can construct performances together and in doing so produce a degree of social order via their interactions (Goffman, 1974). The importance of controlling one's performance and its connection with maintaining the social order have direct implications for policing, as both the organisation and individual officers strive to give positive impressions while responding to those failings that give off the sense that they are not fulfilling the standards expected of their role. However, more generally, these interpersonal interactions are key to how people understand the social world and how they are understood by others. Yet, in order to fully appreciate the impact of particular interactions we must first contextualise the importance of where 'performances' occur and how they can be shaped by this attribute.

The importance of 'region' is most notable when considering theatrical staging; for that which happens 'backstage' is spectacularly different from what the audience observe in front of it. Yet, the two are undeniably linked by the actors involved as they work together to have their performance accepted by the audience who in turn seek to be absorbed into the unfolding drama. It is this audience participation within the metaphor which moves the actors beyond calculating manipulators seeking to defraud; all parties are creating and maintaining the situation together for mutual benefit. It is this interaction which is sustaining the self as 'a dramatic effect arising from a scene that is presented' (Goffman, 1959: 253). For Goffman, the self is dynamic and shaped by social processes and therefore different presentations of it should not be derided as false or held up as uniquely true. Indeed, he explicitly warns against an interpretation that sees performances in the backstage as inherently more faithful by noting

how such performances sometimes require actors to ‘knowingly contradict’ (Goffman, 1959:114) their front stage behaviour. Whilst there may be different self-presentations for different audiences these can be considered as selves partitioned for these situations but otherwise connected; the distinction must not be reduced to a true ‘front’ and a false ‘back’ or a question of public versus private. This connectedness is a key thread and one which has important ramifications for any study of policing, as considered below, but it also hints at the importance of teamwork and how dramaturgical analysis might be utilised within an organisational context.

Teamwork is, for Goffman, based on shared interaction more than any special relationship as people are bound by their situations within which they can become ‘co-conspirators’ in a performance (Goffman, 1959). The well documented sense of ‘us and them’ experienced by police officers as they seek to protect the ‘good’ in society (Loftus, 2009) immediately gives an impression of an established team being, quite simply, the police. However, when one looks beyond this to the various departments, ranks and individuals that make up a police organisation one quickly begins to see that there are a multitude of different stages that officers operate on and the different people, inside and outside of the organisation, they might find themselves collaborating with or performing to. It is important then, to consider that each of these interactions can only be successfully managed via ‘face work’ which can be individual or team based depending on the context. Face work is based on the notions mentioned above concerning the maintenance of the interaction order and ultimately reliant on human beings to act as self-regulators where people draw upon learned rituals to determine, and hold themselves to, social standards (Goffman, 1967). Successfully navigating such interactions is again reliant on cooperation of a sort, and even within confrontational situations that can occur in frontline policing an officer must still act to preserve their face as they embody the role that is incumbent in their job. Only in successfully delivering their performance as a police officer can they maintain the social order. Indeed, rather than considering the preservation of face to be impractical in a policing context one might rather see the ultimate role of the officer as doing just that; their interventions with those who have attracted their negative attention might be considered a response to their loss of face and their being out of touch with the rituals and norms of society. Likewise, those accused of noncompliance have an interest in at least appearing to conform, as Goffman himself articulated, whilst ruminating on the implications of self-interest;

> All of which should remind us that in almost all cases, interaction arrangements can withstand systematic violation, at least over the short run, and therefore that although it is in the interests of the individual to convince others that their compliance is critical to the maintenance of order, and to show apparent approval of their conformity, it will often not be in that individual's interests (as variously defined) to personally uphold the niceties. (Goffman, 1982: 5)

Even without such a grand conclusion one need only consider the substantial prominence of the 'British Bobbie' within public consciousness, and the legitimacy concerns raised with this apparent decline in fortunes, to appreciate the importance of successful impression management at an individual level (Bradford and Myhill, 2015). Ultimately, by considering the costs and benefits of the work required to maintain the interaction order as well as the overwhelming power of the modern state to officially 'police' expressions, Goffman again demonstrates how his work is open both to questions of power and resistance in a way that differentiates him from pure symbolic interactionists (Goffman, 1982: 6).

Before turning to the specific application of dramaturgical analysis to policing, and indeed technological developments within it, it is important to consider some of the critiques that have been levelled at the approach more generally. Goffman's use of metaphors as a tool of analysis is part of what makes his work so enjoyable to read and intuitively understandable for an audience beyond the academy. However, these same metaphors have been accused of obscuring his methodology and attributing too much conniving self-interest to common human interactions (Pettit, 2011). Just as his dramaturgical metaphor paints social interaction as a performance in which roles are tailored for the present audience at any given moment, his own research approach relies on presenting the version of himself that will best put people at ease. Indeed, whilst Goffman was hesitant to explicitly discuss his methodology one theme that comes through is his reliance on deception. As Pettit (2011) remarks, there is a remarkable relationship between Goffman's own experiences, his approach to research and the conclusions he draws. However, while such 'impression management' might naturally be understood as cynical manipulation on the part of individuals this is an interpretation that he later disavows when considering the complexities of framing life as theatre.

Goffman's hesitancy to engage explicitly with his methodological decisions and unveil the practicalities of his research has left his work open to criticism from a range of sources while also limiting the extent to which one can truly be said to be tackling a question from a

'dramaturgical' perspective. The difficulty in claiming such a stance is perhaps best seen in the ostensible contradictions which Goffman's various labours produced and his own later critique of his earlier work. However, rather than being terminal these very inconstancies are evidence of the natural and reflexive growth of ideas which Goffman was refining up until his death (Manning, 2008). Whilst both his theatre and game metaphors have obvious limitations these only become critical when we take them at their literal endpoint rather than as invitations to delve further. When considering what insights can be gained from Goffman's theoretical underpinnings it is important to recognise that he was not constrained by rigid loyalty to his metaphors but instead used them as flexible tools for understanding the complexities of the social world. This development of dramaturgy is most evident in his melding of his ideas of humans as cynical manipulators who simultaneously place trust and faith within the idea of a social contract (Manning 1992, Collins, 2004). It is here that we can dismantle any notion that Goffman believed life was a literal stage, indeed he himself felt the need to clarify this point rather explicitly in his later work;

> All the world is not a stage – certainly the theatre isn't entirely. (Whether you organize a theatre or an aircraft factory, you need to find places for cars to park and coats to be checked, and these had better be real places, which, incidentally, had better carry real insurance against theft) (Goffman, 1974: 1).

Understanding these more 'realistic' roots of Goffman's thoughts is key for utilising dramaturgical analysis within an organisation such as the police. Frontline officers can be expected to present different versions of themselves, to a vast array of different audiences, during any working day but ultimately remain grounded in their very 'real' work and the consequences that can stem from it. Ultimately, whilst dramaturgy can prove to be a most useful analytical toolkit it must always be grounded in the limits of the metaphor and adapted to the specific questions at hand. The successful adaptation of the toolkit to policing in both the past and present course of academia is the perhaps the biggest indicator of its potential and consideration will now be given to these applications.

The significance of police culture from both an individual and organisational standpoint has been considered in chapter two and the contribution of symbolic interactionism to this knowledge has already been established but the contribution of Erving Goffman cannot be underestimated. Whilst the influence of his work is apparent in some of the 'first wave' ethnographies (Cain 1973; Manning 1977; Holdaway 1983) it becomes even more explicit

when considering the refinements of police culture from a monolithic entity to something which is negotiated and renegotiated within the enacted environments of different officers, specialisations and ranks as well as in different contexts (Chan, 1996; Manning, 1996; Waddington, 1999). Whilst the first insights into police culture were focused upon 'routine' police work, Manning utilised dramaturgical analysis to demonstrate the need to account for the possibility of many cultures in one force and variation between forces (Chan, 1996). Part of the merit in Goffman's work here is the capability to take the very 'real' role that officers occupy within their job and accept it as authentic within certain contexts. This allows for analysis to unlock the variations present within this role rather than being consumed by questions of a self beyond it, as limited by more 'pure' symbolic interactionist approaches. For Goffman, situational context was key, and it is this understanding that proved to be so pivotal in understanding how police culture(s) manifest in different, but interconnected, ways in different situations and what this can mean for the wide variety of interactions officers are involved with in their work. His observation that we should be concerned with 'not, then, men and their moments, but moments and their men' (Goffman, 1967: 3) resonates strongly with a research approach that accepts the breadth of moments that make up police work and ensures the continued relevance of the approach as it adopts to a changing policing landscape to remain of the moment. Indeed, that relevance is apparent in recent adoptions of the framework for exploring as seemingly diverse topics as the work of drug detectives (Bacon, 2013) and the relationship between constables and PCSOs (O'Neill, 2017). Such perspectives are helping to drive forward a more complete, and contemporary, view of what is an increasingly diverse and technologically driven organisation operating in a politically charged area (Manning, 2001).

Again, dramaturgy allows for an analysis of both the formal and informal structures of police work to uncover the negotiated nature of this social order and the importance of the symbolic character of the police in achieving it (Meehan, 1992). Taking the point that acceptance of this role is more negotiated than it is calculated one must consider how it is negotiated with different audiences in mind and within the myriad of different contexts officers find themselves presenting on the front stage. Such analysis is then connected to the back stage of policing where officers navigate their place within the organisation through reproducing learned rituals in line with the 'myth' of the effective hierarchy which ultimately reinforces the wider myth of crime control (Manning, 2001). Ultimately, where the lens of dramaturgy falls upon 'street policing' it is inevitably connected to the wider organisational context, and

vice versa, which allows for a comprehensive analysis that looks beyond the negotiated drama put forward by both the organisation and media. Such an encompassing approach is of further importance during times of organisational and technological change as new policies are enacted but rarely perfectly realised in interactions (Prus, 2003). It the explicit focus on the micro interactions which can engage the all-important questions of discretion in frustrating or enabling police reform. By focusing the lens of analysis on frontline officers the actual use, or otherwise, of technology such as BWCs can be explored to shed light on the more macro processes of the organisation and existing knowledge on police culture to consider how BWCs are influencing police-public encounters and wider relations. Adopting a dramaturgical analysis of the 'in situ' use of BWCs then offers not just the possibility of studying organisational aims but reality on the ground during each technological drama (Meehan, 1998). This chapter now turns to considering the importance of the material properties of BWCs and how introducing sociomateriality into dramaturgical analysis can broaden our understanding of the impact the technology on everyday police work.

3.5 Surveillance device or helpful tool? A question of materiality *and* perspective

The world in which the police and public find themselves is dramatically different from that in which dramaturgical analysis was first envisaged and yet it is argued here that the perspective has never been more relevant so long as one can account for the material developments in technology. Whilst Goffman had little interest in interactions beyond their contained face-to-face moment, the current age is one where they cannot be ignored. Indeed, news reports and viral video footage can relocate police-public interactions from their natural setting and open them up to an entirely different audience at different times (Sandhu and Haggerty, 2017). The introduction of BWCs to policing can be considered both as a response to this new visibility (Goldsmith, 2010) and as a potential escalation but the impact on encounters remains unclear. This prolifilation of cameras leaves both the police and the police under the potential threat of being recorded at almost all times in a way that appears to resonate with the idea of the panopticon. Given this seeming relevance, it is worth considering the contemporary fit of the theory for BWCs.

First proposed by Jeremy Bentham the panopticon was a design for a prison to be constructed in such a way as to leave the inmates under the veiled threat of pervasive surveillance at all times (Koskela, 2003). It was proposed that the visibility of the prisoners and the unseen presence of those in power would act in concert to regulate their behaviour and, ultimately,

transform the self. Foucault (1977) extended this idea from the confines of a prison to a comment on a new power model which had arrived in society as a whole – the transformation from control via spectacle to that of surveillance. His theory of the few seeing the many appears to have been realised but his narrow scope has been criticised as overemphasising the visual during a time where bureaucratic surveillance was increasing and also for ignoring a coexisting form of social control in the rise of the mass media (Mathiesen, 1997). Technology has not stood still since and further developments in the fragmentation of the mainstream media and rise of alternative sources of information have coincided with a loss of the state monopoly on surveillance (Haggerty and Ericson, 2000; Doyle, 2011). Despite these developments, people continue to emphasise the impact of visual surveillance on their privacy in a world where our data reveals so much about us (Hier, 2003). This has important implications as, whilst the more established tools of surveillance may fade into the background, the upfront and personal nature of BWCs means that they cannot be considered as business as usual.

Indeed, even though the camera itself demands attention it cannot be understood without considering how the footage it gathers is to be used on an organisational level – these are questions of both policy and materiality. The importance of coherent policy and compliance by police officers is perhaps best understood in terms of contesting a straightforward interpretation of BWCs as a continuation in the panopticon. While there is understandable concern over BWCs as an extension of the 'surveillance society' (Brucato, 2015) there appears to be, within current policy, more potential to survey frontline officers than the wider public. The panoptic metaphor relies on the threat of surveillance at all times and while this could be applied to BWCs in specific contexts, such as the policing of large crowds at events, these are liminal spaces (Turner, 1967) not reflective of the everyday work of most officers. As such, rather than working on the assumption that BWCs are a panoptic like surveillance device, this study emphasises the importance of looking at how the material capabilities of the cameras interact with the social in the form of the officers who retain control over them. Doing so, requires introducing another perspective which can bring the material influence of technology more explicitly into the technological drama occurring within the organisation and the impact within police-public encounters.

Sociomateriality is a theory which is largely used in information systems studies – although a recent group of scholars based in the USA have also highlighted the potential for the theory to be of use in understanding the impacts of BWCs (Guzik, 2021). Orlikowski (2007, 2010)

introduced sociomateriality to great success by reorientating researchers towards the importance of the material. They did this by arguing for the inseparability of humans and technology with the concept of entanglement (Kautz and Jensen, 2012) – the only approach currently visible in the BWC literature (Guzik, 2021). However, this study adopts a different perspective which retains the significance of human agency above and beyond the material. In doing so, it emphasises the greater power that human actors have to shape the use of such technology while also recognising that technology *can* have an impact on the social. In this way, rather than the social and material being entangled, the relationship is one of imbrication (Leonardi, 2011). This concept of imbrication means that rather than the social and material being inseparable – they are separate parts that are interwoven together. Such a perspective explains how both the material features and the social perceptions of a technology come together to form both the *affordances* and *constraints* of that technology in practice (Leonardi, 2011:154).

In BWC terms the material capability of the camera to act as a sensor which captures footage is at the very core of the device. For officers, it affords the ability to record and it does so in a work context. However, this does not necessarily mean that the recording is an act of surveillance of officers at work. Whether such a constraint comes to be seen depends rather on how the technology is used in the wider organisation and how officers perceive it. Officers might instead see the technology as surveilling the public – still a material surveillance device but one looking outward. These perceptions are part of what this very study aims to explore but the significant point here is that both views rely on the same starting point of the material capability of the camera and this must therefore be considered. To return to the dramaturgical, considering the material capabilities of the camera means considering how the existence of a recording of an encounter shapes the perception of those in the moment. Again, from an imbricated perspective, such perceptions are unlikely to be fixed in all moments but they will be shaped by the presence of the material object to some extent.

Bringing the material into encounters reinforces the enduring usefulness of the damaturgical toolkit, for these interactions still involve roles and invite audiences but on a larger scale that is no longer as likely to be self-contained (Collins, 2014) due to the material affordances (Leonardi, 2011) of BWCs. In terms of the impact of BWCs on police-public encounters one can utilise the language of dramaturgy and extend the metaphor via appreciation of these affordances to consider audiences beyond those contained to the physical moment. Who exactly has access to footage and how it is used is likely to change from force to force but the

significant constant is the *potential* for someone to look at the footage. This expansion is noteworthy based on previous works establishing how officers negotiate their encounters based on their own learned view rather than rigid adherence to the 'symbolic' bureaucracy (McLaughlin, 2008: 51). As such, there is potential for conflict – and frontline constraint - where that same bureaucracy are afforded the potential to observe previously invisible encounters.

3.6 Conclusion

This chapter began by contrasting contemporary political rhetoric with conceptual and empirical research in order to demonstrate the disconnect between the perceived and actual role of the police. In highlighting this disparity, and the potential explanations for it, emphasis was placed on understanding the importance of individual officer decision making and broad the remit within which officers operate. The role of symbolic interactionism in uncovering the factors which can influence discretion, and the impacts it can have on different individuals and groups in their encounters with the police, was then considered from a historical and contemporary perspective. The ongoing influence of the framework was highlighted via the use of procedural justice theory which has brought fresh attention to the importance of micro-encounters in having macro implications for how the police are perceived and the impacts this can have on the organisation. A proposed framework for analysing these micro-interactions was then suggested using Erving Goffman's dramaturgical analysis. Through an account of Goffman's metaphor, it was demonstrated that dramaturgy can provide an analytical toolkit for unlocking the interconnected nature of frontline police work and the organisational pressures that circumscribe officers' behaviour.

By considering the material capabilities of BWCs to record and preserve encounters, it was suggested that their introduction has the potential to remove the temporal restrictions traditionally found in police-public encounters and therefore potentially introduce a broadening of the audience in dramaturgical terms. As such, rather than merely borrowing the analytical toolkit of dramaturgy it was argued that framing the analysis in terms of mediated interactions has the potential to further develop our understanding of video recorded interactions.. In policing terms, it was suggested that this presents a particularly important development by potentially overturning the traditional 'low visibility' environment of frontline work and the wide range of unscrutinised discretion officers have been able to exercise. Ultimately, having accepted the importance of officer discretion in navigating the

breadth of police work there is a significant connection between how officers use the cameras or even engage the public and the impact of BWCs. By considering this usage in terms of front and back stage this research will look beyond official accounts to what is occurring in police-public encounters and how this may be impacting the overall experience of everyday frontline police work.

Chapter Four – Research Design and Methodology

4.1 Introduction

This chapter discusses the methodological underpinnings of the study. It explains the decisions made in designing the research and reflects on the experience of conducting it. I break from traditional expectations of 'scientific' writing and adopt a first-person perspective to communicate my experience. In doing so I am consciously drawing on an ethnographic tradition which has identified the need for researchers to be reflexive in their work (Davies, 1999; Hammersley and Atkinson, 2007). The chapter begins by first restating the research aims and questions, demonstrating how these enquiries suited a qualitative approach. It then proceeds to explain the ontological and epistemological positions which anchor the study, further explaining the adoption of a qualitative strategy and situating this within the ethnographic tradition. The next section then outlines and justifies the research design which was adopted to answer these questions. The bulk of the chapter then proceeds to reflect on the methods used and the strategies utilised to maximise their effectiveness while reflecting also on the challenges encountered in different stages of the research and the steps taken to address them. Finally, the commitment to research ethics standards are discussed before some closing reflections are offered on the merits and limitations of the overarching approach adopted within the study.

4.2 Research aims

The overarching aim of this study was to investigate how police use of BWCs impacted the everyday work of uniformed, frontline officers. To achieve this, and to guide the study, the following three research questions were posited;

1. How, and in what ways, have BWCs been adopted by frontline officers?
2. How have BWCs impacted the organisational visibility of frontline officers?
3. How do BWCs influence frontline officer behaviour within police-public encounters and with what impact(s) on their wider work?

The nature of the enquiries, particularly with their expansive questions, invited a qualitative design to fully explore them. Indeed, such research is at its core concerned with answering these very types of question (Bryman, 2012). The relatively new status of BWCs as mainstream

policing equipment further encouraged an exploratory and descriptive approach, which did not seek to create pre-determined hypotheses and instead allowed for a more reflexive and adaptive study. As such, in exploring the impacts of BWCs on everyday uniformed police work data were collected on the organisational policies governing the use of BCWs, its reception and use by police officers and its perceived impact in police-public encounters. Having outlined the goals of the research, I will now turn to the assumptions which informed my approach before introducing the design which supported the pursuing of the research aims.

4.3 Ontological and epistemological framework

Ontological positions tend to fall into two broad camps; positivists who believe in an objective, and therefore quantifiable, reality and interpretivists who consider reality to be socially constructed and fluid (Guba and Lincoln, 1994). Likewise, epistemological positions can historically be divided into realists, those who believe that reality is independent and unaffected by our interpretations, or constructionists who see reality as being moulded by people as they engage in interactions and interpret that which happens (Guba and Lincoln, 1994). The paradigm wars have been waged based on subscribing to the extreme edge of either of these positions, but more tempered views have emerged within the midst of these debates (see for example Elder-Vass, 2012 on critical realism).

Whilst the contribution of the critical realists has undoubtedly restored attention to the potential pitfalls of radical constructionism, ethnographers of certain schools have long highlighted the need for a more conservative contextualism (Fine, 1993, Gubrium 2017). Building on discussions from the previous chapter concerning the perspective of symbolic interactionism, my own position falls into a weak constructionist point of view. Such a position embraces an ontological realism and accepts there is a world capable of being studied. However, there is an epistemic relativism in that there will always be some negotiated order of meaning; people will interpret things based on the context of their social interactions and wider structures. Consequently, this places limits on the extent to which one embraces the social construction of reality by recognising that the circumstances of individuals and social groups shape their interpretation of the world but that there are constraints placed on these interpretations (Fine, 1993; Fine 2007; Gubrium 2017). Having established the philosophical grounding of this research, consideration now turns to the research design.

4.4 Research design

Several things set this research design apart from 'typical' PhD projects. Firstly, the project was a collaborative study funded by the N8 Policing Research Partnership. Secondly, but relatedly, I came to this project beyond the initial scoping discussions carried out by West Yorkshire Police and my academic supervisors. Thirdly, I then spent my first year in communication with project partners at WYP to keep them updated on the direction of the project, but also to request their input on the value of this direction for themselves and potential sites for locating the research. Finally, there was an agreement in place that alongside the completion of my PhD I should generate and disseminate my findings to WYP. All of these factors brought certain benefits but also expectations and resulting limitations of design. Mostly significantly, and understandably, there was an expectation that the research would take place within WYP so that knowledge of the most direct relevance for them could be fed back into the organisation. However, this apparent limitation turned out to be an asset as the substantial investment made by WYP in equipping all frontline officers with BWCs presented, for me, an ideal setting in which to study the impact of the technology on police-public encounters. Further reflections on the fundamentally collaborative nature of the study are offered throughout the chapter but for now consideration will be given to the approach which shaped the research; an ethnographic case study.

Yin (2003) outlines three types of case study; exploratory, descriptive and explanatory. While each of these have distinctive attributes and aims, largely self-evident in their labels, the boundaries between the categories are by no means fixed and in practice there tends to be overlap. This is true of this study which seeks not only to explore a technological development in UK policing but also to describe how users have responded to the technology, how it is being used in practice and with what effects this is having on their everyday work. As such, a case study design was particularly suited to this research as it allowed for the collection of rich data which spoke directly to the context of WYP as the organisation in which BWCs had been introduced (Crompton and Jones 1988). Furthermore, it facilitated a micro sociological approach as by focusing on a defined policing area within a WYP district I was able to incorporate ethnographic methods into the design. Indeed, the commitment demanded by an ethnography encourages a design which balances the need for 'thick' data with the practical consideration that a solitary researcher is unlikely to be able to be able to achieve this over multiple sites (Brewer, 2000).

However, case studies are not without limitations and the main concern raised is one of the limited generalisability of the findings (Yin, 2003). Yet, even a descriptive case study does not stop when data has been collected to comprehensively describe the particulars of the case. As Becker (1968) outlines, collecting data and developing an understanding of the particulars of the case in question can only be the first stage in any sociological enquiry. Beyond this the goal must be to utilise that data to generate and develop theories which speak more generally to the social issues in question. As such, using a case study design to its fullest means embracing it as part of a wider inductive approach where the findings from one specific context can illuminate others (Bryman, 2012).

4.4.1 The case study site

Data were collected within West Yorkshire Police, which is the fourth largest police force within England and Wales and serves over 2.2 million people and covers an area of around 2000 square kilometres. The force is split into five police districts, somewhat dominated by the busy cities of Leeds and Bradford but ultimately covers a diverse region with smaller cities, towns and rural populations across its remaining districts of Calderdale, Kirklees and Wakefield. 78.4% of the population identify as white British while 18.2% identify as black and minority ethnic (a term no longer used by government when writing about ethnicity) with 13.1% of that population identifying as Asian (WYP, Equality Information 2017-2018). It is home to one of the largest student populations in the country and faces some specific challenges with one in five neighbourhoods falling within the top 10% of the most deprived areas in England (WYP, Equality Information 2017-2018). The phased roll out of BWCs began with a pilot in the Bradford District in May 2016 as the area's Police and Crime Commissioner invested over £2 million pounds from a 'Transformation Fund' to enable the project. This roll out has since been completed in all districts and WYP now has over 2000 body worn video cameras, accessible on a pooled basis for all on duty officers in frontline roles. The reasoning behind the choice of WYP for the study has already been discussed above but the journey from this vast area to the specific sites of research requires some further consideration.

Fieldwork took place in two areas, pseudonymised here as Ardler and Lochee. Ardler covered a large geographic area with a mix of relatively affluent rural and suburban communities, alongside a more densely populated, and relatively deprived, mid-sized town. The vast majority of calls for service, and observations during my time in Ardler, occurred in

this town. Lochee consisted of a tighter but more densely populated area, being a subdivision of a large city, and averaged around double the number of reported crimes every month. Lochee's workload was increased further as the team was responsible for handling many of the calls in the city centre – despite this not being part of their corresponding neighbourhood boundaries. Due to the size and workload demands of this combined area the team was divided into north and south, with the expectation that officers would only respond outside these divisions where absolutely needed. As a result, Lochee covered a range of areas from the most modern city centre living to some of the most deprived locations in West Yorkshire. The now infamous back-to-back housing of the Victorian Northern England still dominates much of the housing stock within both Ardler and Lochee but these sit alongside post war social housing developments, more contemporary new build estates and, in the case of Lochee, high rise buildings. Whilst Lochee was certainly a more urban location than Ardler both places covered large areas with team members carrying heavy workloads whilst responding to a wide range of calls for service.

Ardler area was initially chosen for several reasons but one of the most significant was that it had been an early pilot location for the implementation of BWCs. This meant that by the time fieldwork was due to commence the cameras had been in operation for over a year which presented the most advanced stage of 'normal use' in which to understand their impacts. Furthermore, discussions with WYP led to assurances that the district presented a diversity of policing activity that reflected the breadth of police work in which the cameras were used. The specific sub district was then considered with the core criteria being that the area was sufficiently busy so as to increase the time spent during shifts observing 'live' encounters with the public. It was expected that observations would occur, primarily, within this designated policing area in different policing contexts and locations to gain an understanding of how officers in different frontline roles and settings utilised their BWCs. Despite the research being designed as a single site case study, after 100 hours of observations in Ardler I changed site to the Lochee due to a number of practical considerations. The most pressing issue was that my work commitments combined with the travel times to the main station were making it difficult to follow one team consistently which meant I was missing out on the opportunity to fully access the world beyond that of the individual officers I accompanied. Thus, I reoriented my focus to a different district and neighbourhood within WYP. My general criteria for case selection remained the same but having noticed in my first site that there was little distinction in practice between

response/patrol and neighbourhood officers, due to resourcing demands, I explicitly sought out time with PCSOs as my first introduction into the new location. The process from that point was much the same as my experience in the previous area.

The goal in conducting the research within both the neighbourhood policing team (NPT) and Patrol was not to make direct comparisons between them but rather to capture the broadest possible data from the everyday use of the cameras in 'frontline' police-public encounters. While BWCs are used by other units within WYP it was these two frontline functions of neighbourhood and response policing that were described as core users during the rollout. NPT and Patrol were also chosen for their overtly visible and uniformed nature combined with the likelihood of public interactions during shifts, albeit with different circumstances and goals in mind. It was envisaged that the NPT would fulfil a slightly more proactive approach while the Patrol team would cover the reactive, combining to represent the everyday use in mainstream police-public encounters. In both locations it was my plan to begin by observing an NPT for an initial immersion period in the area, utilising their local knowledge and use of foot patrols to increase my own familiarity with the locale. Beyond that I then hoped to transition towards a response team, with the goal being to shadow its shift pattern for an extended period to maximise my immersion in the team and build trust through familiarity (Marks, 2004). I have already raised the difficulties which resulted in my relocating the research but after doing so I was able to implement this plan and immerse myself fully into uniformed, frontline policing within that area.

The camera used by officers during the course of the fieldwork was designed and supplied by Reveal Media. It featured a rotatable camera head, a display screen on the front which displayed the footage being recorded and a red light which would go from solid to flashing when in recording mode. The camera was activated by sliding down a recording switch on the side of the camera, with an accompanying beeping noise to notify of activation, and deactivated by sliding the switch back up. The screen on the front of the camera could also be used by officers to playback footage after detaching it from their kit. The live screen recording of the footage would automatically turn off to conserve power if no further activity was detected by the camera – though the recording continued and was marked by the flashing red light.

4.4.2 Incorporating an ethnographic approach into the research design

Whilst reviewing the literature around BWCs and studying policy documents from both the American and British context the merits of adopting an ethnographic approach within the single site case study became clear. The literature revealed that many of the perceived benefits of the technology were rooted in some improvement of the quality of police-public encounter for either or both involved parties (White, 2014; Lum et al, 2015). Yet, the means of evaluating these improvements tended to be reflected in reportable outcomes, such as complaints against the police or use of force, and there was an evident gap in observational research which considered the cameras as part of the vast range of activity that constitute every day, frontline police work (Lum et al, 2019). Utilising ethnographic methods, particularly participant observation, provided a lens by which to explore the impact of cameras not only in line with the assumptions dictated by policy over what they should be used for, but instead to see how this policy is implemented in practice (Lipsky, 2010). This focus on policy as implemented on the frontline was informed by two main points from the policing literature; frontline officers operate in a role that makes regular, direct supervision of public encounters all but impossible and this presents an opportunity for officers to influence the impact of any new policy or frontline technology (Chan, 2001; Goldsmith, 2010).

Only in entering the world of WYP officers, and experiencing first-hand their relationship with BWCs, could I obtain the data necessary to illuminate my research aims (Robson, 2011). Indeed, while some scholars have welcomed the introduction of the technology as allowing for the methodological developments they can bring with a new window into police work (Sousa et al, 2016), the value of BWC footage will remain dependent on the research questions and an understanding of how the cameras are being used. The very nature of BWC policy within WYP, particularly officer discretion to activate, meant that many of the most important questions surrounded the context of how something is deemed *recordable* by officers, which precluded a research design which relied on what has been *recorded*. As such, I concluded that I needed to enter in the officers' world with the aim of seeing the use of BWCs in encounters while also understanding that the impacts of the cameras may not be restricted to these recorded encounters. Questions over how officers related to each other, the public and indeed their general views on 'the job' under the gaze could never have been answered purely from observing footage where so much of their working day remains potentially free from the apparent oversight of the camera. Therefore, an ethnographic approach was adopted as it provided the most appropriate methods toolkit for exploring how officers were embracing, or

rejecting, the camera in the vast range of situations that make up non-specialist, uniformed police work in WYP. In exploring the use of the cameras as part the everyday working life of officers, I also obtained access to their wider social world which allowed for insights to be gleamed in that cultural context. Having justified why an ethnographic approach was adopted into the research design, I will now reflect on the use of ethnographic methods in practice.

4.5 Ethnographic methods

Reflecting on my own use of ethnographic methods first requires some situating of where my experience stands in the context of the wide sphere of ethnographic approaches that are available. Despite a long intellectual tradition with its roots in anthropology, the very word ethnography remains a contested term which defies a tight definition (O'Reilly, 2012). The label is sometimes conflated with qualitative research more generally, but my own experience most closely resembles that of the 'traditional' sociological ethnography. Such an ethnography is concerned with gaining a deep understanding of the lives of research participants through observation of their everyday activities (Hammersley and Atkinson, 2007). At its most narrow, this involves a protracted period of immersion in a specific research site for at least a year, potentially complimented by interviews and documentary analysis of varying levels of formality. However, just as ethnography developed and shifted in form with its transition from anthropological to sociological, there now exist a vast range of disciplines using the method beyond the traditional social sciences (Pink and Morgan, 2013). Whilst certain research contexts might be ideally suited to a more intense, short term, immersion in a setting, it was determined that the explorative aims of this study, and nature of researching a hard to penetrate group such as the police, demanded a more traditional ethnographic approach (Cram, 2018). Shorter term immersion was deemed unsuitable in addressing the exploratory research aims, for as researchers spend less time in the field they take a methodological shortcut which diminishes 'one of the primary strengths of ethnographic fieldwork, which is its ability to find nuance and uncover new, and often nonintuitive, knowledge about groups' (Conner, 2017: 591). To fulfil my research aims I was required to immerse myself into the new social world of frontline, uniformed policing to obtain the important contextualising knowledge of the organisation and the work officers undertake. In embracing this, I sought to avoid the pitfalls of borrowing the ethnographic approach without embracing the framework which has traditionally anchored it.

The intertwining of framework and methods is key to understanding the complexities of ethnographic research (Brewer 2000). Becoming an ethnographer is much more than simply considering a research question, selecting the best tools for data collection, embarking upon an adventure in the field and then retreating to the safety of the office to analyse the collected data. It is a fluid process in which immersion within a culture allows one to provide the 'thick description' (Geertz, 1973: 13) necessary to open the symbolic world of the research participants. Whilst some ethnographic texts may fall into the same established trap of policing, in exaggerating the excitement of the job, there remains great merit in 'getting the seat of your pants dirty … in the real world, not the library' (Fielding, 1993: 157). By becoming immersed within this world one can unlock the situated meaning of the setting from the perspective of the research participants and in doing so can begin to meaningfully interpret the actions of the actors present (Brewer, 2000).

My own experience of utilising ethnographic methods lines up with these traditional approaches as, like Gaggiotti et al (2017), I sought to maintain the intellectual distance of the sociological imagination (Mills 1959) while incorporating the empathetic understanding of the ethnographic imagination (Atkinson, 2014; Willis 2013). This necessitated an open-minded approach which invited me to embrace these new perspectives without overly narrow research questions at the outset of the fieldwork (O'Reilly, 2012). My success, over time, in doing so provided the framework to make sense of that which might otherwise remain invisible to the everyday lives of those actors studied and as my immersion in the field became deeper, so too did my understanding of the impact BWCs were having on the everyday lives of those involved. In reflecting on my observations of the everyday use of the cameras I began to move beyond description of *how* and *why* they were used in differing situations and connected these to the organisational context within which officers operated. This resulted in a fluid design which facilitated the fullest possible exploration of the impacts of BWCs on every day police work without narrowing the research at the earliest stages. Such an approach is in line with some of the first organisational ethnographies where there was recognition that the "golf nugget of a 'problem' is only found after fieldwork has begun and it emerges from this process of holding field data up to current academic understandings" (Wright 2013: 102). As each separate method within the ethnographic framework was of both individual merit and complimentary in the whole, I will now reflect on my time 'doing' ethnography beginning with consideration of my own identity as a researcher and then the reflecting on the individual methods adopted.

4.5.1 Participant observation and researcher identity

Though less controversial than trying to pin down what constitutes an ethnography, defining participant observation remains a contested arena. Beyond the discussed debates over whether participant observation and ethnography are one in the same, the contention is largely related to the very word *participant* and the limits surrounding its apparent antithesis *nonparticipant.* Atkinson and Hammersley (1998: 248) make the point that this simple dichotomy is not a helpful one and consider the works of Gold (1958) and Junker (1960) to be more nuanced and helpful for framing the role of observer. Gold's (1958) typology of four different roles; the complete observer, observer as participant, participant as observer, and complete participant (see Kawulich, 2005 for further discussion of these) remains particularly influential. However, even this nuance fails to truly capture the minute differences of approach such as whether the research is overt in its aims, previous relationship to the field and what specific activities are being engaged in. While rejecting the literal interpretation that 'all social research is a form of participant observation' as obfuscating the differences in how researchers adopt observations as part of their methods, my design found agreement with Atkinson and Hammersley (1998: 249) in that 'we cannot study the world without being part of it.' The key question for any researcher utilising observations then becomes how integrated must they become into the world of those they are studying? The answer to this will vary from study to study but it is exploring a new social world that continues to be the defining characteristic of observations. Whether one spends moments or years in another's social world, whether that world be physical or virtual, there will be some element of observation of where this social life is 'happening' (Paccagnella, 1997). In accepting this I embraced my role as observer as participating in the social world of the police, without claiming that such a role was a prominent or even deliberately active one.

A history of police ethnographies reveals the value in seeking to become immersed in the social world of the police, but those same studies reveal how equally important it is to avoid the compulsion to 'go native' (Punch 1993: 196). This danger is present in all ethnographic work and ultimately warns against overly identifying with research participants for in doing so one risks losing their critical, analytical edge (Fine, 2017). However, it is perhaps more important to be wary of going native when researching frontline police officers as their world can be a particularly seductive one. The comradery, bursts of excitement and even the very exclusionary nature of shift work all have the potential to lull one into overly identifying with officers (Loftus, 2009). Of course, while there is potential for this, officers act as gatekeepers

to their social world and scrutinise the fieldworker in turn (Van Maanen and Kolb 1982). This means that to some extent, the threat of going native is based on the quality of relationship in the field meaning both how officers initially react to a researcher's presence and how this can change over time. Where barriers are raised, and maintained, any researcher will find it difficult to claim to be truly immersed in an environment which might act as a guard against the dangers of going native but ultimately hinders the strength of any claims to knowledge one can make about that social world (Goffman, 1959, Van Maanen, 1979). As in many things, there is a careful balancing act to be achieved so that an ethnographer might lay claim to immersion without suffering indoctrination. Importantly, the degree to which anyone participates in the social world they are studying is to some extent dependent on their relation to that world prior to commencing that research (Berger, 2015).

The very fact that I had at no point been a warranted police constable, received their training or been empowered to act in their support during incidents meant that the nature of my participation in day-to-day frontline policing was always going to be curtailed by matters of law and practicality. I, of course, never hoped to participate in the sense of formally becoming a police officer but the aim was to be present in their world and in doing so I ultimately accept that I became an active participant in it – though I tried to limit the extent of my involvement beyond 'being there' throughout (Fine, 1993). In this sense I could be seen as a traditional 'outsider' to policing and face the same challenges as Punch (1993) in over-identifying with this exciting, new world. However, this utter lack of exposure to frontline policing also presented the opportunity for me to enter the field with fewer preconceived notions of what the job was about and less investment in the outcomes for the institution as a whole – providing some shield against bias and vested interest influencing the analysis (Sheptycki, 1994). The debate over the merits of insider versus outsider perspectives has further shifted as the nature of policing research itself has changed and formal collaborations have become more prominent with a notable shift towards a more realist take on the aims of policing research (Reiner, 2010). Jennifer Brown offers four categories that policing researchers might occupy; 'inside insiders', 'outside insiders', 'inside outsiders' and 'outside outsiders' (Brown 1996: 180-186). These groups are fairly encompassing and yet I find that I fail to fit into any of the categories in a satisfactorily neat way.

In being part of a formal collaboration between the N8 PRP and WYP I might in some way be seen as an 'insider outsider', particularly as the broad remit of the project was defined before my arrival. However, the degree of freedom I experienced in shaping and conducting

my research – albeit with the welcome input and knowledge of my gatekeeper – resembles far more the traditional 'outsider outsider'. Such labelling is further complicated by the very fact that I was different things, to different people, at different times as my identity shifted over the course of the project. Not only did officers occupying different roles see my value, or otherwise, in different ways but as the teams I imbedded myself in became used to my presence their sense of me noticeably shifted and individual differences became more apparent. Beyond these experiences over time, my identity was also wrapped up in the context of differing encounters as, for example, I occupied the initial role of obvious outsider in briefing but found I quickly shifted towards a more insider role when with officers – particularly when single crewed – and interacting with the public. Further reflections on these shifting stages and differing roles are offered below when discussing the importance of everyday access but for now it is significant that my identity proved to be a fluid one.

While debates concerning the insider/outsider dichotomy recognise that both have advantages and disadvantages (Merton, 1972:33) I ultimately find agreement with Phillips and Earle that such distinctions are wrapped up in a 'a positivist epistemology that seeks a single, universal truth.' (2010: 360). In rejecting such an extreme position, and embracing the importance of everyday individual interpretation, I was able to recognise the significance of how I fitted into frontline policing, without subscribing to the idea there is but one personal category through the entirety of the research with no overlap or blurring of boundaries. Indeed, the discussions in chapter two surrounding the literature on police culture recognise this very point for in accepting that there is not one simple, monolithic culture we are invited to consider how we are seen by different parts of the organisation. As such, rather than determining my status based on my own idea of where I land on the insider-outsider spectrum, it is more helpful to situate how the different parts of the organisation, and indeed different individuals in the same role, saw me at various points over the course of my fieldwork. This chapter now turns to considering the experience of undertaking that fieldwork, with further reflections offered on how I was *required* to adopt different identities to obtain the best possible data while guarding against the identified danger of 'going native'.

4.5.2 Gaining and maintaining everyday access

Whilst almost all qualitative researchers must wrangle with issues of access to the world of their research participants, ethnographers require a depth of access that can be particularly troublesome to secure (Manning, 2014). This is all the truer when trying to conduct an

ethnography of frontline police work which constitutes sensitive, and sometimes dangerous encounters, that 'civilians' are generally shielded from (Westmarland, 2001). Alongside these initial difficulties in gaining some measure of formal access, the very credibility of an ethnography is contingent on being able to gain and maintain *meaningful* access to that world for an extended period. Initial access generally means identifying and securing a gatekeeper who will act as an early in and make the required introductions to potential research participants that help establish a presence within the new social world (Webster et al., 2014). My own experience was somewhat different as being part of the N8 PRP meant that even before I became involved, there was some acceptance within WYP that there was value in conducting a study of BWCs. However, there is an important distinction between management acceptance and frontline buy in, a distinction that can be further heightened by the hierarchical nature of policing.

The tension is related to issues considered in chapter two surrounding our contemporary understanding of police culture as multifaceted; the differences between 'frontline' and 'management' officers (Reuss-Ianni and Ianni 1983). These differences come to the fore when trying to navigate the politics of the police for the very fact official approval has been received from management can lead to distrust from those on the frontline and present further hurdles (Reiner and Newburn 2008: 355). As such, my access demanded constant renegotiation as I descended the official hierarchy and moved from the central HQ to more localised and frontline operational context. Consideration now turns to my experience in seeking to overcome these hurdles and make my initial access meaningful to obtain the richest possible data. As my research progressed from having HQ approval to securing the enthusiastic buy in of an operational Inspector, I had reason to believe that things were progressing towards truly meaningful access. However, my first 'proper' day in the field in Ardler revealed otherwise;

> …'Sorry, Declan who? Do you have ID?'
>
> Alas, I could only offer up my most recent email with the Inspector – confirming I would be arriving for my first observations today – but this seemed to satisfy the officer as he provided me with mixed news; I couldn't come in right now due to an 'unexpected counter terror briefing' but he would be plenty happy to make me a brew while I waited. Sipping away on my tea the somewhat cynical side of me pictured a flustered team of officers trying to find any notice of this researcher turning up today – under the guise

> of a secret briefing – but whether or not that was the case, I was let in fairly sharply and soon introduced to the Sergeant…

Reflecting on this somewhat unfortunate first day strikes me as echoing the importance of a point made by Fielding (2006: 281) that 'the organisational complexity [of contemporary policing] amplifies a characteristic of fieldwork, that access is not negotiated once-and-for-all but continually.' No amount of coproduction, rapport building or enthusiasm on the part of myself could overcome the fact that police forces in the UK constitute large, hierarchical organisations with high workloads, competing demands and priorities beyond the whims of researchers. Soon after these events, I returned to HQ to be provided with a WYP photographic ID, as agreed in in earlier access negotiations. This ID granted me access to the required station at all hours for my future visits and these proceeded as planned, with the inauspicious start proving to be a blip in an otherwise smooth process.

In negotiating access away from the centre to the local, and while working my way towards the frontline, I utilised the same approach in both districts as I attempted to overcome the initial distrust described by the police ethnographers who came before (Punch, 1979). When trying to convince frontline supervisors of my intentions I clarified that while my research had the backing of senior management it was, and would remain, an independent research project and that the identity of any teams and officers involved would be anonymised as much as possible when reporting my findings. Care was taken to highlight that my observations were not part of an evaluation of whether the cameras were 'successful' in their implementation or to compare different usage between teams. Rather, I stressed that the observations would provide me with insight into a working world that I had never previously experienced and that I wanted as realistic a picture of that world as could be obtained. Indeed, I emphasised that alongside this research contributing to my PhD, the findings would be fed back to WYP and that it was my hope that by studying the frontline use of the cameras I would be providing an opportunity for those users to directly express their views and experiences in using the technology. Whilst I could not promise them that this *would* influence any future policies I suggested that it was *possible* that such input could inform the future direction by giving voice to these experiences. Being aware of the hierarchical pressures of policing I also told them that if they were uncomfortable with me being embedded in their team but felt like they could not raise that issue with their bosses, then they could let me know and I would happily think up an excuse as to why I needed to be based elsewhere. This approach paid dividends as I experienced a welcoming and helpful

environment from frontline supervisors who then facilitated my day to day observations by considering my needs at each briefing and ensuring I was paired up with one of their units for the day.

Even as I gained the support of supervisors I continued to approach my research with the understanding that each separate observation required me to negotiate access all over again with that day's officer (Fielding, 2006). To do this, I approached my first experience with each PC or PCSO in much the same was I negotiated my initial access to their team; I provided an explanation of my research, and the potential benefits, to them and let them know they were under no obligation to take part. Likewise, at the end of every shift I reminded them they could escape any future commitments by letting me know and I would think of a suitably plausible academic excuse as to why I did not want to go out with them again. While I cannot say for sure that every officer I spent a shift with *enjoyed* the experience – they almost universally claimed to do so. Furthermore**, t**he effort in establishing myself within the both the neighbourhood and patrol teams meant that when it came time for me to try to gain access to interviews I further benefited from already being a known, and to some extent trusted, quantity around the team. Though the practicalities of arranging interviews proved more troubling than finding volunteers, as discussed below.

Overall, obtaining meaningful access was a continual process but that process was certainly helped by my official affiliation with the N8 PRP and their prior agreement with the force. That initial access placed me in something of a privileged position and it was further cemented by the fact that I simply got on well with my main gatekeeper and obtained their backing for my own vision of the project. However, when transitioning into 'the field' and attempting to imbed myself within the teams, my experience became much more like that of any other 'outsider' trying to navigate a new environment. Consideration will now turn to the constituent parts of my ethnographic approach and reflections on the specifics of how these were carried out.

4.5.3 Undertaking observation of uniformed, frontline police work

Despite the borrowed legitimacy of my West Yorkshire Police identification card, which I wore on a lanyard during 700 hundred hours of observations, there were a fair few things which identified me as an outsider to the teams in which I was imbedded. Some of these were most apparent when in the various stations I spent time in, away from the eyes of the public, and others came more to the fore when at active incidents, but all proved a useful reminder to myself of the role I occupied. How others would perceive me is something that I thought much

about when first entering the field. Indeed, I possibly overthought it. Upon entering the field I soon realised, in accordance with Geertz (1998) that ethnography is more art than science and it is always individualised in the implementation. As such, I adopted the approach which I felt fit best with my 'character' or how I thought I could present myself in the most genuine but effective way throughout the extended fieldwork (Goffman, 1959). In sticking to my civilian clothes, similar to the business casual clothing I would teach in during my 'day job', I stood in stark contrast to the officers I was with. This was heightened further by my lack of stab vest but even the smallest details, like the fact my ID card was orange instead of blue, set me apart. Whilst I wanted to retain this part of my self and resist the full pull into being 'police', I was aware that I had to endear myself on the individual level.

I tried to strike a balance between seeming genuinely sociable and intrigued by the everyday work of policing, while also preserving the natural setting with as little interference as possible. My initial experience was much like that described by Bacon and Fassin where 'I limited myself to 'observing, listening, formulating a few questions, engaging sometimes in mundane conversations and, ultimately, trying to comprehend what was going on'. (Bacon 2017: 85, quoting Fassin 2013: 24). This balance was helped by the various stages that I occupied throughout a shift and the shifting performances that each demanded (Goffman, 1959). The common first stage for each observation was the pre-briefing minutes following my arrival where I would generally check in with officers I had already been out with until it came time to shuffle in. During the briefing itself I tried to sit to the side of the room but was, more frequently as time went on, dragged into the muddle of PCs by some friendly officer I had been out with before as they asked how I was getting on. It was in briefing where I would be allocated to an officer, or two on nights. If I had not been out with the officer before, I would make the effort to try and grab them for a few minutes to chat through the project more as well as making an act of 'getting the [ethics] paperwork out of the way.' Beyond that – depending on the availability of vehicles – it was either straight out into the world or hanging around for some time in my apparently disinterested office state as I, somewhat guiltily, perfected the art of eavesdropping. The walk, or occasional run, to the police vehicle of choice for the shift, either a van or car of varying make, with a new officer was the prelude to the most important stage of all for my own performance. If we had not already been deployed from briefing to some ongoing emergency which required the officers' focus, it was the first real chance we had to chat one to one about anything and everything. My observations with PCSOs followed much

the same pattern but instead of walking to a vehicle we simply walked out of the station and commenced their foot patrol while working through the day's logs.

With the research formalities out of the way, I inevitability ended up searching for an informal hook on which to start developing some understanding of them, and reveal more of myself, outside of the research context in order to develop a rapport (Ryan and Dundon 2008). As I asked them about their lives beyond policing they inevitably, perhaps more out of politeness than interest, asked questions about me as a person and just what exactly I did for my day job which served as a nice shift into my research in a more natural way. I sought to present a version of myself that drew on the authority of my institution and apparent expertise – such as emphasising the fact that I was balancing various responsibilities with the research– to present the image of a professional who had made the active choice to 'put in the time' to understand their world (Neal and Walters, 2006). Furthermore, I would mention my previous years in various departments of the civil service and working within parliament to try to distance myself from their image of being a 'student' and somehow gain some legitimacy in the process. Yet, at the same time I offered myself up as a naive newcomer to the world of frontline policing. When officers would ask what I taught I would mention that one of the final year modules was called 'Policing' but quickly emphasise that it was more about 'history, structures and all that cause obviously the reason I'm with you is to learn about what it really looks like.' My approach seemed to work, at least during single crewing shifts, as almost every officer made a comment along the lines of this one by an experienced officer half way in to our first shift together in Lochee;

> 'To be honest when I heard that some guy was going to follow me around and write everything down I wasn't a big fan but you're alright. It's good having someone to talk to on days about shit too.'

These sorts of comments were made by most officers, even where I offered them an out for any future shifts together, though my apparent success might be credited more with being *someone* to talk to rather than being *someone good* to talk to. Even as the rapport developed I avoided asking general questions about BWCs, or anything else too intrusive, and instead let them either raise the issue naturally or waited until after encounters to get them talking about why they had taken certain actions within that real-world context. Such an approach appeared to both put officers more at ease and provided me with the most detailed insight into their own view of fresh encounters (Skolnick, 2011).

While I would rarely agree with everything my research participants would say I did genuinely get on with most of them which caused me some guilt as, despite my overt presence as a researcher, I felt somehow like I was in the role of conman (Pettit, 2011). As officers disclosed personal details above and beyond that which I expected, I continued to work to present the image I thought best suited to developing trust and obtaining the most accurate picture of their social world. Like Murray, who brilliantly uses Goffman's dramaturgical model to reflect on this process of managing different performances in conducting research, I felt myself to be; 'a spy, a shill, a go-between, and (consequently) a sociologist." (Murray 2003: 394). Such experiences seem common among policing ethnographers specifically as they, in the process of seeking to penetrate a suspicious new world, adopt techniques not dissimilar to officers spying on some supposed deviant group (Punch, 1989). While I was certainly overt in my intentions with the officers I was shadowing for each shift, the nature of their work meant that we spent a great deal of time interacting with either the public or, more rarely, officers from different units.

Interactions with the public generally saw my presence go unremarked as most of the officers would simply introduce me as 'my [their] colleague'. On the occasions where my presence did come up, I was most frequently taken to be a detective but throughout the fieldwork I was mistaken for 'the boss', a social worker and even a trainee police officer at one incident. Where, and when, appropriate I was able to explain that I was from the University of Leeds, researching 'police technology' which seemed to be a suitably boring notion for most of the people to enquire no further. However, I became more participant than observer on a few occasions, such as acting as the satnav for officers on single crewing or providing an extra pair of eyes when looking for a missing person. Such cases were not uncommon and while I was aware that in doing so I was certainly impacting the environment, to not offer up such seemingly mundane help while invading someone's social world would have only served to further label me 'researcher' rather than the personal image I was seeking to cultivate. Yet, not all my interventions into this world made things easier for the officers as my presence at this dropped 9s in Lochee (calling 999 and hanging up before explaining why) demonstrates;

> 'You're not bloody coming in here, I don't want you here and I'm saying no. Who's this [pointing at me] anyway? He isn't even in uniform, so he definitely isn't getting in.' Before I can muster a response, Nathan steps in 'He's with us and has as much right to come in to your house as we do. This is for your safety, what you think would happen if we didn't check out calls like this?'

The woman in this case was annoyed that two police cars had arrived in response to her call concerning a man being in her garden, which she hung up as he left. Eventually, the officers manage to get her to calm down and do a cursory search of her house to make sure everything was indeed fine, but the observed officer offered these thoughts as we were leaving;

> 'Oh! She didn't like you did she? Always nice to be appreciated, just imagine if we hadn't come to check and something had happened' the chat very much continues along those lines with the implication being that she was ungrateful, annoying and generally a waste of everyone's time. Back in the car with Nathan I start to explain that if my being somewhere is ever a problem I am happy to get out of the way and let him get on with it, but he is adamant 'Not at all, I'm not having her tell me what you can do. You're with us, you have every right to be there and we need to do our job. She doesn't have a fucking say where you go, not having it.'

This incident was my first ever shift out with this officer, and one of my first with the team, so I was somewhat surprised by the level of support offered on my behalf, not to mention the fact that I was then invited to the team's pizza night – following handover – and finally offered a lift home at a late hour. I declined both due to not wanting to impose myself into one of their few moments of down time at such an early stage in my imbedding within the team but the fact that this met with protest was a sign that I had either found the friendliest cops in West Yorkshire or that my approach was working. However, I felt uncomfortable with the fact that I had, to some extent, made things harder at this job and it was something I decided to try to judge in advance for future encounters. In a few situations which followed, particularly when dealing with mental health related calls, I did choose to remove myself from the scene – sometimes against the wishes of the officer I was with – with further reflections discussed within the ethical considerations below.

4.5.4 Recording observations

Having offered up some of the experiences direct from my field notes it seems appropriate to reflect now on how these were generated and to break down in more detail what the balance of my observations was over the course of the fieldwork. The practicalities of resourcing in Ardler meant that I spent my time observing PCs carrying out response police work, despite the teams having a nominal connection to the local NPT structures. This consisted of four early shifts, five late shifts and one night shift for a total of around 100 hundred hours, with some of the

shifts being curtailed on return to the office and others overrunning. In contrast, the observed Lochee NPT was primarily staffed with PCSOs and the PCs on the team were able to carry out their neighbourhood policing functions with very limited engagement in any calls for service observed. Over the course of six early shifts and six late shifts I observed around 100 hours of neighbourhood policing, generally with PCSOs on solo foot patrol. The vast majority of my observations then constituted observing single crewed response PCs on seventeen early shifts and nineteen late shifts with the remainder being of, generally, double crewed PCs across fifteen night shifts. As with Ardler, some of these shifts went beyond their scheduled hours and others I departed early as officers returned to the station to hand over their vehicles to the next shift.

During my observations I carried a small notebook which I happily showed to officers at the start of the shift to give them an idea of the things I was going to record. I generally kept such notes limited to time, location and everyday factors such as the weather along with some simple words or phrases to jog my memory of the cases we had been at, items I ultimately determined as salient (Wolfinger, 2002). This was somewhat performative as officers seemed to expect me to be writing something for jobs, especially since they had to do likewise. I never wrote any analytical thoughts on these pages, avoided direct quotes and largely produced it for writing while officers were doing the same on their mobile devices back in the car. I even asked their opinion on my attempts at amusing summaries of incidents and generally received a positive response. Not only would more intensive, in the moment, note taking have been impractical or insensitive for most of the incidents we were at, I was aware that taking notes could potentially make officers feel uncomfortable and undermine the rapport I was seeking to build (Emerson et al, 2011).

Beyond these performative practices I was recording ‘mental notes’ for later write up and scribbling furiously on hidden pages to produce more detailed ‘jotted notes’ when given moments of freedom – such as when first back in the car (Lofland et al., 2006: 109; Berg and Lune, 2012: 231). My accumulated notes from the field would then, at the first possible opportunity, be typed up fully into detailed field notes and reflections. The first possible opportunity tended to differ based on the time of the shift, and the activity that had occurred during it. Day shifts generally provided the opportunity, if not the desire, to write them up immediately on retreating from the field whereas getting off from late shifts or nights did not always leave adequate brain power for the process and so I would instead write fuller notes on my journey home before typing these first thing in the morning. Furthermore, at the end of

every shift pattern I would return to my notes and consider the implications of that week for burgeoning analytical ideals as well as more personal reflection on the process. In generating this vast quantity of data, much like Bacon in his ethnography of detectives, I sometimes felt 'I was trying to observe too much, wasting time taking note of, who made the coffee, who made jokes and who made a show of their flatulence. But when the purpose of the research is exploration one must be careful not to dismiss or undervalue the little things that contribute to the bigger picture.' (Bacon, 2017: 86). Indeed, capturing the fullest possible record of the world of frontline policing, and reflecting upon it, meant that as the research progressed I was considering the broader context, emerging issues and identifying areas to follow up in more detail which allowed me to focus my efforts more on the use of BWCs as I became further immersed.

Field notes are, of course, not a verbatim account of everything that an ethnographer has seen, and many potential insights doubtless failed to make it from the field to my paper with such writings being a 'selective, subjective, and purposeful representation' (Bacon, 2017: 87). My own writings were revisited during my combined interview analysis period where sentences were tightened, particularly sensitive information was either removed or reframed and excerpts were chosen to highlight the analytical purpose required (Emerson et al. 2011). However, where quotes have been used throughout this work they are as close to verbatim as could be achieved, with some Yorkshire dialect words being replaced with that more natural to my own Dundonian ear. My extensive time spent within WYP allowed me to follow up with participants where I needed to clarify certain points and other than their bemusement at the things I found noteworthy they have responded favourably to my recollection of events.

Whilst participant observation is at the very core of ethnography, and indeed the distinction between the two is sometimes less than clear, it need not be the sole method. As my observations became a larger part of the research plan I was distinctly aware that they could be both complimented by, and compliment, a series of in-depth interviews with the police actors I was interested in. Furthermore, in doing so I also aimed to address some of the limitations of relying purely on observational data (Flick, 2004). Having considered in full, and reflected on, the use of participant observation within this study this section now moves to discuss the contribution of interviews as part of the same ethnographic framework.

4.5.5 Conducting semi-structured interviews

Towards the end of my observations in WYP, I conducted 28 interviews with PCSOs and PCs as frontline users of the cameras and Sergeants and Inspectors as their direct supervision. This was composed of 15 PCs, 6 PCSOs and 7 supervisors in total. In recognising that in-depth interviews are a 'a powerful method for generating description and interpretation of people's social worlds' (Yeo et al, 2014: 178) I saw the value of the method but also the importance of it complimenting, rather than supplanting, the wider ethnographic design. I was particularly aware that, as a 'core method' (Yeo et al, 2014), interviews can stand alone at the heart of a qualitative project or act in tandem with other methods within an ethnographic framework. In choosing to intertwine the interviews into my framework I sought for them to both inform, and be informed by, my understanding of the observations (Bryman, 2012). The timing of the interviews towards the end of the fieldwork had three main benefits. Firstly, it allowed for the identification and recruitment of appropriate interviewees during the observation period – indeed many of the people who I spent time with on observations requested that I come back to them for an interview. Secondly, the observations allowed for the refinement of interview questions around specific issues which had been identified in the observations as well as presenting an opportunity to clarify and fill in identified gaps present in those observations. Finally, by conducting the interviews towards the end of the fieldwork period I had become a known quantity around the main station I was operating from. Therefore, for many of my interviewees I had already established a rapport or at least broken down the initial barrier of suspicion through familiarity

There are many different types of interview style; from a rigidly structured interview of predetermined questions with no deviating, to a completely unstructured and free flowing conversation (May, 2011). The combination of structure and flexibility present in semi-structured interviews made them particularly suitable for the exploratory nature of this research as I looked to delve into the subjective experience of research participants and seek further clarification of points through direct questioning (Rowley, 2012). Such interviews were deemed appropriate for exploring officers' attitudes towards using BWCs in different contexts and their feelings as to the wider organisational purpose of BWCs. However, they also provided an opportunity to interrogate themes emerging from observations and to explicitly check frontline officer knowledge of policy surrounding BWCs with their observed usage in the field. In this sense, the interviews served as valuable means of data collection while also enhancing the reliability of the wider findings through acting as a source of data triangulation and as a

reflexive tool for myself (Flick, 2004). By working in tandem with observations the interviews also proved a means of interrogating how an officer's reporting and practice aligned or differed, while also providing an opportunity to reflect on my success in navigating the field and developing the trust required to gain these deeper insights into a new social world (Lofland et al., 2006).

Using semi-structured interviews helped to ensure that interviews of groups were comparable in scope, providing a consistency for later analysis, while also ensuring that – where appropriate – I could more fluidly adapt to a participant's response and probe these further (Arksey and Knight, 1999). This provided an opportunity for not only more depth but also potential to clarify – a useful tool in the jargon filled world of policing – as well as simply helping to put participants at ease by allowing for a more natural and conversational tone (Mason, 2002). This desire for a conversational and welcoming environment was a core part of my research design as I sought to put officers at ease with my presence in their everyday working lives to capture the most faithful picture of their social world. In this sense interviews provided another benefit as a data collection tool as they meant I could save many of my specific, and more probing, questions for the interviews and therefore be more natural during observations.

Each of the interviews was recorded, using an encrypted voice recorder, and these recordings were transcribed before being analysed. Beyond the audio recording I also jotted down short notes concerning matters that were not captured such as body language throughout the interview. Initial research plans aimed for around 25 interviews, but the goal was always to conduct interviews until the point of theoretical saturation rather than setting a hard cap (Guest et al., 2006). In practice, an adaptive approach was taken and so a greater number of interviews were ultimately completed with 28 being the final total – all officers or PCSOs within WYP. A mix of purposive and convenience sampling was used (Robinson, 2014) with the main aim being to ensure that the various ranks and specialties of everyday frontline policing in response and NPT teams were covered while care was taken to interview officers of different lengths of service within policing as a whole.

To cover these different roles I designed two similar, but distinct, interview schedules with the goal being to tap into the combined experiences of frontline users and their direct supervisors. The schedules were drafted to meet the refined research aims and were directly informed by data from the preceding observations, alongside the supporting theoretical framework which had been developed. I decided to interview several frontline users in both NPT and Patrol

contexts prior to interviewing their supervisors for several reasons. As I had built up more of a rapport with the frontline users, through my extended time with them, I was able to normalise the idea of 'being interviewed' before moving on to those I had less exposure to. Furthermore, the very practical detail that there were many more frontline users than supervisors meant that I was able to source participants more readily. Beyond this I was then able to use the initial experiences of frontline interviews to revisit my supervision interview schedule to hone in on emerging areas of enquiry before turning to that smaller sample.

This distinction between users and supervisors was made on the basis that their everyday working interactions with BWCs was shaped by their differing work activities but the schedules themselves were adaptable to suit the specific participants in each interview. For example; those PCs and PCSOs who were longer in service often had experience of previous models of BWCs or could draw more personally on their experience overall, while newer officers were less able to speak to such points. In beginning every interview with questions concerning their service up until this point I was able to naturally choose what sections were appropriate, or otherwise, to cover the diversity of participants while maintaining my more structured enquiries. Such differences were generally reflected in the length of the interviews as while most fell within the forty-five to sixty-minute mark, with the shortest being thirty-five minutes and the longest one hour and twenty-two, it was those officers who were newer to the organisation that generally had less to say. Whilst this was not a universal phenomenon, with some new officers being particularly verbose, it was a pattern that generally held true.

Having spent time with almost all the people I interviewed, either in the station or out on calls, proved to be a great benefit as they noticeably appreciated why I was seeking to do the interviews. Indeed, having imbedded myself within the differing teams in the same station and made the concentrated effort to build relationships within that time, I found that when it came time for me to source participants for interviews I had no shortage of volunteers. However, I ran into some more practical issues in turning these volunteers into interviewees. My established access proved to be a great starting point as local management graciously provided permission to interview the officers during their work time, and therefore reduce the potential negative impact on their own daily schedules. Yet, while this proved to be a great success for arranging interviews in the NPT, with their PCs and PCSOs being less beholden to the reactive call of the radio, it was not as seamless when seeking interviews from those officers responding to calls for service. The stretched nature of policing in austerity Britain meant that during my time imbedded within the Patrol team it was never at 'full strength' and was in fact frequently

hovering around the bare minimum deemed acceptable for covering the large area for which they were responsible. As such, I was very much aware that trying to interview officers in such circumstances could have a negative impact on the service being provided and so sought to minimise any disruption. Through my observations I noted that handover time on 'lates' presented the largest block of time where officers had handed on their keys to the next shift and so I took advantage of that period to source many of my interviews with response PCs. Officers seemed to notice my commitment to sticking through their normal pattern and seeking to suit them as much as possible with one officer reflecting following an interview which concluded around 1am on a Saturday late shift, following handover in Lochee;

> I'd love to read your stuff. Well, maybe the notes actually [laughing] bit long for me! But yeah, these other researchers won't know what it's like. You've been here, putting the hours in and in the thick of it. None of this interceptors best of TV shit, you've seen the crap jobs and what happens after. You've seen when the recording stops and what we need to say then. You've been out days, and nights. Without body armour too! The amount of us who've been to the bosses and asked why you've not got a vest on…

The fact that this comment, and others like it, followed on from particularly frank interviews gave me reassurance that my decision to embrace the traditional ethnographic framework and 'put in the hours' was not only allowing me to conduct interviews but also strengthening the claims to authenticity that could be made from them (Atkinson and Coffee, 2003). Other officers remarked that they would take part in the interviews 'for me' with some further explaining, after turning the recorder off, that they were only happy to say what they said because they trusted that I would protect their anonymity. Having reflected on the techniques and strategies for data collection, and the intertwined nature of these, this chapter now turns to consider more fully how such data was analysed.

4.5.6 Analysis

Explicit within the very design of the research, as an ethnographic case study, is a commitment to an adaptive and reflexive research approach. As such, in following the lessons of Becker (1970: 26-7), while I was continuing to gather my observational data I was conducting essential parts of the analysis on that which had come before. Consequently, further data gathering was influenced by this provisional analysis which helped to clarify and tighten the focus of the research over time (Boulton and Hammersley, 2006). However, rather than being a purely linear sequence where such insights neatly followed into the next stage, there was overlap as I

moved back and forth between collecting the data and analysing it, as is common within ethnography (Kennedy, 2018). This approach meant that while the vast majority of my observations were completed prior to my interviews, I remained immersed in the field and was able to follow up on areas of interest they emerged. After the observations had ended and the interviews were completed I proceeded to complete a full thematic analysis of the combined data, in line with the framework established through the iterative approach (Bryman, 2012). The bulk of this analysis, in the form of the verbatim interview transcripts and my final field notes, was assisted by the use of NVivo software. The software proved a useful tool for managing the quantity of data generated throughout the research as the identified themes were coded into nodes and ultimately organised under four overarching themes with the related subthemes embedded under each.

To reach the point where the four overarching themes of 'activation', 'awareness', 'purpose' and 'reception' were identified, and their subthemes developed, I followed the approach outlined by Ryan and Bernard (2003:88). As such my themes were generated from a combination of 'the data (an inductive approach)' and from my 'prior theoretical understanding of the phenomenon under study (an a priori approach)'. My research design was informed by previous contributions to the field of policing and my reading of the data was further influenced by my adoption of a theoretical framework influenced by the work of Goffman. Such a basis ensured that certain structures were inherently in place from the beginning and many of these were shored up for my interviews where I imposed more structure on proceedings as I developed my schedule, informed from the observations and my theoretical framework. Yet, despite these important foundations and later developments, most of my coding emerged from the data itself and as I conducted my full thematic analysis these began to form the developed themes.

Having identified the broad themes in my data I was guided by my refined research questions to those areas which proved to be the most relevant to the research. I then returned to these areas and further refined the themes, identifying the relevant subthemes and tracking the patterns between these. It was at this point that I reintroduced my dramaturgical lens, hoping to glean insights that might otherwise be overlooked and connect things further to my research questions, all while guarding against of not simply finding that which I wanted to see (Ryan and Bernard, 2003). In revisiting my data and developing the subthemes I began to move beyond simply presenting that which I had observed, or what was said in interviews, and instead was able to make connections which developed explanations for these things.

4.6 Research ethics

Respect for research ethics has been at the core of this study since the inception and many of the most significant design choices were shaped by ethical considerations. The connection with the N8 and WYP meant that there was an element of gatekeeper involvement from the inception of the project, prior to formal ethical approval from the university. However, contact with participants – and more local gatekeepers – was not made until formal ethical approval was granted following an application to the University Research Ethics Committee in September 2017. This application process was the culmination of almost a year of preparation and consideration of how the research design might be achieved while respecting and protecting all of those involved; from myself to the police officers and the public that were to be encountered throughout. The application set out the steps that would be taken, in accordance with the ESRC's core principles for research ethics, and following some minor edits based on feedback from the ethics committee, the final application was granted approval in October 2017 (ethics reference: AREA 17-019).

One of the most difficult dilemmas I faced was who should be considered a participant in the research, particularly given that my commitment to observations of frontline police work would bring me into contact with a variety of people in potentially sensitive situations. Ultimately, I determined participants would be defined as the officers of WYP I was seeking to observe and interview. This meant that the wider public would not be considered participants, even where they were involved in encounters with officers. This decision was taken for a number of reasons, but the starting point was the fact that the research aims were specifically related to officer's experiences, and their perspectives of any encounters were the focus of my observations. This approach suited my wider research design which, in the dated gendered language of Goffman (1967:2-3), was concerned 'not, then, men and their moments. Rather moments and their men.' By prioritising the encounter I sought to maintain as natural an environment as possible and so I was not seeking to purposively engage with members of the public during events, nor did my research questions require me to follow up after. Where the public engaged with me I committed to informing them of my reason for being there, though in practice the issue rarely arose and I let officers determine how they wished to introduce me as they thought appropriate. In more practical terms I was aware that there was no way in which I could claim to be seeking to limit any disruption while simultaneously informing every single person, whether they be a police officer from a different area or member of the public, of the reasons for my being present.

Having identified the participants of my research I was committed to ensuring they truly understood what the project entailed and actively wished to participate in it while also protecting their anonymity throughout. Informed consent was pursued at each stage of the project from initial email contact to local inspectors to more in-depth follow up discussions and finally when entering into the teams themselves. Much of how this was achieved in practice has already been considered above in my strategies for making my access meaningful but one of the most pressing issues I faced was a recognised criminological problem; one cannot assume that superiors have the right to allow their subordinates to be investigated (Hughes, 2000:241). I was aware throughout my movement from the centre to the local, and down the hierarchy of policing command, that at each phase I was in some way leveraging my previous connections to open up the next stage. To blunt the sharpness of these hierarchical pressures I offered each participant, regardless of rank or function, an 'out' in that 'I could make up a suitably scientific reason' as to why either they themselves, or their team, were not suitable for my research needs in that moment. To my surprise, not a single officer took me up on this offer and at no point during the research did anyone ask to withdraw from their commitment. In order to get the message out to as much of the team as possible I requested that details be filtered out at least a week prior to my arrival but in practice this did not seem to have occurred. Therefore, in each instance of entering a new team I introduced myself through their briefing, explaining my purpose for being there and then offered the chance for people to ask any questions. I then took the time to chat individually to as many officers as possible about my project before returning the following shift set when they had time to process this. Alongside verbally explaining the project and obtaining I consent, when heading out on observations or conducting an interview, I provided the participants with an information sheet which outlined the project purpose and their rights. I worked through this sheet with them before having them sign a consent form if they had understood and wished to proceed.

Protecting the anonymity of my participants was of the utmost importance to the research. Given the nature of the research and the methods adopted, with a focus on everyday workplace interaction, I was aware that some officers might adopt approaches or express opinions that could potentially put them at risk of professional harm. As well seeking to offer this protection to get participants on-board with the research I was aware that only in reassuring them of their anonymity could I hope to see the most natural behaviours (Arksey and Knight, 1999). As with my ensuring informed consent, my commitment to anonymity has been present throughout the entire research process and communicated to participants at each

stage. From initial meetings with gatekeepers to my first observation or interview with a specific officer I made it clear that while I would be jotting down real names and locations in my notes these would be pseudonymised upon writing up the full field notes. Alongside this I committed to securing all of my data as securely as possible, whether that be digital audio files or written notes, and disposing of original materials when the research cycle no longer demanded them.

However, there were some limits on the extent to which the anonymity of the project, and participants within it, could be maintained. Significantly, the nature of the study, with previously advertised statements surrounding the collaboration with WYP, meant that anonymisation of the force itself was not possible. As such, special care was given to ensuring that the districts and areas in which the research occurred were protected – though in practice this is harder to ensure within WYP than outside of the organisation. The nature of my access being provided by gatekeepers and the potential for officers in the teams in which I was embedded to talk to their fellows about their time with me, be that in interview or during observations, meant that there remained potential for officers to identify each other as participants. Indeed on one night shift, as home time approached and I was sitting around chatting with six officers, the conversation turned to 'how much longer I had left' and a few of those officers that I had already interviewed started to joke about how 'even I' had determined that an officer present who I hadn't interviewed 'was a waste of fucking space.' Ultimately, I accepted that there was no way to stop officers sharing their experiences or hide the fact that I was attending calls with them on a particular shift. Instead I reassured each of them, that identifying information would be removed as much as possible and if some particularly memorable and identifiable things came to the fore during my research I would not use that data – a commitment I have stuck to despite losing some rich data in the process.

4.7 Conclusion

Reflections have been offered throughout this chapter on each of the individual methods used and the steps taken to generate the richest possible data but this final section turns to reflecting on the overall limits of the ethnographic case study design. One of the most significant limitations of any case study approach is that despite narrowing the scope to the chosen unit of analysis one could never really claim to be able to discover *everything* of relevance to even that focused research area (Becker, 1968: 233). Matters such as the limited time and resource available for this study, as well as the fact that it had to meet the expectations of a collaborative

PhD project, meant that one of the most important tasks during early stages was to delineate between what the study was seeking to do and that which it was not. Indeed, the ability to focus in on a manageable case while illuminating the wider phenomenon is one of the main attractions in the design (Willis, 2007).

In practice this meant that while I was interested in encounters which involved both the police and the public, I took the pragmatic decision to focus on the police's experience of those encounters. Yet even here there remain various type of police-public encounter that I simply did not see during my observations as so many roles, such as public order policing, were beyond the scope of the research. In choosing to study the everyday public face of uniformed policing in West Yorkshire, that is their response and neighbourhood units, I ultimately had to ignore those units with more specialised functions. Such pragmatic decision making seemingly aligns with one of the main critiques of qualitative research more generally; an apparent lack of generalisability that then calls into question the legitimacy of the whole exercise (Lincoln and Guba, 1985). Yet, the goal was to capture exactly this sort of area of policing for it reflected everyday, uniformed police work and so best captured 'the circumstances and conditions of an everyday or commonplace situation' (Yin 2009: 48). As Brewer (2000) argues, such a case then allows for theoretical inference to build from explanations of phenomena into theoretically engaged explanations which can then shed light on other similar cases which develop themes of broader relevance (O'Reilly, 2009). With such theoretical generalizability, as Bryman (2012: 71) explains, the core question then becomes 'not whether the findings can be generalized to a wider universe but how well the researcher generates theory out of the findings.'

That the process remains so open to interpretation raises further questions of the quality of qualitative research. As Lincoln and Guba (1985: 290) discuss, these longstanding criticisms are largely based on the fact that qualitative research does not fit the 'conventional paradigm' and so questions surrounding its objectiveness, validity and reliability may not be appropriate judges of quality. Rather, the strengths of a qualitative approach are wrapped up in its ability to glean rich data from social environments that are unsuited to quantitative approaches in isolation (Wincup, 2017). These criticisms seem all the more fervent when one enters the world of ethnography as it is attacked for lacking methodological rigor (Hammersley and Atkinson, 2007). Indeed, the very methods of data collection used in ethnography have been accused of 'falling below the standards of science' (Brewer, 2000: 19). However, when moving from labels and standards of quantitative research one can still demonstrate the credibility of their

findings (Barbour, 2014). In outlining, in this chapter, the steps taken to generate the data presented in my findings it is hoped that the reader can be reassured of the rigorous steps taken to maintain the credibility of any results. The following chapter begins to present, and discuss, these results.

Chapter Five - Officer perceptions of the purpose of BWCs

5.1 Introduction

This chapter presents findings from the data to demonstrate how BWCs have been adopted and embraced by officers, seemingly in line with organisational goals, despite the established difficulties in implementing technological change in frontline policing. Throughout the chapter, interview and observational data illustrate how, having overcome their initial resistance, most officers have now embraced the cameras as supporting them in their role as a useful tool for 'getting on with the job' rather than acting as a disruptive or reforming force. The chapter begins by contextualising the challenges of implementing technological change in policing, as discussed in chapter two, with the specific reservations and concerns that officers had with BWCs as a potentially disruptive force for their everyday working lives. The importance of communicating that BWCs were implemented with the demands of frontline policing in mind is recognised, while the difficulties in doing so successfully are considered. The most recent attempt to introduce BWCs into WYP is contrasted with previous programmes and the different context in which this apparently successful rollout has occurred. The experiences of officers who had used previous models of BWCs are investigated and, utilising the concept of sociomateriality as introduced in chapter three, the importance of the material properties of the cameras in securing frontline trust are established. It is demonstrated that these properties, alongside perceived fairness of the policy dictating the use of cameras, helped to communicate that BWCs were not going to radically disrupt existing frontline working practices. It is then argued that this dispelling of initial fears set the stage for officers to begin to trust that they might benefit from BWCs and allowed them to begin to see the affordances the technology might offer.

Consideration then turns to how officers, having come to use BWCs, reported the main affordances offered by the technology and highlights how they were largely defined and used in a way which further reinforced existing work practices. Building upon the framework established in chapter three, it is contended that affordances offered by BWCs have been embraced by officers as they are perceived to strengthen their ability to perform 'real police work' effectively. Furthermore, BWCs were seen to afford officers the opportunity to navigate the difficulties of encounters with the public while proactively displaying their adherence to the rules of the organisation. It is suggested that these perceived benefits are heightened by the context of contemporary British policing, as officers reported BWCs

helping to support them during a time of strained resources and perceived scrutiny from within and without the organisation. This staging has implications for how the purposes of BWCs are understood and communicated to the public, as officers have embraced the cameras as being 'on their side' rather than extending the organisational disciplinary gaze or enhancing transparency and accountability. This narrative of BWCs being on the side of officers, questions the extent to which the introduction of BWCs has impacted the visibility of frontline police work. It is contended that BWCs must be understood in a sociomaterial context where the cameras appear to have become seamlessly integrated within officers' working lives but are in fact better understood as being 'imbricated' in a way that allows officers to retain some control over their visibility. Despite apparent organisational and frontline consensus over BWCs, the 'technological drama' is still unfolding as officers' trust in the cameras appears contingent on retaining at least some discretion to define their use.

5.2 Officer perceptions of BWCs: Change, cynicism and curtailed discretion

The difficulties in successfully implementing change, whether technological or otherwise, from the top down in a police organisation are well established in the literature - as considered in detail in chapter two (Marks, 2000; Barton, 2003; Chan 2007; Bayley, 2008). Such difficulties were further recognised, in the local context of this study, as officers reflected on attitudes within their teams and the wider organisation, though often with a sense that change would eventually be accepted:

> And suppose if we, police officers, do not like one thing then its change. We like everything just the same, quite happy. And then you throw something into us that's new and we hate it. And we despise it. And then six months down the line it's the best thing we've ever had, and we love it. It just takes us a long time to get used to things.
>
> (Andrew, PC)

This observation aptly conveys the response of most officers to BWCs, as an initial hesitance succumbed to a growing acceptance and eventual embracing of the new technology. However, it also taps into one of the core debates in the policing technology literature by raising the question of what is meant by officers 'getting used' to BWCs; are officers adapting to technology or is being adapted to them? Koslicki (2019) recently asked this question as she revisited Chan's (2001, 2004**)** and Manning's (1997, 2008, 2010) theories of police organizational culture to conclude that BWCs were, in her opinion, more likely to

reinforce existing practices than change them. Koslicki reached this conclusion by synthesising Chan's (2004) development of Bourdieu's idea of catalyst events with Manning's (2008) research to understand how the police might react to such events. This chapter explores a similar question but follows the empirical data of the study to explore officers' initial thoughts on BWCs and the changes in these, to understand why the cameras have been adopted by the frontline and how they have impacted everyday work practices.

While the introduction of BWCs was framed by an opening atmosphere of distrust, such suspicion towards BWCs was not a universal phenomenon. Indeed, the same officer who recognised the organisational resistance explained how his own initial thoughts on BWCs differed from most of his team as his 'response was pretty much, about bloody time...we're very backwards in getting technology' (Andrew, PC). Although he was in a clear minority of officers who were so open to the idea from the off, he was not the only one who felt like the police were behind the times with other officers observing that 'Doormen', 'Traffic Wardens' and 'Shop Security' have been using BWCs for some time. Even in the apparently positive embracing of the new technology, the cynicism of police culture (Caplan, 2003) was perhaps on show as officers convinced themselves that these other individuals and agencies had 'better kit' than them, despite little to no evidence of this being true. In terms borrowed from Koslicki's (2019) analysis of Chan (2004), this perception of being surpassed by other individuals and agencies might be considered a catalyst event that helped to set the stage both for the introduction of BWCs and the positive reception by some officers. However, it is suggested here that it is better understood as part of a wider dissatisfaction with changes not just in the internal workings of one force, but instead a shift in the dynamics of the visibility policing on an expanded public stage (Goldsmith, 2010).

Koslicki (2019:361), drawing on the work of Ericson (1989, 1995) and Goldsmith (2010), coins the 'tipping point hypothesis' to describe the established idea that the increasing prevalence of publicly captured images of policing, and the new social media platforms in which they are distributed, has challenged the ability of the police to tightly control their image. Such attitudes were reflected in this research as, beyond the pessimistic outlook on police equipment standards, there was an even more influential narrative that 'times have changed' and that the police are continually playing catch up to a public who has already grown used to filming encounters on their mobile phones (Sandhu and Haggerty, 2017). In line with the tipping point hypothesis, this expanded visibility of encounters was further compounded by officer fears of being caught out of context and being subjected to a 'witch

hunt' by a new, more diffuse media 'out to get officers' (Greer and McLaughlin, 2012; Brown, 2016). Such users demonstrated a connection with their initial thoughts on the use of BWCs and these perceived pressures of the contemporary policing, particularly the heightened scrutiny that comes with greater external visibility:

> At the end of the day, it backs up everything that you do. Everything we do, certainly as we're viewed in the media, most of the things we do, even if it is a good job, it's scrutinised by the media. Either you're not doing your job properly or you've not done it as well as you could have done. And at least the body-worn shows everything you have done, the decisions you've made, the choices that you've got in front of you.
>
> (Stuart, PC)

Despite being fresh in service, this officer's initial reaction to BWCs demonstrates how the negative feeling of being scrutinised, mostly externally but also within the organisation, had already impacted his view of the job. Yet, even in the context of this scrutiny seeming inevitable, BWCs were received more out of the resigned acceptance of their usefulness than an enthusiastic embracing of the technology. While this cynicism was even more apparent in most other officers, those few who did back the cameras seemed to do so out of a *belief* that it was helping to address some of the pressures of contemporary policing. Such officers explained that while BWCs were not overly welcome they at least provided 'something to hit them [the public] back with. I mean you get a bit of a smugness that I am filming, and you are like I am filming, you film I have no problem with you filming it, because I am filming it.' (Kieran, PC). Significantly, for these officers, BWCs were recognised as capturing encounters from their perspective and there was an expectation that any resulting footage would show them in a favourable light. Officers who considered that the cameras were 'always going to be a good thing' did so as they trusted that they would be useful for *their* duties with some reflecting that more reticent colleagues took longer to come around to this view.

Some of the officers who were enthusiastic about BWCs demonstrated a self-awareness of policing with BWCs as being all they had ever known, with a few intimating that their more experienced colleagues probably did not understand the benefits. However, a smaller number of early BWC users self-identified as 'technophobes' and had many years on the job before the cameras had been introduced. What united this seemingly disparate band of officers was a willingness to trust the intentions behind the introduction of the cameras as being good for

them. For some of the newer officers this trust appeared to come with little reservation but for experienced officers it was their confidence in their own abilities and ability to do the job right – and justify it – that allowed them to see the value. Yet, most officers interviewed and observed described themselves as lacking this initial trust, with otherwise confident officers feeling curtailed on what they could comfortably present on camera due to their fears of being 'caught out'. Their concerns over the increased public visibility, and external scrutiny, that they recognised themselves as facing were dwarfed by their cynicism towards the potential outcomes of increasing their visibility internally. The following three sections explore the initial fears and concerns of this larger group of officers, the importance of the material properties of BWCs in starting to win them over and how supervisors then attempted to balance the distrust in their teams with instructions to ensure usage of such a significant technological investment.

5.3 Contextualising officer concerns within existing organisational tensions

No policing reform happens within a vacuum. Manning's (1996) dramaturgical study of police technology demonstrated the importance of considering the stages leading up to the outcome of any reform, for the performance of officers using new technology might be so convincing as to present organisational change where little to none has occurred. More recent information systems literature on sociomateriality further highlights the importance of a historical understanding as past activities and experiences can condition how new technologies are initially perceived (Leonardi, 2011). Furthermore, any change must be considered within the context of the hierarchical structures of British police forces and the previous experiences of officers within that system. Such structures have historically led to top-down reforms which can appear to those on the frontline to be backed more with the threat of the stick than the enticement of the carrot (Davies and Thomas, 2008). These structures can problematise meaningful engagement with frontline officers who can feel voiceless within the hierarchy despite being the main 'face' of the organisation to the public and the main users of most new technology (Slansky and Marks, 2008). This has become more apparent since the rise of managerialism where attempts are made to quantify the performance of officers as a way of holding them individually to account and demonstrating collective efficacy to other internal and external audiences (Lanier and Cooper, 2016). Such previous experiences influence how users view related changes in technology further down the line (Leonardi, 2011) and may go some way to explaining the recurring theme that BWCs

were, from the perspective of officers, initially implemented as a tool to hold them to account.

While recognising that there was a diverse tapestry of opinions about why BWCs had been introduced and what they might achieve, the majority of officers reflected on their personal concerns over what BWCs would mean for their everyday working lives. The most common and strongly expressed concern was a general fear that the cameras would invite a 'Big Brother' like environment, with references both to Orwell and reality TV, with unseen management officers watching every move of those on the frontline. Such concerns resonate with the very arguments made for the introduction of BWCs as an accountability tool (Ariel et al, 2017), with the cameras coming to enforce a disciplinary gaze (Koskela, 2003). Significantly, these fears were most often tinged not with a disdain for the new technology in isolation but rather a concern, or distrust, over how the technology would be utilised by those 'higher up the ladder'.

Officer concerns over BWCs reflected a wider recurring theme throughout the fieldwork, an established distrust from those who identified as 'frontline' of those seen to occupy 'distant' leadership positions. This distrust was conveyed in a general bemoaning of the latest development, or often the mere rumour of one, from a supposedly out of touch leadership team and reflected a long perceived disconnect between the groups in wider policing research (Reuss-Ianni and Ianni, 1983; Rowe, 2006). Whether their complaint was concerning a new shift pattern, a change in policy or a new technology the rallying cry of dissent was that most senior management had forgotten what the job 'actually looks like' and therefore their ideas could not benefit the 'frontline'. During a rare lull on a late shift in Ardler, one experienced officer explained the reasoning behind his own initial feelings of distrust towards management where change was concerned:

> Well, some of these changes you wonder who they are for. Someone new comes in and you're going back to the same system you used before, but they've called it something different and then they have their competency for their next promotion…
>
> (Shaun, PC)

This sense that some, often quite substantial changes, are (re)implemented not for the benefit of the frontline but rather some pursuance of a personal goal such as promotion was a recurring theme throughout the study and set a barrier for the successful introduction of BWCs in the minds of many. While the perception that such reforms were being

implemented by people who would never actually have to experience their impact was a further annoyance for frontline officers:

> Its fine for them [management] to have these big ideas but they never have to see them through. When was the last time they got out and about, like going on proper jobs? …they need to get out on a full set with us – like you are doing – then they might know about what we really need and what we can actually do.

(Michael, PC)

Such seemingly negative attitudes towards management are a recurring theme within policing research (Reuss-Ianni and Ianni, 1983; Rowe, 2006; Slanksy and Marks, 2008; Reiner, 2010), but the strength of the initial suspicion towards BWCs was particularly intense. Part of the problem for officers was a lack of confidence in how BWCs should be used in individual encounters, with questions arising around the *need* to record. This lack of confidence fed their fears over how any footage would feed into the wider organisation and drove them to perform in ways which minimised the personal risks to themselves by limiting their internal organisational visibility. One experienced officer conveyed her initial concern over how she should use her BWCs and the impact this had on her practice:

> I think at first it was the case of right, so are we going to have this on all of the time? Then you actually get out there and you're thinking do we need to turn it on now? Should we have it on? Or should we turn it off? Should we turn it back on? A lot of thoughts at the beginning, mixed thoughts for me personally…Then you think maybe it's better not to get caught out so you wouldn't have it on so much even though you were doing everything right anyway.

(Joanne, PC)

An officer still in their probationary period echoed the sentiment, as they reflected on their more limited policing career and the worrying of getting things right while learning so much else about the job:

> Do you know, I can't remember [the reasons behind BWCs]? I think there was an email, but I can't remember much…. I didn't see the point. I didn't. I wasn't too bothered either way, I just didn't think it would be any use but then I was quite new

> at the time and, I suppose, it was another thing to worry about…Thing is, we actually do the job and they [management] could have explained it however they liked but you don't really know [how it will be used] until you get out there.
>
> (Kenny, PC)

The sense that BWCs were *another* thing to worry about was a common concern for officers and tapped into a perception that their views on the things that impacted them were underappreciated by those in more senior positions. That such inexperienced officers already perceived a disconnect between themselves and their senior management is perhaps less surprising in the context of the lure of police culture and the cynicism which surrounds it (Tankebe and Ariel, 2016**)**. Such doubts demonstrate that, despite the efforts of the BWC implementation team to actively engage with the views of those who would be the using the technology the most, existing tensions hampered the ability of officers to trust what they were being told regarding the purpose of BWCs.

Communication to the frontline was potentially furthered hampered by electronic communication fatigue as most officers admitted to not really have time to check their emails or the intranet. The difficulties in communication shifting to this more abstract form has been noted in other policing jurisdictions (Terpstra et al, 2019) but it has further implications for how new developments are received. For officers understanding of BWCs, it meant they were often relying on another's interpretation of the latest communication which created a space for misinformation and misunderstanding to grow. This misinformation was addressed somewhat when officers received their official training. Delivery of the training, in person and with hands on practice with BWCs, seems to have reassured officers of the purpose behind the technology. Such apparent success indicates a need to retain personal contact between groups in the increasingly abstract systems which constitute contemporary police forces (Terpstra et al, 2019). One officer noted how he 'didn't comprehend what we were actually going to use them for until I'd been on to the training course' (Callum, PC) and while a supervisor admitted that 'training is not one of the things that the police do great if I am truthful' (Kim, Supervisor), there was a sense from officers that this training at least clarified what the cameras were for. While the training was noted as helping to reassure most officers, they still harboured suspicions that there remained a hidden purpose behind the cameras.

Officers' suspicions of some hidden purpose behind the introduction of BWCs centred on the idea that they would be caught out for seemingly small matters such as swearing during an encounter or otherwise 'being human' – despite messages being filtered throughout the organisation that this was not the goal of the technology. That fears and doubts over the purpose of BWCs were so widespread seems to have been down to a recognition that it was not just another change that would be reversed later down the line. Rather, it was recognised as potentially being 'a gamechanger' for the organisational visibility of individual officers and their actions that would open them up to extreme scrutiny. The claimed neutrality, or objectivity, of the camera was in question. Most officers feared that BWCs would radically change how they were supervised, with a perception that the tools were introduced by management and that any benefits would be *for* management. Such fears must be understood in the context of the traditionally low-visibility world of frontline policing. This environment has allowed officers to retain high levels of discretion and exercise such discretion with little formal reviewability (Skogan, 2008; Slansky and Marks, 2008; Grant and Rowe, 2011). These fears proved largely unfounded during the research period. However, the perception that someone might someday be caught out 'from above' remained, albeit to a lesser degree as officers began to buy into the benefits of BWCs. The impact of this perception of being surveilled on the everyday labours, particularly emotional (Brunetto et al, 2014), of performing the role of police officer are explored further in chapters six and seven as the focus for this chapter remains on the initial barriers to adoption and how these were overcome. The next section considers how, given existing tensions and difficulties in communicating change to the frontline, officers came to believe that the cameras were for their benefit.

5.4 The narrative power of a camera 'fit for the frontline' in easing tensions

The first hurdle to be overcome for the implementation of BWCs, tied to the organisational tensions considered above**,** was the idea that it was being imposed from above by those who were in no danger of being inconvenienced by the change. Such an impression meant that most officers required further convincing that BWCs would not be a disruptive force in their everyday working lives. This was even more significant given that many of initial concerns with BWCs stemmed from a cynicism towards previous changes failing to take account of

officer needs. One experienced supervisor highlighted the scale of this task and the importance of addressing and overcoming initial frontline suspicion:

> I think it's like anything else, the police are naturally suspicious of anything new, especially when you are being recorded… the opinion has changed I would say to when they first came out, just because that suspicion has gone.
>
> (Kim, Supervisor)

This nature of BWCs as a 'recording device' was repeatedly raised by officers as marking their introduction as notably different from other developments and was indeed viewed with suspicion. This made it more important that BWCs were delivered with a strong impression that they had in fact taken account of officer needs but given the established difficulties in clear communication between different levels of the organisation, this was no easy task. Exploring how this message was successfully delivered has implications for understanding the perceived purpose and use of BWCs evolved in practice while also providing wider insights into navigating the complexities of implementing new technologies in policing.

Understanding the apparent embracing of BWCs, despite officer concerns, first requires contextualising previous attempts for only then can the full story of the reform be understood (Manning, 1996; Leonardi, 2011). While this was the first force wide commitment to normalising BWCs as 'core equipment' in WYP, it was not the first effort at introducing some sort of BWC. Several veteran officers had previous experience of various models, but that experience was almost entirely negative. The strength of this negativity was such that during the research period even fresh recruits had been made aware of the 'horror stories' of the previous models. These experienced officers were keen to offer up their views on previous models and how they 'weren't physically fit for purpose' – directly contrasted with their opinions on the model which was in use during the research period. Time and again the physical properties of older models would be compared to the contemporary experience and it was apparent that these properties were playing a vital role in how the technology was coming to be embraced by users this time around.

The model that was most frequently, and disparagingly, brought up by officers was the 'head cam' of a previous era. These '…original head cams were a large hard drive device, with a cable, a ridiculous headband and a camera that fitted in a loop on your head' (Andrew, PC). Concerns over these cameras ranged from the aesthetics to the practicalities with them not being 'the best-looking piece of equipment and a really big distraction as well' (Joanne, PC)

and leaving officers feeling like they 'looked a bit like universal solider' (James, PC). Such issues were focused on the material properties of the camera, rather than concerns over the reasons for their introduction, and there was a clear sense that the technology was abandoned by officers due to the physical problems inherent in the design:

> The camera on the side of your head, it is obviously quite cumbersome, not a very practical piece of kit because you have to, it were in like, I think it were in three parts. So, you had like the power pack and the hard drive and you had to wire it through your vest trying to get it comfortable, trying to make sure that the camera wasn't slipping about. So yes, that was definitely the worst of the lot.
>
> (James, PC)

The material properties of this model provided the opportunity for officers to refuse to use them in the way that management envisaged as the seemingly obvious flaws took centre stage in the technological drama (Goffman 1959, Manning, 1996). One officer could 'remember them kicking around the station for, at least three years…and very quickly dropped out of favour because they were just too bulky' (Andrew, PC). While others reflected on the bulkiness as a danger with there being '…too much cabling for it. And they didn't work. They were too bulky. They were dangerous because of the cabling' (Chloe, PC). Ultimately, they were deemed to be disruptive and ill-suited to the demands of frontline police work. Such readily apparent physical failings provided the perfect prompt for users to discard the head cams as ineffective and officers admitted to 'playing up' the unsuitability of the cameras to any supervisor who tried to encourage their use, though such attempts quickly faded.

While only a few officers had direct experience of utilising the head cameras, not one expressed a positive opinion of them, potentially framing an environment of negativity towards with the memory of such technology being constraining (Leonardi, 2011). However, these negative experiences were instead drawn on by officers as a direct contrast to the model in use, force wide, during the research period and served as a way for officers to express how they felt these new BWCs 'actually take some account of what the day-to-day job involves' (Kirsty, PC). This apparently small endorsement was a significant one given the initial fears that most officers possessed over the ability of BWCs to physically interfere with their everyday working lives.

The starting point of any comparison between the old and new models was placement, with officers reflecting that they much preferred the easy slotting of the camera on the chest. In

commenting on this, officers drew attention to the many perceived benefits of the new model with it being less conspicuous, less unwieldy, more comfortable over the course of the shift and – most importantly – more integrated into their existing uniform and gear:

> I've got very used to having a radio plonked on my stab vest. It's [wearing a BCW] only like having another attachment. It's not in my way. It doesn't affect you, there is no weight to it. It's not flapping around. It's not moving around. There's no cabling coming from it. You don't even sort of think, or realise it's there, really, given time. It's quite stealthy, I suppose. You don't know it's there.
>
> (Andrew, PC)

As well as the apparent seamless integration with the existing gear, the camera was also praised by officers for its simplicity in use with one older in service user reflecting; 'My issue comes, and I think a lot of it's my age, I am not very tech savvy but recording is fine because it's a button down and a button up to switch it off - even I can manage that' (Chloe, PC). Whilst a rare few 'super users' in the study offered up suggestions on backroom features or potential improvements they would like to see, most officers were keen to emphasise that they did not require, or desire, a more complex model:

> The current cameras that we've got are straightforward to use in terms of, you stick it on. You point the camera in a certain direction. And you push a button down. And it records. I know there's other functionality you can play back on it, the Stealth Modes and all this that and the other. We don't use it. It's nonsense to us.
>
> (Oliver, PC)

Whilst this user was particularly vocal in his opposition to more features the general message is consistent with what officers were looking for in the camera; as little disruption to their existing working practices as possible. The importance that officers placed in preserving their existing practices and seeking to minimise any time away 'from the actual job' i.e. being out and about, was a recurring theme of the research and, insofar as encounters were concerned, BWCs were not perceived as adding to their workload. As the cameras generally worked as intended, there was limited potential for officers to seize control of the narrative and point to their being somehow ill-suited to the demands of the job. In denying officers this opportunity, the materiality of the cameras faded into the background instead of coming to the fore of the technological drama, as experienced with previous models. As officers began to use the BWCs as part of their everyday kit they demonstrated that they were 'fit for the frontline' and

forced officers to reconsider some of their initial reservations. Indeed, one self-identified cynic reluctantly concluded that despite his initial feelings the ‘cameras are alright; I’ve become a bit of a believer I suppose’ (Shaun, PC).

The work of the BWC implementation team to engage with officers and draw upon the direct experience of the those within the team itself appeared to pay off in recognition that the BWCs not only had something to offer but that they had the potential to deliver it without further disruption. However, concerns remained and while officers were more willing to believe the cameras might of some use, the purpose of the technology and its place within the organisation remained a cause of some anxiety. That the material camera was sleek, unobtrusive and easy to use did not change the most important material properties; BWCs are sensors which record scenes and store those scenes for potential future audiences. As such they could be, and were, perceived as ‘recording devices’. The following section considers how the perception of who the cameras were recording *for* shifted and how while the material device remained the same, the perception of it changed from it constraining to affording officers’ the ability to perform in their existing role.

5.5 Maintaining discretion and the role of supervisors in developing trust

While officers’ opinions of BWCs, and the purposes behind them, were softened by the ‘fit’ of the physical camera into their work, doubts remained over the intentions behind the internal use of the captured footage. Such doubts centred on existing organisational fears of supervision becoming more pervasive and intrusive. Despite the reported physical integration of BWCs into officers’ uniforms, it was the very lack of the ability to completely ‘forget’ the cameras which seems to have most reassured officers as to their purpose and allayed fears. A policy context which retained officer discretion (College of Policing, 2014) and a system which required users to activate and deactivate the device facilitated an environment that enshrined the human agency of the officers far above that of any influence of the technology. Beyond this, officers were empowered to determine whether footage was to be deemed evidential, or otherwise. Therefore, officers retained much of the ability to define their encounters with the public as they had before. The biggest potential change to this pre-existing dynamic was, in the eyes of officers, the internal scrutiny that might now be placed upon them by their supervisors. However, this change was viewed with less fear than the more distant threat of ‘senior management’ viewing any footage as officers had a more established relationship with their direct supervisors.

This satisfaction and ability to trust their supervisors was seemingly based on the feeling that they were more connected to the everyday working pressures of frontline policing. The importance of such a feeling was further emphasised by the supervisors themselves as they talked about their need to stay engaged with the work of the officers under them. This proximity to the frontline meant that they had personal experience of using BWCs and most expressed the same initial concerns regarding the purpose of BWCs as their officers. While these shared concerns were largely unknown to those they supervised, they impacted how the use of BWCs was implemented in their teams. However, supervisors felt that initial pressures from above meant that they did not have the ability to communicate any reservations to their team or drastically subvert the 'whip';

> I mean the party line that I would present to the team would always be, right from the outset, you must wear it and turn it on - it's for your benefit. So that has always been my message to them but over time I've, I guess, grown more comfortable with it and can actually believe that myself now... I am comfortable now that it's not misused, the data. The suspicion you have of what is it going to get used for? Who is going to be looking at it? How are they going to be treating that? As time has progressed and you have seen that it's just used legitimately if you like, *for its real purpose*.
>
> (Kim, Supervisor)

> I don't know, for me I think I felt like I was going to be scrutinized all the time… Yeah and it is not that I do anything wrong; I think I just thought it would be Big Brother watching me all the time and I think I misunderstood and thought I was going to have to be recorded from the second I come on duty to the second I went off duty. Again, not that I do anything wrong, but I don't like to be micromanaged; I kind of felt that the camera would somehow micromanage me.
>
> (Rachel, Supervisor)

Concerns over the *real* purpose behind the introduction of BWCs reflected those raised by other supervisors and echoed the initial distrust communicated by their officers. The idea that BWCs were going to alter the structures of policing and open the frontline to further scrutiny from above was a pervasive one that appeared to be based on a hard to shake 'worst case scenario'. These shared fears are closely connected to the organisational context of policing

as a ‘punishment-centred bureaucracy’ (Waddington, 1999:301) where individual officers face being severely sanctioned for failing to meet the standards demanded of the role. While most officers were quick to point out that they were not doing anything wrong, and that they believed the same could be said for most of their colleagues, it was the *potential* to be caught out for something ‘stupid’ that worried them.

Partly as a result of the concern over the impacts of BWCs on the ‘dehumanising’ of internal scrutiny, supervisors described how they adopted an approach that emphasised process rather than outcomes when first implementing BWCs. They did this firstly by ensuring officers were simply equipping their BWCs. This allowed officers, and their supervision, time to get used to the device itself without fear of sanction for how they were using it by those higher up the chain of command. In both NPT and Patrol the supervisors emphasised how only as their own reservations shifted, did they feel more comfortable confronting those who were not embracing the cameras. Yet, even as they grew more comfortable with the idea of officers being required to use the cameras, reservations over the blurring of the longstanding definition of frontline and office-based understandings of jobs left supervisors uneasy about proactively ‘reviewing’ officer footage. In doing so they highlighted the unnatural intrusion of this technology into their world and their own feelings of discomfort with the notion of trampling over established boundaries of responsibility and oversight – areas of further analysis in chapter seven.

In adopting a phased approach to the rollout of BWCs, supervisors were able to present a ‘professional’ impression of compliance to one audience, senior management, without compromising the ‘human’ relationships they had cultivated with another, their team (Goffman, 1959). That that these different performances happened on distinctly different stages, with most senior management contact being carried out through emails, allowed for the ‘everyday’ performance of being an effective and fair supervisor to continue uninterrupted. Though, one supervisor observed that such performances were perhaps helped by the fact that senior management themselves are busy and have ‘likely long since moved on from caring too much about the cameras, they’re being used and that’s enough for them’ (Lawrence, Supervisor). Regardless, in constructing a performance which met organisational goals, without compromising their reputation within their own team, supervisors were able to create an environment which helped to address the distrust of their officers towards BWCs. As they had time to grow more accustomed to the technology, officers were able naturally discover what it afforded for their work in a way that made them feel like they were part of

the process and which slowly overcame their doubts. One PC recalled the initial introduction to BWCs as being quite broad in the reasons why they were being rolled out but emphasised the importance of promised benefits;

> I'd call them sweeteners, rather than the reasons why. They didn't really say right, this is why…but there was a sense of we need to be videoing now and the sweetener was if someone complains and there's nothing to answer to, it can be dealt with very quickly.
>
> (Leigh, PC)

While the initial suspicion of BWCs was not immediately dispelled by promised 'sweeteners', they helped officers to ease into their usage of the cameras. As officers familiarised themselves with the technology, they grew to trust its purpose and fears of 'Big Brother' proved to be unfounded while the many perceived benefits became apparent. Frontline supervision fears over their role being 'dehumanised' and a general concern with the constraining of discretion and 'automation' of policing as a result of BWCs (Bowling and Iyer, 2019) were curtailed as officers of all ranks began to see how 'human' the processes remained. In exploring how officer suspicion had been dispelled the most common theme was officers reflecting on a breakthrough moment where they realised that the cameras were not 'just another chance for someone to get promoted' or a 'attempt to catch us out' but rather that they provided tangible benefits for frontline users. The remainder of the chapter turns to consider the changing purpose of the cameras from the frontline perspective, how this solidified their usefulness in the minds of officers and how this has further shaped their use. In doing so it is demonstrated that BWCs have transitioned from being perceived as a supervisory 'surveillance device' to being on 'the side' of officers as they have strengthened officers' ability to perform their role without radically disrupting internal visibility.

5.6 Uncovering the affordances of BWCs

This chapter turns to consider how the reputation of BWCs, amongst frontline officers, transformed from intrusive inconvenience to indispensable invention. Understanding what led to this change provides insight into how BWCs have been utilised in practice and how new technology, more broadly, comes to be adopted by frontline users. In doing so, the factors behind the embracing of BWCs are illuminated to provide understanding into how attitudes have shifted towards the point where one PCSO now describes BWCs as:

> Something that can help us in times of need. Just makes life so much easier to have it, it really does. And I think there's been times when I've got two miles out of the station, into my beat, and I've thought 'oh I haven't got a body worn' and I've come back for it.
>
> (Jane, PCSO)

Ideas about what BWCs were 'actually for' started to change as officers recognised the affordances the tech provided for them. Recognition of these affordances spread via bottom-up tales of individual success which influenced the adoption of the cameras by framing their use as enhancing, rather than disrupting, existing work practices. A narrative of the usefulness of BWCs was established as stories of breakthrough successes were communicated *by* officers and solidified BWCs as being a tool *for* officers. The influence of this narrative is argued to reveal how each perceived affordance of the technology is linked to the value it brings to officers as individuals in their work, rather than concerns for the organisation or public. Stories of success in police-public encounters were communicated around two main perceived affordances of BWCs that reflected how officers were using them, as (1) a crime fighting aid and as (2) a tool for risk management. While a smaller number of officers reflected positively on the ability of BWCs to make individuals, and the organisation, more transparent, such benefits were offered hypothetically rather than drawing on the many personal experiences of the others in action.

The main affordances that were recognised by officers appear to align with the original organisational goals of introducing BWCs**.** However, despite this apparent alignment on the utility of BWCs, officers explained how their enthusiasm was conditional on their belief that their discretion, sometimes described as professional judgement, had not been compromised and that they could still maintain time 'off camera' during their shifts. As such, while the material properties of the camera and the social of the governing policy present a neatly imbricated arrangement (Leonadi, 2011), this imbrication should not be understood as a seamless integration. Instead the sociomaterial relationship between BWCs and policy in WYP has afforded officers the ability to continue to manage their (in)visibility within the organisation. The ongoing acceptance of BWCs by officers can be understood as being contingent on their continuing to possess the ability to distance themselves from the technology and ultimately retain their agency over its activation. The following two sections outline how crime fighting and risk management came to be perceived as the main

affordances of BWCs and considers implications this has for understanding their impacts on police-public encounters and claims of police 'automation' (Bowling and Iyer, 2019).

5.6.1 Crime fighting

One of the most frequently offered reasons for officer support of BWCs was that it affords them the ability to capture video evidence that, from their perspective, will then help to secure convictions. This was particularly welcome as it allowed officers to 'take action, as the video will justify what we've done and that can help to get some of these victims justice' (Interview, Stuart). Such claims are in line with the organisational goals of WYP as well as those of other forces in the UK (College of Policing, 2014) to 'secure best evidence'. Perhaps more significantly, these goals support one of the traditional cultural values of policing as officers perceive a new tool to help them in securing that exciting edge of the work which most resembles 'crime fighting' to protect the 'deserving' (Reiner, 2010). Indeed, officers' desire to secure results in areas deemed to be 'proper policing' was a recurring theme throughout the study with most commenting on whether a job was 'a waste of time' whilst en route and updating their evaluation immediately afterwards based on matters ranging from the excitement of the job to the location and their opinion of those involved (Klinger, 1997; Mastrofski at al 2002). Over the course of the research it became apparent that BWCs had become woven into these discussions with decisions to activate, or communicate the use of the cameras, often discussed in terms of these same considerations. This organisational cultural context is explored further in chapter six. The following section details how the cameras became so seemingly woven into existing practices despite initially being perceived as a 'game changing' surveillance technology.

Despite this displayed enthusiasm for 'securing justice', the nature of their teams meant that the officers in the sample had limited experience with cases progressing beyond initial encounters and their immediate aftermath. While some officers were able to comment on cases where they had received updates indirectly or through happenstance, most officers could only speculate on the effectiveness of BWCs as evidence. Yet, officers routinely discussed impactful pieces of footage which they claimed showed someone 'bang to rights.' Despite their rarely being told if such evidence had in fact proved effective, officers were keen to tell tales of footage which they were sure was helping to secure 'just' results. The importance of police storytelling for morale, comradery and as part of identifying as part of a wider police culture is well documented but BWC footage has presented a new tool for the

telling of tales (Fletcher, 1996; Van Hulst, 2013; Smith et al, 2014). The implications of this sharing of footage for individuals, and organisational culture, are considered more exhaustively in the following chapters but it is significant that officers put such stock in a relatively small number of 'confirmed' cases.

On the rare occasions where officers had, for whatever reason, obtained confirmation that their BWC footage had helped to 'secure a result' then the story of that success would inevitably be filtered through the team and held up as something to be celebrated. One experienced officer described a situation where he was attending a violent domestic incident with two student officers. As he and another officer were struggling to secure the violent male in the police van, the remaining officer was upstairs talking to the rest of the family. While she was talking to them "the three-year-old child said, whilst on body cam, 'daddy is naughty, daddy hit mummy'…" (Allan, PC). This experienced officer went on to describe how 'in the past' this would have gone nowhere as the woman then declined to go to court but in this case the video was enough to secure a conviction. His enjoyment in being able 'to do the job properly' was matched by officers with similar experiences and there was a clear feeling that the outcomes in such cases would have been entirely different without BWC footage. While such successes did not change views immediately, recognition of the affordance of BWCs in helping with 'crime fighting' was the beginning of a process of acceptance for even some of the more stringent doubters of BWCs.

The process of embracing BWCs was more readily evident in certain types of job and the earliest tales of success were apparent in a narrower field that been defined by officers as worthwhile 'police work'. Throughout the fieldwork, 'domestic' calls were almost universally described as being ideally suited for BWCs, though many officers derided many of these jobs as a 'family arguments' that were a waste of police time if there was no perceived risk of physical violence (see Myhill, 2019). Those domestics which involved an element of violence seemed to be deemed more worthy and the above domestic case was provided as a 'perfect example' by officers in the team who had no confirmed success story of their own. This sense of BWCs enhancing existing work practices was particularly apparent in cases where officers were dealing with 'regular customers' i.e. those homes which were seeing repeat calls for service, without any resolution. When responding to such calls over the course of the research, officers would often comment on the hopelessness of the situation and lament that nothing was ever going to change unless they 'catch them red handed on camera.' While the chances of this were vanishingly small it was apparent that

officers were taking hope that they could change what had become a familiar script for them on such jobs, particularly as the narrative of other successes spread in similar cases. Whilst the idea of BWCs being suited to domestic incidents was first introduced in policy, individual tales of success were a driver in further shifting perceptions of BWCs towards being a tool *for* the frontline as a narrative of their worth developed.

> I'd put it on definitely for domestic even if it's one where the person's gone. Because apparently, they say it's good to get the reaction of the complainant. So, if she's sitting there crying her eyes out or something it's just good for the evidential side of it…you only have to watch a few clips back yourself to know it's true.
>
> (Fiona, PC)

> I *think* it has started getting used for victimless prosecutions. So, you go to a domestic, the victim wouldn't want to provide a statement but they would confirm to you, on camera 'yes, he is bad news, done this and that' and you capture the state that they are in emotionally or physically, maybe suffering from injuries, and being able to take that evidence is massive for us. Gamechanger. Say look, this person is terrified of the abuser, we need to do something, I think they are too scared to do that. I *think* that is, you know, the main benefit.
>
> (James, PC)

Officer willingness to trust that BWCs capture good evidence was not based on official reports of success or organisational data on case progression. Outside of a few cases such as Allan's above, officers simply *believed* that such footage was being impactful, but that narrative continued to spread regardless of the lack of evidence in support of this belief. It was the ability of BWCs to capture scenes, rather than what any footage was ultimately being used for, which was seen as affording the ability to help fight crime. Indeed, as alluded to, the nature of reactive policing meant that, outside of capturing the emotional and physical state of those at ongoing domestics, it was rare for officers to have footage where they felt they had 'caught someone red handed' – as they were most often arriving on scenes after the alleged crime had taken place.

The problem of arriving after an alleged act had occurred was not present where these cases related to crimes committed against the officers themselves – so long as they had chosen to

record at that moment. In such cases, BWCs were described as really coming into their own as the affordances offered by the cameras moved from being passive, if effective, evidence gathering tools into actively supporting individual officers. One officer described in some detail an incident in which he was racially abused while responding to a job before explaining the impact that body worn had for him;

> I mean the body worn video showed exactly what was going on. It also hits the audio perfectly. It does work. Because, actually, she's on camera having admitted x, y, z of the offence and then she denied racial abuse. She said, 'oh I wouldn't have said that'. And it's like; yes, you did [laughs] because there it is.

He went on to explain how the lady who abused him was charged before reflecting on how different he feels the experience would have been without a BWC;

> The body-worn has just added that sort of nail in the coffin. Once upon a time, a police officers' word was just believed without question. Sadly, that's not quite the case anymore. And everything is evidentially tested. So, there is no getting out of it now.

(Oliver, PC)

Another officer described a case where he was assaulted while trying to arrest a man before explaining that;

> Prior to body-worn any evidence of that would have been a word on word allegation and there would have been very little chance of it ever going to court. Even if it did get to court the likelihood of him being found guilty would have been quite low if he'd denied the offence

(Ryan, PC)

As with capturing other evidence, these cases point not to the importance of officers seeing results, for they were generally not privy to the outcome or it had not yet been decided, but rather the belief and satisfaction that officers are obtaining from capturing evidence they could not have before BWCs. Officers felt that they were, self-evidently, gathering impactful footage and that such footage *should* be getting results. Whether or not BWCs had afforded the organisation the ability to present better cases for prosecution, officers developed a narrative that the technology was doing just that. This narrative firmly established the idea that BWCs, by recording the actions and emotions of individuals or simply cataloguing a

scene, were affording a new tool in pursuit of the crime fighting mission. Such an aid was deemed all the more important due to a theme that was present throughout the research and discussed above – times have changed. These changes referred to the police needing to adapt to lower budgets, as a result of austerity, and greater external visibility, as a result of a camera equipped public. This recognition from officers that they must adapt to what they perceive as being 'tough times' to be involved in policing, is essential to understanding why BWCs have been embraced in the way that they have. The importance of this operational context becomes all the more evident when moving from the affordance of BWCs as a crime fighting aid to their ability to help navigate the 'risky work' of frontline policing.

5.6.2 Risk management

The nature of policing as a 'punishment-centred bureaucracy' (Waddington, 1999:301) has already been considered in how officers initially reacted to the idea of being 'surveilled' in their everyday lives, but this organisational context influenced how the affordances of the camera came to be understood. This reception and use were, again, framed by the context of policing in a time of strained resources as officers welcomed any tool which would 'actually help' them in what they perceived to be an increasingly difficult role:

> I think a lot of it is to do with single crewing of officers as well that have that corroborating evidence when you are saying something has happened and the member of the public is saying, no, the officer is lying. To have that video footage is, you know, could be crucial to securing convictions or preventing yourself from malicious allegations as well. So, I think it is definitely a good thing.
>
> (James, PC)

The recognition that BWCs were helping to 'secure convictions' speaks to the crime fighting mission discussed above, but it is significant that protection from malicious allegations was given similar standing. Furthermore, both affordances are offered by the same function that caused most officers to be initially hesitant of the technology - the ability of BWCs to record encounters for future audiences. Despite officers often referring to BWCs as 'objective' or 'independent' witnesses throughout the course of the research, their own journey from fearing to favouring the technology shows that such an understanding is problematic. It is how footage is being captured and then used that has come to define officer understandings of the technology.

The most commonly expressed opinion from officers on the purpose and use of BWCs was to protect themselves from both 'in' and 'on' the job trouble (Waddingon, 1994, Sheptycki, 2017). On the face of it, this might sound like officers domesticated the technology for their own ends. Indeed, as discussed in chapter two, the potential for frontline users to subvert management expectations is well established – particularly in the historically low visibility environment of frontline policing (Goldstein, 1960; Rowe 2007). However, while WYP public outputs surrounding BWCs do not explicitly refer to their ability to negate spurious complaints, it is a potential benefit that has been at the forefront of academic exploration and recognised in national and local force policy (College of Policing, 2014). In this context, the idea of BWCs being used primarily to protect officers seems less a subversion of management intent and more the realisation of a long-planned outcome. The managing of risks was framed, as mentioned, by the 'risky' operational context that officers often referred to as they highlighted how BWCs were readdressing an imbalance in power that exists in police-public encounters:

> I've got you with me but just about everyone else is single crewed – imagine how you'd feel coming away from a job like that with it being your word against them? When I first started there would have been at least two of us there and we'd have each other's back but now you're more likely than not on your own so I suppose the camera is balancing that out a bit. As soon as we get back to the station, I'll be flagging up this footage and letting the Sergeants know about that idiot.
>
> (Jen, PC)

These reflections, following a particularly difficult encounter in a private home with a drunken individual who could not remember why they had called the police, highlight how the very context of austerity influences users' opinions of the technology. Observations on the value of BWCs from officers, who on most shifts would be responding to a sizeable number of calls on their own, were commonplace. Indeed, BWCs providing 'on the job' protection, and the accompanying reassurance that goes with that protection, was raised in every single interview and mentioned during almost every observation shift. Yet, aside from those few officers who expressed their enthusiasm for BWCs from the beginning, this sense of the cameras being useful was something that developed over time – even for many of those who had no experience policing before BWCs.

As with appreciating their evidential value, the perception of BWCs being tools that protect rather than expose germinated as early adopters started to communicate their positive

experiences to others. Concurrently, officers were being 'caught out' in situations where they had not recorded, leaving them to reflect on how BWC footage may have absolved them. In both situations, tales would spread and the narrative surrounding BWCs began to shift throughout the teams as the stories developed. As the research progressed more and more officers conveyed that they had swung from reluctant users to fully embracing the technology as a result of recognising the ability of BWCs to protect them from various risks. Such findings are consistent with other, largely survey based research carried out in the USA, which indicates officers grow to see benefits over time (Lawshe et al, 2019; Snyder et al, 2019**).** However, the nature of this study allows for a greater understanding of how these benefits came to be realised. As the interviews occurred towards the end of the fieldwork period, most officers had long since reformed their opinion and were able to reflect on how they reached that point. One experienced officer who was initially very much against BWCs, explained that while the evidential benefits had started to win him over it was the protection the camera offers that convinced him:

> I feel more protected. If anybody, these customers of ours, want to make a complaint against you, it's all on body cam. It's kind of a backup. It's kind of another colleague… At the end of the day people make complaints when you've done nothing wrong. Play it back. And there you go. Problem solved.
>
> (Allan, PC)

The ability of BWCs to 'protect' was particularly evident when officers were dealing with what they described as 'repeat customers'. These members of the public, though few in number, were perceived to make up a great deal of demand in the local area. Familiarity meant that officers often had a pre-existing idea of the risks these people might present, ranging from physical violence and spurious complaints to generally being a 'waste of time.' At other times, they might be unaware of the risks but have them explained to them by a fellow officer or member of staff who is more knowledgeable about the local area. Such cases help to shed light on the performative teamwork (Goffman, 1959) that goes on in the wider police organisation to protect the reputation of officers, and therefore the service. One such job occurred during a cold winter late shift in Ardler, where an officer had been conducting high risk missing persons enquiries for a female in her mid-teens, for around three hours, when a call came in that she had been seen in the town centre**.** The individual was not known to the officer personally but it quickly became apparent that she had something of a reputation in the area as the radio operator informed all officers that 'We know that she

makes things up for attention, so if any officers do locate her, then be aware and use your body-worn.' Such a warning was well received and prompted the reflection that there is ''probably not a clearer case for it, days gone by and you can bet no guy would be trying to respond to that on their own.' (Shaun, PC). The reasoning behind such thoughts, and how they impact performance on camera, are explored in chapter six but the officer went on to detail how dealing with such cases has really shifted his views on the cameras and how 'we [police] don't like change until we do'. While he confessed that he was not yet using the camera as management would like, indeed on that very shift the other calls had not resulted in him activating it, he was beginning to see it as 'invaluable for anything like that really, where you think someone is going to try to cause trouble for you down the road or you just don't want to be faffing around with he said, she said nonsense'.

Such cases indicate that while BWCs may have been predicted to revolutionise the scrutiny placed on officers, they are actively embracing the visibility they offer to manage risks that they might have previously had to expose themselves to or entirely avoid. In this way BWCs can again be seen as impacting the practices of officers but only in a way that reinforces their existing goals and work practices. Indeed, despite the many cases of officers feeling like the camera was helping to support them, such cases were based on the understanding that they were already performing correctly:

> It's like another partner with you type thing. It does make you think like that, well for me anyway, that yeah, I've got a camera, so I feel a bit more like this is just to go forwards and… it's strange really that, innit. I just think well if sommat goes wrong, I've got it on camera. So, weirdly, it's kind of a comfort blanket type thing as well [laughs]
>
> (John, PCSO)

The fact that this PCSO, recognised his strength of feeling was 'weird' did not stop it being a feeling that was reflected by his colleagues across different teams and functions. Beyond capturing evidence BWCs appeared to engender a feeling of 'support' or 'back up' in a range of situations by supporting an officers' account of an event. Indeed, towards the conclusion of the research there was almost no disagreement that BWCs were there *to help officers* and had proven to be invaluable as an 'an arse covering exercise' (Stuart, PC). As officers became more comfortable with being recorded, they began to view the camera as assisting, rather than limiting, their ability to act. As discussed, much of this change came from personal experience of malicious complaints being lodged;

> My main reason is that I have had a couple of complaints made about me and both times my body-worn has sort of just negated any complaints. So, without that, some people, you don't know who you are dealing with, and their reasons for phoning or some of their past police dealings, so it just, even if it's going to be a standard talk about something really minor, just have it on. I am not paying for the server fees, I may be recording something worthwhile or I might not, but I feel better about it either way.
>
> (Kieran, PC)

This officer was one who saw some value in BWCs from the beginning but still expressed concerns over their use being expanded and 'Big Brother' supervision trying to remove the 'human element' of the job. In such a context, his transition from wishing to ensure that the cameras are used only where 'absolutely necessary', to the point where you 'just have it on' might seem remarkable but for officers, particularly those in the Patrol team, it was a common conclusion to their BWC journey. Protection from complaints was both the most offered purpose for BWCs, from the perspective of users, and the one that they could most readily evidence as being achieved. Unlike the often lacking in evidence claims to evidential value, officers were aware of complaints made against them and aware of their outcomes. Supervisors were likewise aware that officers were recognising a welcome affordance of BWCs and connected this to their uptake;

> The stats show now that even the ones that ordinarily you would have thought to be the ones to be reluctant, they are turning it on as often as the younger ones now, they have seen the benefits themselves in terms of complaints and stuff. And it only has to get you out of trouble once, you think crikey if I had not had that on, that would have been difficult, and you learn from things like that don't you?
>
> (Craig, Supervisor)

This change recognised this supervisor neatly sums up not only the impact on complaints. though again that came to the fore, but rather the impression that has been left on officers where they have had a positive outcome as a result of BWCs helping them to manage risky encounters (Haggerty and Ericson, 1997). It demonstrates the transformation from distrust of the intentions behind BWCs to the faith that officers now place in them and the value that they see in their presence. The initial perceived risk of being recorded and watched by

management has been superseded by the potential of the camera to alleviate the more everyday risks of police-public encounters. As trust in the technology has been established, the perception of what BWCs afford officers has changed. Officers have learned not only to tolerate being recorded but to intertwine into their work in a way which first and foremost supports and covers them. While officers certainly recognise the potential wider benefits for the organisation and criminal justice system, they are far less concerned with the organisational cost:

> I'd certainly sooner activate it needlessly then there's some footage that gets deleted in 30 days' time, or whatever, rather than risk missing something that could protect me or enforce a case or whatever.
>
> (Lyndon, PC)

The perceived constant uncertainty of the job and the potential for every encounter to require justification now frames how officers perceive the role of the camera. The dominant view of the purpose of BWCs has evolved to the point that it is solidly about 'gathering evidence to help the incident and the things that *we* are doing. Not recording each other' (Joanne, PC). Alongside this, in both the NPT and Patrol contexts, officers had 'never heard of anybody getting in trouble because of the body cam…' and realised that while people 'have got this thing in their head that somewhere, someone is watching every video, which just isn't possible is it?' (Kieran, PC). Officers are utilising the cameras to support their, and the organisation's, position while having overcome their initial suspicions with little ongoing reason to fear that they will be 'caught out' for they have no sense of BWCs being used in a disciplinary way. Instead of exposing officers to increased scrutiny as a result of this potential expansion of visibility, they have managed to continue 'policing as usual' by recognising the ultimate affordance of (in)visibility that the current imbricated situation presents – a theme explored further in the following chapter.

5.7 Conclusion

In demonstrating their worth as crime fighting and risk management tools, BWCs were able to navigate a technological drama that began with a deep distrust of the intentions behind the technology. As familiarity and comfort with the technology spread and the impact on everyday frontline policing became clear, users transitioned from a state of suspicion to actively trusting the cameras to support their everyday policing performances. As more officers began to see affordances of BWCs for themselves, supervisors were able to utilise

them in their own performance where they needed to call out those lagging in their use. While the vast majority of users appear to have embraced the technology as at least being ‘useful’ many went as far to note that that they would now ‘feel uncomfortable going out without my body-worn’ (Erin, PCSO). A firm narrative has been established that BWCs are there to support officers in their everyday work and, for the most part, they are doing just that with limited disruption to the working practices of those using them. However, despite the eventual embracing of the cameras by most officers, there remain questions over how the presence of the cameras is impacting encounters with the public. The next chapter explores how BWCs have become more than mere observers to such encounters and demonstrates how officers attempt to manage their visibility at work.

Chapter Six - Frontline visibility in the age of BWCs

6.1 Introduction

This chapter continues to present and discuss the major findings of the thesis, moving from considering how BWCs were adopted on the frontline to exploring how the technology has influenced the traditional 'low-visibility' environment of uniformed policing (Goldstein, 1960). The reasons for introducing BWCs have varied over time and across different jurisdictions, as covered in detail in chapter two, but one of the most publicised and consistent was to increase police officer accountability (Coudert et al., 2015). Greater accountability was expected to be delivered by making officers' decisions and actions more routinely visible to supervisors. As such, it was widely anticipated that the introduction of the cameras would act as a compliment to existing internal procedures for scrutinising officer decision making. Such heightened visibility was further hoped to lead to officers and the public to 'civilise' their behaviour in encounters, in line with deterrence theory (Ariel et al, 2018). Beyond this, there were hopes that BWCs would offer police the capability to review and share footage externally, making the police as an institution more transparent and accountable though this new visibility (Sousa et al, 2018).

However, as discussed in the previous chapter, officers in this study have largely moved from perceiving the technology as being designed to deliver these accountability outcomes and instead now see them as being *for* officers. Indeed, despite manufacturer claims of 'world-changing technology' (Reveal Media, 2020) the perceived impact, for officers, was one of incremental change as they felt they could perform their role in much the same way while feeling more professionally protected. As established in the previous chapter, officers' initial fears and concerns of being watched and controlled have diminished in part due to the discretion they retain to activate BWCs. While this has been significant in securing and maintaining high levels of BWC adoption, it raises questions concerning how much the everyday visibility of individual officers has changed in practice. This question has implications for the impact on frontline police work and is particularly relevant given renewed calls, following the highly publicised death of George Floyd in the USA, for BWCs to be actively used in a way which achieves greater accountability. Such coverage is representative of a move away from seeing BWCs as a technological silver bullet (Koslicki, 2019) and highlights the need to look at the human practices in which the technology is bound up. The framework established in chapter three, and utilised in the previous chapter, allows for such an

exploration by considering the imbricated relationship between material properties of BWCs, the policy governing their use and the actual use within the everyday dramas of police-public encounters.

Consequently, this chapter adopts such an approach to explore how BWCs have impacted the organisational visibility of frontline officers. It begins by considering the policy context which enshrined officer discretion over the cameras and presents findings on the established narrative of decision-making behind camera activation. Building on findings from the previous chapter, it is shown how officers used their discretion over BWCs to limit the disruption to their everyday working lives. Despite a move towards recording more police-public encounters, large parts of officers' shifts remained unrecorded - tempering hopes for BWCs to revolutionise frontline officer visibility. However, a more measured expansion of this visibility is uncovered, with substantial implications for police practice. The implications of this increased visibility are then considered, including officer impression management strategies (Goffman, 1959) for different audiences as classic conceptions of 'front' and 'back' stage policing are revisited and developed to better reflect this new age of visibility.

6.2 Exploring officer narratives of activation across 'typical' BWC encounters

Given that officers broadly explained their eventual support for BWCs in terms of it being under their control and for their benefit (see chapter five), it is important to explore further how they are exercising this control to gain greater understanding into the impacts on their everyday work. As such, the following section considers how the resilience of officer discretion, despite evolving policy and changeable attitudes towards technology, has shaped the decision to use BWCs across a broad range of police-public encounters. The importance of appreciating the wide range of potential police-public encounters is reflected in the very policy which guides the use of BWCs. Lipsky's (2010) classic insights, with contemporary application (Rowe, 2012), tell us that policy rarely matches frontline practice; but such policy at least serves as an indicator for organisational aims and provides the context in which officers are *supposed* to be operating. National guidance instructs that BWCs should be incident specific and operate on a limited discretion model, where officers are *expected* to activate in certain circumstances but maintain the ability to exercise their judgement not to where they have good reason (College of Policing, 2014). Building on this, WYP's own policy provides more detailed direction to officers for the use of BWCs:

> There is an expectation that BWV will be used in every case where there is public contact for a policing purpose. This means where a degree of investigation or the exercise of Police powers is required, unless there is a good reason not to.
>
> (Internal WYP policy document)

This statement acknowledges the fluid and unpredictable environment that officers work in, the range of the police mission and the complexity of holding to account those on the frontline for their decision making. However, the same document proceeds to explain that this expectation does not extend to 'basic interactions such as giving street directions' but that in all cases 'cameras should be activated as soon as it becomes apparent an incident is starting.' Taken together, the policy indicates that BWCs are to be used for encounters that are in line with traditional ideas of the 'policing purpose' as crime-fighting (Loader, 2013), while also recognising that it will not always be immediately clear if any given encounter falls into this category. Significantly, the policy preserves the professional judgement of officers to justify their decisions made in the moment**.** The caveat that officers can offer good reason not to record, appears to maintain some of the unreviewable discretionary working world of frontline policing while also presenting a new layer of officer discretion to consider in the very decision to activate. Combined with insights from the previous chapter, the most pressing question of impact on frontline police work seems to shift from 'how are officers acting on camera?' to 'how are officers choosing to use their cameras?' Yet, while many studies have considered the outcomes of being recorded or advocated a move towards constant recording, fewer have considered officers' reasons for activation or otherwise (Lum et al, 2019).

Those studies which do explore the issue tend to be focused on quantifying activation rates (Lawrence et al, 2019), though the work of Newell and Greidanus (2018) is a notable exception for incorporating observational methods and exploring officer attitudes in their mixed-methods study. However, their work is lodged in an American policing context where 'many officers interpret the technology as, essentially, something to be used against them' (2018: 1572) – a state which the previous chapter has shown officers in this study had largely moved away from. As such, there remains a gap in our understanding of how officers choose to use their cameras in a British context and how this usage impacts their organisational visibility across their shifts. The following sections look to address this gap. Doing so suits an ethnographic approach that can explore the totality of an officer's shift rather than a narrower evaluation of what happens on the moments that are indeed captured on camera or otherwise made reviewable. Indeed, many observed interactions were unremarkable for the officer involved, completely unrecorded

in terms of the organisational record and dismissed as worth retelling due to the apparent banality of the experience. Yet, procedural justice research highlights how such seemingly unremarkable police-public encounters can have significant impacts on how the police are viewed by the communities they interact with (Bradford et al, 2009), demonstrating once more the importance of looking beyond those encounters which make the formal records.

An approach which looks beyond captured footage and administrative records appears all the more important given the imbricated material relationship (Leonardi, 2011) between officer and camera, as introduced in the previous chapter, which allowed for officers to move seamlessly from one encounter to the next, judging each in the moment. Officers were not bound by their previous decisions as they retained both material control over the activation switch and the potential to justify any lack of activation with reference to their professional discretion. However, the experiences that officers accumulate can influence how they perceive future encounters (Collins, 2014) – and while they *could* judge each situation differently it became apparent that certain 'typical' encounters were clustered as appropriate for recording and others were not. Understanding what makes an encounter suitable for recording in the minds of officers, provides insights into why officers deemed it important to keep certain interactions off camera. Such insights can then shed light on the impact of BWCs on officer visibility and the extent to which BWCs have altered the everyday experience of frontline policing.

The remainder of this section explores how officers determined whether an encounter should be recorded, revealing how this changed over time as a narrative of how and when to use BWCs spread but crystallised around an understanding of 'typical' BWC encounters as being in line with ideas of 'real police work'. The starting point for the decision to activate BWCs relates directly to discussions in the previous chapter about the growing acceptance of the technology on the frontline as officers overcame their initial concerns to see value in the cameras. Earlier in the research period, officers could complete a whole shift without recording a single encounter as they did not fit the narrow idea of what a 'BWC job' looked like. Indeed, these officers would often apologise that the shift had not produced anything 'worth recording'. However, towards the end of the fieldwork far more encounters were being recorded as the sense of what constituted a 'BWC job' evolved. This increase in activation was reflected on by supervisors, observed in the force's usage data and further reported in research of other forces and jurisdictions with checks on activation rates (Lawrence et al, 2019). As discussed in chapter five, growing trust in the purpose of BWCs allowed officers to consider how they benefited

from recording an encounter and this was reflected in how they determined what needed recording:

> Now, for me, the camera is for any kind of ongoing incident really, you would use them in more active incidents than you wouldn't. Then, should anything occur you've got the evidence of how you dealt with it.
>
> (Callum, PCSO)

> …but these days, if you are going to your typical 999 call, you're probably going to be putting it on, even if it might not be an emergency. If it's an ongoing incident you're definitely going to be putting it on. Whereas if someone just approaches you in the street, it's weighing it up. Someone might just be saying 'hi, are you alright? Are you having a good day?' It's gauging what is going on as to whether you think you'll need it.
>
> (Lana, PC)

While this PCSO and response constable might have very different conceptions and experiences of what constitutes an 'ongoing incident', they both revealed this to be the key consideration in the *decision* to record. Such views were common across ranks and roles, demonstrating the pervasive power of the narrative that BWCs were most clearly for ongoing 'incidents' where there might be some action or a situation over which the police would have to formally assert control. As BWCs became perceived to afford the ability to gather evidence and protect officers from complaints they were accepted as 'useful kit'. Consequently, encounters that were seen to potentially generate evidence or require protection were in turn reinforced as the most typical 'BWC jobs' with activating at such encounters becoming accepted and then expected over time.

The increase in usage of BWCs might appear to be a moment of policy and practice meeting, as initial ideas around cameras being for domestic calls grew into a much broader sense of 'active' policing encounters as officer views evolved and policy developed. However, a growing familiarisation with BWCs, in an American context, has been suggested to increase officer willingness to use the technology (Huff et al, 2018) and that appeared to be the driving force for increased activation in the present study. Indeed, most officers did not express what the official policy was or openly admitted to not knowing it. Rather, they had developed a sense of when it was useful to use the cameras by using the cameras. This learning 'on the job' is

consistent with how officers reflect on gaining their practical policing knowledge (Charman, 2017). Yet, while most officers appreciated that organisational expectations over activation had developed in line with their own, while maintaining their judgement, some felt their discretion was actively being curtailed:

> I think it's been a slow burner [the use of BWCs]. It's been a slow burner… I mean in the early days the advice was if you go to an incident then you put it on. It's your choice if you want to put it on. Whereas as time's gone further on, we're getting to a stage now where it's more you're told any interaction with the public, turn it on. As opposed to any incident. So, the amount of time you're actually switching it on has increased and your choice has decreased if that makes sense. So, you kind of, if you're speaking to someone then it's on. If you're not speaking to someone it's off. Simple as that.
>
> (Leigh, PC)

This officer identifies the key change for them as being one where they transitioned from *choosing* to record 'incidents' to *having* to record 'interactions' - with the implication again being that incidents were encounters which demanded action while interactions could be as simple as 'speaking to someone.' Such accounts, taken at face value, might leave one with the impression that BWCs have revolutionised policing. For, by removing the decision to record, while broadening the scope to cover all interactions, the expansion of visibility in police-public encounters might be secured beyond even the 'new visibility' of a camera phone equipped public (Goldsmith 2010). Yet, while increased usage did indeed become apparent over the course of the research, it was never to the uniformity put forward by this officer. Instead, even those few officers who professed a simple change from recording some to all encounters, revealed that their practice remained much more complex and situationally determined. Lawrence et al (2019) raised a similar point in their quantitative, American based, study where they found an increase in use over time but identified the greatest, and most consistent, increase to be for 'crimes' - particularly those involving violence. However, their choice of methods prevented them from exploring the more individual aspects which inform officer decision making (Lawrence et al, 2019: 352). The ethnographic methods adopted here allow for an exploration of some of these factors and highlight the individual differences in activation not only between officers but between different encounters for the same officer.

The resilience of individual decision making was evident in how the above officer later went on to apparently contradict the 'simple' process of determining to record as he described how he would not turn his camera on for 'what we class as a standard call maybe, you know, a low-level fraud or something like that. Something where it's not going to have any evidential value' (Leigh, PC). Even as officers began to record more, or even most, encounters they were still determining what value would be gained in activating their camera with a propensity for recording risky 'incidents' over more mundane 'interactions'. While the proportion of encounters recorded increased over the fieldwork period, it was apparent that officers were continuing to exercise their control to record what *they* deemed meaningful, with many police public encounters remaining unrecorded. Indeed, the use of the language 'standard call' indicates that a great many everyday 'standard' interactions continued to be perceived as not requiring BWC activation. Consequently, large parts of officers' shifts remained off camera which allowed officers to continue to operate under the longstanding 'low-visibility' (Goldstein, 1960) environment of frontline policing for much of their everyday work.

Encounters that were commonplace enough to seem 'standard' were broadly described as consisting of non-emergency calls with enough information present for the officer to perceive little personal risk or see enough evidential value to justify recording from the outset. These evaluations were not only based on the evidence of individual cases but drawn from officers' past experiences of seemingly similar encounters. Yet, the nature of officers' varying experiences and the different conclusions they would reach when dealing with similar situations, meant their control of the cameras did not always result in choosing not to record where the option presented itself. Rather, the power of discretion was mirrored in encounters where officers would highlight how they were purposefully choosing to activate their BWC, despite not having to, 'just to be on the safe side'. As discussed in the previous chapter, these officers who chose to err on the side of caution did so as another narrative had developed that the cameras could help manage the professional and personal risks of policing. Yet, even these officers continued to highlight encounters where they had forgotten or decided not to record, with no apparent repercussion from above:

> I generally try to turn my camera on at any job. Don't get me wrong I have forgotten to do it at certain jobs and some you think 'what's the point?' but, yeah, I try to. Now, even if I stop a car, I will turn it on, because you never know what you are going to face. What you think might just be a knock on someone's door or a standard log, standard job, could turn into something else or someone can make a complaint about

> you. So, I tend to try and turn it on before I do what I am supposed to be doing. As I say I have forgotten at times, but I certainly do try to use it every time.
>
> (Michael, PC)

This officer's experience was characteristic of attitudes towards the end of the fieldwork, as he admitted he *tried* to use it for all jobs but did not quite reach that point in practice, demonstrating an environment where individual differences remained despite an increase in overall recording. Again, much of the upsurge in use was related to officers increasingly utilising BWCs to manage their own personal risk as even a 'standard job' was noted as having the potential to cause trouble. Yet, despite such an increase, officers would speak of recording 'all' or 'most' encounters while simultaneously talking about those that they had either chosen not, or simply forgot, to record. This should not be understood as officers actively seeking to defraud, for most were quite vocal in their initial opposition to BWCs and had no discernible reason to pretend to have grown to like them. Rather, such apparent inconsistencies are a function of what makes for interesting storytelling and how officers come to perceive their own work as they focused on those encounters which were in some way dramatic or exciting (Van Hulst, 2013).

Officers considered themselves to be recording 'all encounters' that resembled 'crime fighting' or involved some element of predicted risk, whether it be physical or professional. Where they were not expecting any trouble, or aiming to explicitly gather evidence, BWCs were largely deemed unnecessary and the whole encounter was often derided as not being 'police work' and so did not qualify as anything more than a 'standard job' in the retelling. If these expectations proved true, the encounter was unremarkable and no longer worth thinking on. If they proved false, then the encounter was an example of the 'unpredictability' of policing and suddenly again became a worthwhile example for sharing. Most officers perceived the use of BWCs to be for them and so their recalling of any activation was directly linked to considerations of how they could benefit in recording. When recounting this process officers tended to present a straightforward narrative of recording most or all 'incidents' while avoiding the expansion of this to cover all 'interactions'. As experienced with the initial adoption of the technology, these seemingly clear categories were influenced by existing ideas of what constitutes 'real' police work. For officers, the 'typical' BWC encounter was one in which they were proactively investigating some sort of suspicion or reactively attending a call in which they felt they were going to exercise their powers or be placed at risk. In such risky contexts, heightened visibility was seemingly invited as acting to protect officers rather than something to be feared – an area

explored further below. However, even here there were contradictions and tensions within what might – to an outsider – appear to be incredibly similar types of encounter. The following section explores the difficulty of consistently categorising whether any encounter is going to be appropriate for BWC activation and problematises the narrative of 'encounter types' offered by officers, and reflected in policy, as guiding the activation of BWCs.

6.3 The significance of discretion for navigating the continued 'messiness' of policing

Officers described their 'ideal' use of BWCs across certain 'types' of encounter, largely in line with policy, but the nature of the working environment of frontline policing can make such distinctions messier in practice. The 'messiness' of police work is long established and intimately connected to the unpredictable breadth of the work, the inherent disorderliness in many calls for service and the limited ability for direct supervision of frontline police officers (Herbert, 1998: 354). The challenges of direct supervision are connected to the low-visibility environment of frontline policing (Goldstein, 1960), an area which might be addressed by the material properties of BWCs affording (Leonardi, 2011) the ability to make visible something approximating the perspective of officers. However, as established in the previous chapter, officers grew to perceive BWCs as being within their control. The importance of this perceived control was paramount for winning the support of frontline users but such discretion over activation influences how visible the everyday work of officers can be expected to be. As such, the impact of BWCs on frontline visibility is explored here not by considering the technology as an objective and fixed sensor but, building on findings from the previous chapter, by recognising how they are actively imbricated (Leonardi, 2011) into everyday performances of officers – taking on different roles across and within encounters (Goffman, 1959). Indeed, some of the contradictions observed around officer use of BWCs within this research, and the variable impact of the technology reported elsewhere (Lum et al, 2019; Malm, 2019), can be partly explained through an appreciation of this diversity of potential encounters that constitute frontline police work.

While the preceding discussions have uncovered how officers considered BWCs to be suitable for 'core' policing tasks, what constitutes such work has long been contested and remains the subject of contemporary debate (Loader, 2020). For officers in this study the everyday experience of policing occupied a vast breadth of situations that had little apparent connection beyond the urgent need for *someone* to do *something* (Bittner, 1970). As one officer in Lochee remarked on leaving the home of an elderly woman suffering from dementia – 'You wouldn't

put that on the [recruitment] ad. Didn't think I was joining to be a carer but who else are you going to call at this time? …not that you mind it for someone like her'. Such sentiment was commonly expressed with officers feeling like they were responding to matters that were the remit of other agencies but that – particularly outside of office hours – fell to the police to handle. Officer views on the suitability of BWCs for these different situations changed overtime but they broadly settled on the notion that BWCs were most suited to encounters that reflected the general idea of 'real police work' that officers had in mind when joining the job. Such views have been reported in other contexts (Gaub et al, 2016; Lawrence et al, 2019; Snyder et al, 2019) but this section presents novel insights into how officers simultaneously hold to a narrative of typical 'BWC encounters' alongside the seemingly contradictory notion that almost any encounter *could* become suitable. In exploring this tension, the wider value that officers place on their ability to make such decisions is revealed, with implications for potential future narrowing of discretion in policy and increased technological automation of BWC activation envisaged by others (Bowling and Iyer, 2019).

The idea of all encounters as having the potential to be 'risky' is consistent with the views of officers explored in the previous chapter, particularly their desire to protect themselves from malicious complaints. Yet, it was rare for most encounters to be prefaced with enough information to accurately determine the risks present. Instead, officers were continually considering limited information, reaching intuitive judgements and otherwise simply reacting to events unfolding in front of them. This uncertainty of encounter, and the perception that anything could happen at any time, was a unifying theme regularly expressed by officers regardless of their role. Response officers emphasised the hazards of quickly going from job-to-job with little downtime, planning or opportunity for reflection while neighbourhood officers emphasised the ability of the seemingly mundane to escalate with no warning. Common to all was a sense that officers needed to be able to exercise their control over these risks but whether BWCs were aiding or hindering this quest for control varied both between officers and across encounters. The unpredictability and difficulty of evaluating any given encounter revealed tensions in officers' claims to be able to accurately judge beforehand whether something was going to be a 'BWC job' or how much informed control they could exercise over the potential risks. While policy presents the decision to activate a BWC as being a conscious and deliberative process, in practice, many encounters required officers to make swift decisions that were often guided more by intuition and situational factors and which thus allowed for existing biases to inform the process (Kahneman, 2011). Yet, officers felt they

could manage this gap and judge each situation on its merits and *in the moment* as being part of what kept the job 'human' while also being key to their sense of professional worth:

> It should be down to the officer wearing the camera, not automated every time you go out. It needs to be your decision, though you use your National Decision Model like you do at every job. You turn up and you asses threat and risk and you go from there. You take that away and you think, what is even the point in me?
>
> (Stuart, PC)

This officer identified the art of assessing risks and deciding what to do as being at the absolute core of police work. Consequently, for them, not only should the activation of BWCs follow the same practice, it should in no way risk disrupting their ability to make these wider judgements. This importance placed on maintaining discretion in frontline police work was one of the most prevalent themes of the research. In line with established ideas around the perceived uniqueness of 'the job' by officers (Reiner, 2010), many expressed how only by regularly experiencing the reality of frontline policing could you evaluate whether a decision was the right one. The perceived unpredictability of policing meant that it was paramount that frontline officers maintain the ability to make important decisions and be given the opportunity to justify them. To even 'give off' the impression (Goffman**,** 1959) of automating any part of their role was perceived to be a move towards an unwanted future where officers would be unable to make their own decisions, leaving them deskilled, devalued, dehumanised and ultimately disinterested in doing the` job:

> I definitely wouldn't be a Response Officer if it were [automatically] recording me all the time. I probably would not really want to be an NPT Officer either because I don't want a video recording my actions every day, all day, you know? I'm an adult, I can make my own decisions. I choose where I go and what jobs I deal with. I choose how to handle them, and I can stand by that. A bit too big brother if it [recording] is out of my hands.
>
> (James, PC)

This officer, who had experience in both neighbourhood and response policing, captured the strength of feeling over the need to maintain human agency over BWC activation. Despite his strong support for BWCs, and even an expressed hope that it would help to catch out 'bad police', he was uncomfortable with the idea that control might slip further away from frontline

officers. Many officers expressed such concerns over what BWCs *might* become. These reservations were amplified by a distrust of managers' goals and longstanding doubts for the potential of meaningful and positive change for those on the frontline (see chapter five). The prevalence of cynicism in policing is well documented (Caplan, 2003; Reiner, 2010; Galovic et al, 2016) and has been considered throughout this study, but questions remain over how cynical talk reflects or informs practice. As such, there is a need to go beyond taking such cynicism as a cultural mainstay to be noted in passing (Turner and Rowe, 2017) and instead look at how such concerns constitute part of the wider technological drama of the introduction of BWCs (Manning, 1992).

The previous chapter revealed how, rather than cynically opposing change for the sake of it, officer distrust of BWCs was based on specific doubts and concerns which were blunted as a narrative shift occurred where the cameras went from being perceived as disruptive to useful. However, this apparent transformation was bound up in a context where officers could exercise control over activation which, in turn, allowed them to manage some control of their visibility. Ongoing fears of this control being removed – through technological developments or policy changes (Bowling and Iyer, 2019) - were raised repeatedly by officers and can help to explain why they were so keen to forward their own narrative of informed choice driving the activation of BWCs. In presenting the choice as a professional one, drawing on the same standards and processes as other police decision making, officers were able to convey the seeming reasonableness in their maintaining control over BWCs. However, concerns of control were not confined to officers seeking to protect themselves as even those who claimed to already be filming most public encounters emphasised that they deserved to be trusted to make the right decision for everyone:

> Well I record most stuff now anyway, but I think as officers and PCSOs you know that judgement is ours' to make. And I feel like we should be trusted with that judgement… there's been times where I've thought 'I'm not recording this. I'm not recording this because of these reasons, because of you know my ethics and my morals and my principles and the things that I stand for, no, I'm not recording this. And that's for me to justify to anybody.
>
> (Jane, PCSO)

This PCSO's concerns over BWC activation reveal how the perceived value of discretion and moments of invisibility in police work are not solely tied to maintaining the status quo of frontline officers as particularly powerful, low-visibility (Goldstein, 1960) street-level

bureaucrats (Lipsky, 2010) in exciting or 'risky' encounters. Rather, there was an acceptance that the nature of police work – legally intruding into private domains in a way that others cannot – means they are exposed to people in some of their most personal, and potentially vulnerable, moments (see Adams and Mastracci, 2017 for further discussion of the ethics of expanded visibility into private spaces). The work of PCSOs and neighbourhood constables tended to be more slow paced, with greater opportunity for such reflections; but the sheer breadth of calls that response officers were expected to attend meant that there was more crossover in experience than the different roles might indicate. In acknowledging this, officers expressed how it would be wrong to record *some* of the encounters they have with the public and, furthermore, that being able to make that decision was important for their worth as professionals while maintaining their more personal 'ethics, morals and principles'. While BWCs continued to be used more throughout the fieldwork, there remained situations where officers reflected on the deliberate choice to not record, often as a combination of what they described as their 'professional' assessment of an encounter and more 'personal' concerns. The following encounter was one such example:

> Almost immediately we get another call, this one also a concern for safety but in relation to a dropped 9s at an address where the caller 'notably slurred their words' while a child could be heard to be distressed in the background. Ollie scoffs as the operator mentioning the slurring – saying it implies a level of urgency and seriousness to the job that might not be anything, but makes his way there all the same. On arrival he explains to me that he won't be using his BWC here as he can't justify recording 'with the distressed child in the picture.' We get out of the car to find a laughing parent at the window who invites us up to see that everything is fine. Making our way up to the house we discover that the family are sitting around having a Sunday dinner …the Grandad, seemingly responsible for the slurring, has – by the sounds of it - had a few beers but the children are clearly well supervised as far as Ollie is concerned. We learn how the problem came about with a switch to a new phone – the 9 didn't work on the old one so they hadn't thought about the potential for the children to be playing with it and their Grandad thought he had suitably explained the situation on the phone before hanging up. Satisfied that things are in order, following a playful chat with the children, Ollie tells the family to enjoy their meal and lets the control centre know that things are fine. As we get back in the car Ollie offers up his final

> thoughts on the job - 'See what I mean? I knew that wouldn't be anything, but there go DCR trying to make it seem like the biggest thing ever. How is that police work?'
>
> (Ollie, PC)

The above example, in the early afternoon with an experienced officer in Lochee, again demonstrates the reluctance to record matters outside of an 'obvious policing purpose' but also shows the impact of the officer's identity on determining the boundaries of both that consideration and other questions of appropriateness. While the policy surrounding BWCs can allow for differences in activation, to deviate from the increasing norm of recording most encounters required officers to have confidence in themselves to make the right decision, but also trust in the organisation to treat them fairly (Schafer, 2013) if a problem was to arise afterwards. That any officers were willing to expose themselves to the *potential* problems that can result in not recording police-public encounters indicates there being some value in time off camera regardless of the risks identified by officers in the unpredictability of everyday frontline policing. At least some of this value comes from officers maintaining their image (Goffman, 1959) of themselves as trusted and competent professionals who are required, and capable, of independently taking control of situations combined with the need to maintain spaces where they can drop their most professional mask. As such, the fear of losing control of the ability to activate was not a simple material one around the technology itself (Bowling and Iyer, 2019), Rather, it was fear of losing control of the carefully constructed barriers present in their everyday work and no longer being able to maintain any stable stage in which they could feel 'human' as the lines between previously segregated audiences were blurred. The impact of such a blurring of audiences, within the encounters themselves, is explored in the next chapter but first, the ways in which officers sought to limit their exposure to multiple audiences are considered.

6.4 Controlling the frontstage

The many different arguments for BWCs as transformative technology were predicated on the cameras enhancing the visibility of the work of frontline officers. While questions remain over the impacts of BWCs there is, according to Lee et al (2019:7) 'little doubt' that BWCs have potentially expanded the visibility of policing. The assumption of greater visibility brought by BWCs might be explained by a tendency to think of public encounters as being policing's frontstage while considering the backstage regions as being physically segregated from these and consisting solely of fellow officers in neatly delineated spaces. However, a more nuanced

view of the different stages of police work can help to shed light on the variable impacts of new technology. As Manning (1996:61) set out, given the vast discretion of frontline officers, the apparent success or otherwise of any new reform or technology can only be understood 'in terms of the impressions members of the organization wish to convey to particular audiences.' This need to address *particular* audiences has grown only more relevant given the expansion of audiences that officers recognise as potentially being privy to their public performances, both within and outside of the organisation and across moments (Goldsmith, 2010; Sandhu and Haggerty, 2017). While there has never been a fixed back and front stage of policing, this section reveals how distinction between each has never been more fluid.

Goffman's (1959) dramaturgical metaphor was considered extensively in chapter three, but it is worth reiterating that successful impression management supposes a 'knowable' audience to perform for and that this is most straightforward when such an audience is consistent and contained. Where multiple audiences with potentially competing expectations are part of the same scene then the actors involved must determine how best to manage this. They might attempt to placate all, recognising that such an approach is likely to be less successful but could at least maintain 'face' for future interactions across all parties. Alternatively, they could seek to prioritise one audience and present the performance that is best suited to winning them over – while recognising this might cause other audiences to perceive the performance to be a failed one. Variations on both broad approaches were witnessed during police-public encounters and these varied impacts of performing on camera for the quality of the encounter are considered fully in the next chapter. First, consideration turns to how officers attempted to improve their odds of success in impression management by controlling the audience(s) present. To do so they had to develop strategies for maintaining distinct stages across the blurred boundaries of everyday frontline police work.

Sandhu and Haggerty have demonstrated how officers are aware of the need to manage their visibility, even before the advent of widespread use of BWCs, and outlined how the same officers would adopt different 'orientations' towards being filmed at different times (2017:81). In revealing how officers can hold seemingly contradictory views of being on camera, based on the perceived risks or opportunities of any given moment, they highlighted the need to develop a more nuanced view of video recording as an accountability tool. However, the context of their research was one in which officers had little control over the cameras as they were largely speaking to their experience of being recorded either by a mobile phone equipped

public or on CCTV. As such, while there are similarities with the present findings in that BWCs can also sometimes be either threat, ally or innocuous background object (2017:93), this element of control is key to understanding how BWCs have influenced the visibility of frontline policing. The importance of control for officers was most apparent in the distinction they drew between the feeling of recording, or being recorded, on BWC and the feeling of being recorded by a member of the public. Although one or two officers expressed serenity at being recorded by the public, most others raised objections. The most common of these objections was a desire to retain control of the physical space in any encounter:

> My experience of people recording on phones is they will stick the phone right in your face while you are trying to deal with someone that is being aggressive and, you know, obviously it is very intrusive, into your personal space and it just feels like it is an aggressive act to try and make you do something wrong.
>
> (James, PC)

By visibly interfering in an encounter, phones transformed from recording devices to threats to the established and expected interaction order of a police-public encounter (Goffman, 1983). In invading the physical space of officers, those who were previously deemed to be members of the audience could find themselves the new stars of the play. This idea of phones being wielded as a disruptive tool, by disruptive actors, was in direct contrast to the growing understanding of BWCs as unobtrusive and 'objective' objects (as established in chapter five). Indeed, BWCs were further described as helping to restore officers feeling of control over the 'objective' reporting of encounters:

> It can be quite uncomfortable because the footage that they are recording will only show it from their point of view…It only shows their subjective viewpoint. Whereas nowadays, when you get a lot of people sticking cameras in your face. 'You're being recorded' they'll say, but it just doesn't seem to bother me as much anymore, because I can say 'so are you.' Then you go through the spiel and you know you're properly covered with a true account.
>
> (Ryan, PC)

This emphasis of the 'subjectivity' or selectiveness of any public recordings was a common objection but alongside fears over the public selectively editing footage, officers expressed concerns of losing control of where such footage would be shown:

> I find it quite intrusive. PAUSE. It is not something, personally, I feel comfortable about. Especially the possibility that I could be on social media in uniform. Not from fear that I'm doing something wrong but not wanting it to be general knowledge what I do for a living.
>
> (Callum, PC)

This officer was concerned not with losing control of the narrative of their account, or being caught doing something 'wrong', but rather about having their private work persona spill into the public realm. While different in their focus, each of these concerns was related to control and visibility on the most explicit of policing's frontstage – encounters with the public in the public realm. Officers wanted to appear visibly in control in any encounter, they wanted to be assured that the encounter was captured from their perspective, and they wanted control over how that encounter would be reported. The 'new visibility' of Goldsmith (2010) was no longer novel for officers, but BWCs presented an opportunity for the rebalancing of some of their lost control by capturing a more 'objective' view of any recorded encounter. The potential of physical disruption and social media exposure remained but officers drew comfort from the fact that their account would be more 'official' and so most likely trump any 'amateur' footage. In essence, they had a new tool to help maintain their 'account ability' by leveraging the existing professional legitimacy of police systems to provide a credible account in a way which *appears* to satisfy the demands of accountability (Ericson, 1995: 137). Such findings reinforce how the early debates of the purpose and use of BWCs as either sousveillance (Fan, 2016) or surveillance (Brucato, 2015) devices (Newell, 2020:258) can only be met with an answer of 'it depends' as their function is bound up in their use. Such use is, again, intimately tied to the power that an officer can exercise over any given encounter and how convincing an 'account' they can offer for their actions.

When a police-public encounter involves only those parties directly related to the call and no outside recording is taking place, the most impactful decision when looking to control the visibility of that encounter is the activation, or otherwise, of a BWC. That is not to say that

activating the camera guarantees some expanded visibility but that taking the decision not to record is one of the clearest ways to attempt to limit the audience to those present by taking control of the scope of the encounter beyond the moment. The importance that officers placed on maintaining material control over the camera demonstrates not only the importance of that physical property but also the drafting of the policy instructions for the use of BWCs as ultimately resting within the judgement of officers. That BWCs appear to be a standout success in the ready embracing of new technology into frontline policing can be at least partly credited to the discretionary policy over activation which many jurisdictions have implemented (Willis et al, 2018). This policy has allowed officers to maintain their sense of control and given them the opportunity to manage their organisational (in)visibility. However, this has also allowed officers to retain some of their existing power to define encounters and manage some of the boundaries and expected roles of performers within them (Goffman, 1959).

The power of officers to define situations and influence experiences within police-public encounters was most apparent away from the formal 'law enforcement' aspects of the role and towards the softer order maintenance activity where more informal interventions tend to occur more routinely. Informal intervention is used, somewhat crudely, here as a catchall term for the vast range of encounters that fall outside of common conceptions of what law enforcement looks like while still calling on the police to 'do something' (Bittner, 1970). While no formal legal powers are expected to be invoked at the initiation of these encounters, they are more than 'basic interactions such as giving street directions' (Internal WYP policy) and generally help to keep the peace (Banton, 1964). They are the encounters that policing scholars classically identified as constituting a large amount of police-public contact (Banton, 1964; Bittner, 1970; Kappeler and Schaefer, 2018) and this remained true within these observations. Significantly, they are also the encounters that were most often deemed by officers to not *require* recording, unlike those encounters where it was expected that they would be invoking their legal powers from the beginning. Despite the differing starting point regarding the expectation to record, many of these encounters would unfold in such a way that demanded a more formal response. Consequently, as the divide between law enforcement and more informal encounters is not always clear at the outset, of importance here is the initial impression which sets the stage for the encounter. The following example is one where officers' initial expectations were met, and the desired performance was successfully delivered by all involved to present a seamless and unrecorded intervention:

> The New Year fireworks are a distant memory, but the celebrations have yet to slow down as the busy night shift continues around one of the 'nicer' areas of Ardler. On the way to the [non urgent] call, with the rain continuing to drizzle through, Kirsty spots a young man, bundled up in thick dark clothing, walking on the other side of the barely lit country road. It is an impressive spot, no one else had clocked and Kirsty and Hayley are happy as it has the added benefit of delaying the 'shit job' we were being sent to. The van swings around so that Kirsty can pick him up to 'give him a right bollocking'. Neither officer activates their BWC as they swing around, upon finding him or as they invite him into the back of the van for 'a chat'. Despite visibly being several drinks into his New Year celebration he presents himself quite calmly, reasonably clearly and – seemingly most importantly – politely to the officers. It transpires that he is around 18 years old and is drunkenly walking from one friend's house to another, in search of the next party. His 'plan' unravelled when his phone died and deprived him of directions. He isn't from here originally and doesn't know the area too well but decided to take the main country road as he 'thought it would be OK because I'm a runner.' Kirsty proceeds to explain to him just how stupid that sounds and how lucky he is that she spotted him now rather than picking him up off the side of the road in the early morning. He takes his chastisement without complaint and is offered a lift back to his hometown to 'sleep it off.' He pushes his luck slightly and requests to be dropped off at the party instead and, seemingly having passed the attitude test, the officers grant his request…after dropping him off Kirsty turns to me to explain how 'maybe that sounded a bit cheeky but that's what he needed to hear…Might not look so good if it were on camera, but you just need to talk to some people on that level'

The significance of the officer wanting to keep this encounter off-camera to talk on the required 'level' is explored further in the next chapter but, for now, this encounter is important for matters which are not readily apparent in the moment. The encounter was initiated by the officers and was framed by their idea of how it should transpire according to their own definition of the situation. No apparent crime was committed, no one had instructed the officers to make the intervention and it took place in an isolated location late at night. This set of circumstances resembles one of the most low-visibility (Goldstein, 1960) encounters of the entirety of the fieldwork with no instruction from above nor audience from outside to record the moment. As such, the decision not to record the encounter essentially

made the exercise of discretion within it unreviewable for anyone not present. However, the factors which influenced this decision were more complex than it not being an encounter for a clear 'policing purpose' as one of the officers explained later the same night:

> We didn't use the camera for that boy in the road earlier because there was no reason. Maybe if he had gotten aggressive or was known to us, we would have but he wasn't the type of person we need it for. It's a nice area and you are generally dealing with nice people. On a night like this, with a decent lad, you know he's just going to need some help home. Different story, I was on my own obviously, and vice versa with a male officer on their own with a woman. You've got to protect yourself; you know?'

This officer's reflections on the decision not to record reveal the range of considerations that cross her mind for *every* encounter and how these are not uniformly shaped by her own feelings of things being 'BWC jobs'. Rather, such decisions are framed by a range of factors from the setting, the people involved, the timing and, ultimately, the perceived threat to her. Her views on the significance of the 'type' of person resonate with her colleague's comments earlier in the shift as she reflected on the need to keep the station open in the area we were operating from at that point in the night:

> Well, we wouldn't want to close this one anyway. The people here are the ones who pay for the service. The ones we actually deal with don't pay anything. They say they pay my wages, but I pay for their house, food and big screen TV too. Even the ones who do contribute probably pay about a penny of my way wage. Give me a penny and you'll get the service, I say.

The above young man fit into the definition of those who 'pay for the service', largely by virtue of the festive timing, the location and, upon closer examination, his initial appearance. As such, the encounter was framed by the idea of helping him. With there being nothing to gain in this goal by recording him it was deemed that there was 'no need' to do so. With the camera turned off, and only those present to perform to, the officer was able to comfortably present the impression that she felt would best deliver the outcome she was hoping for. Her comment about needing to 'talk to some people on that level' demonstrated a self-awareness that her colourful rebuke might not be what many people would consider professional but it fit the demands of the present audience in the form of a drunk young man. By not having to concern herself with audiences outside of the direct encounter, she felt comfortable taking such an approach. Such ideas around performing for different audiences are considered

further in the following chapter, but it is significant here that choosing not to record allowed for the prospective audiences to be controlled and the visibility of the performance managed. In turn, by presenting himself as amiably recognising their authority while also being receptive to their desire to help, the young man ensured that the officers' initial definition of the situation was sustained. Such an outcome seemed to be beneficial for all involved but the judgements that these officers were making can be problematic for groups and individuals who are seen less favourably. Indeed, the understanding that officers have developed around the purposes of BWCs as being for *them* to gather evidence or protect themselves, discussed in the previous chapter, is significant in practice due to the way in which officers are evaluating these risks.

The focus on the imagined quality of a character based on where they live, or their outward appearance was a recurring theme of the research. It became apparent that officers' expectations of certain areas, and the people living in them, were influencing their decision to record as such traits were regularly offered as a risk factor. Indeed, contempt for the group that Reiner (2010: 123) identified as 'police property' appeared alive and openly offered as a justification for decision making rather than a shameful secret:

> As we pull away in the car Lana begins to chat about how happy, if surprised, she is that we didn't have to 'lock up' as it probably would have stopped us getting off in time with the sun already threatening to rise on our night shift. I find myself agreeing but joke that she could have just drove on by if she was that worried. Lana laughs as she explains 'Oh yeah, they'd like that around here, they would, but then you're letting them win. He was alright in the end but most of the people around here are scum. Just look around, we'd be better setting off a bomb and starting again…Obviously not *everyone* here is trouble, but you've got to watch out for yourself first'

This brief conversation reveals much about how the decision to engage and record a man on the street, in the early hours of the morning, in one of the 'rougher' areas of Lochee was because of contextual factors outside of his immediate control. While it transpired that he was innocently walking home after a couple of drinks, seemingly fewer than the above young man in Ardler, the decision to stop him was taken as he 'looked dodgy' and the decision to record the encounter was a direct result of seeking to protect against this idea of him as being potential trouble. The goal of the encounter was not to help him, as above with the man in Ardler district, but instead to prevent him completing or getting away with some imagined wrongful act. Such

perceptions of those living in certain areas are reflective of the 'class contempt' that Loftus (2009:183) and, more recently, Bacon (2017:109) found in their research into different areas of police work. While officers repeatedly described certain settings, and the people living in them, in derogatory terms it was more often the desire to protect from the perceived threats of any such encounters, rather than the hope of catching someone 'red handed', that appeared to inform their decision to record. Indeed, as with the Lochee incident above, many officers were happy to not have to 'lock up' and actively tried to avoid doing so on what they determined to be 'nothing jobs'. Both the above examples involve officers exercising their discretion to proactively engage members of the public but the goal, and consequently the starting point, for each encounter could not be more different. This starting point of disdain and perceived risk is particularly significant for it has a direct bearing on whether officers feel they need to record for themselves, therefore influencing how they 'act' on camera – considered further in the next chapter – and how reviewable the encounter will be in future for other audiences.

The decisions made in the lead up to encounters, such as if or when to start recording, are all the more important when considering the extent to which BWCs have impacted the overall visibility of frontline policing for such decisions are themselves contained 'backstage'. Consequently, they are unreviewable to anyone not present in the moment. The decision-making power of officers was most explicit on the shifts where they were double crewed as they actively voiced their considerations to each other, though during single crewed shifts officers often chose to talk through their decisions with the researcher. In this way, BWCs became part of the active routine of preparing to move onto the frontstage as officers considered what they knew about a situation, how they thought it might play out and how they could best navigate that. As observed by Turner and Rowe (2017), the power of officers' existing narratives of areas, people and 'types' of situations was evident in how their discussions and rationalisations framed their approach to jobs. That such discussions occurred off camera reveals how much control officers appear to maintain over their formal visibility. Indeed, officers could talk frankly amongst themselves off camera, decide on what to do and only then turn the camera on to capture the reality they expected would follow. As such, one of the most impactful ways officers had for managing their (in)visibility was the very act of classifying their encounters with the public.

Across the wide spectrum of police work only 'proper jobs' were seen to *require* activation, in the eyes of officers and so they could rationalise not recording other encounters by determining

they did not meet this threshold – such as the young man in the road above. In this way, rather than acting to revolutionise officer visibility, and therefore accountability, BWCs appear to have been 'domesticated' (Berker, 2005) into the existing everyday practice of frontline officers' decision making. In maintaining their ability to define the starting point for informal interventions, officers were able to continue to set the initial stage for such encounters based on existing ideas of 'types' of people and situations. As such, the overall visibility of police-public encounters may have expanded but much of the context of such encounters remained invisible and the potential for individual differences across officers and between encounters was stark. Yet, as established, officers increasingly claimed to – and indeed were seen to – record more and more of their everyday encounters as the technology became more imbricated into standard equipment and everyday practice (Leonardi, 2011).

6.5 Conclusion

This chapter has offered insights into how frontline officers managed their organisational visibility in a period where BWCs became ever-present – if not always on. It built directly from the findings of chapter five by further exploring the question of how the changing perception of BWCs informed their use. In highlighting the policy context which enshrined officer discretion over the material, the significance of the very act of activating BWCs was brought to the fore. It was revealed how officers constructed and presented a narrative of 'typical' activation that was growing more encompassing overtime. However, in practice, officers continued to use their discretion to activate BWCs in a way which allowed for a great deal of difference between both officers and encounters. Indeed, while echoing wider findings of a move towards increasingly recording encounters, large parts of shifts were shown to remain unrecorded and invisible on official records. Such findings temper existing claims that BWCs might revolutionise frontline officer visibility while reiterating the need to consider the context of encounters.

The inherent 'messiness' of policing was explored to reveal how BWCs take on different roles across and within the vast breadth of encounters which constitute everyday frontline police work. In doing so, the chapter was able to offer insights into how officers' value their discretion in a way which goes far beyond accusations of 'cynical' attempts to reduce the impact on their individual visibility in a quest to maintain power. Instead, a novel picture of the importance of human agency over the cameras was presented as officer accounts of decision-making being

the absolute core of police work were considered. The value that officers' place on the 'human' side of their job was uncovered and the importance of time off-camera introduced.

Having established the continued power of officer discretion over BWCs, and therefore their individual visibility, the strategies by which officers act to control the 'frontstage' of policing was explored. Ultimately, it was revealed how discretion around encounters, allowed officers to manage the extent of the increase in their organisational visibility by attempting to keep different audiences segregated. Consequently, this limited the scope for BWCs to radically alter frontline officer visibility. Nevertheless, officers recognised that the presence of BWCs still acted to expand the *potential* for scrutiny as they perceived their recorded actions as being more visible and open to questioning. This more measured expansion of visibility, whilst accepted, still had significant impacts on officers everyday working lives and influenced their experiences in and around public encounters. The following chapter turns to consider this qualified embracing of visibility by looking at the impact of BWCs in police-public encounters.

Chapter Seven – BWCs in police-public encounters

7.1 Introduction

This chapter concludes the presentation and discussion of the major findings of the thesis. It moves from considering the impact of BWCs on the organisational visibility of officers to exploring the influence of the cameras on performances within police-public encounters. There has been a great deal of consideration of how BWCs might impact police decision making and, particularly in the context of the USA, an expectation that police behaviour in encounters with the public could be improved through their being recorded (Pyo, 2021). However, research has generally looked to explore the impacts within police-public encounters by considering outcomes such as arrests, complaints and use of force as part of a goal to quantify 'improvements' in behaviour (Piza, 2021). The findings continue to be mixed with variation across forces even within the same national context of the USA where the majority of studies have been conducted during a time of heightened political interest in policing (McCarty et al, 2021). There are a growing number of ethnographic studies but they remain a small part of the literature base. Yet, the ethnographic method is ideally suited to identifying what is happening both within and around police-public encounters as they are understood as more than the rare moments of drama which require police action and the generation of formal records.

The chapter begins with the starting point of police-public encounters – engagement. It considers the differing experience of neighbourhood and response officers' engagement of the public on camera. Moving onto the impact within encounters themselves, public awareness of being recorded is considered and officers' strategies for managing this, to minimise disruption to their everyday work, are uncovered. The question of awareness is then turned to officers' experience of video recorded encounters. Ethnographic data is then presented to show how their emotion of being recorded changes across different encounters but also over time as BWCs open encounters to new prospective audiences. Finally, these insights are considered in the whole to demonstrate that while BWCs have not dramatically revolutionised policing and ushered in an age of automatons (Bowling and Iyer, 2019), the technology has had a substantial influence on the everyday work of frontline police officers by blurring the line between the frontstage and backstage.

7.2 Encountering the public on camera

It bears repeating that policing on camera is not a new phenomenon (Goldsmith, 2010) but consideration has moved beyond the sousveillance idea of the many watching the few (Mann et al, 2003) to evaluating, usually in the context of the United States, the impact of officers wearing and using their own cameras (Houwing and van Eck, 2020). While BWCs have brought a renewed and heightened interest in quantifying the impacts of policing on camera, there has been less consideration of how BWCs might influence those harder to measure everyday police practices (Backman and Löfstrand, 2022). This section, in step with the rest of the chapter, takes such an everyday sociological approach (Adler and Fontana, 1987) to begin the consideration of impacts in encounters with the beginning of encounters themselves – police engagement. This starting point for exploring the impacts in encounters offers novel insights in an area where the greatest and clearest divergence was observed between those operating within a neighbourhood policing environment and those working in a response team. Each type of team is taken in turn but the essential difference in NPT and response officers' experience of engaging the public on camera is explained in the differing capabilities of the teams to be proactive and to *choose* what encounters to initiate or get involved in.

While the incident specific, limited discretion, model of BWC policy combined with material control over BWCs (see chapter five) allowed response officers to justify not recording and therefore exercise some control over their internal visibility (see chapter six), there was less opportunity for them to not engage in an encounter at all. Most work for response officers was reactive - tasked and tracked from the control hub, meaning response officers were most often being directed by others from 'job-to-job'. While exceptionally slow shifts did occur for a particular officer – such as where they would be stuck on a constant observation or guarding a scene – the only routinely shared quiet moments on early and late shifts tended to be while processing prisoners at custody. Likewise, the middle period of a night-shift was the only reliable exception where officers could partake in 'nothing' due to an absence of demand (Rowe and Rowe, 2021). As such, while officers were able to choose which calls to 'shout up' for this rarely mattered in practice during the greatest part of their set. Resourcing limitations and the fear of being shamed by their teammates for being 'job shy' removed much of the decision making to attend incidents from officers. Furthermore, officers were aware of the impression management (Goffman, 1959) strategies that operators have long employed (Manning, 1982) to make 'griefy' calls sound more palatable or interesting and were therefore wary of relying too much on such information. While some officers were

notably craftier at ‘coasting’ (Miller, 2004) through their shifts and engaging in Cain’s (1973) ‘easing’ behaviour (Loftus, 2010 and Holdaway, 2016) there was little sense that this hesitance to get involved was due to a fear of being recorded. Rather, BWCs appeared to shift expectations towards greater involvement in situations that were previously deemed unsuitable for an officer to attend on their own.

The protective affordances of BWCs, established in chapter five, meant there were more encounter types for single crewed officers to confidently engage in and less opportunity to frame (Goffman, 1974) a potential encounter as unsuitable for solo attendance. Consequently, rather than BWCs resulting in the police shying away from encounters (Sandhu and Haggerty, 2017) the perceived protection seemed to increase expectations to engage where they might previously not have done so. This *expectation* to engage is key for, even in some situations where response officers appeared to exercise their discretion to engage, there was an imagined audience with demands on that performance, as the following encounter towards the end of a Lochee early shift demonstrates:

> Jack sighs as he spots the colourfully dressed man waving at all the passing cars and rather neatly swings the lumbering van around to pull up beside him – though the window only comes down after the BWC is on. It transpires that the man is, despite Jack’s fears, really quite stable and is simply looking for his hotel which is nowhere near this part of town. Not being overly familiar with the hotels of the city, a quick Google allows for Jack to pass on the directions and before long the man is gratefully on his way. With the window rolled back up, the BWC is immediately switched off – no script and no mention at all throughout the encounter. Jack bursts out laughing ‘That couldn’t have gone better could it?’ He goes on to explain how he was expecting some sort of ‘mental health job’ and would have loved to have just drove by to get off on time but you ‘can’t really do that when you’re in this [big van], can you?’

The officer in this encounter was not tasked to engage this man but he felt obligated to by virtue of the public location, the time of day, the inescapable police presence of his vehicle and the fact that he was free from other tasking. These factors cumulatively created an expectation of intervention, though this appeared to be supported by some level of concern for the man despite the jokes at his expense. As such, even where officers were exercising

their discretion to engage, such as with the man looking for his hotel, this choice was constrained by their existing tasking and the very expectation (Júnior and Muniz, 2006) of their role to be seen to 'do something'. Though some officers were adept at using their tasking to shield them from 'griefy jobs' whether that be the commonly witnessed delay in going free on the radio, or the rarer cases of driving through night-time economy areas with 'eyes shut' to drunken behaviour on the way to a call elsewhere. While broadly aligning with the findings of Wallace et al (2018) in the USA that officers were not put off from engaging the public because of BWCs, this work offers insights around how this is bound up in the British context of austerity and stretched public services. Overall, the nature of response police work and a workload that far exceeded the resources of the team to meet meant that there was less opportunity for observed response officers to 'pick and choose' their jobs or take time to be 'proactive'. Consequently, for most response officers' shifts, BWCs were of little consequence in the *decision* to engage the public for the time and place of their performance was largely prearranged.

In contrast to response teams, NPTs were predominately staffed with PCSOs which influenced the type of encounter they were permitted, and expected, to engage in. NPT supervisors were occasionally apologetic that the 'only' option was to go out with PCSOs as 'for all the will in the world, our ward PCs are largely desk bound' (Rachel, Supervisor). It is possible that some of these views stemmed from PCSOs being perceived as a lower class of occupation, occupying a different 'team' (O'Neill, 2017) but it was also communicated that PCSO work was expected to be a bit more 'boring' and potentially unsuitable for someone observing the use of BWCs. The implication from such statements was once again that BWC usage tended more towards the dramatic and exciting areas of 'real policing' that response officers were expected to face. However, an emphasis on foot patrols in busy areas meant that PCSOs often found themselves having to make unplanned interventions in situations of potential conflict. In any given shift they were likely to be approached by members of the public, unsolicited, for anything from a friendly but inconsequential chat to an intelligence gathering opportunity or a potentially physical confrontation. PCSOs emphasised the unknowable 'risk' of such encounters, explaining how those identified as causing the most trouble drew little distinction between the differences in uniform, and responsibilities, of a PCSO and PC. By being out on foot, in uniform, they were one of the most readily approachable faces (Goffman, 1955) of WYP for both good and ill. It was in this 'risky' and public facing context that PCSOs framed their use of BWCs. Yet, beyond shared concerns

over managing risk, there was evidence that PCSOs and NPT PCs were utilising BWCs in different ways than their response PC colleagues and that this was having a greater impact on how they were encountering the public.

Many conversations with, and about, PCSOs centred on their role as intelligence gatherers. The importance of this role to their identity is not a novel insight in isolation (O'Neill, 2017) but their use of BWCs around encounters was closely connected to it in a way not echoed by response officers. PCSOs adopted BWCs as a new way to generate intelligence by providing an opportunity to record individuals and activities without having to explicitly engage in any reciprocal interaction. Most PCSOs told individual stories of, and were observed, proactively recording people without engaging them in conversation but one NPT supervisor summed up the transformative power of the technology for intelligence gathering:

> Usually you walk around the corner and the kids go into starburst [run and scatter] but my PCSO's have done some really good work. With ASB kids, when we know where they are, they have had the body worn recording ready for when they walk around the corner. Then when everyone starbursts we can get some stills as to who is causing those issues and we can start to build up intelligence surrounding those people.
>
> (Rachel, Supervisor)

Such recording is somewhere on the border of 'incident specific', and arguably more covert than overt, demonstrating the scope of the technology to act as more than the 'objective witness' that officers often claimed when describing their adoption (see chapter five). Instead of objectively capturing encounters with 'ASB kids' as they would have otherwise occurred, BWCs came to the fore in such performances and influenced the very shape of the interaction – or lack of it. The affordance (Leonardi, 2011) of persistence, by capturing the image of those present for later examination, allowed the PCSOs to remove the unpredictability of a face-to-face encounter while still achieving their existing mission of generating intelligence to take back to their team and to feed into the organisation. Where PCSOs might have previously tried to engage, or even pursue, the individuals they were now content to 'play the long game and see what shakes loose' (Charlie, PCSO) from their recorded footage. That this was so readily offered up as a success reflects how the material technology was seamlessly integrated into the existing social world of policing - reinforcing the earlier finding that BWCs are seen as a tool for the police over the public.

The perception of BWCs being a police tool became increasingly dominant over the course of the study, both for NPT and response officers, and helps to explain why there was little evidence of BWCs causing officers to 'depolice' (Wallace et al, 2018) by withdrawing from engaging due to being 'camera shy' (Sandhu and Haggerty, 2017). Rather, the decision to avoid engaging 'ASB kids' was described as pragmatic one designed to improve results while also helping to avoid potential sources of confrontation – reinforcing earlier findings around how the technology was used in line with existing ideas of how certain 'types' of people should be engaged. Encounters with people labelled (Becker, 1963) 'ASB kids' saw BWCs take on the role of surveillance tool in the quest for intelligence in support of enforcement. Meanwhile, encounters with those suspected of or likely to cause 'trouble' for officers saw BWCs take on the role of 'objective witness' as officers sought to capture their 'good' performance on camera to counter any claims to the contrary. Then there were a range of situations deemed unsuitable for recording, where officers wanted to talk 'on the level' with someone they had an existing knowledge of and relationship with, explored further in the section below. These findings reiterate those of previous chapters around camera activation and highlight the need to consider the shifting role of BWCs across the vast range of encounters that makeup frontline policing. They further build on these foundations by uncovering how officers, within both response and neighbourhood contexts, perceive themselves as policing many publics (Fine, 2019). Yet, while these publics required different approaches and styles of engagement, the presence of BWCs largely empowered officers to engage confidently as their ability to define situations (Herbert, 1998) was maintained or even reinforced.

While BWCs were praised for offering a new avenue of intelligence collection, there is potential for the deployment of BWCs as proactive tools of suspicion to lead to an erosion of the police-public relationship for two distinct reasons. Firstly, by choosing to record *instead* of attempting to engage individuals, officers are making their suspicion clear without maintaining any potential for a positive encounter. By removing the potential for any positive encounter, and going straight to suspicion, they are demonstrating a lack of trust (Bradford, 2011; Tyler et al, 2015). This lack of trust can hamper the starting point of future encounters for all officers (Bradford et al, 2009). Secondly, there are significant ethical and legal questions around the use of the technology as a borderline covert surveillance tool. The national policy surrounding the 'normal' use of BWCs is based on their being an overt tool (College of Policing, 2014: 4-5) and their governance under the more recently updated Surveillance Camera Code of Practice (Home Office, 2021) is founded on the same basis. No officer was ever witnessed trying to

actively conceal their camera, but some recording for intelligence purposes appeared to stray from the guiding principles of the governing policy.

Legal scholarship is beyond the scope of this research but there was no sense from officers that their use of BWCs was wrong, highlighting an area which potentially requires clarity in law or training. Their ease with the use of the technology in this way also reinforces the importance of officers' perception in the deployment of the technology while raising the potential for this to clash with public ideas of what BWCs *should* be for. Where the police are seen to go against law, policy, or public expectations they are likely to experience reputational damage which can harm the wider police-public relationship and impact the starting point of future encounters for all officers (Bradford et al, 2009). Understanding the impact of BWCs on police-public engagement therefore requires an awareness of the local that has been overlooked in much existing research in favour of attempts to quantify and compare globally. In addressing the local, the subsequent section shows how the policies surrounding camera activation and an expectation of 'overtness' were enacted on the frontline. In doing so, the question of the borderline covert recordings mentioned above are revisited as the expectation of public awareness within more typically 'overt' encounters is problematised in practice across a range of encounters.

7.3 Public awareness of BWCs in encounters

This section moves from the initiation of encounters to explore the impact of BWCs within them; it considers public awareness of being recorded, how officers manage it throughout encounters and how this influences their performance. As established in chapter five, over the course of the study officers became increasingly accustomed to the prospect of recording 'at certain jobs' but this didn't result in their recording every encounter. Rather, some encounters were deemed to be unsuitable for recording on BWCs due to the very expectations of those being policed, as the following encounter early into a Lochee morning demonstrates:

> After some time chatting about what's going on with her – and her on-again, off-again boyfriend, alongside many failed attempts to get her to stop swigging from the bottle, my presence [as a researcher] finally is mentioned, which leads to the cameras being discussed for the first time… 'Oh no, you wouldn't get me talking on that [the camera]. You know exactly where I'd be telling you to go if you turned up with that on; fuck off [laughing]'

> …As we head away from the bench, with parting friendly shouts wishing us well, Paul is clearly quite proud as he explains 'That's exactly what people need to get out and see, you can't do a one size fits all thing in policing… she'd tell me things she'd never say on camera. She knows me.'

This encounter was emulated by most PCSOs covering the area who had built up trust with the woman, though she took exception to one whom she did not like and would not talk to. That individual dislike, and her wider views on being recorded by police, help to crystalise an important point that might be missed when considering only the world of response policing in a busy area; not all police-public encounters are defined by a pressing need to intervene into the 'unknown'. Likewise, not all police-public encounters are one off events, some entail relationships built up many years. Whether it be in the realm of community policing, or in a less busy area where response officers might feel they have more time to be proactive or simply respond to 'softer' calls for service, there are a range of police-public encounters which rely on the public *choosing* to engage as much as the officers involved. Although there was little evidence of BWCs resulting in officers avoiding encounters, as established above, there were incidents in which the public objected when they realised that they were being recorded.

Public objections to BWCs were relatively uncommon for, as with the wider literature, the public seemed generally unaware of their being recorded (White et al, 2017). However, even the smallest remark concerning BWCs could serve to disrupt the interaction order (Goffman, 1983) as a break from the expected normality (Misztal, 2001) of an interaction being bounded to those present. While there was no uniform reason for public discomfort at being recorded, explanations ranged from distrust of how the footage would be used to the house being too messy, they all spoke to a broader concern over a future audience watching the scene. Some public remarks were offered jokingly, others angrily but each served to bring the BWC to the fore of the performance. In doing so the BWC was transformed from background prop to the unexpected focal point of the drama, as with this call to a break in during the early part of a late shift:

> Grant turns on his BWC as we leave the car, and we soon encounter the caller outside their property. Before getting into the reason for her call he explains, while pointing to his flashing BWC, that he's 'recording on this camera here, just so you know' to which she swiftly replies 'oh, OK.' Things quickly move on to the details of the incident which essentially amount to local 'youths' being in the area and the woman

> believing they have tried to gain entry to the building – unsuccessfully. After obtaining these details, and judging the situation, Grant mentions that he is 'turning off body worn as no more value for the video' to which she, surprisingly given her earlier acknowledgement, says 'Oh, [laughing] I didn't know it was on. I look a right state too, I've just come from the gym!'

Having built up a good rapport with the woman, the officer in this situation was able to save face (Goffman, 1955) for everyone involved by simultaneously explaining that he had let her know and by joking alongside that she was a 'natural' on camera anyway. As such, and given that it was now switched off, the BWC faded into the background as the encounter was once again bounded to those present. Later, the woman explained her apparent lack of awareness at being recorded:

> During a quiet moment, as Grant is checking the property, the woman starts chatting away and I introduce myself properly as a researcher – not 'CID' as she had assumed. Given the relaxed mood at the scene and the fact that BWCs have already been a point of discussion, I ask her if she wouldn't mind telling me more about her not knowing she was being recorded - 'Maybe he did [let me know], love, but I wasn't thinking if I'm being honest with you. I just wanted to make sure the house was alright.'

This woman's explanation for her not registering that she was on camera was repeated in other encounters where officers remembered, or deemed it appropriate, to announce the presence of their BWC. Such an announcement was not witnessed in most encounters, but the practice was observed notedly more towards the end of the fieldwork period as officers described the act of getting 'used to the 'challenge' (as they put it) of letting the public know they were recording events. Significantly, this lack of public awareness at being recorded provides an insight that questions the extent to which BWCs can have a 'civilising effect' (Patterson and White, 2021) on public behaviour. While the above encounter was an amicable one with little apparent need for such an effect, it demonstrates that the most unexciting of encounters – from a police perspective – may be an emotionally charged one for the public. Patterson and White's (2021) observational study of US officers highlighted the same lack of officer notification to the public, but this study found that even where citizens were notified of being recorded the notification often failed to register in a way which translated to active awareness. This lack of awareness can be understood by considering the very staging of police-public encounters as a dramatic event for the public.

While the idea of the police responding to a vast range of needs might be commonly accepted by the British public (Júnior and Muniz, 2006) moving from idea to encounter is not 'everyday' for most. Even the most seemingly mundane encounter with an officer in their uniform is a dramatic disruption from the norm – an event which is unlikely to happen yearly – never mind daily for a great deal of the population. This is all the truer in the context of response policing; the act of calling 999 is symbolic, it signals the urgent need for assistance and while officers would routinely see calls as boring the same situations were vital and dramatic for the public involved. The most dramatic moment, in the otherwise most routine of observed calls, was often the initial interaction – where a member of the public would engage with the officer(s) involved and attempt to set the scene. It was within this initial moment of an encounter that officers were told to inform the public they were being recorded in line with BWC being an overt tool. Paradoxically, however, these very moments were the time in which the public were least likely to take in such a message as they were not yet of the right 'footing' (Goffman, 1981: 128) to hear any instructions as they tried to get across their own version of events or simply vent their feelings. Officers were aware of this problem with many reflecting on the difficulty of letting people know that they are being recorded and the importance of timing, as the following encounter from a late shift in Lochee demonstrates:

> The next call turns out to be a 'suspicious' dropped 9s, calling 999 and hanging up before explaining why, which means another unit is also emergency responding and we will likely be back up once more. We get over to the location, towards the southern limits of Lochee, to find another officer is indeed on the scene and appears to be having a heated conversation with a woman in the doorway. Nathan activates his BWC, again letting me know beforehand, prior to exiting the car and I notice the other officer in attendance has his camera on too as we make our way to the house. The woman immediately notices our arrival 'Oh, great more of you! I just want you to leave alright. My neighbours are all going to be looking now and I haven't even done anything wrong!'
>
> …The woman only gets angrier as time goes on which makes it difficult for officers to get a word in, or get her story straight…it eventually becomes clear that she did phone the police as someone was in her back garden but they had moved on before she got through so she hung up...Officers try to explain that they have procedures in place to make sure nothing has gone wrong for the caller and that means they will have to check

her house, for the safety of everyone…There is further back and forth with the caller getting more and more emotive in her denial of the officer's access before she reveals that she'll 'be complaining, how do I talk to your boss?'. To which again the officers emphasise how this is proper procedure that *must* be followed before finally revealing that they are recording:

> Look; this is all being recorded on video [touches camera] – we aren't doing anything wrong here, we just need to make sure that you are alright but there will be a record of it. We aren't saying you've done anything wrong, but we have to be here.

This seems to placate the caller somewhat 'Well OK, but you can obviously see that I am fine, I'm telling you I'm fine and the only thing that is causing me any distress is you being here!' With this and a few more words, clarifying the situation the officers are convinced that she is OK and that being there is not helping things, so they say their farewells to her, deactivate their cameras have a quick informal debrief and then decide to head off before she 'complains further'… just as we drive away, Nathan starts to reflect on the camera usage:

> To be fair we probably should have announced that we were recording as soon as we got there but it would've made her worse. You saw her. Realistically, you can't always let people know you're using it because where do you stop to tell them in amongst all that? [But you did let her know] Yeah, it makes sense in that moment but that's it, you've got to find the moment sometimes.

The significance of timing and finding the right moment to raise the presence of BWCs was also raised by officers in interviews as the vast majority explained that they did not routinely let the public know they were being recorded:

> No. Not really, if I'm being honest. I know that we are supposed to let people know but, you've been out so you already know, it just isn't practical is it? 'If you could just stop hitting Mrs Miggins for a moment, I'd like to let you know that you're on camera'. It isn't how it works; you jump out the car and you just go with what is in front of you.
>
> (Allan, PC)

As established in the preceding findings chapters; officers sought to secure the many perceived benefits of BWCs while limiting the disruption to their work. In describing the quest to find the right 'moment' or taking the most 'practical' approach to an encounter, officers were again highlighting the significance they placed on integrating BWCs into their everyday lives. Public unawareness generally made for fewer socially awkward moments for officers, whether that be the self-conscious awkwardness of delivering a 'robotic' script or the more disruptive awkwardness of provoking a negative reaction.

In the case of the irate caller who wanted the police to leave, the camera was brought to the fore after the mention of a possible complaint, as a last resort where the interaction order (Goffman, 1983) had already broken down and there was little to lose. However, bringing attention to the video recording was not a silver bullet which 'civilised' the scene through calming the member of the public. Rather the reference to the video disrupted the existing flow of the conversation and provided an opportunity to change the direction of the interaction and restore order. By mentioning that they *had* to be there, the officers highlighted the necessity of their actions and the notion that they were following orders. The nature of these orders as coming from elsewhere was alluded to by virtue of the mention of the 'record' which expanded the prospective audience from those physically present to those who *might* watch the recording in future. In doing so, officers were able to 'give' (Goffman, 1959) the impression that they were sympathetic to the caller not wanting them there – for they would have rather been elsewhere – but that they were hampered by organisational expectations. The camera was essentially leveraged as a prop to demonstrate that there were other interests, and the officers were limited in what they could do without 'giving off' (Goffman, 1959) the wrong impression to those interests. Yet, while in this case the mention of recording was key to impression management it was not the only way in which officers used the cameras as props to navigate their encounters with the publics.

As well as the highlighting of recording, officers could instrumentally bring attention to their camera to reinforce the fact that they were *not* recording as part of their performance. During an early shift in Lochee one of the first calls of the day was disrupted as, en route, the officer was flagged down and told of a 'massive fight' around the corner. The fight turned out to be between college aged teenage boys and much of that morning involved following up with the teachers and families of those involved:

> Arriving at the house of one of the boys Michael lets me know that he 'won't be using the camera here as no need' which turns out to be true as no one answers. Instead, we head to the - officer defined - victim's dad's house. Michael gets the man up to speed with what has happened while emphasising that his son is the 'victim' who isn't 'in trouble' though the other boys 'might make counter allegations if you decide to go ahead.' To really push this point Michael starts talking about what he captured on camera 'he said it on camera that he hit him first but then I stopped recording. I could see where it was going, obviously.' This sort of chat continues for a bit with Michael insisting the dad doesn't need to thank him for his tactful handling of the situation when he then asks if his son has had any similar bother in the past or otherwise caused trouble. Before the dad can answer Michael makes a point of physically pointing to his camera and explicitly mentioning that 'I'm not recording now, don't worry you can tell me'

Bringing attention to the lack of the recording in this encounter was possibly prompted from the conversation around recording the fight; BWCs were already mentioned and so the officer conceivably felt he had to assuage any concerns about the present being on video. However, similar moments were witnessed or recalled by officers without BWCs previously being mentioned to those present. One officer offered the following explanation for why he occasionally liked to let people know they were not being recorded:

> It's not something we've been told really but I just find that it can be that little extra bit which gets someone to talk. I couldn't, like, point to a job and say yeah that definitely helped get the ball rolling but it's more a feeling that you can get someone on side.
>
> (Ryan, PC)

The benefit of mentioning the BWC in such encounters was to present the interaction as a private one, something approaching the more self-contained and knowable audiences of Goffman's original dramaturgy. While some police-public encounters have long been recorded and preserved in written form after the event, officers could utilise the lack of a *video* recording to focus the attentions of the public on that moment. This stands in contrast to the case of the dropped 9s where the recording was used to highlight a potential backstage presence which contributed to the attendance of the officers, and which retained an interest in things being done 'properly'. Yet, in both cases, it was a decision exercised by the officers to bring attention to the camera, and *potential* wider audiences, later into the encounter that is most significant. The

potential 'civilising effect' of BWCs has been of interest from the earliest stage of their widespread implementation (Ariel et al, 2017) and more recent studies have utilised observational methods to highlight a lack of public awareness of being recorded (Patterson and White, 2021). However, the ethnographic approach and dramaturgical lens of this research provides new insights into how public awareness of the use of the cameras is actively managed throughout encounters by the officers involved. Indeed, some officers contrasted their own awareness with the unawareness of the public as a tool for directing an encounter towards the best possible outcome from a police perspective:

> …he were like really aggressive and I knew my camera were on but I didn't like rise to it. I suppose it's like acting really. Like you've got a camera on and you think, you know, I know what to say, I know me lines and I was flawless. But yeah you know when it's on, they might not but you do.
>
> (John, PCSO)

While few other officers were so explicit as to refer to their on camera performances as acting, the majority did recognise some element of self-consciousness which resulted in them thinking that they *should* be presenting themselves in the best light on camera. Questions surrounding officer awareness are explored in detail in the following section, but there are implications for the policed in how public unawareness could be leveraged by officers who possessed both material control of the camera and the subsequent knowledge of when it was recording. Earlier findings regarding how certain groups or individuals were assessed as more likely to require recording make this all the more significant an insight. Adopting once more the language of Goffman, those recorded in this way tended to be already 'framed' (Goffman, 1974) as police property (Reiner, 1992). In lacking the power to resist the frames applied to them – through awareness of being recorded - they might find themselves 'frame trapped' (Hancock and Garner, 2011) in a way which again reinforces an existing power imbalance. While the public currently have no choice but to accept being recorded, an active awareness of it would help to ensure BWCs act as the 'objective witness' most officers believed them to be and help to address concerns of those communities which see themselves as over policed.

As well as building on existing research highlighting a general a lack of awareness from the public as to the presence of BWCs in encounters, this section has presented insights into how

this (un)awareness is not predetermined, nor accidental. In any police-public encounter, awareness can ebb and flow throughout the drama but was shaped most significantly by the deliberate prompting of officers. That most encounters passed without reference to BWCs should not be taken to mean that they faded into the background due to somehow being unimportant to the encounter. Rather, there was a decision to allow BWCs to become background objects as officers attempted to keep things 'natural' or how they would be without BWCs present for those officers. It is worth reiterating that this research was carried out in the first few years of mainstream BWC rollout in WYP. Public awareness will likely have developed further but the point remains that, in the drama of many police-public encounters, general knowledge of the existence of BWCs does not automatically translate to an active awareness of being recorded. Indeed, as demonstrated in the case of the potential break-in above, even where officers had explicitly told people that they were being recorded it did not always register. This has implications for how policy governing the notification of recordings should be drafted, both due to user resistance to the unnatural expectation of 'early' notification and the unready recipients of that knowledge failing to acknowledge it when delivered to script. Having considered both the impacts of BWCs on the decision to engage the public and public awareness of BWCs within encounters, the following section delves further into the officer experience of being recorded in encounters.

7.4 Police awareness of BWCs in encounters

This study has already identified how being equipped with BWCs began to largely be perceived as 'normal' for frontline officers in WYP as trust in the technology grew. Such trust was developed via the usefulness of the material affordances (Leonardi, 2011) explored in chapter five and the control retained over officer visibility (Goldsmith, 2010) considered in chapter six. Yet, while officers described themselves as transitioning from seeing the camera as problem to boon, this growing comfort could be disrupted in recorded encounters where officers remained concerned over how they *might* be judged later. The variable impacts of BWCs on officer behaviour reported in other studies (Cubitt et al, 2017; Lum et al, 2019; Laming, 2019) can be better understood by contrasting the growing sense of normalcy with the rarer concerns in, and around, encounters. To do this, the section first tackles the general change in perception of being on camera as officers grew familiar with the technology.

Much like their shifting opinions on the purpose of BWCs, officers expressed how the general feeling of being on camera transformed over time. Some of this change was directly related to

ideas already explored concerning the shift in perception of cameras as being for managers to being for officers. However, there was also the more personal and persistent matter of growing to overcome self-consciousness at being recorded in the moment and *potentially* judged later:

> I did at first. I was really aware of it. You're not used to hearing your own voice, you get a bit panicky about what you are saying to people. What if I say something wrong and this is recorded?... I remember at first if there were quite a few people there you know you're going to be filmed and they are not all the most flattering angles. It's just one of those things, you worry what people think about you – don't you?
>
> (Lana, PC)

This officer's description of her initial hyper awareness at being on camera was typical but demonstrates that beyond concerns over the 'disciplinary gaze' (Hoffman, 2014) of BWCs capturing wrongdoing, officers were aware of how they might be judged on a more personal level. While existing research has considered how the capturing of previously unreviewable encounters on BWCs can impact formal accountability processes (Lum et al, 2019), there are more intimate audiences and individual concerns to consider**.** Officers described not wanting to come across as 'stupid' or 'useless' in front of their colleagues. Such concerns over appearance go deeper than merely seeking to avoid professional sanctions, they reflect a desire to maintain, or build on, the carefully constructed image that officers have established in their team. The ability of BWCs to potentially disrupt these images and reputations was one of the reasons that officers initially acted against the cameras, as considered in previous chapters, by trying to limit their exposure on video as much as possible. Yet, the growing trust in the use of the technology, and the passage of time allowing for familiarity, meant that concerns over the disruptive potential of BWCs apparently faded as explained by the same officer who was initially worried about being recorded:

> You do get used to it [BWCs] and you get used to other people's [cameras] as well. You just forget that it's there so long as you're not saying anything bad or ridiculous, do you know what I mean? If you were going to be stupid, you wouldn't have it on.
>
> (Lana, PC)

Central to this officer's growing comfort in being on camera, to the point where they transitioned from hyper awareness to almost forgetting about it, was their belief that they would not be imprudent enough to do anything *too* unprofessional or humiliating when *choosing* to record. Such a starting point for performance is in line with the same cultural outlook described by Sandhu and Haggerty (2017: 88) where officers believe that they – and most of their colleagues – try to do the right thing in the oft complicated circumstances they face. Yet, beyond this belief of generally being on the 'right' side there was a frankness from officers as they explained they were 'not going to mess up when on camera, I don't want to lose my job at the end of the day' (Charlie, PC). In admitting that they would not incriminate themselves on camera officers were implicitly acknowledging the power of BWCs to make them check their behaviours. However, officers were often quick to clarify that they also would not do anything 'stupid' off camera but that they are simply more aware of their on-camera performances. Some officers went further still and emphasised that:

> The cameras are there to help us…If you do your job right you have nothing to worry about and that is the people that we should have in the police anyway, those that do the job right. If you don't then you deserve to get tripped up and you deserve to fall short of your own evidence.
>
> (James, PC)

The sense that people doing their job competently had little to fear from BWCs was bound up in an organisational culture that emphasised that officers are on the 'right side' of society (Reiner, 2010). With this came an expectation of higher standards but officers gave little credence to the idea that they – or anyone they respected – would be caught doing something 'truly wrong'. Whether someone was 'wrong' and deserved to be caught was coupled with a sense of severity - if someone was actively corrupt or judged to be so incompetent as to prove a risk to the team then they deserved to be punished. Yet, doing the job 'right' did not mean to do the job perfectly or in some formulaic way – instead the enduring cultural emphasis on pragmatism (O'Neill and McCarthy, 2014) over idealism remained apparent. Indeed, it was often said by officers that the whole job is about being human and that there are always different ways to do things:

> I feel much more human here and much more important [compared to my last job]…Our sergeants are better than most at getting out but it's up to you to handle

> things, you can't be expected to know exactly what to do but so long as you get involved and aren't shy you'll be OK. That's one of the best things about the job.
>
> (Chloe, PC)

This emphasis on the importance of making the decision to do *something* was one of the most significant themes of the research and was often offered, as with the above example, when back in the car following an encounter which involved multiple officers with different approaches. Those officers who presented themselves confidently and took charge of situations were routinely offered up as paragons while those who were perceived as indecisive were ridiculed as not being fit for the job. The most blatant of mistakes over law or procedure was forgivable while any apparent laziness, hesitancy in projecting control or failure to get 'hands on' when needed could quickly label someone with an unfavourable reputation in the team. Meanwhile, the ability to explain breaches in any given performance as 'different approaches' helped to maintain the order within the team and save the face (Goffman, 1959) of officers deemed worth saving. However, despite the importance placed on being 'human' and making decisions, this ability to adapt was not the same as being able to do whatever you wanted in any given situation. Indeed, when downplaying the influence of the technology officers emphasised that they were already 'acting' as police officers in most encounters with the public but that they could only work within the scenes presented to them:

> My discretion, it depends what you do. I mean I am quite a relaxed person. I am not, you know, as far as officers go, by the book, clear as crystal sort of thing, dead accurate with everything they say. I am quite relaxed in how I approach a job. If there's a named suspect, there's a named suspect, different question altogether and you put your best police face on. But if you don't know what you're going into, I just go with my own personality. And if they view that on the body worn video and they don't like it, then fair enough. But that is, I am who I am. And that's how I've been taught to approach a job. And I don't think that will influence you on the body worn. Even if it went to court, we're all human. The camera shows it all. So, it will show your personality, but it shows you as a worker and either they like that or they don't.
>
> (Stuart, PC)

For this officer, and most others, it was not a question of preparing to act 'on camera' but instead preparing to act at work. While he recognised that certain 'faces' might be appropriate for certain encounters, he also recognised that information was limited and that most often he would be arriving at a scene with little idea of what was going to happen. This meant that only so much preparation could be done so officers had to be comfortable in presenting themselves across a range of situations in an effective way. While this presented self should, and would, be adaptable it was fundamentally tied to the role and expectations of being a police officer. As they were already adopting a public facing mask for such performances – and felt confident in doing so – they did not *generally* feel the need to adapt their style for any prospective audiences of the footage (Goffman, 1959). In being comfortable in their role, and confident in their approach in the moment, they expressed little concern with being reprimanded in the future for they believed they were acting correctly and that BWCs would capture that 'truth'.

Key here then is the idea that officers can appear 'human' on camera but that remains an aspect of their work face (Goffman, 1955) and that they work *with* the camera to capture that performance. While they may seem informal and personal, it is still a cultivated role that is constructed in the boundaries of their work context. Officers want to come across as natural, but they are aware that they are performing a job which comes with certain expectations. One officer summed up his feelings on taking on the role after an encounter in a private home where the family members were vehemently antipolice:

> It comes with the job. You get used to it. Maybe you shouldn't but you do and at this point I'm past caring what they think. It isn't about me; I'm turning up in this [uniform] and that's enough for them, no matter what I do they aren't going to suddenly be my best friend.
>
> (Lyndon, PC)

This officer's resignation at being disliked by what he described as a certain 'type' of the public was tied up in the idea that by putting on the uniform he was no longer really an individual in the eyes of many. Indeed, some officers embraced this same idea to distance themselves from the pressure of the job by emphasising how they tried to forget all about their shift, to varying degrees of success, as soon the uniform came off. Through this lens, while many officers reported growing more comfortable being 'themselves' on camera, that self was part of their public-facing police officer role. As such, they remained aware of the need to maintain some sense of 'role discipline' in line with the long-standing expectations of police officers:

> I think that is something you get used to, like I say. You worry at first what you are saying to people, if you need to be a bit frank with people and tell them how it is. At first you think this is actually going to be on video, is this the right thing? But that comes down with experience as well. As long as you can justify what you are doing and what you've said, then it's one of those things.
>
> (Fiona, PC)

For most officers, in most encounters, their existing work face (Goffman, 1955) grew to align with their perceived expectation of appropriateness on camera. Therefore, having moved on from their initial hyper awareness, most encounters passed with little consideration of being recorded as they performed with the camera capturing them 'at work'. Yet, while most officers reported growing increasingly confident in their ability to present this self on camera, there were many examples of scenes observed where awareness of being recorded disrupted their performance. This heightened awareness of being recorded was generally a result of a perceived poor performance where their chosen face either accidently slipped or was deemed unsuitable and the interaction order (Goffman, 1983) was challenged. The impacts of these disruptions to the interaction order are considered further in the final section of this chapter but these moments of hyperawareness were not always framed negatively. Indeed, some officers made the point that they were now more confident in in potentially intimidating or compromising situations as they felt much safer knowing that they were on camera:

> …sometimes it's a tool that I've used plainly because I've been in the situation where, you know, I've been out on the street for whatever reason and there's been a guy who's slightly bigger than me and he's not particularly doing anything but he's getting a bit close…as soon as I switch it on I just feel that bit better.
>
> (Jane, PCSO)

That the same PCSO complained about 'having' to use their camera in other encounters might seem inconsistent with such positivity. However, this reflects a trend witnessed across the study as ardent annoyance with the camera in certain moments, or whole encounters, was contrasted with a more removed appreciation of benefits of the technology in general. As with Sandhu and Haggerty's (2017) research on policing on camera more generally, there is no universal

answer to how officers feel about being recorded, nor even how one officer feels about being recorded in a single shift. Officer opinions on BWCs were changeable. They changed overtime as BWCs became accepted as a useful tool (see chapter five) but, even towards the end of the research period, individual views on the impact of the cameras could shift from one moment to the next. The abiding theme which explained these changes was the breadth of police work conducted in an average shift and the need to adopt different approaches to effectively meet these diverse demands. The most apparent tension was where the appropriate approach in the moment was somehow constrained by knowledge of being recorded as a general awareness of recording transitioned to an awareness of potentially being watched. The following section explores this idea further by investigating the tension officers expressed between doing a good job as a 'professional' police officer and their perception of wider expectations of 'professionalism' at work.

7.5 Performing professionally on camera

Officers would simultaneously discuss the idea of BWCs heightening their professionalism while claiming that BWCs had little impact on their approach to 'proper jobs' or ability to exercise their powers. When explicitly asked whether they believe they act any differently when being recorded, officers were remarkably consistent in their inconsistency. On the one hand they claimed that, while they initially did act differently, they have grown more comfortable with the cameras recording them 'doing the job'. On the other, those same officers described how they still – at times – feel constrained in how 'natural' they can be on the camera. This apparent inconsistency appears to be down to a question of what officers perceived to be important changes in their behaviour and the different stages of awareness explored above. While they reported becoming more comfortable exercising their powers in the same way that they would have before the introduction of BWCs, they gave less weight to the changes to their overall character in encounters. One, particularly experienced and confident officer typified the complexity of feeling about being on camera:

> I am not going to hold my hand up and say I am always the most professional person. If you can have a laugh and a joke with people, why not have one? Sometimes when people have had a stressful situation, it's nice just to have a little bit of a chill out but I am sometimes mindful of that side of it now. But I am not a robot. I'll never come across as a robot on a camera. The only thing I do think about is, let's face it, after twenty minutes on a shift, you're using the F word like a bloody full stop. You do

> tend to think of that a little bit, my vocabulary might improve with the camera on [laughing] but other than that I don't act any differently with the camera on or off.
>
> (Andrew, PC)

While this officer was confident enough to resist the temptation to retreat into robotic professionalism (Rowe et al, 2018) not all officers were so emphatic and even he expressed concerns over swearing – a point explored further below. Other officers made the point that where they 'had time to think' about being recorded, it could interfere with how effectively they presented themselves. These officer statements, on the need to retain their ability to personalise and adapt to situations, were at odds with the overall claim to have grown comfortable with policing on camera as they offered small caveats about having to be a bit more 'professional' in their already professional role when recording:

> Yes, you do try and moderate your language sometimes and play it safe. Not always. Sometimes you know the odd swear might slip out if you are scrapping with somebody. I don't think they [supervisors] are too bothered because they know what the job is like. But yes, you do try to be a bit more professional.
>
> (Fiona, PC)

Officer concerns over trying to swear less on camera might seem inconsequential, but they highlight the pressure that can come with knowing your work is being recorded. The idea of trying to be more professional on camera to 'play it safe' chimes with a desire to avoid trouble 'in the job' (Waddington, 1999). Yet, while it goes against the norm of what would be deemed professional in many workplaces, swearing was frequently described as possessing an instrumental dimension in frontline police work that could be utilised to avoid trouble 'on the job'. Indeed, officers' use of colourful language is long established as being a part of both informal backstage discussions and a potential tool to assert dominance in frontstage public encounters (Loftus, 2010, Crank, 2014). There was no hiding from this during the research and some officers seemed to take pride in their bluntness. However, many alluded to the value of being able to performatively shed their 'robotic' professional masks as key to being able to handle certain jobs, not just for their own wellbeing (Bakker and Heuven, 2006), but also for the quality of the encounter for the public (Skogan, 2005; Bradford et al, 2009). While swearing

was commonly raised, the wider fear was one of being caught and punished for presenting a more informal face than expected of an officer performing on the frontstage (Goffman, 1959):

> If someone watched it and we were just acting normally, probably swearing and joking, things like that being picked up, you're 'thinking oh we will get in trouble for doing this, doing that'
>
> (Kieran, PC)

This fear of being punished for 'acting normally' was the main concern that brought BWCs to the fore for officers even though the same officer admitted that 'it has not really materialised that way' in practice. One of the explanations that officers offered for the disconnect between fear and reality was that *their* immediate supervisors were empathetic but the concern of others watching the footage remained. This was tied to a recognition that their supervisors have some continued exposure to frontline policing and can understand these 'unprofessional' moments as necessary parts of their performance rather than a breakdown in character (Goffman, 1959). This trust their supervisors to 'get it' was reflected in the research itself as supervisors showed not only an appreciation for their officers' behaviour but also contrasted it favourably with their own previous experience of policing off camera:

[When looking at footage] nine times out of ten, they are polite, patient, beyond what I would have displayed when I would have been in their job, I did it for ten years as well. I didn't have CCTV everywhere and mobile phones everywhere. And I think a lot of police officers now are a lot more patient and a lot more tolerant because of that.

(Kim, Supervisor)

This supervisor, and others, went on to explain that the purpose of BWCs was not to 'snoop' on officers and find every little mistake or trip them up for saying the wrong thing. In fact, they were quick to point out that they simply did not have the time to carry out that level of proactive monitoring of footage - a point raised in the previous chapter which contributed to officers maintaining some professional invisibility. However, this reality did not prevent officers feeling constrained in how 'naturally' they could present themselves in some moments. These moments of self-consciousness were most often raised around encounters that were not typically deemed to be of the type that *needed* BWCs. As discussed in the preceding chapters, officers tended to draw on examples of encounters that were dramatic or action orientated when considering the necessity of BWCs. The retelling of such stories is both an established part of

police culture (Van Hulst, 2013) and a methodological challenge to studying the more mundane, and common, aspects of the everyday working lives of police officers as these rarer moments are more readily recallable. Most encounters that officers recalled as being 'suited' to BWCs were centred on uncertainty and immediacy. These encounters were described as demanding a direct response which tied into the perception that cameras had become 'normal' as that demand trumped any other concerns:

> Something like that when it is pre-planned and it is slow time, yes, I think you are more aware of it then. Whereas when it is a spontaneous incident that you are just arriving at and you've got to deal with whatever hell is happening in front of you, you don't have time to worry about it as much.
>
> (James, PC)

This distinction between the feeling of being recorded in what are essentially 'fast' or 'slow' encounters was repeated by many officers both in interviews and seen and heard during observations. Taking this perspective, 'fast' encounters require officers to be able to immediately deal with whatever they face and this leaves them with little time to be thinking about what might come of any footage. Inversely, 'slow' encounters, present officers with the time to think about both what they need to do to achieve their immediate personal goals within the circumstances that confront them and what others might think about their recorded actions in future. Such feelings and apparent contradictions highlight how despite claims to have grown 'used' to being recorded, officers are referring to only part of their everyday working lives. However, while most officers spoke in broad terms about the differences between types of 'job', the process of observing these revealed a more nuanced understanding where such 'jobs' could be broken down further into a series of smaller encounters. Even the 'fastest' and most action packed of initial encounters could taper off into a protracted scene of statement taking over hours with different actors taking to the stage over this period.

From this understanding, the variable impacts of BWCs that continue to be reported elsewhere (Choi et al, 2022) can be better contextualised through an appreciation of the imbricated nature (Leonardi, 2011) of BWCs. The cameras take on different roles in different contexts both across different 'types of job' in the broadest sense and within any given encounter as the drama unfolds. Within encounters, officers occupied different positions on both how aware they were and how this awareness translated into impacts on their behaviour through the double-edged

understanding of *potential* visibility. This generally sees officers simultaneously feeling more protected and free to act within recorded 'risky' moments, that already demand their most 'professional' face, but more exposed and constrained in recorded 'safer' moments where the camera inhibits their more 'relaxed' self. The consequences of officer awareness of being recorded shifted with these roles – whether it be the rare hyper awareness of 'having' to perform professionally *for* the camera or the more commonly witnessed and reported performing *with* the camera as an accepted part of their 'police kit' established in chapter five. Consideration of how this impacts officer behaviour requires an understanding of the different stages of contemporary policing. The final section of this chapter turns to this question, exploring how BWCs have impacted our understanding of the stages of frontline police work.

7.6 BWCs and the contemporary stages of frontline policing

Applying Goffman's dramaturgical metaphor in policing research has previously unearthed significant differences in how officers present themselves publicly on the 'frontstage' from how they present themselves 'backstage' in areas of apparent privacy such as police stations (Manning, 1977; Holdaway 1980). Consequently, the most significant departure from the staging of 'canteen' culture (Waddington, 1999) might be the death of the police canteen as a gathering space in the face of budget cuts and station closures. While the stations in Ardler and Lochee districts retained a physical space for breaks, and those working in an NPT could find the time for a meal together, response officers repeatedly complained about not having the time to do so. Furthermore, officers actively avoided the station as they feared being seen by one of their supervisors to then be 'voluntold' for whatever 'griefy job' required allocating in that moment. The workload pressures on response officers – during early and late shifts – were indeed observed as largely preventing them taking much time back at the station. Likewise, some PCSOs on foot patrol made a point of taking their tea breaks in shared community spaces or facilities that they had access to via partner organisations rather than returning to the station. The exception for response officers was towards the end of shifts where they would have to return to give their vehicle keys to the incoming team – offering a period where they were 'allowed' to be seen around the office. These handovers were at their longest when transitioning from weekend 'lates' to 'nights' and it was during these times that officers would actively try to secure the time to get together. Beyond these gatherings, the middle of nightshift saw some officers return to their hot desks, in the open plan offices which made up their stations, as the initial burst of activity faded but before the desire to be unseen returned as handover approached.

Outside of these moments, during the bulk of their set, officers were operating away from the station. This was facilitated by the introduction of smart phones to all frontline personnel. These phones afforded (Leonardi, 2011) officers the ability to meet many of their administrative duties and obligations without returning to the station. This further afforded them the opportunity to manage their organisational (in)visibility by avoiding being physically seen as 'free' by their supervisors. The phones were (thus) extremely well received on the frontline. Most officers described how their initial misgivings were quickly overcome by the sheer usefulness of being able to perform checks without waiting for the radio to clear or updating a log without returning to the station. Beyond these intended benefits, the phones also afforded (Leonardi, 2011) the ability to build in some slack into the working day. Following encounters, officers could flag up with control that they were still on their most recent 'job' dealing with the immediate paperwork on their devices, affording them time between calls if the emergency grading of the workload at that time allowed for it. No shame was expressed over this behaviour with the rule being that so long as you didn't 'take the piss' it was seen as fair to take a few moments to relax. Indeed, these moments were seen as a necessity in a policing context in which many felt exhausted - admitting they were far too stretched across most shifts, as one officer commented in the early afternoon of an early shift in Lochee:

Yeah well, stereotypes are there for a reason. It's like cops; people say we're miserable or have no empathy and they aren't too far off. Like earlier, talking to people, as a service it's something we could so much better really but you just don't get the time. You have maybe two or three good jobs in you and then you're just drained.

(Ryan, PC)

The experience of this officer feeling 'drained' at some point during a shift was typical, but it was not just the number of calls which proved draining, as demonstrated by the following officer towards the end of a late shift in Ardler:

> It is hard to jump from something like the rush earlier [previous call involving a group of young men fighting] right to sitting asking about someone's haircut [missing person details]. It's all part of the job, but it is nice when you get a few moments in-between like this, if that makes sense? We're expected to be scrapping for our lives one second and best friends with someone the next and then you throw in the camera and you don't get a second to be yourself.

(Alex, PC)

While the observed shifts did not involve as many explicit life-or-death moments as this officer alludes to, there was a great range of emotional highs and lows with little assured time for resting or catching up with colleagues in between. Indeed, another change visible from the **'**glory days' of policing, that some vanishing few recalled, was an increase in single crewed units as the norm that meant the previously reliable backstage of the shared patrol car was also rare – outside of night shifts.

The lack of access to a reliable space where officers could retire to with their trusted team (Goffman, 1959) meant that they needed to actively seek out opportunities to gather while avoiding the gaze of the public, their supervisors or even disliked peers. This shift away from the neatly delineated spaces of the station or a shared car put a new emphasis on more liminal spaces (Turner, 1967; Beech, 2011) within and around police-public encounters as a gathering point – a contribution to the understanding of the contemporary everyday work of frontline police officers. Most of these encounters were either in public streets or in and around private homes and – given they were serious enough to demand multiple officers – tended to be of a type deemed to be suitable for BWC recording, as established in previous chapters. Yet, while the setting of the backstage changed, and may now be considered ever changing in its liminality, the purpose remained the same, as this conclusion to an incident during a busy afternoon in the centre of Lochee demonstrates:

> As the man is sent on his way all three officers remain around the parked police cars which have created an oasis of relative calm amongst the throngs of people. Just as Steve starts to open with 'he was…' the other two jump in, almost simultaneously, with a 'concluding recording' comment - Steve cottons on immediately and does the same while they all switch their BWCs off. I join in as all three officers start laughing in unison before Kieran asks 'You know why we do that right?' - the answer follows as they proceed to joke about the absurdity of the call and how it was not quite what was promised.

The conversation over the following few minutes covered everything from comments about the individuals involved in the incident to plans for upcoming rest days. Significantly, the officer who almost started his remarks on camera was grateful that the others stopped him while explaining that he was 'just happy to be done with them, really'. Similar scenes unfolded

throughout the course of the research as officers attempted to help colleagues save face and maintain the interaction order (Goffman, 1983) when confronted by the blurring of present and prospective audiences presented by BWCs. Doing so, as with the incident above, involved a prompt towards a more contained 'backstage' area where the audience was knowable by virtue of being contained to those physically present.

Whereas the departure of outsiders might have previously signalled a shift from front to backstage for the police team, this transition is now not complete until BWCs are no longer recording anything likely to be watched in future. This caveat of likely to be watched is a significant one for at some incidents it quickly became apparent that no formal action would be taken, meaning the footage would not remain long on the system and would be unlikely to attract attention. This was increasingly clear towards the end of the fieldwork period, as officers would make more informal conversation after assessing that the 'job' was not going anywhere. One incident, which involved standing around for over half an hour in a bank in Lochee, sums up the judgment process when the officer pointed towards someone on the street:

> …I'm still recording but it's not relevant so don't worry. You see those lads pointing at the that guy with the man bun then he looked right at them [laughing]?... Wish we didn't have to start recording so early at sometimes but you probably know that if its over 10 minutes we clip? No one will be wanting to look through all this.

That the same officers, in the same shift, earlier restrained themselves from commenting – and warned other officers they were still recording - at a 'proper job' helps to demonstrate that it is not so much the act of recording but the act of *potentially* being reviewed which frames (Goffman, 1974) the appropriateness of a performance. By taking what was previously an encounter between only those present and opening it up to the others, via the affordances of persistence and reviewability (Leonardi, 2011), BWCs can break the bounds which Goffman (1959) originally conceived of as necessary for successful impression management. As well as being a core idea of Goffman's work, the importance of presenting the appropriate self for the immediate audience was recognised by almost all officers who reflected on the difference between their personality 'on and off the job' as a starting point. Many went further and separated their 'job' performance into distinct stages and teams, emphasising that they might for example act the joker with close colleagues – or even the researcher - but would not dare to risk being perceived as 'unprofessional' around others they did not trust.

Social media research has explored an analogous problem in the form of transitioning from performing for the contained audiences of physical space to the 'imagined' of the internet (Marwick and boyd, 2011). Bullock (2018) considered the question of a truly unbounded audience in the context of police use of social media and offered novel insights on the impact of such technologies on the relationship between police and public. While this study also builds on an appreciation of Goffman's (1959: 137) emphasis on a performer knowing their audience, in order to best tailor their approach, it retains a focus on the physical settings that Bullock (2018: 353) considered generally bounded. The audience expansion of BWCs differs from that of social media as recorded encounters continue to take place in real-time and in person with the *addition* of a potentially knowable future audience rather than a purely unbounded and imagined one.

While officers admitted that they did not know who (if anyone) watched their footage, as explored in the previous chapters, the nature of the controls on stored recordings reasonably limits the potential audience to – in the first instance – restricted members of the same police force and the wider criminal justice system where footage is deemed evidential. Yet, even with this relatively bounded group of prospective audiences, some encounters could cause officers to spend the rest of their shift agonising over how their performance might look to someone with a different framing (Goffman, 1974). This was expressed by one officer after a colleague threatened to 'fucking floor' someone if they did not stop resisting in the middle of a road:

> …it is something I worry about - how the job has changed. People might think that policing has gotten soft and all that but, actually, while we had more fun back in the day, there were more of us and it was just a lot easier to do things properly. If things look messy now that's because they are messy, the more good people you can have at a job the better it will look…Then you think, do the senior management team still get that?
>
> (Billy, PC)

The notion of 'the job' having changed was something that officers with more service often reflected on but even less experienced officers raised the perceived divide between themselves and those without *recent* experience of frontline policing. In doing so, they communicated concern over the potential incompatibility with what they deemed to be the most effective approach for the present audience and the expectations of any prospective audience reviewing their actions through a different frame (Goffman, 1974). As established above, this uncertainty

over the prospective audience could manifest in the form of officers taking on a more restrained 'robotic' self (Rowe et al, 2018) but there was little evidence of the revolution in officer decision making predicted elsewhere (Bowling and Iyer, 2019). Instead, the blurring of present and prospective audiences manifested an ever greater appreciation of time backstage. This was particularly apparent following encounters which were emotionally charged or where an officers reflected on recording a mistake, as with the following call to a 'domestic argument' early into a night shift in Lochee:

> …having established that things are now quiet and that they are sufficiently comfortable leaving the two together, we leave the house around 23:40. As we are getting back in to the car, Lisa turns around to me 'I suppose we should have mentioned the recording at the door but he said something then you just respond, don't you? It's human so we'll probably get in trouble for that.' Before I can properly respond, Lana chimes in 'It was hard enough getting in the door, I don't think much was getting through to him in his state anyway [laughing].'

The aftermath of many recorded encounters followed this pattern where officers expressed their concern at getting in trouble for their performance despite the relatively minor nature of their misstep 'giving off' (Goffman, 1959) the wrong impression. In doing so, they demonstrated the increased strain placed on their everyday working lives by the mere potential of their actions being watched back and judged to fail in some fashion. This tension, and potential increased strain, was made worse by the dwindling of a reliable backstage, as officers felt they had increasingly little time to be 'themselves' during busy shifts. While this 'self' remains a work face, as discussed above, the value in it was explained by one officer following a charged encounter - 'this time just after a job is all that is really left to us and if they were to try to take that then, I don't know, we'd be on a sinking ship and I'd be straight out' (Steve, PC). This officer was part of a small minority who felt the weight of the increased expectation of being on camera in every single encounter they took part in, but his appreciation of time off camera, especially just after a concluded 'job', was shared by all.

This appreciation of time of camera is significant as while officers retain material control over the cameras (chapter five) they can manage their internal visibility (chapter six) and thus avoid the potential 'context collapse' (Marwick and boyd, 2011) of performing for both a present and prospective audience when not in the midst of a 'proper job'. While Ariel et al (2016) recommend BWCs being on for the entirety of a police shift, the current research has

demonstrated that this would likely be detrimental to the wellbeing of officers by denying them the time they need to recharge from their most frontstage performances in police-public encounters. It has also demonstrated the need to consider the local context of the officers being studied, as much of the everyday working environment of frontline officers in this project was framed by a lack of resources, a prevalence for single crewing and a genuinely busy 'job-to-job' environment. In such a context, time backstage was highlighted by officers as being all the more significant and the encroachment of BWCs onto this was a regularly expressed fear.

7.7 Conclusion

This chapter has explored how the everyday working environment of officers has been impacted by the introduction of BWCs into and around police-public encounters. It found how officers, after overcoming their initial self-consciousness, reported *mostly* attending to their policing responsibilities in much the same way as they did before BWCs. In doing so it, it has drawn attention to how officers actively and instrumentally manage public awareness of being recorded throughout encounters. Further insights have been offered into how the experience of engaging the public has differed between response and neighbourhood functions while presenting a more universal finding of how officers are more concerned with being judged on how they present themselves rather than the decisions they make. These findings reiterate the importance of considering the varied impacts of BWCs on the broad spectrum of encounter types that constitutes frontline policing and going beyond self-reported data to look at the everyday working environment as a whole.

In doing so, the chapter has revealed how BWCs can act to heighten the expectations of professionalism in the minds of officers which could have a knock-on effect for their ability to present themselves effectively in certain encounters. It has established how precarious the newly established normality of policing with BWCs is when recorded encounters do not go to script and awareness of the cameras returns to the fore for the officers involved. While most encounters passed without dramatic disruption, even the smallest of missteps on camera could be brought up by officers afterwards as evidence of the increased pressures of policing on camera. This extra strain was more explicit when the performance required in the moment was perceived to conflict with the expectations of those who might witness the footage later. This research builds on existing theory both in the application of Goffman's dramaturgical metaphor and how this has been applied in policing studies. Classic conceptions of policing's front and

backstage have been shown to no longer reflect the contemporary policing landscape – with implications for officer welfare both now and as the technology of BWCs evolves.

Chapter Eight – Conclusions

8.1 Introduction

This thesis set out to investigate the impact of the introduction of BWCs on the everyday work of uniformed frontline police officers. It did so by ethnographically exploring the working world of response and neighbourhood officers working in bounded geographical locations in one northern English force; the findings, however, have implications beyond that organisational setting. In pursuit of the overall aim, three objectives were set. First, the study sought to investigate how BWCs were initially adopted by officers and in what ways they were used. Second, it explored how the introduction of this technology impacted the organisational visibility of officers. Finally, it endeavoured to provide new insights into how BWCs impact the behaviour of officers in encounters with the public and as well as on their wider experience of work. Chapters five, six and seven of this thesis have taken each of these questions in turn and met the initial objectives. Having done so, this final chapter of the thesis reflects in aggregate on the key findings and research process before looking to the future and suggesting areas of further study.

The first substantive section of this chapter focuses on the findings, summarising the key contributions on the impact of BWCs in frontline policing. It contends that BWCs have been embraced as a core part of police equipment, with substantial impacts on the everyday working life of officers. However, BWCs have not yet revolutionised the organisational visibility of those on the frontline or introduced the age of automatons predicted elsewhere (Bowling and Iyer, 2019). Ultimately, it is argued that the impact of BWCs must be considered more broadly as the technology has implications beyond those immediately apparent when considering police-public encounters in isolation. The next section reflects on the design of the study and considers both the strengths and limitations of the ethnographic approach for answering the research questions. The third section then turns to the implications for both theory and practice. Finally, the chapter – and thesis – concludes with thoughts on the future of BWCs in policing before proposing areas that would benefit from further study

8.2 Reflections on findings

The difficulties of delivering change – technological and otherwise – in frontline policing are long established and well explored (Chan, 2001; Manning, 2008; Manning, 2010). Yet, in this study, BWCs were found to have been adopted to the extent that they were embraced broadly

in line with organisational goals and governing policy – despite the initial concerns expressed by most officers. However, such an outcome was not inevitable and should not be expected to be replicated across every police force or with every model of BWC. This is reflected in the existing literature base which continues to present mixed results on the reception of BWCs. (Lum et al., 2019; Gaub and White, 2020; Wooditch et al., 2020). As Wooditch et al. (2020: 428) observed in their study of two Los Angeles Police Department divisions; there remains a need for greater knowledge of officers' perceptions in order to better understand both the implementation process *and* the impacts of BWCs in practice.

The initial view of most officers towards BWCs, as first established in chapter five, was one of deep distrust regarding their purpose combined with a wider cynicism towards the potential of the technology to alter and affect their working lives for the better. However, this negative reception was tempered by a recognition that the public are already (and increasingly) recording some of their encounters with police and that BWCs can act to rebalance such interactions towards the police. The data collected in this study, from both observations and interviews, suggest some support for Koslicki's 'tipping point hypothesis' (2019: 361), whereby the 'new visibility' (Goldsmith, 2010) of policing has helped to prepare officers to embrace BWCs. However, this merely provided an opening for officers to see *some* potential benefits of the technology while the overall perception of it remained negative due to existing organisational tensions which manifested in a distrust of managerial goals among those on the frontline.

Through the concept of sociomateriality (Leonardi, 2011) this study explored the continued impact of historical organisational tensions, such as previously introduced technologies being seen as 'unfit' for frontline use. In doing so, the importance of both the material properties of the cameras and the policy framework governing their use for navigating such tensions was uncovered. Significantly, the value that officers place on their equipment being materially unobtrusive was highlighted as part of a wider desire to be able to get on with what they perceived to be the essential parts of their work. Yet, even after being convinced that BWCs would not physically make their work harder by getting in the way or requiring constant charging, concerns remained that BWCs would become a tool to limit the discretion of those at the street-level (Lipsky, 2010). Such concerns were partly addressed through supervisors emphasising the more tangible benefits of BWCs over the *potential* for the technology to have a detrimental impact. The key for the adoption of BWCs then became the way in which officers overcame their initial concerns and began to perceive the technology as primarily

serving their interests – not managers or external audiences. This occurred as officers began to perceive BWCs as affording (Leonardi, 2011) them the ability to carry out the same tasks more effectively rather constraining their discretion. In doing so, the purpose of BWCs began to solidify as being *for* officers by assisting them to carry out their core desire to fight crime while also helping them to manage the everyday risks they believed they faced as a fundamental part of contemporary police work. As these affordances were demonstrated the narrative around BWCs being tools to surveil the frontline faded and, instead, their capacity to support officers – without disrupting existing work practices - came to the fore.

Given the debate around activation and the potential for the cameras to always be recording (Ariel et al., 2016; Newell and Greidanus, 2018; Lawrence et al., 2019), it is significant that their being embraced was found, in this study, to be contingent on officers maintaining material control. This control allayed some fears over their everyday work becoming more robotic (Rowe et al., 2018) and allowed for them to grow used to BWCs steadily rather than through an abrupt switch to their every interaction being recorded. However, such control raises questions as to how much the visibility of police work has been impacted by the introduction of BWCs, that is, if so much interaction with the public remains potentially unrecorded. Chapter six explored this by first considering the impacts of the policy context which helped with adoption and how this translated to use in practice. The limited discretion policy governing the activation of BWCs (College of Policing, 2014) was tightened during the course of the fieldwork by refinement of internal force policy towards a stated expectation to record public encounters with a 'policing purpose'. Yet, even the fullest compliance with such an opaque definition can leave aspects of the police function, beyond the myth of crime fighting (Loader, 2013), unrecorded. Furthermore, officer discretion was maintained by the ability for officers to attempt to justify not recording even if the encounter would otherwise fit. Consequently, the ethnographic approach of this study was key to gathering data on how this limited discretion model was enacted in practice.

Research adopting observational methods to explore how officers activate BWCs is rare (Lum et al., 2019), but that which does exist highlights the importance of considering the impacts of BWC within the organisational context. In contrast to the broad finding of Newell and Greidanus (2018: 1572) that officers continued to feel the technology would be used against them, this study has outlined how that perception changed through the implementation process. Significantly, it was the eventual sense of BWCs being for the

benefit of those on the frontline which appeared to drive activation. This was most apparent in how officers chose to activate BWCs in those encounters which did not meet the established narrative of an obvious 'ongoing incident' which demanded activation. Such decision making to voluntarily record was almost exclusively seen in encounters that officers felt might – in some way - cause them a problem. Conversely, those same officers might explicitly choose not to record a different encounter despite acknowledging that doing so would be more compliant with policy. In such situations officers highlighted how recording might be generally expected in policy but point out some specific reason that they felt justified their decision not to in the moment. Being present across the breadth of police work witnessed across different shifts was vital to collecting data that shone a light on these issues - and this understanding frames the contribution of this study. The apparent contradictory impacts of BWCs reported elsewhere (Lum et al., 2019; Malm, 2019), and witnessed in individual officers during this study, can be better understood through appreciating this diversity of police work.

By synthesising an understanding of the interconnectedness of social and material (Leonardi, 2011) with dramaturgical analysis (Goffman, 1959), this study was able to demonstrate how the role of BWCs can change across different encounters and how this influences the decision to activate. This understanding of the changeable role helps to highlight how the perception of BWCs, and their impact on performances, is also open to variation. Encounters where officers consciously chose to activate their BWC, despite not being forced to do so, were felt differently from those encounters where BWCs were activated out of reluctant obligation. Part of this is down to the importance that officers place on the *decision* to activate but it is also tied up in the role the camera is perceived to take. In encounters deemed to be risky, for any reason, BWCs were welcomed and perceived as supporting officers in their performance. In contrast, BWCs could take on the role of unwelcome annoyance in those encounters where officers did not wish to record. This changing role is significant for our understanding of any change in visibility brought about by BWCs as greater visibility is neither universally desired nor feared by officers. Rather, the value of (in)visibility was felt in accordance with the circumstances of the moment.

It is significant that officers continue to retain some power to define police-public encounters by labelling something as not requiring recording. In doing so, they retain some of the low visibility they have historically enjoyed (Goldstein, 1960) by limiting the audience privy to

their performance (Goffman. 1959) to those physically present. Through this understanding, the limited discretion policy governing BWCs in many jurisdictions (Willis et al, 2018) affords officers some ability to manage their (in)visibility at work. In practice, towards the end of the fieldwork, the majority of calls for service were being recorded as they met the threshold of 'policing purpose.' However, there was still scope for officers to classify an encounter as not meeting this threshold. Furthermore, the moments before and after recorded encounters remain functionally invisible to those not present. Consequently, while BWCs have brought greater visibility to policing, this appears to have occurred in line with existing everyday work practices – with a focus on recording those parts of police work deemed to be exciting, risky or conflictual. In this way, BWCs are understood as having been 'domesticated' (Berker, 2005) by officers rather than acting to revolutionise their visibility or radically alter their discretion. However, even these more qualified changes to visibility were found to have significant impacts on the everyday working lives of officers.

This study, in contrast to most BWC research (see Löfstrand and Backman, 2021), explicitly looked at the impact of the technology on the wider working environment of officers. In doing so it was able to move away from the assumption that greater recording is desirable in and of itself (Ariel et al., 2016; Lawrence et al., 2019) and consider the impact across the different stages of policing. This approach uncovered how, rather than causing officers to shy away from encounters (Sandhu and Haggerty, 2017), the affordances of BWCs created an expectation among supervisors that officers would attend an ever greater range of calls for service on their own. This was significant as it was seen to further erode the ability of officers to take time between encounters where they could easily meet up with colleagues. Such understanding is particularly important in the British context of stretched public services where officers, in much of the country, are increasingly expected to attend calls on their own. Indeed, as officers moved beyond an initial mistrust of BWCs their ongoing concerns with being recorded were more to do with losing their limited space to relax rather than being caught breaking any rules. Such concerns were framed by a context in which officers expressed feeling overworked, under resourced and on the brink of exhaustion.

The context of officers approaching exhaustion was important for how they felt about being recorded in police-public encounters as the technology could either lessen or increase the strain. For the most part, BWCs made officers feel more supported in 'ongoing incidents' with clear goals. However, where an encounter was less clear-cut or deemed to require

officers to step outside of the expected demands of professional behaviour, the impact of the cameras was felt differently. Likewise, where BWCs were seen to intrude on the increasingly rare moments in which officers could relax they were vilified – particularly in cases of officers' forgetting to switch off recordings at gatherings after encounters. This time after encounters was shown to have a great deal of importance for the wellbeing of officers as it was increasingly the space in which they mentally and physically decompressed and recovered from the strains of any given encounter. Indeed, during the course of observations it was noted that officers rarely returned to the station as a fixed backstage space (Goffman, 1959). Instead, the line between front and backstage performances was discovered to be increasingly blurred as officers sought out spaces to relax in and around their encounters with the public. Such a change from classic conceptions of backstage areas in policing (Manning, 1977; Holdaway 1980) was primarily down to workloads but it was also facilitated by the recent introduction of digital mobile technology which allowed officers to update their records remotely.

Appreciation of the changing nature of the contemporary stages of frontline policing is key to understanding how BWCs can impact the experience of officers in their everyday work. With the shift from canteen to street as the primary backstage space, BWCs materially impact the transition from front to backstage. Where the transition might have previously been evident in the departure of those outside of the policing team, this now is not confirmed until BWCs stop recording and the audience is contained to those present. More significantly, the presence of BWCs within a police-public encounter can cause officers to be caught between performing for the present audience and the prospective audience who *might* watch the footage at a later date. While this study has shown that in many encounters this rarely has a substantial impact in the moment, the period after any encounter could see officers replaying their actions and questioning what might come of them if scrutinised. Consequently, this time backstage is key to managing the extra strain that comes with the potential 'context collapse' (Marwick and boyd, 2011) of performing for both a present and prospective audience in police-public encounters.

8.3 Reflections on study design

In any research project it is important to reflect from inception through to completion but this is all the more significant when adopting ethnographic methods (Davies, 1999; Hammersley and Atkinson, 2007). As in chapter four, this section adopts the personal voice to aid in

communicating these reflections. An ethnographic approach was chosen for a number of reasons. Firstly, it was deemed that exploring the everyday life (Adler et al., 1987) of frontline officers required entering their world to obtain the 'thick description' (Geertz, 1973) necessary to make sense of it. On the more practical level, it was assessed that exploring a new technology, with a relatively scarce research base – particularly in a UK context, welcomed an exploratory approach. Finally it became evident that understanding the impact of BWCs required investigating how they were not used as much as how they were – which ruled out other observational methods such as watching recorded footage. In retrospect, the findings of this thesis could not have been obtained without 'being there' and participating to some extent (Fine, 1993) in the social world of officers.

The findings of this study being so tied to the ethnographic approach are reflected in – and give more strength to - ongoing calls for ethnographic research into the impact of BWCs (Lum et al., 2019; Backman and Löfstrand, 2022). While the research base has developed since the inception of this study, with Rowe et al. (2018) providing ethnographic insights from their wider study of police discretion, the relative scarcity of ethnographic findings remains. Indeed, this study remains the sole one where the researcher has ethnographically embedded themselves, for a substantial period, in a British force with the express purpose of exploring the impact of BWCs. As reflected in the findings, the combination of observations and with semi-structured interviews was particularly useful in drawing some of the contradictions between the everyday impacts of BWCs and how officers reflect on them *post hoc*. However, the ethnographic approach did not come without challenges.

The change of research location from Ardler to Lochee has already been documented in chapter four but it added to the ongoing challenge that is obtaining and maintaining meaningful access to any organisation. The change of location required an explanation for the main gatekeeper, further introductions into the new site and then negotiated access to that site. All of this cost time and goodwill through the negotiating stages and in the re-establishing of rapport at the new research location. On reflection, one limitation of the approach to access is that the gatekeeper appears to have exercised much control over the choosing of the teams that I was able to spend time with. This was limited in practice by my suggesting start dates and times – which could only align with one team in the location based on the shift pattern that day – but there remains the chance that such a suggestion was encouraged as the teams were seen to be particularly 'good' examples of BWC usage. Likewise, I had a great deal of influence over which officers to observe – and later interview

– but it is possible that certain officers were told to make themselves as unavailable to me. The length of time embedded in Lochee, where the vast majority of observations and all interviews were conducted, helped to alleviate the potential for any such deception through the strength of relationships formed and sheer exposure to different officers during shifts.

While the strength of engagement with officers helped greatly in generating data, it also added to the danger of my going 'native' (Punch 1993: 196) and overly identifying with those researched. Such dangers were reflected on extensively in chapter four, alongside considerations on the changing nature of my identity as a researcher in different moments but there is value on reflecting once more at the conclusion of the study. The chosen approach of observing as many different officers as possible helped to alleviate the danger of over identifying with any one officer but the most important defence – in hindsight – was the continued connection to a professional life outside of the observations. During the course of the fieldwork, I continued to participate in wider academic life, via teaching and through engagement with other academics around the office and at conferences. While not a deliberate strategy, such engagement helped to keep me grounded in the mindset of an analytical observer. However, it is worth reporting that this came with a further compromise in that following police officer shift patterns while meeting these other commitments is not easily achieved. Such an approach would likely not have been sustainable over any longer period – though the length of the fieldwork in itself already presented some challenges.

While the length of time embedded in the field allowed me to develop the relationships necessary to access the everyday life of officers, it generated a vast amount of data – some of which went far beyond the scope of the research questions. Many encounters, conversations and reflections are – by necessity – absent in this work. The need to answer the research questions inevitably results in a focus on data which addresses those to the exclusion of other important and interesting areas of study. Conversely, more time in the field could have allowed for the study to expand into other areas, with the force having since introduced a new model of BWC – likely with different material affordances and constraints (Leonardi, 2011). That said, this research was focused on exploring the everyday impact of BWCs following their relatively recent introduction as core equipment and the researched period met that expectation.

The greatest strength of this research was the timing of the technology as new combined with the length of time in the field, following the actual shift patterns of the embedded teams.

Following the change of location for practical reasons, being embedded in one neighbourhood followed by one response team was key for keeping the research manageable while generating data for wider understanding. Yet, once again, this came with compromises. The focus on police experience meant the exclusion of the public side of police-public encounters beyond how their reaction – or otherwise - to BWCs impacted officers at work. Likewise, while the research sought to capture the everyday experience of uniformed frontline officers there was no coverage of teams outside of this such as public order policing or detectives. While this was an attempt to best reflect the everyday or commonplace (Yin, 2009) face of policing, such compromises align with a critique often made of qualitative research as a whole with the potential lack of generalisability (Lincoln and Guba, 1985). Though the findings here will be of generalisable interest to most British forces that operate some form of response and neighbourhood equipped officers as part of their core service. Beyond such practical generalisability, in bringing the concepts of dramaturgy and sociomateriality together with a representation of everyday frontline policing, this study has sought to move beyond the confines of the case and build theoretical inferences that can help with theoretical generalizability (Bryman, 2012: 71). The results of this attempt are summarised in the following section.

8.4 Implications for theory and practice

This thesis has demonstrated how the reception to BWCs, their observed use and their potential future use are all intimately tied to whether they are perceived as heightening or lessening the strain of policing by those on the frontline. It is significant then that this perception is not fixed; BWCs were seen to have value in some encounters while making others more difficult. Consequently, this thesis has identified a need to look beyond police-public encounters as a homogenous experience upon which the impact of BWCs will be universally felt. Such an understanding helps to explain the ongoing mixed results concerning the impacts of BWCs reported in recent reviews (Lum et al., 2020; Backman and Löfstrand, 2022), while reinforcing the value of a research approach which can zoom in on officer behaviour across different encounter types. It also highlights the need for appreciating the local and welcoming perspectives outside of the USA where the vast majority of BWC studies continue to take place (Backman and Löfstrand, 2022).

Indeed, while the ethnographic approach of this thesis has offered novel insights into the impact of BWCs across a wide range of everyday police work, the practical implications of

these findings must be situated in the local policing context. For example, while BWCs led to officers feeling more empowered to engage rather than inclined to withdraw from encounters due to being 'camera shy' (Sandhu and Haggerty, 2017) this must be contextualised within the wider drama (Manning, 1992) of their introduction. BWCs were introduced by WYP through advertising materials which emphasised their role in helping the public both be and feel safe with the cameras acting as 'the new recruit' and an 'independent witness' to help with 'crime detection' and 'crime prevention' (West Yorkshire Police, 2020). These reasons for adoption differ extensively from that of an American force where the cameras followed calls for protection from police violence or even the Dutch argument of providing the 'full' police perspective in police-public encounters (Houwing and van Eck, 2020). Research needs to take account of these local contexts, the purpose behind the introduction of the technology and the specific laws and policy which govern the use of the BWCs when considering the impacts in practice.

None of this is to say that this thesis only advances knowledge in the context in which it was studied. Rather, the contribution is widened through the application of social theory in the analysis. In this respect, this study has presented novel findings on how the affordances (Leonardi, 2011) of persistence and reviewability present in BWC footage can break the bounds that Goffman (1959) deemed essential for effective impression management. Many police-public encounters before BWCs could be safely considered bounded to those visibly present, even in the new age of visibility of a mobile camera phone equipped public (Goldsmith, 2010). However, the introduction of routinely stored BWC footage offers the *potential* for an increasing number of encounters to be viewed by an unknown future audience. The introduction of this prospective audience has been demonstrated to result in officers' perceiving themselves as subject to extra scrutiny with the impact of this perception being felt across their everyday work. Indeed, despite there being no evidence during the fieldwork of the apparent increase in organisational visibility resulting in any disciplinary action, it remained a pressing concern for officers.

As with other observational research of frontline use of BWCs in Britain (Rowe et al, 2018), such concerns could manifest in officers being more robotic in their performances but, significantly, such impacts were rare in this study and can be explained by two main levers – time and awareness. Where officers had the time to think about what a prospective audience might desire or where some failure in the interaction order (Goffman, 1982) caused awareness of BWCs to return to the fore; the perceived conflict between the needs of present

and prospective audiences could manifest. Such awareness could then result in officers being caught betwixt and between (Turner, 1974) what they deemed to be most effective in the moment and to what they judged appropriate for a potential future review. Again, such a tension was present despite the lack of any negative judgment falling on officers for their behaviour on camera. While such conscious reflecting on being recorded could be interpreted as evidence of the civilising effects of BWCs, it was framed more negatively by officers. Most reflected on over awareness of being recorded as a potential restriction on their ability to do their job safely and effectively in the moment. These findings again highlight the importance of considering the potential for the technology to produce different impacts across the wide breadth of policing. They also highlight the strain that even a generally welcomed technology can add to an everyday work environment where it is perceived to possess the material capacity (Leonardi, 2011) to act as a surveillance device regardless of use in practice.

The impact of the mere potential for BWCs to be used against officers was seen in those moments beyond and between police-public encounters. More commonly than expressed or witnessed changes of behaviour within encounters was officers routinely reflecting on their performances after the fact. Even the smallest misstep or perceived failing could afterwards cause officers to lament that they *might* be reprimanded. Importantly, there was little fear of being seen to make the wrong decision in enforcing the law; performances, not outcomes, were the cause of concern. Such concerns could have a cumulative effect over the course of not just a single shift but also as a reflection on the changing nature of everyday police work as a whole. This was most apparent in the near universal concern expressed by officers of recording of their work becoming ‘less human’.

The desire for officers to be able to carry out their work in a ‘human’ way has further been demonstrated in this study to influence how officers communicate – or otherwise – their activation of BWCs to the public. One finding of direct importance for practice is an echoing of Patterson and White’s (2021) observational study of officers in the USA which highlighted the absence of a notification to members of the public in most encounters. However, this study has shown how even in those few encounters where the public were notified, it rarely registered. While public reactions to BWCs were not the focus of this study, the general lack of awareness observed indicates the technology is unlikely to have the civilising effect on public behaviour hoped for elsewhere (Ariel et al, 2017). Consequently, policy governing the use of BWCs should recognise the importance of officers being empowered to deliver

notifications in the right way – at the right moment – and the value of such notifications being more than cursory for the public. More broadly, this study has shown how the relative success of BWCs – from a police perspective – is tied to officers still being able to feel 'human' despite the general increase in their organisational visibility. Such a feeling has been supported by officers being able to carve out time backstage (Goffman, 1959) to recharge from their public encounters. Given that this study has demonstrated how such backstage areas are in increasingly public spaces – in and around encounters – any encroachment on officer control of their camera should also be understood as intruding on this potential to recover backstage.

8.5 The future of BWCs and areas for further study

It has been remarked throughout this work that BWCs are not entirely new to policing, with British forces considering head cameras as far back as 2005. However, such early models of BWC are far removed in design and capability from the cameras of the current study – as reflected in the materiality (Leonardi, 2011) discussions in chapter five. To recognise the importance of materiality but not reflect on the differences available in the newest models at the conclusion of this study would be an oversight. While the current state of the technology remains broadly similar in design and core functionality there are new features which need to be recognised. Already, BWCs have the capability to be remotely activated and even livestreamed by other personnel. Beyond this, they can be set up to be wirelessly activated on certain triggers – such as leaving a vehicle or drawing a weapon – and they are increasingly integrated into wider systems (such as Axon's Evidence programme) where camera equipped officers can be live tracked. Such tracking facilities and livestreaming can again be tailored to flagged users, areas or incidents. In short, the latest models might look almost identical to those used at the beginning of this study but there functions have expanded. Given the support for BWCs expressed by officers in this study was so contingent on their retaining control of the technology, these material developments have the potential to drastically alter how BWCs are received on the frontline.

The introduction of remote activation and livestreaming is an area that deserves particular attention given the findings in this work about the ongoing tensions between performing for present and prospective audiences. The bringing in of external audiences to ongoing encounters presents the potential for a complete collapse of audience segregation that Goffman (1959) deemed essential for tailoring performances to the moment. Already in this

study, officers have shown how they can struggle to accommodate the blurring of audiences to the extent they are experiencing a form context collapse (Marwick and boyd, 2011). Future studies are encouraged to investigate how live streaming impacts the experience of police-public encounters but also how officers feel more generally about being equipped with devices that are not entirely in their control. It is worth noting that not every force will adopt such technologies or utilise the full features of those available but researchers should seek out contexts in which they have been adopted in order to consider their impact.

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Appendix A: Information sheet (observations)

Research FAQ for observations

1. What is the title of the research project?
Police use of body-worn video cameras: A qualitative study of the impacts on police public interventions

2. What is the purpose of the observations?
You are being invited to take part in a research project. Before you decide it is important for you to understand why the research is being done and what it will involve. Please take time to read the following information carefully and discuss it with others if you wish. Please ask if there is anything that is not clear or if you would like more information. Take time to decide whether you wish to take part. Thank you for reading this.

3. What is the project's purpose?
The research involves an exploration of how the use of body-worn video cameras (BWV) is impacting policing. This study particularly focuses on police-public encounters and how the cameras influence these. The approach taken is a qualitative one, involving both interviews and observations and it aims to increase our understanding of this new development in policing.

4. Why have I been chosen?
You have been chosen because you utilise BWV in your everyday work and your role sees you engage with the public in a variety of different encounters.

5. Do I have to take part?
It is up to you to decide whether or not to take part. If you do decide to take part you will be asked to sign a consent form and you can still withdraw at any time. You do not have to give a reason.

6. What will happen to me if I take part?
You will be asked to participate in a series of observations. These will include observing you in your normal working practices and may involve answering some questions. No personal data is obtained and you will not be asked to act differently to how you usually would. This method is designed so the researcher can get a good grasp of how BWV is being used in the broad range of encounters that frontline officers engage in.

7. What do I have to do?
In essence; go about your usual work activities, which will be observed by the researcher. This may involve some questions during appropriate times. The observations will be anonymised when published.

8. What are the possible disadvantages and risks of taking part?
There are no foreseeable disadvantages for participants. It is recognised that policing is a complex and skilled activity and therefore the researcher will try to gather the most complete picture by clarifying or asking questions where appropriate. These will be timed to avoid distraction to the job.

9. What are the possible benefits of taking part?

The participants will be given a summary of the research and an opportunity to discuss the findings. It is also hoped that this work will help to develop a better understanding of how BWV is impacting frontline police encounters which should assist in the development of future policy and practices.

10. What happens if the research study stops earlier than expected?
If the research activity stops earlier than anticipated for some unforeseen reason(s) each participant will be notified and an explanation provided.

11. Will my taking part in this project be kept confidential?
All the information that I collect during the course of the research will be kept strictly confidential. You will not be able to be identified in any reports or publications.

12. What type of information will be sought from me and why is the collection of this information relevant for achieving the research project's objectives?
The research will compile and then analyse the observations. When all the observations are collected they will be built up to develop a picture of the use of BWV in public-police encounters

13. What will happen to the results of the research project?
The results of the research will appear in researcher's thesis scheduled for completion in September 2019. Before and after this date the researcher may use the results, which will be anonymous, to write papers for academic journals, other publications or for presentations to conferences.

15. Who is organising and funding the research?
The researcher is undertaking this doctoral research at the University of Leeds as part of an N8 Policing Research Partnership scholarship.

16. Will I be recorded, and if so how will the recorded media be used?
The researcher will take written notes during observations. Notes taken during observations will be used only for analysis and for illustration in conference presentations and lectures. No other use will be made of them without your written permission, and no one outside the project team will be allowed access to the original recordings.

17. How will my data be stored?
All recordings, notes and transcriptions will be encrypted and stored on a password protected computer in a secure room at the University of Leeds.

18. The project team consists of the following people.

Researcher	Lead Supervisor	Supervisor
Declan Falconer **D.Falconer@leeds.ac.uk**	Mr Stuart Lister 0113 343 5075 **S.C.Lister@leeds.ac.uk**	Prof David Allen 0113 343 7015 **d.allen@lubs.leeds.ac.uk**
Contact Address – Leeds University, School of Law The Liberty Building University of Leeds Leeds, LS2 9JT		

You will be given a copy of the information sheet and a signed consent form to keep.

Appendix B: Information sheet (interviews)

Research FAQ for interview respondents

1. What is the title of the research project?
Police use of body-worn video cameras: A qualitative study of the impacts on police public interventions

2. What is the purpose of the interview?
You are being invited to take part in a research project. Before you decide it is important for you to understand why the research is being done and what it will involve. Please take time to read the following information carefully and discuss it with others if you wish. Please ask if there is anything that is not clear or if you would like more information. Take time to decide whether you wish to take part. Thank you for reading this.

3. What is the project's purpose?
The research involves an exploration of how the use of body-worn video cameras (BWV) is impacting policing. This study particularly focuses on police-public encounters and how the cameras influence these. The approach taken is a qualitative one, involving both interviews and observations and it aims to increase understanding of this new development in policing.

4. Why have I been chosen?
You have been chosen because you utilise BWV in your everyday work and your role sees you engage with the public in a variety of different encounters.

5. Do I have to take part?
It is up to you to decide whether or not to take part. If you do decide to take part you will be asked to sign a consent form and you can still withdraw at any time. You do not have to give a reason.

6. What will happen to me if I take part?
You will be asked to participate in an interview lasting approximately one hour. The interview will not include any personal or biographical questions and will only focus on your experiences and use of BWV during your work. The interview will be an in-depth discussion about how BWV has impacted your work and how it has been received in public encounters. It is anticipated that the interview will take place at your work place in a suitable room. If this is not possible please let me know and I will sort out any alternative arrangements.

7. What do I have to do?
In essence; answer the questions posed as best you can. There are no lifestyle restrictions as a result of participating, the interviews will remain confidential and results will be anonymised when published.

8. What are the possible disadvantages and risks of taking part?
The main disadvantage for participants is the time factor. It is anticipated that the time taken for the interviews will be about one hour.

9. What are the possible benefits of taking part?
The participants will be given a summary of the research and an opportunity to discuss the findings. It is also hoped that this work will help to develop a better understanding of how BWV is impacting frontline police encounters which should assist in the development of future policy and practices.

10. What happens if the research study stops earlier than expected?
If the research activity stops earlier than anticipated for some unforeseen reason(s) each participant will be notified and an explanation provided.

11. Will my taking part in this project be kept confidential?
All the information that I collect during the course of the research will be kept strictly confidential. You will not be able to be identified in any reports or publications.

12. What type of information will be sought from me and why is the collection of this information relevant for achieving the research project's objectives?
The research will compile and then analyse the responses of each person who is interviewed. Based on what is said I will draft a narrative/transcript which you may check if you wish. When all the results are collected they will be built up to develop a picture of the use of BWV in public-police encounters

13. What will happen to the results of the research project?
The results of the research will appear in researcher's thesis scheduled for completion in September 2019. Before and after this date the researcher may use the results, which will be anonymous, to write papers for academic journals, other publications or for presentations to conferences.

15. Who is organising and funding the research?
The researcher is undertaking this doctoral research at the University of Leeds as part of an N8 Policing Research Partnership scholarship.

16. Will I be recorded, and if so how will the recorded media be used?
Yes, using a digital recorder with inbuilt encryption. The audio recordings of your activities made during this research will be used only for analysis and for illustration in conference presentations and lectures. No other use will be made of them without your written permission, and only the researcher will be able to access the original recordings.

17. How will my data be stored?
All recordings, notes and transcriptions will be encrypted and stored on a password protected computer in a secure room at the University of Leeds.

18. The project team consists of the following people.

Researcher	Lead Supervisor	Supervisor
Declan Falconer **D.Falconer@leeds.ac.uk**	**Mr Stuart Lister** **0113 343 5075** **S.C.Lister@leeds.ac.uk**	**Prof David Allen** **0113 343 7015** **d.allen@lubs.leeds.ac.uk**
Contact Address – Leeds University, School of Law **The Liberty Building** **University of Leeds** **Leeds, LS2 9JT**		

You will be given a copy of the information sheet and a signed consent form to keep.

Appendix C: Consent Form

Participant Consent Form

Title of Research Project: Police use of body-worn video cameras: A qualitative study of the impacts on police public interventions

Name of Researcher: Declan Falconer (contact: D.Falconer@leeds.ac.uk)

*Please **initial the box** if you agree with the statement to the left*

1	I confirm that I have read and understand the above research project and I have had the opportunity to ask questions about the project.	☐
2	I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time without giving any reason and without there being any negative consequences. In addition, should I not wish to answer any particular question or questions, I am free to decline.	☐
3	I understand that my responses will be kept strictly confidential. I understand that whilst direct quotes may be used my name will not be linked with the research materials, and I will not be identified or identifiable in the report, reports or articles that result from the research.	☐
4	I agree for the data collected from me to be used in future research	☐
5	I agree to take part in the above research project and will inform the researcher should my contact details change.	☐

_____	_____	_____
Name of participant	Date	Signature
Declan Falconer Lead researcher	_____ Date	_____ Signature

To be signed and dated in presence of the participant

After the form has been signed you will receive a copy of the consent form along with a copy of the letter and any other written information required in advance of the initial interview, observation or document access.

Appendix D: Interview Schedule – Frontline Constables & PCSOs

Opening

Can you tell me a little bit about yourself, how long have you been a police officer/PCSO?

- What type of unit are you currently working in?
- Have you had any different roles within the police previously?

Body worn video cameras (BWCs)

Before we start talking about your experience of using body worn could you tell me approximately when you were first issued with and started using the camera?

How did you feel when you were first told about their introduction?

Do you recall how their introduction was explained?

- why do you think they were introduced?

Activating BWC

Now I want to talk about how you decide to use your camera in different situations.

- What influences whether or not you turn the camera on?
    - Has that always been the case?
- Do you have an example of a time you were particularly glad you were recording?
- Has activating body worn ever caused you any problems? Can you think of an example?
- What about a situation where it was initially difficult to predict the need for body worn but it then arose?
- Have you ever activated the camera before deciding it was more appropriate to turn it off for any reason?
- Do you think how you use body worn differs depending on if you are solo or with colleagues?

Officer awareness of being on camera

Now that we've discussed how you use the camera, I want to spend some time on your awareness of recording.

- Having activated the camera, is it something you think about when interacting with people?
    - Can you think of a situation where you have been aware of the fact you are recording and adjusted your approach in any way?

- Following on from when responding with other officers, have you ever been asked to turn off your camera by a colleague? Have you ever asked a colleague?
- Have you ever been questioned or complimented by superior officers about your handling of a situation that was recorded on camera?
    - Do you know of any colleagues who have?
- Does anyone ever watch your footage?
    - Courts, peers, superiors?
    - Have you ever watched someone else's?
    - Does the thought of their watching ever affect your decision making?
- Do you think recording on BWC makes you more or less likely to deal with an incident using your formal powers?
- And what about when the public are recording you on their phone, does that feel the same or different to you than being recorded on BWC?

Communicating activation & public awareness

Thank you. We've talked about some different situations where you've used your BWC and how you feel about this, I now have a few questions about how activating the camera is received by the public.

- In situations where you have activated your BWC, do you think people are always aware that they are being recorded?
    - Do you think this awareness has any impact on how they act towards you?
- When engaging people do you let them know they are being recorded?
    - Do you always feel able to?
    - How do you decide when is the best time to let them know?
- Can you think of a time where you haven't let someone know they were being recorded for some reason?
- Overall, do you think BWCs have had an impact on how do you deal with the public?

Concluding – I asked you at the start of the interview about how you felt when BWCs were first mentioned then introduced, has your view shifted since you started using them?

Do you think that management aims of BWCs match up with how you use them on the front line?

Would you views change at all if BWCs were recording all of your interactions with the public?

- What about if they were simply always on?

Thanks for taking the time to talk with me, before we finish is there anything else you would like to say or let me know about?

Appendix E: Interview Schedule – Frontline Supervision (Sergeants & Inspectors)

Opening

Can you tell me a little bit about yourself, how long have you been a police officer?

- What type of team are you currently working in?
- How would you describe your responsibilities within the team?
- Have you worked in any different type of team within the police previously?

Body worn video cameras (BWCs)

Before we start talking about your experience of body worn could you tell me approximately when your team were first issued with and started using the camera?

- Did everyone start using them at the same time?

How did you feel when you were first told about their introduction?

- Do you think that impression was shared in the team?

Do you recall how their introduction was explained?

- Why do you think they were introduced?

As a supervisor, were you consulted or involved in the roll out of the cameras to your team in any way?

BWCs and supervision of PCs

Before we talk about your direct experience as a supervisor, I want to spend a bit of time on what you expect from the PCs/PCSOs on your team when it comes to their use of BWCs.

- What sort of situations do you expect BWCs to be used in?
    - Where does that expectation come from?
    - Has that always been the case?
    - Are expectations the same for yourself when attending a job?
- Do you think there is consistent use of BWCs throughout the team?
    - Is this monitored in any way?

Ok, I now want to talk about how the introduction of BWCs has impacted your own supervision responsibilities.

- Did you expect BWCs to have an impact on your day to day supervision?
    - In what ways has the reality matched your expectations?
    - Has it impacted your workload at all?
- Is there any particular change in your day to day activities that immediately stands out to you since the introduction of BWCs?
    - In what circumstances would you review an officer's footage?
    - Can you think of any way in which BWCs have proved particularly helpful for you as a supervisor?
    - What about situations where BWCs have proven to be a hindrance?
- Have you ever had reason to talk to an individual officer about their use of BWCs?
- Are officers always made aware if you view their footage for any reason?
- Are there any ways in which you think BWC could be better used in your role?

BWCs and the wider organisation

Having discussed your experience as a frontline supervisor I'd like to now talk about your experience of the introduction of BWCs on interactions with other departments and groups outside the police.

- Have BWCs had any impact on how you work with more senior officers?
    - Stats?
    - Reviewing footage?
    - 'Big' incidents?
- What about different departments?
    - Investigative teams?
    - Professional standards?
- Outside organisations – such as other law enforcement agencies or the Crown Prosecution service?
- And finally, the public – can citizens request footage?
    - Does this ever happen?
    - Proactive v reactive sharing
    - What do you think the implications of BWCs are for police-public relations?

Personal awareness of BWCs

Before we wrap things up I wanted to give you the chance to talk a little bit more about your own awareness of the camera at jobs.

- What sort of situation might you as a Sgt/Inspector expect to attend in person?
    - Do you think of any of these as more or less suited to BWCs?
- Having activated the camera, is it something you think about when interacting with people?
    - The public?
    - Police?
- Are there any particular incidents that you have been to where the use of BWCs stands out in your memory?

Concluding

I asked you at the start of the interview about how you felt when BWCs were first mentioned then introduced, has your view shifted since yourself and the team started using them?

Do you think that senior management aims of BWCs match up with how you have experienced them in practice?

Would you views change at all if BWCs were recording all officer interactions with the public?

- What about if they were simply always on?

Thanks for taking the time to talk with me, before we finish is there anything else you would like to say or let me know about?