University of Southampton

Faculty of Social Sciences

Sociology, Social Policy and Criminology

Armed Policing in England

Volume 1 of 2
by
Oliver William Clark-Darby

Thesis for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

September 2019

University of Southampton

Abstract

Faculty of Social Sciences

Sociology, Social Policy and Criminology

<u>Thesis for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy</u>

Armed Policing in England

by

Oliver William Clark-Darby

This thesis finds that armed police officers do not report experiencing a lack of legitimacy when interacting with members of the public in Great Britain during their routine duties. Instead, firearms officers believe that there are aspects of their role that frustrate their ability to build legitimacy in the same ways as their unarmed colleagues do. However, firearms officers do identify alternate ways of building both self-legitimacy and organisational legitimacy. These alternate ways are most visible in the aftermath of a critical incident.

The findings also indicate that there is a distinct firearms officer culture. Aspects of the armed police role mean that firearms officers are in pursuit of challenge and excitement. However, within this culture, there is a noticeable lack of specific enthusiasm for firearms themselves. Further to this, existing hierarchical and cultural conflicts are evident in the discussions between firearms officers and the force control room surrounding the authorising of firearms deployments. Finally, firearms officers oppose the routine arming of the police. Instead, for their sense of safety, firearms officers place an emphasis on other factors such as improved communication skills, carrying TASERs and always patrolling in pairs.

Armed policing in Great Britain remains an under-explored and difficult to access area of research. With a history of 'unarmed exceptionalism', the position of Authorised Firearms Officers in Great Britain is precarious. It is assumed that armed police are delegitimising and threaten the notions of 'Policing by Consent' and 'Procedural Justice'. With a large increase in the number of firearms officers in 2017 and an ongoing debate about the routine arming of police officers, it is important and instructive to assess existing interactions between the public and armed police.

This research examines the interactions between armed police and the public. It examines the circumstances in which armed officers interact with the public, how the public behave during those encounters and how armed officers construct their sense of legitimacy in relation to these encounters. Using an ethnographic approach, this research accompanied Authorised Firearms Officers as they performed their daily duties in Armed Response Vehicles across two police jurisdictions. Semi-Structured Interviews were also conducted. The fieldwork took place between February and April 2018.

Table of Contents

Table of Tables

Table of Figures

Declaration of Authorship

Print name:

Title of thesis:

I declare that this thesis and the work presented in it is my own and has been generated by me as the result of my own original research.

I confirm that:

1. This work was done wholly or mainly while in candidature for a research degree at this University;
2. Where any part of this thesis has previously been submitted for a degree or any other qualification at this University or any other institution, this has been clearly stated;
3. Where I have consulted the published work of others, this is always clearly attributed;
4. Where I have quoted from the work of others, the source is always given. With the exception of such quotations, this thesis is entirely my own work;
5. I have acknowledged all main sources of help;
6. Where the thesis is based on work done by myself jointly with others, I have made clear exactly what was done by others and what I have contributed myself;
7. None of this work has been published before submission.

Signature:

Date:

Acknowledgements

This thesis would not have been possible without my exemplary supervisory team: the expertise and support of Professor Jenny Fleming, the knowledge and advice of Professor Peter Squires. Thank-you for believing in me. I wouldn't have succeeded without you.

To Jenny, I have cherished every moment of working together and you have improved me far beyond what I deserve. Your help was always valuable, as was your intuition for when I needed it! Your understanding made it seem that even with everything I would get wrong, I still had hope of getting it right one day.

To Peter, whose careful criticism and encouraging praise has been invaluable. I was elated when you came on-board partway through the project and will always be grateful for the doors you have opened for me.

A thesis without data would simply be a very dry literature review and so I must extend my gratitude to the National Lead on Armed Policing and his staff at the National Police Chief's Council for agreeing to help arrange the fieldwork section of my thesis. I must also thank the senior officers from both police services for agreeing to take on my project.

To the AFOs who I accompanied directly, who tolerated my presence at all junctures or who had the laborious task of ensuring I was looked after, I give my sincere gratitude. I also give thanks to the many and varied police officers of various services, departments and ranks to whom my presence must have been baffling.

I must also extend thanks to the following people.

To Dr Toby Miles-Johnson whose friendly guidance was key in directing the early stages of the project.

To Dr John Boswell, Dr Paul Bridgen and Professor Rod Rhodes for their diligent and incredibly valuable feedback during various annual reviews and upgrade processes.

To the Economic and Social Research Council for their funding, and the staff of the Southampton DTC for their help.

To Ash for proofreading. To Russell for the kebabs.

To my office colleagues past and present for humour and distraction.

To my family and friends, for their patience and understanding.

To my fiancée, words cannot express how much I appreciate you being with me whilst I was on this journey, your love and support has meant the world to me.

Abbreviations

ACPO – Association of Chief Police Officers

AEP – Attenuating Energy Projectile

AFO – Authorised Firearms Officer

ANPR – Automatic Number Plate Recognition

APP – Authorised Professional Practice

ARV – Armed Response Vehicle

BTP – British Transport Police

CAQDAS – Computer Aided Qualitative Data Analysis Software

CNC – Civil Nuclear Constabulary

CTSFO – Counter Terrorist Specialist Firearms Officer

ERGO – Ethics and Research Governance Office

FCR – Force Control Room

FSD – Firearms Support Dog

HMIC – Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary

IOPC – Independent Office of Police Conduct

IPCC – Independent Police Complaints Commission

MoD Police – Ministry of Defence Police

MOE – Method of Entry

MOPAC – Mayor's Office of Policing and Crime

MTFA – Marauding Terrorist Firearms Attack

NPAS – National Police Air Service

NPCC – National Police Chief's Council

NPFTC – National Police Firearms Training Curriculum

NPT – Neighbourhood Policing Team

OFC – Operational Firearms Commander

PAVA – Pelargonic Acid VanillyAmide

PBR – Plastic Baton Round

PFEW – Police Federation of England and Wales

PPE – Personal Protective Equipment

PPU – Police Paramilitary Unit

PSD – Professional Standards Department

RPU – Roads Policing Unit

RTC– Road Traffic Collision

SAS – Special Air Service

SFC – Strategic Firearms Commander

SFO – Specialist Firearms Officer

SNT – Safer Neighbourhoods Team

STO – Specially Trained Officer

TacAd – Tactical Advisor

TFC – Tactical Firearms Commander

TTO – TASER Trained Officer

Glossary

Sample images of the relevant vehicles, weapons and equipment described within this glossary are provided in Appendix 1.

ACPO – *Association of Chief Police Officers* – See **NPCC**.

AEP – *Attenuating Energy Projectile* – An AEP is a 37mm, soft-nosed impact projectile made of a rubber or plastic composite fired from a single shot launcher. An AEP is a form of less-lethal weapon only available for use by trained officers to give them an additional means of dealing with threats of serious violence. It delivers an impact that is not intended to cause serious or life-threatening injury but is of sufficient force to dissuade or prevent a violent or potentially violent person from their intended course of action, thereby reducing the threat. If used incorrectly, they can be lethal.

AFO – *Authorised Firearms Officer* – A police officer who has been selected, trained, accredited and authorised by their chief officer to carry a firearm operationally.

An Garda Síochána – The police service responsible for the Republic of Ireland. They are a routinely unarmed police service similar to British police services.

ANPR – *Automatic Number Plate Recognition* – A camera based technology that can 'read' vehicles' number plates as they pass. Originally used by **RPUs** to check the registered owner of the vehicle, police can now attach 'markers' to the vehicles details to inform them of the vehicles occupants or if the vehicle is known to be involved in crime.

APP – *Authorised Professional Practice* – A directory of information authorised by the **College of Policing** as the official source of professional practice on policing. Police officers and staff are expected to have regard to APP in discharging their responsibilities.

Armed Response – The use of **AFO**s to respond to emergency calls requesting their assistance. This is opposed to a deterrence use of **AFO**s to guard persons and/or property.

Armed Uplift – By December of 2015, in the wake of terrorist attacks in Paris, the British government made available a £34 million budget ring-fenced for a number of selected police services to increase the numbers of firearms officers they employed and available on duty at any one time.

ARV – *Armed Response Vehicle* – A police vehicle used by **AFO**s to take them between calls as well as carry their weapons and equipment. These vehicles are crewed by uniformed officers who have been selected and trained to respond to a range of armed operations involving subjects on foot, in moving vehicles and in buildings.

ASP – A friction-lock telescopic baton used by British police. The name came initially from the company that first started manufacturing them: *Armament Systems and Procedures, Inc.* but is now used as the generic term for a baton of this type.

Baton Gun/Launcher/Round – See **AEP**.

BBs – Used to refer to steel or lead air weapon ammunition and the plastic BBs used in airsoft or soft air weapons. Contrary to popular belief, the 'BB' does not stand for 'Ball Bearing' but

rather the 'BB' size of lead shot from **Shotgun**, which the earliest versions were designed around.

BB Gun – A replica firearm and/or air weapon capable of discharging a small pellet known as a **BB**. They are available to purchase by anybody aged 18+ in the UK. Despite the fact there are appreciated differences between different sorts of air weapons, 'BB Gun' has entered popular parlance as a catchall term for replica firearms capable of discharging a shot.

Bean-bag Round – A small fabric pillow containing lead shot weighing approximately 40g.

Bean-bag Shotgun – A less-lethal option where a 12 gauge **Shotgun** is used to fire **Bean-bag Round**s to gain pain compliance from a target.

Body Worn Video – Cameras mounted on police officers' uniform that are used to record their interactions with the public.

BTP – *British Transport Police* – The non-Home Office police service partly funded by transport companies to police the railways. In preparation for the 2012 Olympics they trained and deployed their own **AFOs** for the first time. Their firearms unit increased as part of the **Armed Uplift** and they regularly deploy **ARVs** on patrol in London as well as **AFOs** on trains or at stations around London and Birmingham

CAQDAS – *Computer Aided Qualitative Data Analysis Software* – Software such as NVivo which allows for the analysis and categorisation of large amounts of qualitative data.

Carbine – A short barrelled, shoulder-fired weapon shooting either **Rifle** or **Handgun** ammunition depending on the model, originally designed for use by cavalry. A **Semi-Automatic** rifle-calibre carbine was the primary weapon of the **ARV** teams at the time of the fieldwork.

CNC – *Civil Nuclear Constabulary* – The non-Home Office police service assigned to protect civil nuclear facilities and the movement of nuclear material around the country. They are a routinely armed service and all of their officers must qualify as **AFO**s.

College of Policing – The professional body that oversees training and development for the police in England and Wales.

CS Spray – *2-chlorobenzalmalononitrile* – An **Incapacitating Spray** using 'Tear Gas' as the principle reacting agent.

CTSFO – *Counter Terrorist Specialist Firearms Officer* – The highest level of firearms officer in the **NPFTC**. Established by the Metropolitan Police in the run-up to the 2012 London Olympics. Since 2016 this grade of officer has been nationally organised around London and the five regional hubs (Greater Manchester Police, Thames Valley Police, West Midlands Police and West Yorkshire Police in England, plus Police Scotland) forming the CTSFO Network. Their training includes Advanced Marine Training, Close-Quarter-Combat and Fast-Rope Helicopter Tactics; they regularly train with the UK Special Forces command including the **SAS** and SBS.

D5 – **NPFTC** Module on Open Area searching.

Distraction Device – Also called Flashbangs or Stun Grenades; a non-lethal grenade that when thrown emits a loud bang and a bright flash of light. Some devices will emit multiple pulses of flashes and bangs from a single grenade.

Enforcer – A manual, single-person portable battering ram; see **MOE**.

ERGO – *Ethics and Research Governance Office* – The body which oversees the Ethical approval of research at the University of Southampton.

FCR – *Force Control Room* – The police staffed control room responsible for the deployment of police resources towards any spontaneous incidents or pre-planned operations.

FIM – *Force Incident Manager* – The Inspector in charge of the **FCR** that has oversight for all the policing being carried out in their area. It has been said they are the operational end of the Chief Constable's Authority. They must also be a qualified **TFC**.

Firearms Deployment – **AFOs** are considered as being deployed when they are required to conduct a specific task during which the possession of a firearm, with appropriate authorisation, is a required element. This includes when they self-deploy.

Force Armourer – The individual responsible for organising and maintaining the weapons used by a particular police service. This is usually a civilian employee with a police or military background, they may run a team that helps them if covering a particularly large force.

FSD – *Firearms Support Dog* – A police dog trained with its handler to participate in firearms operations to provide a less-lethal contingency to **AFO**s.

Garda/Gardaí – See **An Garda Síochána.**

Glock – *Glock 17* – Austrian made **Handgun** chambered in 9 x 19mm Parabellum, the issued **Sidearm** for the **ARV** crews at the time of the research.

Halligan – A multipurpose tool consisting of a claw, adze blade and tapered pick, which is useful in quickly breaching many types of locked doors, also see **MOE.**

Handgun – A small, short-barrelled firearm designed to be used with one hand.

HMIC – *Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary* – The body with statutory responsibility to perform inspections of police services in England and Wales. Since July 2017 the body has integrated inspections of Fire and Rescue Services too, now being known as HMICFRS.

Incapacitating Spray – A generic name referring to the sprays issued to police, commonly known by the public as 'Pepper Sprays'. 'Pepper Spray' is now a misnomer as Capsicum is not the principle agent of all Incapacitating Sprays. Incapacitating sprays aim to provide officers with a less-lethal tactical option to help restraint activity. The most common example in use is **PAVA**, shortly followed by **CS Spray**.

IOPC – *Independent Office of Police Conduct* – A public body for overseeing the system for handling complaints made against police forces in England and Wales. Formerly the **IPPCC** and is sometimes still referred to as such.

IPCC – *Independent Police Complaints Commission* – See **IOPC**.

Level – Slang term for a **Firearms Deployment**.

Level 2 – Level 2 is a grade of public order officer. These officers are deployed to spontaneous or pre-planned public order/public safety events as a resource to enable an effective policing response and act, where needed, in a **Mutual Aid** capacity.

MoD Police – *Ministry of Defence Police* – The non-Home Office police service that provides civilian policing and protection to Ministry of Defence sites and convoys. They are a routinely armed service with all officers required to be **AFOs** and 90% of MoD Police personnel on duty at any one time are armed.

MOE – *Method of Entry* – The use of dedicated equipment and techniques to gain entry to premises. The two main tools carried by **ARV**s are the **Halligan** ("Hooly") Bar and the **Enforcer**.

MOPAC – *Mayor's Office of Policing and Crime* – The functional body of the Greater London Authority that provides oversight and accountability for the Metropolitan Police.

MTFA – *Marauding Terrorist Firearms Attack* – An incident in which an individual with a firearm carries out a random and unprovoked attack on members of the public, normally in a crowded area at a predetermined target location.

Mutual Aid – When one regional police service provides resources to support another.

NPAS – *National Police Air Service* – The centralised police aviation system providing air support to the regional police services in England & Wales.

NPCC – *National Police Chiefs' Council* – A forum for chief police officers to share ideas and coordinates strategic operational responses and advice to the Government. Formerly known as **ACPO** and sometimes still referred to as such.

NPFTC – *National Police Firearms Training Curriculum* – A programme of nationally accredited firearms training that has been developed within a framework of integrated modules. These modules form the basis of required training to become a firearms officer or any other associated specialism (e.g. **OFC** or **CTSFO**).

NPT – *Neighbourhood Policing Team* – The policing teams with responsibility for a set geographical area to address crime in that area and provide reassurance policing to the residents. These teams often combine regular PCs with Special Constables and PCSOs.

OFC – *Operational Firearms Commander* – The nominated 'Bronze' Commander for a Firearms Operation. On each shift there will be at least one **AFO** who is qualified to become the nominated **OFC** in case of an operation. Their responsibility is to ensure the tactical parameters set by the **TFC** are implemented properly and to be the link between the **AFO**s carrying out the operation and the chain of command. They usually will be present at the scene of an incident but can perform their role remotely.

Operation Foot – A reassurance policing exercise and counter-terrorism strategy utilised by the police where overtly armed officers were deployed on foot to venues and events that were expected to draw a large crowd. The moniker 'Foot' is a fictional name for the operation generated for this thesis. This has been done to protect the use of the real operation's name by police.

Operation Plato – The firearms operation put in place when police suspect there is an Active Shooter who has fired at persons and may continue to do so. It triggers a **Mutual Aid** process whereby all surrounding police services are to provide principally **ARV**s and but also other

resources if requested to help contain and neutralise the gunman. It also triggers the deployment of **CTSFO**s.

Operation Temperer – A reassurance policing operation carried out in the immediate aftermath of terrorist activity that sees armed military personnel deployed to bolster positions normally guarded by armed police.

PAVA – *Pelargonic Acid VanillyAmide* – A synthetic capsaicinoid based **Incapacitating Spray.**

PBR – *Plastic Baton Round* – See **AEP.**

PFEW – *Police Federation of England and Wales* – The statutory staff association for police officers up to the rank of Chief Inspector in England and Wales. The police are prohibited by law from joining trade unions and so the Police Federation functions as a union equivalent based on a good faith arrangement with the serving government.

PPE – *Personal Protective Equipment* – Equipment used to keep an employee safe at work. In a policing context in Great Britain this also includes their stab-vest, baton and incapacitating spray.

PPU – *Police Paramilitary Unit* – Kraska (1999) determines a PPU to comprise specially trained officers equipped to deal with high threat public order incidents and confront armed suspects.

Priority Call – Priority Calls are calls that require an urgent police response to prevent loss of life, serious injury, use of violence, serious damage to property or the escape of an offender. They can come from either a member of the public via the 999 system or originate from the **FCR** itself or another police officer. These calls often necessitate the use of blue lights and sirens. [Officially the term is a 'Grade 1' call but 'Priority Call' is a particular colloquial term that was used in both police services observed. Other terms such as 'Immediates' and 'I-Grades' are also used].

PSD – *Professional Standards Department* – The internal department of a given police service that investigates complaints and takes action to ensure the integrity and accountability of its police officers.

Response – Officers on 'Response' are unarmed, 'front-line' officers whose job it is to respond to emergency calls.

Rifle – A firearm whose barrel has been 'rifled' to improve the accuracy of the bullets fired and is designed to be fired from the shoulder. 'Rifle' is a broad category of weapons with many different mechanisms, firing a wide variety of ammunition.

RPU – *Roads Policing Unit* – Officers with additional training for policing on roads and motorways.

RTC – *Road Traffic Collision*.

SAS – *Special Air Service* – A Special Forces unit of the British Army. Considered the most highly trained in the world with an illustrious history, they perform classified operations both domestically and internationally.

Semi-Automatic – A semi-automatic firearm is one that fires a single bullet each time the trigger is pulled. In between trigger pulls, the firearm performs all steps necessary to prepare it to discharge again.

SFC – *Strategic Firearms Commander* – The nominated 'Gold' Commander for a Firearms Operation. They will have overall strategic command with the responsibility and accountability for the directions given. They must authorise the deployment of firearms officers for an operation or where the TFC has made that decision the **SFC** must ratify or rescind that decision. They must ensure the strategy for deployment is recorded and any changes are evidenced through a clear audit trail. These officers would not be a currently trained **AFO** and are unlikely to have ever been an **AFO**. They will not normally be deployed to the scene of an incident.

SFO – *Specialist Firearms Officer* – An **AFO** who has undertaken a higher level of training to cover roles including hostage rescue, marine operations and CBRN situations. This grade of firearms officers is slowly being replaced with the upskilled **CTSFO** level.

Shotgun – A smooth-barrelled firearm capable of firing a wide variety of cartridges. Conventional shotgun cartridges include Birdshot (hundreds of small pellets), Buckshot (multiple larger pellets) or Solid Slugs (a single projectile), all of which are designed to be lethal. Specialised shotgun cartridges include Hatton Rounds (door-breaching rounds) or less-lethal munitions – see **Bean-bag Shotgun**.

Sidearm – A firearm, usually a **Handgun**, that is worn holstered in a convenient location. For the **AFO**'s accompanied this was in a drop-leg holster mounted on the thigh. These weapons serve as an officer's 'secondary' weapon and would be used only for immediate personal protection or in confined circumstances.

SNT – *Safer Neighbourhoods Team* – See **NPT**.

Standing Authority – Where **AFOs** are given the authority to carry a particular weapon with them regardless of circumstance. All **AFOs** in both police services have a Standing Authority to carry a **Sidearm** at all times. In certain locations, such as at the Airport, the **AFOs** also have a Standing Authority to carry their **Carbines**.

STO – *Specially Trained Officer* – An officer with the requisite training to carry a **TASER** on duty. These officers can be from any division and carry out their usual functions until a specific request is placed for a **STO** to attend an incident.

Stop Sticks – Stop Sticks are a single use, self-contained tyre-deflation device to be deployed ahead of a suspect vehicle during a pursuit.

Stun Grenades – See **Distraction Devices**.

TacAd – *Tactical Advisor* – An **AFO** who has received additional training to provide advice to elements of the command structure when requested. This advice normally relates to the capabilities and limitations of police firearms resources deployed and the validity of the tactical options the **TFC** may be selecting. Their position is solely one of advice, not of command.

TASER® - A Conducted Energy Device (CED) that fires two barbs that form a circuit between the target and the weapon through which a high voltage shock can be delivered. The name is formed as an acronym from the short story 'Thomas A. Smith's Electric Rifle'.

TFC – *Tactical Firearms Commander* – The nominated 'Silver' Commander for a Firearms Operation, normally the **FIM**. When an **SFC** is not in place, they have responsibility for the working strategy and appropriate tactical parameters for an armed operation, including granting a **Firearms Deployment**. These officers would not be a currently trained **AFO** and are unlikely to have ever been an **AFO**. They will not normally be deployed to the scene of an incident.

TTO – *TASER Trained Officer* – The more literal term used within certain police services to refer to officers that meet the Home Office's requirement for an **STO**.

X2 – At the time of the fieldwork, the newest model of **TASER** that was being rolled out to police services in England and Wales.

X26 – At the time of the fieldwork, the predominant model of **TASER** being used by officers in England and Wales, and the model carried by the **AFOs** accompanied.

1   Introduction

1.1   Research Context

The police use of firearms generally lacks systematic inquiry. The 'every day' effects of carrying firearms are seldom investigated, particularly when what little scholarly attention exists is usually focussed on the more 'dramatic' events where weapons are fired, injuries caused or lives lost. Such narratives often involve the term 'Shoot to Kill' (see Squires and Kennison, 2010; Punch, 2011 among others). While these incidents obviously deserve scrutiny, the implicit assumption that police should carry firearms is rarely explored. This is particularly the case if we consider whether carrying firearms in certain contexts can be detrimental to police legitimacy.

The role of the police relies upon the use of perceived legitimate non-negotiable coercive force (Bittner, 1985). Lethal force, and therefore the use of firearms, reside at the most extreme end of the use of force continuum but remain essential to modern policing in Great Britain[1] and elsewhere. The police use, and misuse, of potentially lethal force is a controversial issue and potentially undermines the public's opinion of the police. If public opinion falls, legitimacy is no longer granted to them and the police may cease to operate effectively (Myhill and Quinton, 2011; Ludwig, Norton and McLean, 2017).

The legitimacy of the police in the eyes of the public is arguably one of the most important objectives in the policing of democratic countries (Bayley, 1977; Skogan and Frydl, 2004). Legitimacy has been associated with numerous co-operative behaviours including obeying the law and collaborating with the police. Implicit within these findings is the ideal that a legitimate police service achieves its goals more effectively and more efficiently (Tyler and Huo, 2002; Myhill and Quinton, 2011; Jonathan-Zamir and Weisburd, 2013; Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary, 2016a).

Some areas of legitimacy remain unexplored, including the police's view of their own legitimacy: so far, the overwhelming majority of academic attention in the legitimacy debate has been fixed on the standpoint of citizens (Tankebe, 2014, p. 3735). Kronman (1983, p. 41) states that power-holders need to "persuade themselves that their fates are deserved and therefore rightful". In other words, the police need to believe that they occupy a morally

---

[1] While this thesis has as its site of primary data collection a focus on England, the unitary terms 'Britain', 'Great Britain' and 'British' will be used throughout for simplicity's sake. These terms also serve to highlight that England and Wales (and to a lesser extent Scotland) are bound by similar approaches to, and a shared history of, policing.

acceptable position and their attendant roles are justifiable (Bottoms and Tankebe, 2012). To do this, as well as exercising legal power, police officers must also be convinced that they are legitimately justified in line with a society's shared values and beliefs (Tankebe, 2014, p. 3736).

The overt carrying of a firearm acts as a reminder to the public that police officers may use legitimate non-negotiable coercive force, and that the force used can lead to someone losing their life (Bittner, 1985). For this reason, it has been theorised that equipping police officers with firearms may affect the interactions between the police and the public, and that these interactions could potentially erode perceptions of police legitimacy. While numerous sources have proposed policing theory on this matter (Bayley, 1977; Sarre, 1996; Waddington and Wright, 2007; Buttle, 2010), to date there has been little robust, practical inquiry.

1.2   Policing and Firearms in Great Britain

The British police use of firearms has a complex history and this has led to the 'unarmed exceptionalism' seen today where very few on-duty officers routinely carry firearms (Gould and Waldren, 1986, p. 7). This 'unarmed exceptionalism' sets Great Britain apart from almost every other country in the world. Barring a series of small state police services, only one other OECD nation operates the British model: the *Garda Síochána* of the Republic of Ireland. The police services of Great Britain include the 43 Territorial Police Services of England and Wales as well as the nationalised Police Scotland. It should also be noted that there are three Specialist Constabularies also operating in Great Britain: the British Transport Police (BTP), the Civil Nuclear Constabulary (CNC) and the Ministry of Defence Police (MoDP); the BTP operates a sizable firearms unit whilst the CNC and MoDP are routinely armed. The distinction is also made here between Great Britain and the United Kingdom because the Police Service of Northern Ireland is a routinely armed service.

Practically, what this 'unarmed exceptionalism' means is that the formal training to become a fully qualified police officer in Great Britain does not include any handling of firearms or familiarisation with firearms tactics. All police firearms use is instead the province of specialist units with additional training requirements. Importantly, routinely unarmed officers have no mechanism to use a firearm on duty even if circumstances demand it. There is no policy in place for them to do so because they are considered untrained, unqualified and unauthorised. Therefore their only options are to use alternate Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) or await the arrival of a specialist unit. However, it is worth highlighting that Common Law's right to self-defence would still provide a defence if a police officer argued they had picked up and used a firearm in self-defence or to save another's life. The proposed historical reason behind

these restrictions in the police use of firearms has been that the British public would not consent to being policed by fully armed officers (Waddington, 1991). Waddington (1991, pp. 4-6) suggests that giving a police officer a firearm removes the opportunity for a member of the public to give their consent voluntarily. He argues that the overt presence of a firearm is coercive; it demands public compliance without permitting an assessment of the officer's legitimacy (Waddington, 1991, pp. 4-6).

As the founders of 'modern' policing, with the creation of the Metropolitan Police in 1829 by Robert Peel, the British police have considered the legitimacy of their officers an important issue since their inception (Reiner, 2000, p. 52). This historic ideal from Peel's New Police, of officers being 'citizens in uniform' and exercising their powers to police their citizens with the implicit consent of those fellow citizens, have survived into the modern age and are held as a leitmotif for British policing (Reith, 1956; Reiner, 2009, p. 52; Myhill and Quinton, 2011; Home Office, 2013). The legitimacy of the police in Great Britain is supported by high standards of procedural justice where the legitimacy of policing is based on the public consensus that the police will be transparent regarding use of their powers, that the police will display integrity and that they will be accountable for using their discretionary powers (Home Office, 2013, p. 5).

Instead of carrying firearms, all British police officers are equipped with some form of baton and carry incapacitating spray with them. This is in addition to being equipped with body armour and a radio. The British police do not routinely carry TASERs, instead a number of officers are permitted to undertake additional training to become a Specially Trained Officer (STO). These STOs are not regionally organised and it is left to chance how many might be on a particular shift at any one time. The most recent nationally published national statistics indicated there were 13 794 non-firearms trained TASER officers making up 10.4% of the police workforce (BBC News, 2013). By compiling individual forces' most recently available statistics[2], they indicate that STO numbers are on the increase with at least 17 264 STOs recorded, comprising 14.1% of the police work force in 2018. Increasing numbers of police services are offering TASERs and training to an increasing number of officers who can demonstrate operational need to become an STO. However, there are still no police services in Great Britain that mandate all officers to be trained in the use of TASER and carry one whilst on duty (BBC News, 2018; Dymond, 2018; Ariel et al, 2019; Mercer, 2019).

---

[2] These numbers are for 41 Home Office forces in England and Wales. The statistics do not include Kent Police or Lincolnshire Police for whom statistics are unavailable.

As well as STOs, a fraction of all officers from each police service also have the authority to carry firearms on duty, as part of their service's dedicated firearms unit. All territorial police services in England and Wales have a dedicated firearms unit and, whilst the name may vary from service to service, they all broadly carry out the same duties. These duties include the carrying out of all firearms training within the force, as well as the need to carry out an operational role surrounding the deployment of firearms officers. All firearms officers carry a TASER with them whilst on duty.

The nomenclature currently in use for firearms officers has changed little since the early 1990s. At its core, it comprises two levels of officers: Authorised Firearms Officers (AFOs) and Specialist Firearms Officers (SFOs). AFOs are used for more 'conventional' firearms related tasks such as patrolling in Armed Response Vehicles (ARVs) and providing protection to buildings or individuals. SFOs carry out more advanced tasks such as hostage-rescue, siege situations or high-risk arrests. Both levels of officers have a range of firearms available to them including self-loading handguns, semi-automatic carbines, shotguns and rifles. As of March 2019, there were 6653 armed officers in the 43 territorial services of England and Wales, this represents 5.4% of the 123 171 total police strength (see Figures 3.1 and 3.2 in Chapter Three for more detail).

The most recent, significant change to armed policing in Great Britain the system was the creation of the Counter-Terrorist Specialist Firearms Officer (CTSFO) role as a level above SFO. CTSFOs are SFOs who have received additional training for the purpose of carrying out the highest risk operations. Originally, CTSFOs focussed on Counter-Terrorism tasks but they now also tackle other issues such as organised crime groups. The CTSFOs were first organised regionally, with certain forces being in charge of a region's CTSFO resource and forces having the responsibility of providing the training and equipment for the officers, regardless of which service in their region they came from. However, they now form part of a national co-ordinated strategy for the provision of Counter-Terrorism officers (Association of Chief Police Officers, 2013[3]). With the introduction of this national-level CTSFO structure, the future of forces retaining their own SFOs is now uncertain.

Finally, in the event of a catastrophic incident, Her Majesty's Armed Forces personnel and the 'Special Forces' are authorised to assist police. The deployment of the Armed Forces usually

---

[3] The Association of Chief Police Officers (ACPO) became the National Police Chiefs' Council (NPCC) in 2015.

relates to the protection of people, places or spaces, such as the extensive deployment of military personnel during Operation Temperer[4]. The deployment of 'Special Forces' is normally reserved for a confrontational role as most famously demonstrated by the Special Air Service's (SAS) involvement in the operation in 1980 to retake the Iranian Embassy. The SAS's deployment via helicopter onto London Bridge after the Borough Market terrorist attack in 2017 has become the contemporary example of its continued role in British counter-terrorism policing.

1.3   Research Questions

There are two research questions central to this project. The first is exploratory and focuses on expanding the horizons of what is known about the carrying of firearms by police in Great Britain. The second focuses on how police officers who carry firearms interpret their interactions with the public whilst on duty. The research questions ask:

1. What challenges are faced by Authorised Firearms Officers in a modern, British police service?
2. How do Authorised Firearms Officers interpret both organisational and self-legitimacy?

To answer those questions the following issues are explored:

- Who are Authorised Firearms Officers and what do they do?
- What interactions do Authorised Firearms Officers have with the public?
- What interactions do Authorised Firearms Officers have with unarmed officers, police staff and members of partner organisations?
- How can firearms policing policy and practice develop the police use of firearms in Great Britain?
- What do Authorised Firearms Officers understand of the police-public relationship?
- Do firearms policing practices impact police self-legitimacy in Great Britain?
- What are the opinions of Authorised Firearms Officers on the routine arming debate?
- What are Authorised Firearms Officers' perceptions of safety?

The focus of this thesis is the police viewpoint; it is a police-centric thesis. It explores the often-marginalised voice of police officers about their firearms. It explores how armed police officers attempt to construct their legitimacy in relation to the interactions they have with the public. For this reason, the data collection focuses on the perspectives of firearms officers from two

---

[4] Operation Temperer is the name for the British Government plan that allows the deployment of armed soldiers alongside the police for reassurance purposes following a terrorist attack. It was used for the first time in May 2017 following the Ariana Grande concert bombing in Manchester.

police services in England. The objective of this research was not to survey public opinion but rather to explore the interactions between armed police officers and members of the public. Measurements of public approval for police and public opinions on police armament are included in the relevant chapters but are not the sole drivers of this research.

This thesis is unique because it is a thesis on armed police in an unarmed country exploring the effects of officers carrying firearms on the police-public relationship. It does this outside of the traditional debates surrounding 'Shoot to Kill' or police accountability and instead focuses on the propagation of police legitimacy with the armed officers as a starting point. Taking into account relatively unknown police self-legitimacy material, this thesis explores how firearms officers feel they can contribute to legitimate policing given their often-precarious public position as 'wielders of lethal force'. Finally, this thesis explores firearms officers' considerations regarding the debate surrounding the routine arming of the British police. By drawing upon AFOs' experiences, the thesis illuminates a set of opinions on this debate internal to the police organisation that have not been specifically sought or articulated previously.

1.4   Thesis Overview

Having established the context for this thesis and identified the research questions for the research, the following section provides an overview of the remaining eight chapters.

The Methodology chapter provides the rationale for a qualitative and ethnographic method. It details the fieldwork process of how data was collected, transcribed and analysed. The fieldwork comprised 22 ride-alongs with ARV crews, in two English police services, totalling 219 hours of observation. Within these shifts nearly nine hours of semi-structured interviews were recorded. The ethical considerations of the study are also discussed. The chapter provides elements of reflexive writing as I examine my thoughts on the research process and design taking into account the challenges encountered when accessing and seeking permission to research this sensitive topic area with the police.

Chapter Three provides an overview of the relevant firearms literature that addresses its historical roots within Paramilitary Policing. The existing literature demonstrates how little is known about policing with firearms in Great Britain and why the first research question about challenges is pivotal. Elements of police culture are discussed, demonstrating what is known about an armed police culture. How police culture operates inside firearms units is explored in relation to both elitism and gender issues. Finally, the chapter also outlines the aspects that

Belur (2014) identifies as the three key challenges for the current global armed policing paradigm: police involvement in counter-terrorism operations, the challenges of arming unarmed police and issues with developing ways to use less-lethal force.

Chapter Four outlines the theoretical framework of police legitimacy that informs the second key research question. The chapter draws upon the importance of Policing by Consent and Procedural Justice. This thesis makes a unique contribution by discussing police self-legitimacy material to develop the police-centric nature of the thesis and further the debate about how conventional police legitimacy is attained and reproduced. Chapter Four identifies the few explicit links that exist between legitimacy-based literature and police firearms, as well as how they have contributed to developing the research design.

The following four chapters (Five, Six, Seven and Eight) detail the empirical data gathered from the ethnographic fieldwork and interviews. There has been an inherent dilemma with how to present this data, particularly in relation to the two key research questions and the two literature reviews. Therefore, what is presented is the 'most logical best split' where each Research Question is presented and tackled in turn. Whilst one could argue Chapters Seven and Eight follow Chapter Four more naturally you need the information presented in Chapter Five to appreciate the context. The material in Chapter Six more logically accompanies Chapter Five hence its position before Chapters Seven and Eight.

As stated above, Chapters Five and Six tackle the first research question, examining the role of and challenges facing AFOs. Chapter Five summarises the administration and equipment of ARVs within the two police services observed. It explores the calls that the ARVs attend and aspects of an ARV specific culture. Chapter Six describes the conditions and circumstances for when ARV crews are permitted to deploy with firearms.

Chapters Seven and Eight answer the second research question, focusing on the legitimacy theory framework. Chapter Seven provides a typology that explores the ways in which AFOs negotiate their encounters with members of the public. The extent to which ARVs are expected to be, or can be, involved in Community Policing techniques is also detailed. Chapter Eight presents the material on the routine arming debate and explores AFOs' senses of safety.

Finally, Chapter Nine summarises the main findings from the thesis as well as offering some conclusions and recommendations for future research.

2   Methodology

Introduction

Having established the context for the thesis and the questions that drive the research in Chapter One, this chapter details the methodology of the research. It focuses on the rationale for an interpretive approach and the choice of 'hit and run ethnography' as the primary data collection technique. The material in this chapter is reinforced with reflexive thoughts on the research process, as there were a number of challenges that presented themselves during the research design phase.

The first section outlines the choice of an interpretive approach coupled with ethnographic methods. It explains 'hit and run ethnography' as well as the rationale for supporting the data collected with semi-structured interviews. The second section discusses the various access issues faced when seeking to gain permission for this research with various police services and is followed by a third section detailing the research process with the Armed Response Vehicles (ARVs) once it began. The final section of the chapter details the process undertaken to transcribe and analyse the data including the importance of using NVivo. Finally, the potential ethical issues raised by the study are considered.

2.1   Interpretive Approach and Ethnographic Methods

Interpretivist work focusses on the meanings and understandings attached to human behaviour. For interpretive thinkers, positivist research strategies fail to offer any in-depth understanding of criminal justice matters, if they even correctly identify the phenomena (Hughes and Sharrock, 1997, pp. 100-105). Weber's notion of *Verstehen*, literally – 'to understand', is fundamental to interpretivist theory and involves reconstructing or experiencing the subjective experience of social actors (Hughes and Sharrock, 1997, p. 100). For this reason, an interpretivist approach often leads to methods aligned with epistemological and ontological convictions of social science such as ethnography, participant observation or interview. These are chosen to gain, with distinct methodological practice, a rich understanding of the human world in its own terms (Hughes and Sharrock, 1997, pp. 100-105; Geertz, 2000, pp. 83-90; Treadwell, 2013, pp. 26-34; Boswell and Corbett, 2015a, p. 219).

By using narrative inquiry and immersing oneself in the life and viewpoint of a research subject one can break down the roles that are assigned to researchers and the practitioners they study (Ospina and Dodge, 2005, p. 410). Various forms of qualitative research can construct narrative enquiries as qualitative research places the researcher in the world that they wish to

comment on. Qualitative research is a situated activity allowing a researcher to study actors in their natural settings, making sense of and interpreting phenomena in relation to the meanings individuals ascribe (Denzin and Lincoln, 2000, p. 3). As these narratives develop, they allow the researcher to remain flexible by permitting abductive reasoning. The researcher can continually redefine their approach in light of the data collected as the research progresses (Shwartz-Shea and Yanow, 2012, pp. 27-34; Killick, 2018, p. 246).

This study's use of qualitative research methods locates the actions of police officers and their decision-making within their operational world; it is this focus that makes the research so important. Narratives are created that can convey meanings or beliefs that reflect a situated reality rather than an objective one; narratives carry practical knowledge that has been gained through experience; and are constitutive in that they are not only shaped by individuals but shape those individuals as well (Dodge, Ospina, and Foldy, 2005, pp. 290–91). This narrative understanding contributes to the data's overall validity; the data is 'real' as it is grounded and exploratory (Blaxter, Hughes and Tight, 2010, p. 66). Although quantitative methods would not have been wholly unsuitable for these research questions, it is an open-minded understanding that is desired rather than a quantification of responses; qualitative research creates a 'depth' rather than a 'breadth' of the topic (Blaxter, Hughes and Tight, 2010, p. 65). A mixed methods approach was discounted for several reasons. The utility of using mixed methods to triangulate data can be limited if one does not appreciate the ways in which those methods illuminate social phenomena (Mason, 1996, pp. 148-149). One is unlikely to be able to simply use the 'outputs' of mixed methods to corroborate each other, instead causing a crisis about the notion of validity. There can also be issues that arise from attempting to integrate methods of different philosophical approaches such as how to manage potentially conflicting results within the study (Bryman, 2012, pp. 629 - 643).

Ethnography is a research approach that seeks to discover and investigate patterns or meanings in a social or cultural setting that unfolds around the researcher (Schensul, Schensul and LeCompte, 1999, p. 1; O'Reilly, 2012, p. 1). Ethnography as a research approach encapsulates participant observation methods but does not stop at merely watching what is going on (Bryman, 2008, p. 402; Taylor 1993, p. 1). To contribute towards ethnography a researcher must be immersed in the setting, participating regularly in conversation with the participants and engaging directly with activity that may not be immediately amenable to the observations; this must then all be written up into detailed accounts (Bryman, 2008, pp. 402-403).

Ethnographic observation encompasses the systematic description of behaviours and events in the chosen social setting using all five senses to provide a "written photograph" of the phenomena being studied (Erlandson et al., 1993; Marshall and Rossman, 1995). Observation methods are useful as they provide detail on non-verbal expressions, chronicle time spent on various tasks and determine who interacts with whom and how they do so (Schmuck, 1997). Alongside these data, a researcher should also use a fieldwork notebook, a place to write down their own thoughts and interpretations on the data as they are collecting it, noting reflexive comments alongside the data being collected (Rhodes, 2014a, p. 322). Other methods such as interviews may provide consistent answers but will not show the conflicts where a strategy or policy meets the natural environment (DeWalt, 1998). This can include elements of "backstage culture" where unscheduled events can draw attention to cultures and practices carried out by individuals expected to have a public-facing persona; this can facilitate the development of new research questions or hypotheses (deMunck and Sobo, 1998, p.43; DeWalt and DeWalt, 2002, p.8).

There is no established agreement on how the role of 'ethnographer' should be performed and/or whether a researcher's role shifts throughout the observation period. Van Maanen (1978, pp. 345–6) describes his relationship to the police he was observing as: "a cop buff, a writer of books, an intruder, a student, a survey researcher, a management specialist, a friend, an ally, an asshole, a historian, a recruit and so on". I can only identify with about half of those labels, but I shall let the reader select which they think are the most appropriate.

One accepted variation of ethnography is to perform 'yo-yo fieldwork' (see Wulff, 2002), also called 'hit and run ethnography' (see Rhodes 2011). This is defined as repeated, short bursts of intensive observation as researchers come into and out of the fieldwork environment repeatedly over a set period (Boswell et al., 2018, p. 5). The 'Hit and Run' approach to fieldwork is deemed to legitimately challenge the traditional anthropologist's approach of long-term immersive studies by still providing the necessary 'thick description' in a given context (Geertz, 1973; Geertz, 2000, pp. 83-90). 'Hit and Run' ethnographic studies are relatively unknown in criminology and by accompanying police on-duty I was aiming to imitate the police ethnographic styles similar to Moskos' (2009) *Cop in the Hood* or Giacomantonio et al.'s (2014) *Making and Breaking Barriers*, but over shorter, interspersed intervals.

At its best, ethnographic work with police can illuminate and question practice and assumptions seen in a world immediately recognisable to those officers doing the job (Rowe,

2017). Wilson (1978, p. 7, emphasis in original) acknowledged that "discretion increases as one moves *down* the hierarchy" and it is only by engaging with those street-level bureaucrats that the police organisation can begin to be understood (Mutsaers, 2014). Fieldwork of this kind has a distinct advantage in that it is often the only source of a particular sort of data and the only way to identify key individuals and core processes (Rhodes, 2014b, p. 9). The researcher needs to observe and participate in the 'every-day life' of the study; whilst you do not need to be friends, you must be accepted, and you must fit in well-enough that you can get by (Rhodes, 2014b, p. 10). Once you are 'fitting in', you can use the conversations you have during the fieldwork, whether relevant to the topic or not as a valuable source of data to flesh out your ethnography and narrative.

There are some limitations to collecting qualitative data using observational methods. For example, it is suggested that the written recordings of an event are never able to be a complete description (Atkinson and Hammersley, 1994). When recording data, the researcher's personal beliefs influence what is believed to be relevant and important (Atkinson and Hammersley, 1994). Another potential issue with an observational methodology is that it is possible a researcher could accompany the police for a lengthy period of time without witnessing or coming into contact with the phenomena that they wish to study (Westmarland, 2001a). However, whilst firearms incidents are rarer than other types of crime, this is not a study focussing on those incidents. The observation of on-duty police and the focus of this study is to enable continual conversations to develop around the role of firearms in their work and observe how these officers interact with the public and the extent to which legitimacy features in those interactions. Observational infrequency can be meaningful in and of itself; the quantifying of the prevalence of such phenomena can be compelling evidence for the rarity of these events (Lersch et al., 2008).

To complement the continuing fieldwork conversations, semi-structured in-depth interviews were chosen as the most appropriate method of supporting the observational data gathered. Semi-structured interviews allow the interviewer to retain a clear list of issues that they want to address but remain flexible in terms of the order in which they are asked. The interview structure is discursive, making use of open-ended questions on a limited number of topics. These allow the interviewee to develop ideas and speak more widely on the issues raised by the researcher as the answers are open-ended, and there is more emphasis on elaborating points of interest (Denscombe, 2007, p. 176).

While the questions are semi-structured, they are not standardised, as different questions were asked at different times depending on what the officers said. Additional questions were created during some interviews to probe further into the answers given. Furthermore, questions based on the most recent observations could also be asked, and a comparison was able to be made between what was said and what was seen, one of the strengths of combining these methods (Rhodes, 2014b, p. pp. 12-13). The created questions were then added into the question schedule for other participants if they seemed particularly relevant. Such a strategy allows the interviewer to be less of a "disinterested catalyst" for the interview and more of an active player (Holstein and Gubrium, 1995, pp. 38-39).

The success of semi-structured interviews depends on intangible factors such as trust and rapport, especially when they are carried out as part of ethnographic research (Rhodes, 2014b, pp. 12-13). This may be viewed as one of the disadvantages of interviewing, if the rapport is not present, then the data gathered may be of minimal value. A further disadvantage of semi-structured interview methods is that transcription and analysis can be lengthy and time-consuming (Alshenqeeti, 2014, p. 43). Finally, the data, once gathered, can be hard to generalise if no two interviews follow the same structure (Alshenqeeti, 2014, p. 43).

Despite these potential limitations, there were several reasons that observation and interviews were chosen instead of alternative methods such as surveys or focus groups. Firstly, survey methods are problematic when following an interpretivist approach as they are often unable to connect the action taken or answer given and the meanings or beliefs that underpin that course of action (Bryman, 2012, p. 205; Rhodes, 2018, p. 3). Furthermore, surveys are becoming popular ways of researching the police; as pointed out by one of the officers I interviewed, the data they gather is not always robust due to the self-selective nature of survey distribution:

> **AFO17**: There's also been a massive increase of studies that are sent our way, lots of surveys, mainly from [a local University], but they will only ever get a massively skewed set of respondents. People like myself who have done academia will give it a look on, or people who are interested in the title of the study will give their opinions. Old hands like AFO19 and AFO20 would never bother doing a survey![1]

Focus groups were excluded from the study for other reasons. The shift-based nature of police work is one limitation. The fact that officers are available at different times and have rostered leave means that organising focus groups for police can be a logistical nightmare; this is aside

---

[1] Fieldnotes 10

from concerns of having to have your research endorsed by a senior officer otherwise the attendance of officers might be limited (Fleming, 2011, p. 20). Additionally, focus groups with police can be particularly problematic if not constructed with officers all of the same rank, otherwise officers frequently defer to the most senior or most experienced officer in the room meaning others' views are lost or compromised (Fleming, 2010, p. 141; 2011, p. 21). For a police focus group to be effective the researcher must have a strong sense of the organisation or topic of discussion, the police are expert at going off on a tangent or having a 'group-whinge' (Fleming, 2011, pp. 20-23). Finally, there is heavy emphasis on the facilitator to ensure the participation of all present and, if not well managed, focus groups can fail to generate any appreciably useful data (Fleming, 2018, pp. 222-223).

2.2   Access

Accessing research in sensitive topics taxes the ingenuity of researchers', it requires imagination and a solid grasp of methods to overcome (Lee, 1993, p. 207). Originally, this thesis was intended to be an international, comparative piece on the police use of firearms. Unfortunately, data collection was not possible due to access issues with police in New Zealand and the Netherlands. This was despite a 14-month negotiation period with the New Zealand Police where contact was sought and assurances given in more than 20 separate instances and after an exceptional grant was awarded by the Economic and Social Research Council to support the fieldwork trip. With the Dutch Police, contact was made with several academics and police representatives over an 11-month period to ultimately no avail. These issues were repeated, albeit on a smaller scale when attempting to research within Great Britain. Therefore, it is instructive to discuss briefly here the issue of accessing police officers for primary research.

Table 2.1 outlines the timeline of contact I had with various police services throughout Great Britain from my first tentative contacts through to the start of my fieldwork with the police in 2018. It is also worth highlighting here that because of the delays encountered when attempting the planned international sections of my research, I was well into my third year of study when the possibility of data collection in Great Britain was confirmed and fieldwork started. I must credit the idea for structuring the timeline in this way from Alyce McGovern's (2008) thesis detailing her trials of attempting to research in the New South Wales Police's Media Unit.

DATES	ACTIVITY
April 2017 – June 2017	I contact and have a conversation with an Inspector in Police Service A; after promising they will seek permission to meet and discuss my study they do not contact me again.
May 2017 – August 2017	I contact and have conversation with a Superintendent from a joint unit across two services (B & C), they promise to read my proposal and forward it to a particular Superintendent who will contact me. I hear from neither again despite much prompting.
August 2017	I contact the National Police Chief's Council with a message for the attention of the National Lead on Armed Policing, they agree to pass my message on. Within two weeks the National Lead replies and I set up a conversation with his staff officer.
	I also contact the Police Federation of England and Wales with information on my thesis, I receive no reply.
September 2017 – October 2017	I contact and have conversation with a Chief Inspector in Police Service D. They invited me to call them and despite multiple attempts I never managed to connect through or receive an answer to any of my subsequent messages or e-mails.
September 2017 – January 2018	Much of my conversation with the National Lead on Armed Policing and his staff officer takes place over these months as they establish what it is my study hopes to achieve as they look for volunteers. I am informed my proposal will also be taken to the National Armed Police Working Group meeting on the 25th January 2018.
31st January 2018	My final contact with the NPCC National Lead. I am updated with the results of the Working Group where my proposal was put forward and the support of two police services was offered. My details were given so I was told to await contact.
8th February 2018	I am contacted by and start discussion with representatives from Police Service 1 and Police Service 2 who state they will be able to assist with my research.
20th February 2018	First observation carried out

Table 2.1 Table of contacts with police services in Great Britain

Despite the fact there is a certain amount of popular 'visibility' of the police working on the streets, the police can be considered one of the most inaccessible parts of the Criminal Justice

System to research. Most of their tasks and decision-making are carried out beyond the public eye in a world only visible to the police themselves (Quinney, 1970, p. 114; Skolnick, 1975, p. 14). Negotiating access, particularly as an outsider involves many hurdles, and once access is given, it is never something to be taken for granted (Reiner and Newburn, 2007, p. 357). Fox and Lundman (1974, p. 53) consider gaining research access to policing organisations as a continually developing process as opposed to a stable state of being. They conceive access being comprised of two 'gates': the first guarded by the 'top-level administrators', while the second comprises those research subjects one wishes to study; without the consent of both, the research cannot take place (Fox and Lundman, 1974, p. 53). Whilst 45 years has elapsed since Fox and Lundman's comments, one might speculate that nothing appears to have changed!

Punch (1989, p. 177) acknowledges that gaining access for fieldwork is difficult to achieve, with severe limitations in "penetrating sensitive areas of institutional life". The researcher's task is how to best make it through the "minefield of defences" designed to conceal and protect how police work is actually done (Punch, 1989, p. 178; Punch, 1993, p.184). Fox and Lundman (1974, pp. 54-55) outline three factors directly relating to the success of an access request: firstly, access relates strongly to pre-existing informal relationships with the "top-level administrators" of the police. Second, one must recognise the patterns of authority, and how one individual may exercise power over the others; thirdly, that the organisation chosen is self-selective, in other words, it demonstrates an overall openness to external contact and observation (Fox and Lundman, 1974, pp. 54-55).

In terms of the policing organisations I targeted, I was fortunate in that I had pre-existing informal relationships with a number of administrators in British police services through my Master's work (Clark-Darby, 2015) on a similar topic previously. In the end however, it was not through those connections that I was able to access my research. Brookman (1999, p. 48) reminds us that appreciating these various factors may mean little in the end: "the ease, or difficulty, with which one is permitted access to sensitive data is dependent upon many factors, several of which appear to owe very little to the value of the research, and more to serendipity, determination and good negotiation skills".

As seen is Table 2.2, Brown (1996) outlines a four-part typology on how who you are and your existing relationship with the organisation affects the material you can access.

TYPE	DESCRIPTION
Inside Insiders	Police officers conducting officially sanctioned police research.
Outside Insiders	Former police officers conducting police research at the point of leaving or after leaving a police service.
Inside Outsiders	Non-police officers with official roles in either police services or government to carry out police research.
Outside Outsiders	Non-police officers with no official link to police services or government wishing to carry out police research.

Table 2.2 Brown's (1996) researcher typology

My experience as an 'outside outsider' to the police has been fairly typical: outside outsiders face the greatest barriers in gaining access due to their lack of formal links, this is despite the fact that this form of external work has constituted a large amount of the police research work carried out by academics; whilst insider research is growing rapidly, outsider research is still the most prominent (Reiner and Newburn, 2007, p. 375). Outsiders bring with them a different perspective into an organisation, they can observe and comment on problems with processes that are invisible or less obvious to those 'inside' with the outcome of effecting change (Foster and Bailey, 2010, pp. 99-100).

It is important for outside outsiders to consider the personal characteristics of different researchers and their ability to develop relationships during the delicate negotiation process on the material of the research, particularly when the reflexive understanding of the researcher from the subject's participants can be highly influential (Reiner and Newburn, 2007, p. 358). Outsider observation is only valuable if the observer understands how police 'think' and operate', something which can only be attained by ethnographic observation and immersion in police practice (Stanko, 2007; Foster and Bailey, 2010, p. 100)

According to Lee (1993, p. 2018) trust, and crucially, emerging distrust are key aspects of accessing a sensitive topic. Once primary access has been attained, Punch (1989, pp. 178-179) espouses the use of what he terms 'infiltration' to achieve the best results from participant observation. Despite the negative connotations of the term, Punch (1989, pp. 178-179) argues that establishing a routine of confidence and trust allows you to 'get in' amongst your research subjects. However, even when using observational work to penetrate the 'low visibility' of police work, it is hard to ascertain if the subjects of the research trust the researcher and whether they are modifying their behaviour to suit observation (Punch, 1993, p. 195; Reiner and Newburn, 2007, pp. 354-355). A researcher can never be sure whether the behaviour displayed or conversations had are intended to be 'acceptable to outsiders'. Reiner and

Newburn (2007, p. 355) suggest that researchers may console themselves that they are trusted if they hear something that may embarrass the subject if it were revealed to their senior officers or placed on the front-page of a tabloid.

Brookman (1999, pp. 51-52) summarises how she gained access to various police services to conduct homicide investigation, I consider my experiences as similar to Brookman's in many ways. Firstly, that the officers 'on the ground', the constables and sergeants who had the actual responsibility of organising my fieldwork and ensuring it could take place were only provided with rudimentary detail on the purpose and scope of my study. Consequently, I was occasionally met with scepticism and apathy when attempting to actually establish procedures to allow me to carry out my fieldwork; fielding questions about what I wanted to spend time with them for, what I hoped to do with "all of this" (my research) as well as what I intended to do as a career and how this "helped" (Brookman, 1999, pp. 51-52).

I also walked the fine line between portraying myself as a competent researcher, as expert enough in the subject to justify doing a PhD, but also clearly acknowledging that they, the Authorised Firearms Officers (AFOs), were clearly the operational experts on this matter from whom I hoped to learn something. Once this slightly complex relationship was established, I had no negative experiences with any of the officers I interacted with, although it serves as a reminder of the way researchers have to renegotiate constantly their presentation of self and their right to exist in a given research setting (Brookman, 1999, p. 52). So, whilst I was taken as bona fide by senior officers, I still had to assert my credibility and integrity to the AFOs throughout. This was assisted by the fact I was 'riding along' on several shifts so by the middle of the fieldwork my 'face was known' by most officers. Also, early on in the process, I was recognised by two officers whom I had met when I was doing my Master's degree in the same area. I also had an in-depth conversation with the Force Armourer during a visit, where I successfully answered his most difficult questions. A feat that few others had done, apparently. After these exchanges, I was deemed to be 'safe hands', I noted the following during a conversation:

> 13:45   Legacy goes a long way across firearms. The officers [AFO24 and AFO25] talk about their own legacy, each other's and the fact that I, by proximity, have a legacy. They note that police officers, particularly AFOs, are naturally suspicious of intrusion, but that word spreads quick and certain actions I take, and aspects of my personality mean that I've been mainly judged to be safe hands.[2]

---

[2] Fieldnotes 13

When being studied, police are often anxious how they are going to be represented to both internal and external audiences (Reiner and Newburn, 2007, p. 353). Punch (1989, p. 186) cautions about flitting between 'upstairs' and 'downstairs' too readily when researching and ensuring not to tell one side too much about the other. Fieldwork can become much more challenging when more than one group in a highly factional organisation are involved; no one wants to be accused as spying on behalf of one side or the other (Punch, 1989, p. 196). This accords with the findings from both Fox and Lundman (1974, p. 58) as well as Reiner (1978, pp. 15-16), where they report that when observation focuses on those at the bottom of a hierarchical organisation, they are concerned you are a 'snoop', being used to test and measure them on behalf of the organisation. I had this reinforced to me by a throwaway comment made by an AFO as we drove around town that, whilst good-humoured, demonstrated I was not entirely above suspicion:

> **AFO33**: I can't go through a red [traffic] light with a PSD [Professional Standards Department] mole in the car![3]

In retrospect, my overriding personal experience of doing both this research, as well as looking back on my two previous pieces of research in the field of police firearms in Great Britain, is that AFOs are not particularly averse to contributing to research, it is just so long as it does not 'absent' them or take time out of their already busy days. My decision to accompany officers on duty, in hindsight, was ideal for research purposes as it allowed for conversation, observation and interview to take place. A bonus of being sat in the ARV and sitting behind the officers meant for the most part note taking was unobtrusive allowing notes to be taken at any time. Whilst initially I had hoped to conduct focus groups to aid co-production of the research, with the access troubles I had, I decided not to go down this route.

2.3   The Fieldwork Process

2.3.1   Establishing the Fieldwork Process

Police Service 1 is a large, territorial police service in England. It polices a mix of rural areas interspersed with several towns. Police Service 2 is a coastal English force that also polices mainly rural areas with a few urban epicentres. As of March 2019, approximately 6% of Police Service 1's officers were AFOs; approximately 3.5% of Police Service 2's officers were AFOs.

---

[3] Fieldnotes 20

Police Service 1 and Police Service 2 are neighbouring forces and, in certain circumstances, share specialist resources such as firearms officers. This means the officers in the thesis are accustomed to occasionally working with each other. However, the officers from each police service do not mix on duty. For example, Police Service 1 AFOs will only work from a Police Service 1 base in a Police Service 1 vehicle with Police Service 1 colleagues; and vice versa for Police Service 2. If an incident should occur that requires more resources than one side can muster, or if an incident occurs along the border of the two forces, then AFOs from both forces can attend and work together.

The ARVs of both police services are based on an 'armed area car' model, meaning each ARV is assigned a specific geographic area. The AFOs are free to patrol that area and use their discretion to attend any calls as a general policing resource. Therefore, the ARVs effectively have a dual function. They respond to any non-firearms calls they are close to, particularly when other officers request assistance, or if there are no other units available. The Force Control Room (FCR) can track the location of the ARVs and may specifically request their attendance at certain calls because they have the appropriate equipment. The ARV crews must also keep in mind their primary task, which is to respond to any spontaneous firearms deployments. Whilst dealing with any non-firearms tasks, ARV crews are conscious of the fact they may need to redeploy rapidly and maintain good force-wide response times should a firearms incident occur. This means AFOs stay with their vehicles and cannot drift too far from major towns or roads in case they need to redeploy quickly. The impact of this dual tasking is explored in Chapter Five. The 'armed area car' approach is common but not universal for ARVs in Great Britain. Instead, some forces, combine their ARVs with the Roads Policing Unit (RPU) to create RPU/ARVs whilst others have their ARVs kept 'pure' and only respond to calls as directed by the FCR.

The ARVs are typically crewed by two AFOs. As a study of armed policing, it was essential that the officers accompanied were carrying firearms for as much of the observed fieldwork as possible. Fortunately, when crewing an ARV, AFOs in both services have a 'standing authority' to routinely carry their sidearms, regardless of what task they are performing. The officers and their vehicles also carry other equipment that is detailed in Chapter Five. Occasionally, an ARV will go "three-up" (have a crew of three AFOs) due to officers needing to make up shifts or there being a lack of vehicles available for all officers rostered on that shift. ARVs are available all-day, every day with officers normally working 10-12 hour shifts. Each 24-hour period has three shifts split across it (Earlies, Lates and Nights) to allow the shift times to overlap. This overlap is so firearms cover is maintained whilst officers are kitting up at the start of the shift

or driving back to the base at the end. When I was accompanying them on fieldwork, the ARVs operated out of two key locations in Police Service 1 and two key locations in Police Service 2.

Once the police services had agreed that I could accompany their ARV crews, there had to be the establishment of some ground rules for everyone's safety. Firstly, I was instructed to keep the officers involved anonymised. Secondly, I was instructed what to do should a firearms deployment occur. It had been agreed that whilst I could accompany the officers for the duration of their shifts, I was not to accompany officers to the site of a firearms deployment. That is where an individual has access to a "potentially lethal weapon" or had been deemed "otherwise so dangerous" that the police may have to resort to using firearms against them.

While I cannot pretend I was not disappointed by this judgement, it is understandable. The decision negated the need for me to be provided with expensive Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) and stopped me from getting in the way of a rapidly developing and potentially violent set of circumstances. Furthermore, it was not critical to my research to be present at these incidents. My research focusses on the 'every-day' aspects of armed policing. It is the focus on the interaction had between officers and ordinary members of the public that drives the narrative. Interestingly, the majority of the AFOs that I accompanied expressed surprise that I had been disallowed from attending these incidents, seeing it as easy enough to provide me with some body armour and tell me to sit in the car. However, I sensed the key debate they were perhaps not appreciating was upon whose head the decision-making would then lie for insurance. Is it up to the AFOs or the senior officers to decide ultimately whether I should be at a given incident or not, and who takes the responsibility if it goes wrong? I think the policing organisation was taking the safest route by pre-empting that decision-making. It was decided that should a firearms deployment occur, I would be left at an appropriate location. I was briefed to make sure I had cash and cards so I could travel if necessary to meet up with another police unit or ARV to either continue my fieldwork or take me home. Whilst several firearms deployments occurred over the course of my fieldwork, I was able to continue the fieldwork in all bar two instances, there is more detail of these occurrences in Chapter Six.

2.3.2   Undertaking the Fieldwork Process

Once I had permission from the police services to perform the fieldwork with them and negotiated the necessary safety procedures, the way the research process started was with me arranging a few shift dates and times via the Chief Inspector that I had contact with. I then drove to the relevant police base for the start of the shift. It is interesting to note that the firearms officers were not based out of a 'normal' police station like other officers. In both

instances I was instructed to attend a specific operational base that was dedicated for use by special units, usually shared between firearms and roads policing. It was generally agreed that I would arrive roughly 15 minutes before the shift to give me a little time to get into the police facility and to meet the two officers that I was crewed with that day.

My first shift on duty with the ARV passed in a blur; I was excited to have finally got there and be doing the research. As Polsky (1971, cited in Punch, 1993 p. 194) states, fieldwork is supposed to be fun, a break from the rituals of academia, and it certainly felt that way! However, when it came to review the notes I had taken over the course of the 10-hour shift, I remember it being barely a page of hand-written notes, which ended up as about 600 words of typed material. I had to consider that if I did not rethink this, I was going to have nothing to show from the fieldwork and therefore no thesis! Recording the interview had also been difficult as I had accidentally chosen a busy part of the day to do it and we were constantly interrupted, meaning the interview ended up in about six segments that I had to work to weave together after the fact.

I recall the overwhelming feeling that I was not 'doing' 'ethnography' 'right', that I was not seeing the 'right' things and writing them down, as if there is some underlying level of action that ethnographers must witness. I was particularly concerned at this point, as I had not established how many shifts I would do and therefore I was working on the assumption that the three I had negotiated might have been my only opportunities for primary data collection, thankfully that was not the case. I would go on to do 22 ride-alongs in total, generating 13, 000 words of written material and over 219 hours of observation and interview. On my second outing, I reviewed my practices and my note taking was more efficient, leading to significantly more material. However, I was still left with the feeling that what I was writing down did not have the same beautiful narrative flow that extracts of ethnography from my chosen authors conveyed. Perhaps I did not appreciate at the time the extent to which ethnography is a learned process in many ways. There is an 'artistry' associated with ethnography: repetition (or 'practice') over time does improve the experience of capturing not only the data but also my reflections more accurately (Boswell et al., 2018, p. 3; Yanow, 2014, p. 131).

Upon reflection, this should have been clearer to me. A significant part of the research process was essentially making it up as I went along, when to take notes, when to sit back and listen and when to record the interview were my key considerations and these considerations had to adapt to each shift because of the different circumstances I was faced with. As a rule, I tried to do the interviews at about the halfway point of the shift (so 5-6 hours into a 10-12 hour shift),

because I wanted to have developed a rapport with the officers, so the questions were not met with a 'cold' response. Also, it allowed some of the topics to emerge naturally already in relation to either wider discussion around my thesis or in relation to incidents that we attended together. This consequently meant that the officers had their thoughts on these topics at the front of their mind and were thus able to talk about them coherently and confidently when prompted. It also meant that on a long, potentially tedious, night shift there was something that helped bridge the hump in the middle. Finally, I also found that when I would put off doing the interviews early to help build rapport with the officers; inevitably something exciting would occur for the sole purpose of ruining my carefully laid plans!

The role of the ARVs, and their requirement to be always available and always patrolling, meant that almost all of the interviews took place within the ARV itself. Normally the ARV was moving, so contending with engine noise was always a concern and there was one notable instance where the officers wrapped up the answer to the question as we started to attend an emergency call using blue lights. During this situation, I somehow doubted that the officers' focus was on providing a coherent answer to my question instead of making progress through the, thankfully light, night-time traffic. There were two exceptions where the interviews took place within a police station, as the officers on these days were lucky enough to schedule their break at a quiet period. This quiet period allowed us to sit down for half an hour or so together to get through the interviews.

The other effect of being required to do the interviews 'on the fly' meant that occasionally I felt pressure to wrap up the interviews and get through them more quickly than I would have liked, often because the officers had identified a window in which to do the interview (e.g. whilst travelling from A to B to do something). As that window diminished, I wanted to get an answer to all my questions. This meant that sometimes I had to take officers 'first answer' to the question and not probe too much at the risk of going off on a tangent and failing to finish the interview in time.

The interviews lasted between 14 and 55 minutes, with an average length of 29 minutes. Interviews were carried out on 18 of the 22 shifts observed. Two interviews were not carried out as I was placed with a crew that I had previously accompanied, therefore negating the need to ask them the same questions again. The other two interviews did not take place as the fieldwork section of my research was cut short due to a firearms deployment where my

presence was not permitted. Unfortunately, being as I ended up with a different crew nearly every shift, this meant there were a couple of officers that I was unable to interview.

An issue that arose during the fieldwork that I had not anticipated was that all my interviews, because they took place in the ARVs were essentially 'double interviews', where I was asking questions and allowing each AFO to answer in turn. Due to this, it is possible that it was perhaps a sanitised 'joint' opinion that was presented to me, as opposed to two separate opinions as each officer may not have wished to say something controversial. Unfortunately, there is very little literature that exists dealing with interviews with more than one person that do not qualify as focus groups. However, in my experience, the positives of interviewing like this were that officers would support each other's answers, feeding off each other to develop their thoughts on a topic, or asking the other officer to help check facts or policies even if, in some instances, officers would just repeat aspects of their partner's answer or say that their opinion was the same and they did not have anything to add. I was relatively pleased that most officers picked up on their colleagues for 'copping out' when they did give answers like that, and it usually prompted them to give more information than initially provided. The reader will note by the volume of data provided in the thesis that the responses were overall very useful!

When I was doing the interviews there was a question that, early on in the research process, struck me as counterproductive. The question asked the AFOs their opinion on the Police Federation of England and Wales' (PFEW) stance on routine arming. Very few of the officers knew that the PFEW were supportive of routine arming should their membership desire it, and I found myself repeatedly outlining the background information. At the time I felt that being as nobody knew the PFEW's stance and what impact it had had, the question may as well be dropped from the interview transcript as it was not generating any new data. Upon reflection, I wish I had kept the question in. I can now see how the null result was a result in of itself, and that it would have been potentially beneficial to be able to state that no AFOs particularly understood this issue even though at the time it was being heralded as headline news. Instead, I can only say that for about one third of the officers interviewed. Other than that issue, each interview did cover the same core questions (see Appendix 2), albeit in slightly different orders; any probing questions were then improvised where relevant to the answers the officers gave.

Despite the issues that arose during my fieldwork, as is common with early steps of ethnographic research (Punch, 1989, p. 198), I did not feel that my data has been diminished. As Boswell and Corbett (2015a, p. 223) highlight, during ethnographic work, there can be "an

on-going sense of inadequacy". When data collection is completed, it is important to acknowledge explicitly any issues faced, but also to reflect upon the aspects that went well and contributed to a robust data set.

In terms of the sample, of the 38 AFOs I spent time on duty with: 18 of them were from Police Service 1 and 20 from Police Service 2. Four of them were female, and two of them were from a Black or Minority Ethnic background, the remainder where white males. This then presented me a significant advantage when it came to interacting with the majority of members of the unit – I am a young, white, male with an interest in policing and firearms, and it was relatively easy for me to 'fit in' with the prevailing culture of the unit. Whilst I was careful to not become 'one of the boys' (Punch, 1979), I think my appreciation for policing, my understanding of firearms and my dry sense of humour set me up quite well to get along with all the officers I came across, regardless of their background.

2.4   Data Transcription and Analysis

The process of transcribing the interviews and field-notes was complicated by the necessity of following an ARV crew shift pattern over several days. This meant transcription of field-notes often had to wait until the end of a 'set' of observations. Doing several 12-hour shifts on the ARVs in a row left little time at the end of the day for anything other than sleeping, particularly once travel to and from the police premises was considered. The routine I adopted was to undertake 'sets' of 3-4 shifts, transcribing the field-notes at the end of each 'set'. Unfortunately, this meant some quick notes to self and other pieces of context, particularly when scribbled quickly in the back of a (fast) moving police car, could not be interpreted fully by me when it came to transcribe. As the research went on, I became more conscious of these limitations and therefore made clearer, short-hand notes when pushed for time.

At the end of each shift, I checked to ensure that my audio clip of the interview had recorded properly before copying the files in triplicate, storing each separately. Due to the fact I was relying on my short-term memory to help support my field notes in between 'sets', I tackled the interview transcription once I had finished all the observations and interviews, safe in the knowledge that I had a verbatim recording of them to work from. This was beneficial, as listening to the interviews 'back-to-back' allowed me to start thematically linking together sections of the interviews and helped me conduct a 'pre-analysis' on them.

For clarity, whilst transcribing the interviews, all questions asked are prefixed with 'Me' whilst the responses are pre-fixed with 'AFO' and their assigned number. This thesis relies on not only verbatim quotes from the recorded interviews but also presentations of fieldnotes that relay either conversations or experiences. Verbatim quotes from the interviews are presented in *italics* with the speaker identified in **bold**. Where I present conversations from the fieldnotes, they are presented in standard font, with speakers identified in **bold** and with the relevant fieldnote referenced via a footnote. For general fieldnotes relaying my experiences they are presented in standard font, accompanied by the time of recording and with the relevant fieldnote referenced via a footnote. For a full list of which AFOs appear in which fieldnotes or interviews, please see Appendix 3. Any emphasis placed within a quote is shown in **bold**; any clarifications or explanations are added in [square brackets]. A final aspect to highlight here is that when fieldnotes or interview quotes are presented, the most relevant sections are illustrative, not exhaustive. At the beginning of the thesis there is both a list of abbreviations and a complete glossary that clarify and define the terms used in the thesis and fieldwork.

Transforming data and ideas into a coherent narrative involves a constant process of refinement and to communicate the best features of their analysis, interpretive researchers should choose vivid, rich details that convey them. The selection of quotes or anecdotes presented should explain the situational context as well as underpin the theoretical argument being made (Boswell and Corbett, 2015a, p. 220). Howell (1972) recommends using thematic analysis to analyse data from participant observation: Thematic analysis organises data according to the recurring themes evident after the data collection. Other data analysis methods such as deductive analysis of content analysis was considered, but with their focus on applying preconceived concepts to a data set, I felt that it would not allow for the reflexive detail and depth exploratory data of this kind requires (Bryman, 2012, pp. 567-568).

Braun and Clarke (2006) outline a comprehensive guide to Thematic Analysis. Whilst the precise definition of thematic analysis is arguably cause for debate (Boyatzis, 1998; Braun and Clarke, 2006, p. 79), thematic analysis is a method that identifies, analyses and reports patterns within the data, it is these patterns that become themes. These patterns become obvious throughout an analysis across the entire data corpus (Braun and Clarke, 2006, p. 79). Thematic analysis is a flexible method of qualitative analysis, allowing for a variety of different applications with the relevant theories. Thematic analysis can start from when the researcher transcribes the interviews into something that flows and is presentable. During this, initial ideas of themes may emerge and are carefully noted. The analysis then builds up in layers,

documented as repeated visits to the data extrapolate and enlarge the themes. Table 2.3 outlines the process followed in its entirety:

PHASE	DESCRIPTION OF THE PROCESS
1. Familiarising yourself with your data:	Transcribing data (if necessary), reading and rereading the data, noting down initial ideas.
2. Generating initial codes:	Coding interesting features of the data in a systematic fashion across the entire data set, collating data relevant to each code.
3. Searching for themes:	Collating codes into potential themes, gathering all data relevant to each potential theme.
4. Reviewing themes:	Checking in the themes work in relation to the coded extracts (Level 1) and the entire data set (Level 2), generating a thematic 'map' of the analysis.
5. Defining and naming themes:	Ongoing analysis to refine the specifics of each theme, and the overall story the analysis tells; generating clear definitions and names for each theme.
6. Producing the report:	The final opportunity for analysis. Selection of vivid, compelling extract examples, final analysis of selected extracts, relating the analysis back to the research question and literature, producing a scholarly report of the analysis.

Table 2.3 Phases of Thematic Analysis (Braun and Clarke, 2006, p. 87)

However, there are supplementary approaches to interpretive analysis that allow the process to be more impressionistic rather than being solely reliant on the systematic method outlined in the table above (Boswell and Corbett, 2015a, pp. 217-218). Boswell and Corbett (2015a p. 217) remind us that for those new to this craft, analysis build upon on lingering impressions from the field rather than come from methodologically founded insight.

Boswell and Corbett (2015b, pp. 229-231) introduce three key aspects of an interpretive approach that need to be highlighted during analysis and writing up: the aesthetics, the impact and the resonance of the piece. The aesthetics of the piece define its flow, how the narratives unfurl and how links are made between theory and practice: how one can gain a sense of the issues drawing on the thick description of the field data. Boswell and Corbett (2015b, p. 230) quote Van Maanen (1988, p. 34) who argues, "artful ethnography is evocative in addition to being factual and truthful". Boswell and Corbett (2015b, p. 230) extend this by stating that it is the task of an analyst to ensure the context and its details flow in an intelligible and convincing manner. In addition, the writing must be impactful, making the reader remember and wish to

know more about the piece: the ethnographer should "startle their audience [with] striking stories [as] their stock-in-trade" (Van Maanen, 1988, pp. 101-102; Boswell and Corbett, 2015b, p. 230). Finally resonance, one must be careful when analysing and writing up to not abandon reality in pursuit of a 'beautiful or startling' account; it must still be reflective of the beliefs within (Boswell and Corbett, 2015b, pp. 230-231).

I used Computer Aided Qualitative Data Analysis Software (CAQDAS), namely NVivo, to help me keep track of the datasets I had analysed and the codes I had generated. The first step after importing my raw data into NVivo was to manually code data with apparent themes; this is done using tags known as 'Nodes'. One of the great advantages of CAQDAS is its flexibility, these nodes can be renamed, reordered, split or sub-categorised at will. The first steps of analysis are the purposeful creation of Nodes for known themes, particular experiences during the fieldwork or for specific interview questions so that the data started to have a logical composition. This is another advantage of CAQDAS over traditional pen and paper analysis, CAQDAS can catalogue data in an orderly fashion whilst also indexing data and allowing data to be searchable. Furthermore, to ensure meaning or context were not lost, a number of nodes were tagged with labels or notes to join them together or capture thoughts in the moment.

For example, after completing the fieldwork it became apparent that Police Culture was an emergent theme and so I created a Node entitled 'Culture' to sort the data into. During my first analysis I split the 'Culture' node into four sub-nodes detailing the instances in which the AFOs discussed their unit, other police services, other departments within their police service or other emergency services in general. On my second round of analysis I also added in an 'ARV Culture' node for when the aspect of police culture seemed particular to those officers on the ARV; I also created a node for when the officers discussed themselves in relation to officers abroad. The next step was then a major one, as I realised I had so much content grouped under the 'Other Departments' node that it would be beneficial to split them into the departments being discussed. Furthermore, to help clarify my thought process, I also moved the aspects of Police Culture away from the parent node ('Culture') into their own child node entitled 'Police Culture'. On the final discussion of the node with my supervisor, I then split a departmental child node in half from 'FCR (Force Control Room) and Management' to 'FCR' and 'Senior Officers' to allow for comparison to be made between the two. A complete example of fieldwork coding can be seen in Appendix 4.

According to Boswell and Corbett (2015a, p. 222), to allay fears regarding the validity of interpretive research, researchers should strive to make their data and analytical tools

available for scrutiny in the same way that positivist researchers do. NVivo allows for the creation of a Codebook at the click of a button, and I improved the generated Codebook by adding a column of accompanying illustrative quotes in an effort to be as transparent with my methods of analysis as possible. The additional advantage of NVivo creating a Codebook is that multiple iterations can be saved so the transformative processes of the data analysis are seen. A copy of the Codebook is provided in Appendix 5.

2.5   Ethics

This research adhered to the ethics guidance set by ERGO (Ethics and Research Governance Online) at the University of Southampton and research approval was obtained by the two police services involved. As evidenced by the insubstantial amount of literature available the police use of firearms has often been an undisclosed part of policing. Therefore, specific consideration must be given to the confidentiality of both personal and organisational information. Wiles et al. (2006) suggests that anonymity is used as a 'vehicle' by which confidentiality is 'operationalised'. All individuals' names were anonymised via pseudonym or removed completely from any accounts of the research. Basic demographic details were noted (e.g. gender, ethnicity, police rank) but only used if they were relevant to the findings and did not risk identifying any individual.

Despite discussions relating to the need for officers involved in this study to sign two Consent Forms, one each relating to the Observation and Interview components of the research, there were instances where officers did not. This was because the officers either did not feel the need to, where time was not permitting to or where officers returned the forms either incomplete or with only one signed. Therefore, research was carried out on the basis of both written consent, where available, and verbal consent at all other times. The feasibility of accomplishing these tasks was outweighed by the practicalities, I was not going to be permitted to accompany an ARV crew who did not agree to the research, they could simply just leave without me. Similarly, any individual officer who did not want to be interviewed or have their interview recorded had ample opportunities to make their decision known outside of the formality of the consent form. When this pattern of problematic form signing was identified, officers' verbal consent was then audio recorded at the start of each interview to ensure a record of consent.

As with any observation of police, there are a few potential safety hazards facing the researcher. However, these issues can be mitigated by strictly abiding by the rules and

regulations set out by the police services in question for this type of research, for example: full compliance with PPE requirements, full obedience to all instructions given and maintaining a discrete distance from officers as they carry out their work. Details on the training or duty observed were kept minimal in this research so specific locations, methods and tactics were not divulged. For groups on duty or undergoing training, verbal consent was gained from officers at the beginning of the observation, and where possible supported with written consent. All data gathered was password protected or, if a hard copy existed, kept locked up.

Given participation in the research was voluntary, performed under the ethical guidelines of both the University of Southampton and the two police services. Since no ethical issues were raised from the beginning of the research until the time of writing, then it is the researcher's belief that no ethical concerns have arisen from the fieldwork section of the thesis. Copies of the ERGO submission form, the ERGO Risk Assessment Form, the Participant Information Sheets and the Consent Forms used in this research are provided in Appendix 6.

Chapter Summary

This methodology section demonstrated the importance of ethnographic methods to illuminate the actions and decision-making abilities of police officers in public view. It showed how hit and run ethnography was the appropriate method to undertake this research as it allows for immersion in the police's world. Issues relating to accessing the police were discussed as well as difficulties of access and the delays that come from dealing with the police hierarchy and bureaucracy. The following section outlined how the fieldwork was actually carried out: when and where I met with the ARV crews, how I recorded data and how I tried to make the most of each shift. The use of Thematic Analysis to review the data was also covered. Finally, the key ethical considerations of the study were outlined.

3 Overview of Police Firearms Literature

Introduction

Understandably, the police use of firearms in Great Britain (and other parts of the world) has remained discreet. As identified in the previous chapter, this is a difficult to access area of police research. Whilst the majority of police worldwide are routinely armed, there is little clear uncontroversial debate regarding when and how they should deploy, carry, aim or fire firearms (Belur, 2014, p. 3751).There is a paucity of research in this field, particularly not first-hand, ethnographic or primary data accounts. To a degree there is an appreciated discourse on police shootings that focuses on the legality, necessity, training of police and associated moral or ethical rationales (Coady et al., 2000; Belur, 2014, p. 3747); but no such public discourse exists for the discussion of the routine carrying of firearms by police. Therefore, this chapter relies on compiling research from a variety of sources. The data presented in this chapter highlights how important it is to address the first research question and understand what challenges are faced by Authorised Firearms Officers (AFOs) in Great Britain. Without a contemporary understanding of the carrying of firearms by police in Great Britain, it is impossible to accurately and effectively resolve the issues that police face.

Firstly, the influence of paramilitary policing literature is explored to demonstrate how there is a desire to proliferate police armament in response to certain perceived threats. This section appreciates that there are issues with the use of paramilitary policing literature as much of it has a focus on North America meaning its application to other parts of the world is not straightforward. Also, a number of the seminal works are out of date or incomplete in their approach to the issue of firearms. However, the paramilitary policing literature does highlight the influence that paramilitary-type cultures can exert on police organisations. The second section highlights police culture material, and its role in understanding police specialist units. The chapter discusses three of the main challenges facing the current armed policing paradigm as highlighted by Belur (2014). The challenges include the role and continued involvement of the police in counter-terrorism operations, the debate surrounding arming unarmed police and the concerns surrounding the use of less-lethal force.

3.1   Paramilitary Policing

The underlying origins of the police role are vested in coercive force, where governmental power is delegated to the police in order to enforce laws and maintain order (Sherman, 1980; Lersch et al., 2008, p. 282; Reiner, 2009). Some authors argue that this use of coercive force to manage interpersonal relations is central to the police role and distinguishes policing from

other professions (Bittner, 1970; Bayley, 1977; Pate and Fridell, 1993). Commenting in the American context, Bittner (2005) suggests that the use of force is implicit and therefore does not have to be used to affect behaviour; therefore, merely carrying firearms can act as a pressuring factor for the public. Klockars (1985, p. 10) contends that it would be difficult to conceive a "police" existing that cannot claim the given-right to forcibly compel people to do something.

The vesting of power and the right to violence in the police came as part of the 'civilising' process many nations underwent during the late modernity; this process aimed to reduce overall violence in society by giving up the public's right to use violence in any circumstance other than self-defence (Lersch et al., 2008, pp. 282-283; Reiner, 2009). The 'sub-contracting' of the police to carry out violence on behalf of the government not only questions how and why police use force but also the broader issues of the role and functioning of a 'democratic' government (Croft, 1985; Lersch et al., 2008, p. 283).

Whilst modern policing in Britain was established in symbolic opposition to the military way of imposing social order (i.e. by being civil, democratic and unarmed), other models of policing relied more on military principles, for example the Colonial Model of policing used to subjugate rebellious populations in (former) colonies (Waddington, 1999a). Paradoxically, whilst the American police system shared its roots with the British, the firearm has become the most overt symbol of American police power, a direct contrast to how it is seen in Britain (Waddington, 1999a).

Kraska (1999; 2001) first noted the proliferation of what he termed 'Police Paramilitary Units' (PPUs) in the US at the end of the 20th Century. These units comprised specially trained officers equipped to deal with high threat public order incidents and confront armed suspects. Punch (2011, pp. 84-85) argues that the reason these units saw a mass proliferation in the US was that because American federal law[1] forbids the use of the military to assist law enforcement, it was felt police departments had to rise to the occasion and fill the gap when confronted with critical incidents, such as the riots that swept America in the 1960s. Originally intended for only the most critical of circumstances, Kraska (1999; 2001; 2007) realised that the members of these PPUs were an expensive resource to have sat on stand-by for significant periods of time. He noticed that to keep them employed, many police departments had started to use PPUs to

---

[1] The *Posse Comitatus* Act limits the powers of the federal government by preventing them from using federal military personnel to enforce domestic policy.

support more routine policing operations such as drug raids and property searches, which he argued led to a proliferation of police violence in the US (Kraska, 1999; 2001).

Despite his valid concerns investigating PPUs, Kraska's work solely focusses in the US. Squires and Kennison (2010, p. 1, emphasis added) argued that the developments brought about by the proliferation of the PPUs in the US have "transformed the *appearance* of [British] policing" leading to a "paramilitarisation of policing practice and assumptions". This change in appearance of policing was a key aspect of the seminal debate between Waddington and Jefferson in the 1990s. However, whilst broadening the paramilitary policing perspective to include the British police, Waddington and Jefferson's debate focussed primarily on public order policing and the use of force more generally. The key discussion considered whether the police are becoming 'militarised' as they focus on the implementation of shields and longer batons for riot control as well as 'military-like' structures of command and control for major incidents (Jefferson, 1990 and 1993; Waddington, 1993).

For example, Jefferson (1990) argued that dressed like 'Robocop', the police in public order situations were provocative and could cause an 'amplification' of violence. He argued that officers had a lack of supervision and the combination of being provoked by protesters whilst lacking collective discipline potentially led to a relationship between paramilitary policing tactics and the eruption of violence (Jefferson, 1990). On the other hand, Waddington (1993) maintained that the equipment was designed to protect the officers in the fullest way possible whilst allowing them to carry out their role as the monopolists of force in civil society. He also argued that with improved technology and equipment, paramilitary methods were likely to be safer than traditional ones for both officer and public safety.

Jefferson's (1990) critiques intimate that dedicated groups of public order specialists, such as the then notorious Metropolitan Police's Special Patrol Group[2], were akin to paramilitary units of police. Jefferson does not include any notion of armed police within that assertion and, whilst most would consider it hyperbolic to call a modern British police firearms department a 'Police Paramilitary Unit', the existence of similarities between the units Kraska decries and their contemporaries should be considered. Kraska (1996; 1999) comments on the

---

[2] The Special Patrol Group was a unit of the Metropolitan Police Service. They were a centrally located group consisting of a number of units designed to combat serious public disorder. They had a reputation for being reckless, violent and using unauthorised weaponry; they were famously implicated in the death of a demonstrator during a protest. They were disbanded in 1987 and replaced by the Territorial Support Group.

proliferation of PPUs and their ever-expanding arsenals but does not 'step back' far enough to explore one of the intrinsic elements of an existing PPU: namely that they routinely carry firearms. Even in Britain, throughout the premier debate on British paramilitary policing, there is scant reference to firearms. This is a particular facet of the British paramilitary policing paradigm that Waddington later admitted, "had been seriously under-researched" (Waddington, 1999a, p. 126). Bittner (1970) notes the police are the monopolists of force in a civil society and it is unclear why the debate on paramilitarism in Britain has avoided discussion of the highest level of force, and one that the police unquestionably share with the military. Being organised into defined units, dressing in a certain way, officers carrying particular coercive tools or equipment may be perceived to alter the nature of British policing. If this is the case, then it is necessary to explore those issues in relation to contemporary firearms officers at the point at which armed police come into contact with the public.

3.2   Culture

The inclusion of police culture material here is evidence of the iterative process of interpretive research as presented in the methodology. It became clear during the data collection that elements of police culture are particularly important and evident within the armed response unit. According to Skolnick (1975), there are three key aspects of the police role that define officers' "working personalities": authority, danger and pressure. Reiner (2019, pp. 172-180) develops these and identifies ten core characteristics of a police culture: mission, action, cynicism, suspicion, machismo, isolation and solidarity, loyalty, pragmatism, conservatism and racial prejudice.

However, police culture is not monolithic, and is comprised of a series of cultures (Chan, 1996; Loftus, 2009). Not all aspects are displayed by all police officers. Different departments within the police may display distinct combinations of these aspects in different combinations, with some exaggerated and some minimised (Chan, 1996; Wood, Fleming and Marks, 2008). Furthermore, elements of culture are not fixed. Cockcroft (2013) identifies how wider social change can have an impact on these varied police cultures, allowing them to adapt and change over time. Cockcroft (2013) also highlights the need for ethnographic research to continue the exploration of police culture. Works by Innes (2003) and Bacon (2016) have highlighted the value of ethnographic studies in exploring distinct police cultures.

Innes (2003) embedded himself in a homicide unit for two and a half years. By using ethnography, Innes (2003) overcame a number of limitations encountered by previous studies of detectives. Innes (2003) was able to build a narrative of the individual characteristics of

detectives that invoked different investigative problems and thus shaped their practice. By only focussing on the routines and processes, previous research has missed the nuance of "doing" detective work. By restricting his focus to one type of crime, Innes (2003) built a substantial account of a single type of policing. This sort of research attention has not been applied to the culture of armed policing before.

Westmarland's work (2001b, pp. 134-175) foreshadows that of Innes (2003) and Bacon (2016). She (2001b, pp. 134-175) focuses on the influence of machismo, masculinities and the representation of gender within these units finding that specialist teams such as, traffic officers and firearms units, have exaggerated aspects of police culture. For armed policing, these findings are supported by anecdotal evidence from a variety of sources (Collins, 1997; 1999; Gray, 2000; Hailwood, 2005; Long, 2016). While these books are autobiographical accounts from serving officers, and are primarily written for entertainment purposes, they do contain evidence of a macho and action-oriented of culture within firearms units.

This anecdotal material also links to the paramilitary policing literature. Kraska (1996; 1999) raised his concerns about the development of a particular form of subculture within PPUs. He argued that it is the "seductive power of paramilitary subculture" in the form of "techno-warrior garb [and] heavy weaponry" that makes creating and joining PPUs popular (Kraska, 1999, p. 142). In the wake of a horrific incident, governments may prioritise creating or improving special units whose training emphasises the violent aspects of police culture: danger, seclusion, isolation, secrecy and loyalty in the development of a 'warrior fantasy' (Gibson, 1994; Belur, 2014, p. 3746). Kraska's (1999, pp. 153-154) major concern is that the militaristic subculture of these units may spread to the rest of the policing institution and challenge the latent functions necessary for civilian policing. He states that after undertaking a short amount of fieldwork with members of a PPU, anybody would appreciate the overwhelming similarities between its officers and members of a military special operations unit as opposed to the regular cop-on-the-beat (Kraska, 1996; 1999, p. 151). However, Kraska perhaps overstated how much contact the layperson has with military Special Forces and may be basing his assertion on the assumptions he has about that type of role.

The work of Brown and Sargent (1995, p. 3), whilst almost twenty years old, provides a general feel for the representativeness encountered in firearms departments with only 2.6% of AFOs being female. The anecdotal evidence collected as part of this research has indicated that,

whilst those numbers are increasing, they still do not reflect the gender balance in the police[3] let alone in wider society: for example, reports indicate that around a quarter of the Met's AFOs are now female (Birchley, 2018). Brown and Sargent (1995) suggest that there are significantly different motivations for male and female officers attempting to join the firearms unit, with 37% of women wanting to do so for the sake of variety, versus 13% of men; and 13% of men joining with a view to providing a valuable public service versus 5% of women. Overall, they identify that rather than being less motivated than their male colleagues, female officers are more likely to be discouraged from applying to firearms units because of deeply embedded aspects of police organisational culture distinct to the machismo of firearms units (Brown and Sargent, 1995, p. 13).

When Westmarland (2001b, p. 147) did her fieldwork with the Central Task Force firearms team on Court Protection duties in a British police service in the 1990s, she encountered, "the only armed female officer in evidence". Asking this officer whether she had any issues being a female officer on a decidedly all male team, "she smiled politely as her sergeant answered for her: 'No, no, not at all. Jill fits in with everyone else – she's just like one of the lads'" (Westmarland, 2001b, p. 147). When observing firearms training with the team, Westmarland (2001b, p. 148) noted that with "heavy boots and police overalls with prominent 'POLICE' logos" the firearms officers were awarded a "certain undeniable male status". Asking the members of the team about the lack of representation from women, Westmarland (2001b, p. 148) received a variety of replies ranging from the fact that female officers' partners would not be keen to let their wives join; that it is too cold and physically demanding to do the training all the time or that it's simply too stressful – only one officer stated they did not understand why there were not more women on the department. Westmarland (2001b, p. 150) hypothesised that male officers within special units such as firearms have their masculinity reinforced by the environment in which they exist and interact; she argued that women can be seen to have special privileges in terms of accessing opportunities but not necessarily engaging with them. Whether these attitudes still exist within a contemporary firearms unit are important to consider particularly when police services have made concerted efforts to attract more female officers to specialist roles such as firearms (Gray, 2007; Cain, 2011; Birchley, 2018).

3.3   Counter-Terrorism

Waddington (1999a) argued that terrorism is narrowing the gap between the police and the military, particularly in Great Britain because of an implicit assumption that to successfully

---

[3] As of March 2019, 30.4% of police officers are female (Home Office, 2019a).

counter terrorism one must deploy armed units. Whilst other issues exist that armed police are needed to combat, such as gang shootings and organised crime groups, terrorism has captured the current public consciousness. The deployment of armed officers as a counter measure to terrorism is heavily publicised and this means deployments of armed officers are intrinsically linked to terrorism by the public (NPCC, 2017).

With the continuing threat of terrorism, nations are incentivised towards the creation of paramilitary units with the weaponry and equipment to deal with terror-based violence (Belur, 2014, p. 3751). According to McCulloch (2000), the increasing paramilitarisation of police in the face of terror threats has led to an increase in police violence. Belur (2014, p. 3752) argues that the police priority should be to understand how counter-terrorism strategies can be inclusive of community policing to avoid alienation, despite communities often outwardly appreciating 'robust' policing (Jonathan-Zamir and Weisburd, 2013, pp. 4-7). The use of civil police in, potentially covert, counter-terrorism operations may increase suspicion and distrust within those communities being policed, undermining public consent and police legitimacy (Belur, 2014, p. 3751). Green and Ward (2004, p. 80) demonstrated that measures initially introduced and justified on the basis of countering terrorism have been quickly absorbed and modified into routine policing practices and this may have a similar, negative effect on police legitimacy.

However, there are reasons to suspect that involvement of police in counter-terrorism operations could be potentially beneficial for the police image within the police-public relationship. Jonathan-Zamir (2014, p. 3807) states that the focus of police on counter-terrorism during times of acute security threats could be perceived by the public as the police reacting robustly to the most troubling of public issues. This focus may therefore promote collaboration between police and public in an effort to address such an issue. Furthermore, if the police prove themselves timely, proportionate and professional in their response, this may further enhance the public's assessment of police competence (Jonathan-Zamir, 2014, pp. 3807)

den Heyer (2012) concurs with the points Waddington (1993) makes, in that the development of PPUs reflect a professionalisation of policing within a country as a response to the threat of violent crime. Kappeler and Kraska (2013) rebutted his arguments stating that den Heyer's account suggests the creation of PPUs should be "natural", "evolutionary" or "inevitable". However, recent examples of counter-terrorism operations demonstrate den Heyer's (2012)

point in that there is a need for a professionalised police unit that far exceeds the capabilities of 'every-day' officers. For example, after the Paris attacks in November 2015, a siege situation developed in Belgium where a number of the suspects were holding out in an apartment building. During this siege, over 5000 rounds of ammunition were allegedly fired and explosives were used by both the suspects and the security forces, most notably when the suspect detonated a suicide device destroying the apartment they were in (Punch, Crawshaw and Markham, 2016, p. 3). This is clearly far outside the remit of 'civilian policing', even in a country where police are routinely armed, and whilst the paramilitarisation of police is potentially problematic, the necessity for heavily armed police or military units to take on circumstances such as these is evident (Punch, Crawshaw and Markham, 2016, p. 3).

Despite the widespread impact of 9/11 on global counter-terrorism strategies and the impact of the 2005 London Bombings on British counter-terrorism policy, neither event was followed by any significant increase in the number of AFOs employed in England and Wales. However, the terrorist incidents in France in 2015, notably the Charlie Hebdo[4] attack in January and the Bataclan Theatre Siege[5] in November, had a significant influence on modern European police firearms policy. This was mainly because they comprised Marauding Terrorist Firearms Attacks (MTFA); MTFAs are considered an extension of previously recognised 'Active Shooter' scenarios. 'Active Shooter' protocols involve an individual who kills or attempts to kill people in a populated area using a firearm, with no pattern or method to their selection of victims (U.S. Department of Homeland Security, 2008, p. 2). MTFAs are considered distinct as they involve highly motivated gunmen, with a political agenda, who continue to rove in search of targets, shooting at members of the public until ultimately challenged by armed police or taking their own lives (Punch, Crawshaw and Markham, 2016, p. 11). It is for this reason that in Great Britain, it is taken for granted that counter-terrorism operations require armed police. Therefore, if the role of armed police in the current, British counter-terrorism environment is to be fully understood, then the effects of carrying firearms by British officers interacting with the public needs to be considered and investigated.

These considerations are particularly pertinent when discussing the recent use of armed police as a reassurance tactic in the immediate aftermath of an attack. The most relevant and

---

[4] The Charlie Hebdo shooting was carried out in January 2015 by two brothers. Armed with a number of semi-automatic weapons, it was the first example of an MTFA in Western Europe. 12 civilians were killed and 11 wounded. It spawned copycat attacks across France in the following days.
[5] The Bataclan concert hall was a target of the November 2015 Paris Attacks. These were a series of co-ordinated MTFA involving numerous perpetrators, suicide explosives and multiple heavy calibre semi-automatic weapons. 130 civilians were killed and 413 wounded.

contemporary research in this area comes from Yesberg and Bradford's (2018) exploration of trust and emotional response on public support for armed officers. By adding questions to the annual Mayor's Office of Policing and Crime (MOPAC) survey their research found that people's emotional feelings regarding armed police are the key factors in shaping the public's response to policy designed to increase numbers of armed police after an attack (Yesberg and Bradford, 2018). Yesberg, Bradford and Dawson (2019, pp. 25-26) propose that while the British public might dislike seeing armed officers with carbines, levels of police legitimacy are unlikely to be affected by extra deployments of armed police in the aftermath of terrorist incidents.

3.3.1 The Armed Uplift

After the Charlie Hebdo attacks in January 2015, the firearms lead for the National Police Chief's Council (NPCC) (quoted in Hudson, 2015) admitted:

> *The prospect of a nationwide manhunt for armed terrorists who have gone to ground after an attack is deeply concerning. Could the UK respond to incidents like the ones in Paris? I believe we have the capability: capacity is a different issue* (Hudson, 2015).

After the Bataclan Theatre Siege, between November and December 2015, the Home Office announced an extra £34 million budget to provide more armed police to a number of services. The Home Office pledged to increase the overall number of AFOs by 1500, with the Metropolitan Police receiving the most funding to train an additional 600 AFOs. Other forces received more modest boosts, for example West Midlands Police received funding for an additional 24 AFOs, and some forces were not allocated any funding as part of the procedure. Of those forces not allocated additional funding, Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary (HMIC) found that some forces put aside their own resources to increase capacity, for example North Wales Police and Staffordshire Police (HMIC, 2016b; HMIC, 2016c). Others reviewed their requirements and strived to maintain existing capabilities, deeming them sufficient, such as Essex Police and Merseyside Police (HMIC, 2016d; HMIC, 2016e).

With this uplift in effect, an increase in armed police numbers was recorded in March 2017 for the first time since March 2012. However, in context, it still represents a significant decline in armed police numbers since the classification of 'Authorised Firearms Officer' was created in 1983 (see Figure 3.1). The creation of such a classification followed the mistaken shooting of journalist Stephen Waldorf in 1983 by detectives who were looking for a wanted man. The purpose for creating the distinct classification was to stop officers embedded in a variety of

roles from having access to firearms when they deemed appropriate; it set the stage for AFOs as firearms specialists within British policing. This drive towards specialisation is further evidenced by the rapid decline in numbers between 1983 and 1987 where more and more officers were not 'revalidated' as AFOs to allow for the training requirements to become more stringent. The rapid decline stopped in 1988 in the aftermath of Michael Ryan's mass shooting in Hungerford the year before (Great Britain. Home Office, 1992a, p. 4). Whilst the number of AFOs in 2017 is half that of those available in 1983, those that remain are significantly better trained and better equipped reflecting the fact there has been a great professionalisation of armed policing in Great Britain over the last few decades (Punch, 2011, pp. 50-51).
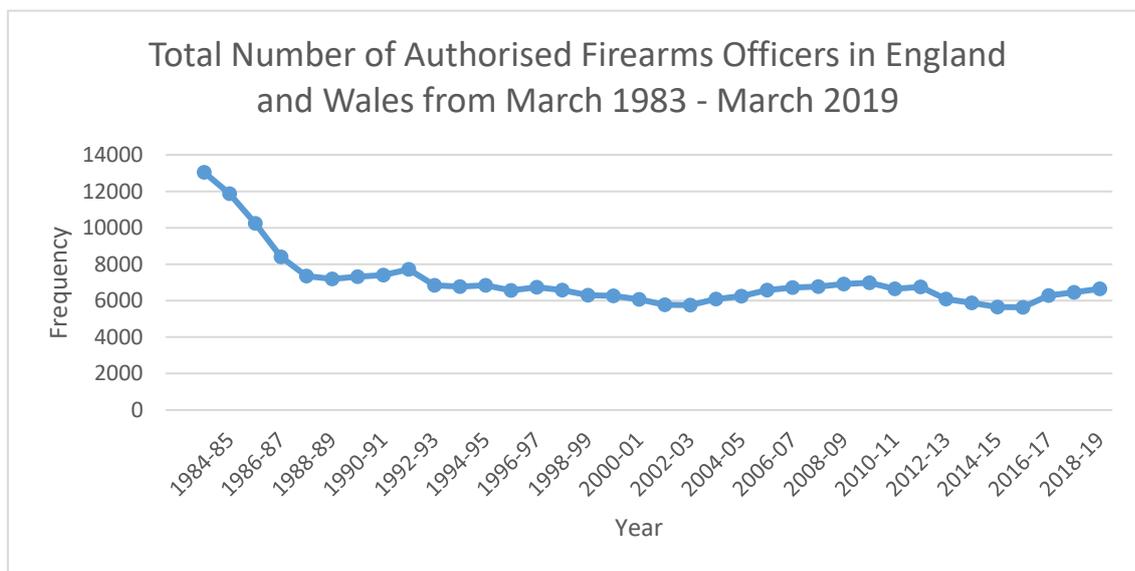
Figure 3.1 Total number of Authorised Firearms Officers in England and Wales from March 1983 - March 2019

For information on how the number of AFOs relates as a proportion to the number of police officers total in England and Wales, see Figure 3.2. As an aside, as the overall number of police officers in England and Wales drops, Figure 3.2 also demonstrates how, whilst the number of AFOs is relatively stable, they are becoming an ever-increasing proportion of British policing strength from 4.7% to 5.4%.
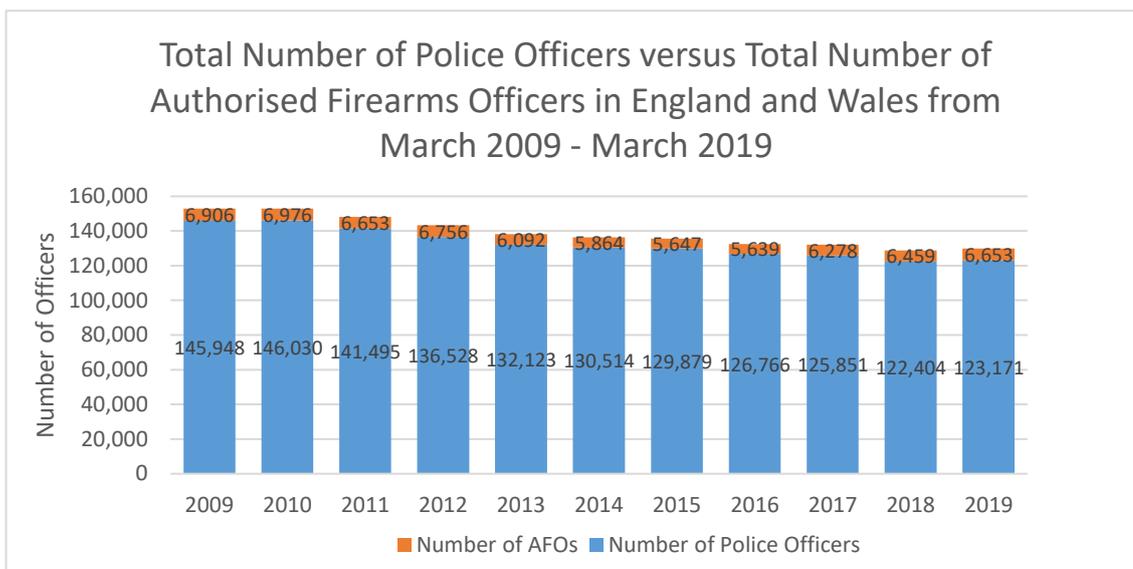
Figure 3.2 Total number of Authorised Firearms Officers against total number of Police Officers in England and Wales from March 2009 - March 2019

A note on nomenclature is needed here. Previously published statistics from the Home Office have displayed data on the number of 'Authorised Firearms Officers'. This term is problematic because it was used in these previous publications in its literal sense to encompass any officer with authority to use firearms. This therefore includes Specialist Firearms Officers, not just the officers trained to a basic standard to carry a firearm designated AFOs by the National Police Firearms Training Curriculum (NPFTC). The NPCC and the College of Policing recommended the Home Office broaden the definition to 'Armed Officers' to remove this confusion and now encompasses all officers who are authorised to use firearms operationally, including those whose only operation requirement to use firearms is to train personnel. As a matter of course, all 43 police services were contacted to ascertain if the change in definition affected previous figures. Only two forces of the 42 that responded reported the change in definition changed their numbers, and these numbers accounted for less than 0.5% of the total armed officers as of March 2017. As such, the Home Office, NPCC and College of Policing deem that, despite the change in definition, the figures published from March 2017 onwards are comparable to figures from the previous publications without issue.

It is argued that the counter-terrorism narrative has done for Europe what the 'War on Drugs' narrative did for the US 30 years ago. While there has not been so much of a proliferation of new paramilitary units, the existing paramilitary units within European police services have been upskilled, developed, expanded and rebranded (Smith, 2013; Van Oosbree, 2018). If the role of armed police in the current, British counter-terrorism context is to be fully understood,

then the effects of carrying firearms by British officers interacting with the public needs to be investigated. According to Belur (2014, p. 3752) the growing popular demand for the arming of unarmed police is a reaction to the public's perception of increasing social violence, most graphically demonstrated by increased instances of terrorism. The issue of arming the police, both generally and in Britain is explored in more depth in the next section.

3.4   Arming an Unarmed Police

Punch (2011, p. 70) poses the question whether the police should be armed at all and, if so, is it then necessary that *all* police officers are armed? In general, two separate issues are crucial to understanding the debate surrounding the routine arming of the police, particularly in the British context. As outlined above, there is an argument that the police should maintain a tactical capacity for dealing with serious incidents, organised crime and terrorism. Inherent in the role of the police and their ability to use violence is the idea that the police have a duty to use force where necessary to protect the public. This force may require the use of firearms.

Aside from the tactical capacity of the police, there is an argument for the personal protection of police officers. Perhaps understandably, the occupational culture and psychology of the police becomes fixated on the instances in which being able to draw a firearm in self-defence "on a 'wet night down a dark alley' as the saying goes" could make the difference between the life and death of the officer (Punch, 2011, p. 70). However, it is unfortunate that the recent narrative of counter-terrorism has, to some degree, conflated the two issues, where now officers perceive the ability to intervene in a serious, terrorist incident as key to their personal protection. This conflation of issues is, admittedly, in part due to the changing nature of terrorist attacks. However, it is possible the relative infrequency of terrorist activity is not sufficient to be the impetus for arming the police, even if it gathers the most popular attention.

The police in the Netherlands, where Punch's work is based, are routinely armed, yet the number of officers who draw that weapon from their holster on duty is very low; the number of officers who actually fire their weapon is miniscule (Punch, 2011, p. 70). This is similar to other routinely armed jurisdictions as well (Knutsson and Strype, 2003; Olsen, 2008; *Uusi Suomi*, 2016). Belur (2014, p. 3742) argues that if police are to be further armed because of perceived dangerous working conditions, this may multiply the risk for the police officers themselves as well as damaging police-public relations. In the context of the Dutch police, Punch (2011, pp. 70-71) questions whether the majority of police personnel would even qualify as technically competent enough to use their weapons even if facing danger. By way of

explanation, he highlights that the requirements for a Dutch civilian to own and shoot a handgun at a gun club are stringent, they must attend and practice with that weapon sixteen times a year otherwise their permit is revoked. A Dutch police officer on the other hand is only required to train with their weapon four times a year (Punch, 2011, pp. 70-71).

The agenda to arm the British police, or increase numbers of AFOs, is often driven by a widening public perception of increasing criminal violence (Belur, 2014, p. 3752). Waddington (1991) stated it may only take a single, horrific incident to spur the routine arming of the British police, and we have seen a direct correlation to this with the Bataclan siege provoking a national armed uplift program. It has been argued that there should be an effort by the police and academia to prevent a spiralling cycle of increasing armament by understanding the possible outcomes of various events (Squires and Kennison, 2010, p. 81-83; Punch, 2011, pp. 195-199; Belur, 2014; p. 3752). This is particularly emphasised by those who feel that there are few, if any, events that could lead to a compensating disarmament of the police, especially given the established overarching threat of terrorism (Waddington, 1991).

The decision to arm more police in Great Britain seems implacable and irreversible. Some have argued that disarming a previously armed police service remains impossible once levels of societal violence have accommodated an armed police (Phelps, 2010; Belur, 2014, p. 3742 and 3750). Even on a small scale, experiments to disarm police have been met with resistance from institutional stakeholders, it seems that to disarm the police would be simply unacceptable (Punch, 2011, p. 72 and p. 119). This is despite research evidence that demonstrated in areas where rates of violent crime where comparable, routinely armed police officers were at higher risk of being killed or seriously injured than their colleagues in areas where police were routinely unarmed (Hawkins and Ward, 1970).

What Punch (2011, p. 73) does adequately portray is the two sides of the conundrum that the routine arming debate provokes. To express it starkly: the price paid for an unarmed police is that some officers or members of the public may die who might have lived if the officer had been armed. In the latter scenario, the price paid for an armed police is that some people will needlessly die because of accidents and 'mistakes'. The question is — what price is society prepared to pay and what are officers ready to accept? As established in the introduction, there are only two nation states that operate a routinely unarmed service. When the debate surrounding routine arming arises there is often great reluctance to engage with, or change, any of the existing conditions. However, both Norway and New Zealand, countries where

officers patrol unarmed but with firearms available in their vehicles, have gone through a period of routine armament. The Norwegian National Police was routinely armed for a period of 14 months following the foiling of a terror plot directed against Norway in November 2014 (*Norges offentlige utredninger*, 2017). The Norwegian National Police rescinded its routine arming policy in February of 2016, having reviewed the policy eight times in the intervening period (*Norges offentlige utredninger*, 2017). The New Zealand Police underwent a period of nationwide routine armament after the 2019 Christchurch terrorist attack (New Zealand Herald, 2019). New Zealand Police were armed for a period of six weeks before returning to patrolling unarmed as the organisation deemed the threat level had subsided sufficiently (Channel News Asia, 2019).

Squires and Kennison (2010, p. 110) outline the following pros and cons of routine arming in Table 3.1 below. Whilst a decade old, the table still reflects a concise overview of the pertinent issues facing the routine armament of police in Great Britain today:

FOR ROUTINE ARMING	AGAINST ROUTINE ARMING
• So that police officers would be properly protected in routine incidents which turn violent • To discourage knife attacks on police • Criminals may be less prepared to resist arrest • Armed criminals would be less likely to try to shoot their way out of trouble • The police need to be on an equal footing with the increasing number of armed offenders • A tough armed policing response might discourage or deter offenders from carrying weapons • It would bring Britain in line with Europe • An unarmed policing system may make Britain appear a soft touch in the face of increasingly internationalised criminal activities • There is insufficient ARV cover to adequately protect police and the public	• Existing officers might resign – 'I didn't join an armed service' • Many officers may be physically or psychologically ill-equipped to handle firearms • May increase the risk of officers killed by 'friendly fire' as is the case in the USA • Increased risk of suicide amongst police officers – a problem in the United States and Northern Ireland • Members of public may be put at risk – caught in crossfire • It might stimulate a growing gun culture and encourage offenders to more routinely arm themselves • Arming the police would undermine the police relationship making officers less approachable • A different type of person might be recruited into police work • Police firearms training standards would be lowered • The real need is for better protective equipment and body armour • Routine arming would not be cost effective as the time and financial requirements to train and equip a large number of officers would be substantial • Police might start 'shooting first, asking questions later • The traditional police image should not be sacrificed to knee jerk reactions

Table 3.1 Summary of the arguments 'For' and 'Against' the routine arming of the police (see Squires and Kennison, 2010, p. 110)

One significant issue is missing from the above table. In Great Britain certainly, the primary reason given for routine arming not occurring is that the public and the police would not stand for it (Kelly, 2012; Orde, 2012; Weinfass, 2017; Whitelam, 2017). For example, the most recent investigation on the matter by the NPCC (2017) found the following: "we have relied on the fact that the majority of the public in this country do not want an armed police service and the majority of officers do not want to be armed." This sentiment is contradicted by a history of surveys demonstrating that the police's interest in routine arming is increasing and the public have always "displayed an appetite for routinely armed policing that far exceeds that of police

officers themselves" (Waddington and Hamilton, 1997). There are three types of survey that show recent police and public attitudes towards police having firearms: public surveys carried out by popular media, police surveys carried out by police federations and joint surveys available from a variety of sources. Tables 3.2, 3.3 and 3.4 show the headline statistics from a number of these surveys. Table 3.2 shows four surveys held between 1994 and 2017 where the public is overwhelmingly supportive of police officers carrying firearms. In the wake of recent terrorist attacks, the British public poll at 75%+ support for routine arming. Even in the mid-1990s there was popular support at 60%+, for "All" police officers to be trained in the use of firearms and issued them, at the very least, "as and when necessary".

1	
Purpose: Public Survey	
Source: Playbuzz via Facebook	
Date: June 2017	
Reported Sample: 2675	
Survey: Should police in the UK be routinely armed? Do you believe that police in the UK should routinely carry firearms?	
Yes	75%
No	25%
Notes: Referenced by the NPCC's National Armed Policing Working Group. (Sunderland Echo, 2017)	
2	
Purpose: Public Survey	
Source: ITV's This Morning	
Date: November 2015	
Reported Sample: 13 000+	
Survey: Do you think British police officers should be armed?	
Yes	78.24%
No	21.76%
Notes: Carried out in the immediate aftermath of the Paris Terror Attacks (ITV, 2015)	

3		
Purpose: Public Survey		
Source: Electoral Reform Ballot Services Ltd.		
Date: Spring 1994 and Spring 1995		
Reported Sample: 1000 in each		
Survey: Routine Arming Survey		
	1995	*1994*
All police officers should be armed at all times, either on or off duty	10.3%	8%
All police officers should be armed at all times whilst on duty	15.6%	22%
All police officers should be issued with firearms as and when necessary	37.3%	37%
Only specialist officers should be issued with firearms	34.8%	31%
No view	2.0%	N/A
Notes: (Squires and Kennison, 2010, p. 113)		

Table 3.2 Public Survey Data - Opinions on routine arming

Table 3.3 supports these public findings and demonstrates the changing attitudes of police officers in their support for the carrying of firearms.

1
Purpose: Police and Public Survey
Source: West Yorkshire Police Federation
Date: August 2017
Reported Sample: "More than 1500…officers responded"; "Nearly 6000 [public] responses".
Survey: West Yorkshire Police Federation TASER and Firearms Survey

	Police	Public
Carrying a firearm routinely would keep the public safer	86%	80%
Routine arming would significantly change how we deliver policing	60%	63%
I would feel safer carrying a firearm	56%	N/A

Notes: Only headline statistics available. Survey sample represents approximately 1/3 of the force strength.
(West Yorkshire Police Federation, 2017)

2
Purpose: Police and Public Survey
Source: Gallup Polling
Date: Spring 1994
Reported Sample: "2000 serving police officers and 1000 members of the public"
Survey: Do you think British police officers should be armed?

	Police	Public
Yes	45%	67%
No	55%	33%

Notes: 63% of officers in London wanted to be armed. Chief Constables were also approached for comment by The Sunday Times. 12 responded with 8 saying they wanted more armed officers and 7 saying they wanted more ARVs.
(Ingleton, 1997, p. 60; Squires and Kennison, 2010, pp. 102-103, 106)

Table 3.3 Mixed Survey Data - Opinions on routine arming

Finally, Table 3.4 shows perhaps the most nuanced answers from the police with breakdowns per category but again demonstrates the growing support among police officers for carrying firearms. Interestingly, it also shows the drop in support for the statement that "The present number of officers who are specially trained to carry firearms is about right", from 17% to 6.2%. Unfortunately, the survey does not specify whether this means police officers think there are too many or too few firearms officers available but, given the context of the survey, we can perhaps assume that it means there are not enough.

1	
Purpose: Police Survey	
Source: The Police Federation of England and Wales	
Date: September 2017	
Reported Sample: 32 366	
Survey: Routine Arming Survey	
All police officers should receive appropriate training and be armed at all times, either on or off duty	8.9%
All police officers should receive appropriate training and be armed on duty but not off duty	25.2%
All police officers should receive appropriate training and firearms should be issued to them as and when necessary	16.8%
Firearms should not be issued to all police officers, but more officers should receive appropriate training and be issued with firearms, as and when necessary	42.5%
The present number of officers who are specially trained to carry firearms is about right	6.2%
No view	0.5%
Notes: (PFEW, 2017)	

2	
Purpose: Police Survey	
Source: The Police Federation of England and Wales	
Date: July 2016	
Reported Sample: "Just under 11 000"	
Survey: Police Federation Violence Survey	
I have or want access to rapid response firearms teams	"A third"
I have or want access to personal firearms	"A fifth"
Notes: Only headline stats available. Retrieved from 'POLICE' the PFEW's magazine.	

3	
Purpose: Police Survey	
Source: The Police Federation of England and Wales	
Date: May 1995	
Reported Sample: 73 379	
Survey: Police Federation Firearms Ballot	
All police officers should receive appropriate training and be armed at all times, either on or off duty	5.6%
All police officers should receive appropriate training and be armed on but not off duty	15.6%
All police officers should receive appropriate training and firearms should be issued to them when necessary	18.6%
Firearms should not be issued to all police officers, but more officers should receive appropriate training and be issued with firearms as and when necessary	42.7%
The present number of officers who are specially trained to carry firearms is about right	17.0%
No view	0.4%
Notes: (Squires and Kennison, 2010, p. 111)	

Table 3.4 Police Survey Data - Opinions on routine arming

What then is the barrier to routine arming? The key reason highlighted consistently by popular media, politicians and police leadership is that the public and the police would not accept routinely armed police, yet reviewing the tables above, that is probably inaccurate. While it must be appreciated that there is nuance in the questions asked: for example, in Table 3.2 and 3.4, both the public and the police are asked if the police should be trained and carry firearms "when necessary" with no qualification of what this might mean. Furthermore, officers are sometimes asked if they would be willing to carry a firearm on duty if asked, the answer to which is assumedly based on the officer's assessment of their preferences and capabilities but does not rely on them supporting a system where all of their colleagues are also armed. However, it is also inescapable that there is a financial cost to the endeavour of arming the police, with the NPCC (2017) observing:

> *Aside from the costs associated with abstractions for training, there would be significant implications and costs associated with supporting infrastructure such as access to suitable ranges and firearms instructors. Ranges and instructors are already significantly stretched by the Uplift Programme.*
> *The cost of a handgun is £470.*
> *All armed officers must also be equipped with a Taser as a less lethal alternative; the cost of a Taser X2 is £800* (NPCC, 2017, pp. 3-4).

However, this is obviously separate to the moral costs outlined by Punch (2011, p. 73) earlier where either way, the lives of the police and public are at stake due to the chosen weapons policy. Finally, there is no current positioning statement from the British government that states the reason they do not currently support routine arming because of the financial or ethical cost.

In the wake of the 2005 Stockwell shooting, Sir Ian Blair, then Commissioner of the Metropolitan Police, argued that:

> *An open debate is now required, not just about how the police deal with suicide bombers, but about how, in a liberal democracy, a largely unarmed service uses lethal force in any and all circumstances* (Punch, 2011, p. 195).

Essentially, Blair was calling for a debate on how and when routinely unarmed police should choose to deploy firearms. The Independent Police Complaints Commission (IPCC[6], 2007, p. 160) in its report two years later admitted that a wide-ranging and well-informed public debate was needed on these issues. At the time of writing his book, Punch (2011, pp. 194-197)

---

[6] The IPCC was replaced by the Independent Office for Police Conduct (IOPC) in January 2018.

did not believe that this had happened and suggested that a Royal Commission was needed to assess a number of elements. Firstly, it could survey whether the police and the public would actually want a routinely armed police; secondly, it could debate what level of weaponry is appropriate and what policies would accompany that weaponry. Finally, it could establish: "how to move away from the incident-driven nature of firearms policy" towards a more "principled, anticipatory position on the whole issue of guns in society, police responses to gun possession and gun crime, and police use of firearms" (Punch, 2011, p. 197).

The implications of this are that currently, Britain seems to be paralysed with indecision with regards to the routine arming debate. Aside from the survey data gathered, which is often temporally influenced by the current events of the time, there does not exist a clear picture of how members of the British public respond to armed officers, particularly when required to interact. The police are an emergency agency that must respond to both the most mundane of happenings but also to spontaneous, challenging incidents. Some of these incidents will require the deployment of potentially lethal force through the use of firearms (Punch, 2011, p. 69).

An interesting understudied aspect of the debate is the fact that AFOs have not been explicitly surveyed for their views on this matter in recent times. On the PFEW surveys AFOs are listed under the 'Response' category and not asked specifically, despite the fact that they surely must be considered the subject matter experts. In the methodology chapter I noted why survey methods were not chosen and referred to the statement from AFO17 that most AFOs would never bother doing them even if asked. However, as the individuals using firearms in a routinely unarmed police service, firearms officers would have the best experience and insight with which to inform the debate. Therefore, this thesis seeks to gain the views of AFOs on the routine arming debate through ethnographic conversation and semi-structured interview methods.

3.5   Less-Lethal Force

Belur (2014, p. 3750) cites the increasing pressure on law enforcement from both the public and the media to resolve difficult circumstances without the use of firearms, as driving the ever-expanding exploration of alternative uses of force. Whilst a number of terms have been used in the past, including 'non-lethal' and 'less-than-lethal', the most up to date term for these types of technology is 'Less-lethal' (Rogers, 2003, p. 195). The reason being that the phrase 'less-lethal' appreciates that while they may be 'less lethal' than conventional firearms, they can still cause death, even if used correctly. The former two terms do not entertain this

possibility, suggesting that they would never cause death even if used incorrectly. Punch (2011, pp. 85-86) states that the lethality of such weapons has been graphically illustrated over a multitude of incidents whether concerning the use of Plastic Baton Rounds in Northern Ireland or TASERs in North America. However, even appreciating linguistically that they are 'less-', instead of 'non-' lethal does not stop these innovations from being free of controversy (Summers and Kuhns, 2010).

The United States National Institute of Justice (cited by Northern Ireland Office, 2001, p. 7) defines 'less-lethal equipment' as "Devices or agents used to induce compliance with law enforcement personnel without substantial risk of permanent injury or death to the subject". Rogers (2003, p. 195) adds that the main objective of all 'less-lethal' technology is to save the lives of both public and police where necessary. However, less-lethal weapons are not a new panacea. Politicians and the public should realise that in certain circumstances, the police will need to resort to the use of conventional firearms (McBride, 2002, p. 20). Currently, many existing technologies have limitations in terms of accuracy, distance or effect which is problematic when confronted with the highly changeable nature of police work and the unanticipated encounters it may create (Belur, 2014, pp. 3750-3751). Police officers are often reluctant to place their trust solely in a piece of technology that is not guaranteed to overcome an individual who is potentially presenting them with a lethal threat. This piece of technology will find itself overlooked if the officer is likely to be carrying a conventional firearm which is more likely to enable the officer to achieve the required instant incapacitation of the suspect. In the British police setting, this is reflected in Dymond's (2019, pp. 10-15) work where officers without access to firearms are repeatedly warned by TASER instructors not to be overconfident in the device lest they end up too close to a lethal threat and the TASER fails. Data from the Metropolitan Police suggests that TASER, on the occasions when the TASER is fired, will only achieve an incapacitating effect on 55% of occasions (Metropolitan Police, 2019).

Waddington (1991, p. 105) argues that promoting the use of these kinds of weapons in situations such as these can be problematic as it can lead to the blurring of the line between the use of less-lethal and lethal force. He states that they are only truly useful where lethal force would be justified but total and immediate incapacitation is not essential, such as a knifeman holding police at bay (Waddington, 1991, p. 105). However, despite his long standing resistance to less-lethal technology Rogers (2003, p. 196) states that Waddington (1991; 2001) is starting to be over-written by a growing body of evidence from manufacturers and

government bodies that less-lethal weapons can be used in both firearms and non-firearms incidents.

According to Belur (2014, p. 3751), there is still a need for research in the area of less lethal technology to assess their performance in the dynamic situations law enforcement will demand. This research will help the development of a true non-lethal weapon fit for purpose as an alternative to the use of lethal force. Operational trials of TASER began in England and Wales with four forces in April 2003, the forces were: Lincolnshire, Northamptonshire, North Wales and Thames Valley. The TASERs were only issued to AFOs. The trial lasted 12 months and, in September 2004, authority was given for all forces with AFOs to equip officers with TASER if so desired. In 2008, permission was sought and granted for officers in non-firearms roles to be equipped with TASER and 10 000 TASERs were made available for non-AFO roles. Since then TASER use has been growing exponentially with a number of forces agreeing to arm all front-line officers with TASER that ask for it so long as an operational need is identified (BBC News, 2018; Apter, 2019)[7]. This is coupled with predictions from chief constables that TASER will become a routine piece of equipment for police in Britain (Mercer, 2019).

Other than articles detailing their potential medical effects (see Bleetman, Steyn and Lee, 2004) or statistical summaries of their use (see Payne-James, Rivers and Green, 2014) there has been little qualitative investigation into the use of TASER, particularly in relation to the effects of carrying TASER as a coercive tool. Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary (HMIC) has never investigated the use of TASER by the British police until its 2015 PEEL report. HMIC reported its findings as merely that there was "good evidence of tasers [sic] being used, in accordance with authorised professional practice" (HMIC, 2015, p. 57). Considering firearms officers must be equipped with a TASER if carrying firearms, my research provides ample opportunity to investigate the carrying of TASER alongside the carrying of firearms (NPCC, 2017).

Table 3.5 outlines the results from a number of public surveys surrounding TASER use. They demonstrate how TASERs receive greater public acceptance in Great Britain than firearms, with much higher public and police approval ratings for the idea of the routine issue of TASER than for the routine issue of firearms:

---

[7] The forces identified so far are Hampshire, Devon & Cornwall, Kent and Northamptonshire.

1		
Purpose: Police and Public Survey		
Source: West Yorkshire Police Federation		
Date: August 2017		
Reported Sample: "More than 1500…officers responded"; "Nearly 6000 [public] responses".		
Survey: West Yorkshire Police Federation TASER and Firearms Survey		
	Police	*Public*
Carrying a TASER routinely would keep the public safer	86%	80%
Notes: Only headline statistics available. Survey sample represents approximately 1/3 of the force strength. (West Yorkshire Police Federation, 2017)		
2		
Purpose: Public Survey		
Source: Ipsos MORI for The Police Federation of England and Wales		
Date: 11th – 15th November 2016		
Reported Sample: 2004		
Survey: Ipsos MORI and The Police Federation: Attitudes Towards TASERs Survey		
It is Fairly or Completely Acceptable for police to carry a TASER when on patrol.	71%	
If a police officer were carrying a TASER, it would make no difference to my likelihood of approaching the officer for assistance.	75%	
Forces should be allowed to train and equip officers with a Taser if the use of a Taser is automatically recorded by Body Worn Video,	89%	
Notes: (Ipsos MORI, 2016)		
3		
Purpose: Public Survey		
Source: The Home Office		
Date: 2010		
Reported Sample: Not known		
Survey: Public Attitudes Towards TASERs Survey		
I support the police using TASERs	76%	
I have either a great deal or a fair amount of trust that their local police used TASERs responsibly	71%	
It would be acceptable to fire TASERs at people behaving violently or suspected of carrying a weapon	50%	
It would be acceptable to fire TASERs at people suspected of carrying a weapon	48%	
I would feel safer if more police were equipped with TASERs	50%	
Notes: (Education and Home Affairs Scrutiny Panel, 2010)		

Table 3.5 Mixed Survey Data - Opinions on routine issue of TASER

In addition to TASER, firearms units in Great Britain are unique in that when deployed, all ARVs are equipped with an Attenuating Energy Projectile (AEP) Launcher, also known as a 'Baton Gun'. The AEP Launcher is a Heckler and Koch HK69 40mm Grenade Launcher fitted with a 37mm rifled barrel insert. The launcher was originally designed for military use in the late

1960s and the specific less-lethal ammunition and barrel insert were first developed in the early 1970s for use during public order incidents throughout The Troubles in Northern Ireland. The barrel insert not only allows it to fire projectiles more accurately but also prevents the weapon from chambering any conventional military-spec 40mm ammunition that is almost certainly not 'less-than-lethal'. The original ammunition developed was known as Plastic Baton Rounds (PBRs) hence giving the name 'Baton Gun' to the launcher. Colloquially they are often known as 'Rubber Bullets'. However, in June 2001, following an inquest after a number of deaths caused by PBRs in Northern Ireland, the launcher was updated by the introduction of an optical sight and the ammunition was updated to have better deceleration upon impact to hopefully alleviate the potential damage caused. These new rounds were termed AEPs (Rogers, 2003, p. 196). These updated AEP Launchers were approved for police use and the first operational discharge took place on 27th February 2002 by North Wales Police (Rogers, 2003, p. 196). Just like TASER, little is known about the AEP Launcher and, in particular, its use outside of public order situations. Where statistics are collected they usually refer to its 'deployment' rather than its explicit 'use' or 'firing'; even then the statistics do not illuminate what circumstances qualify as a 'deployment' (Payne-James, Rivers and Green, 2014).

Part of why we understand so little about the AEP Launcher might be that, when compared with other routinely unarmed or semi-armed countries, the AEP Launcher fills a niche for front-line ARV officers that is not really seen anywhere else. The closest contender are the *Gardaí* Regional Support Units in the Republic of Ireland, which are modelled on British ARVs, but instead carry a shotgun with bean-bag rounds for such circumstances. Routine patrol officers in Iceland, Norway and New Zealand have no routine access to an extended range of less-lethal options, only conventional firearms. Furthermore, New Zealand is the only one of those three semi-armed nations where officers routinely carry TASER. Special units in these countries, and other countries around the world, use a variety of different less-lethal options but they are primarily seen as for the resolution of public order incidents, not firearms incidents.

Chapter Summary

The first section of this chapter explored how paramilitary policing literature is the key precursor of police firearms literature but has a number of explanatory limitations. On the whole the existing paramilitary policing literature either focusses on police in the US or, where it does involve British police, the literature does not pay any attention to the issues surrounding police firearms. Therefore, any research project focussing on fieldwork with a police firearms unit in Great Britain has the opportunity to expand the literature base and

draw upon the existing work to examine the policies and practices witnessed. The following section explained how an understanding of police culture became an emergent requirement for the study of police firearms following early field work by policing scholars. Innes (2003) and Bacon (2016) highlighted the value of ethnography similar to this research in exploring individual police cultures. The section also demonstrated how the work of Westmarland (2001b) hypothesised how gender norms are reproduced due to the masculine culture of specialist police units and how women might struggle to join or fit in.

The chapter discussed how the desire for tactical capacity and the counter-terrorism narrative, rather than the police protection narrative, is driving the demand for armed officers because of underlying assumptions and evidence from recent terrorist attacks that demonstrate there is a distinct need for armed police to control. This is seen as more critical than the requirement for armed police to be available to tackle armed gangs and gun crime. It demonstrates that there are gaps in the literature where it is not fully understood how armed police interact with the public and what effect that has on counter-terrorism principles. Related to that, the fourth section discussed whether the routine arming debate and how there is increasing demand from both the police and the public for the police in Britain to become routinely armed. I identified that the views of AFOs about routine arming have never been explicitly sought and neither has anyone assessed from an officer's point of view the impacts or effects of armed officers routinely interacting with the public. Finally, linked to the routine arming debate is a similar discussion relating to the routine issue of TASER and the use of other less-lethal weapons by armed police. Whilst they generally receive more popular support than the routine issue of firearms, there is still a lack of information or informed debate as to whether carrying the TASER, another coercive tool, has any impact on police-public interactions and therefore police legitimacy. The next chapter outlines police legitimacy theory as a framework for the analysis of the fieldwork data.

4   Theoretical Framework of Police Legitimacy

Introduction

Chapter Four outlines a literature review and theoretical framework of police legitimacy. In particular, it explores self-legitimacy theories from Bottoms and Tankebe (2012) and Tankebe (2014) that act as a theoretical framework through which the research data can be considered. The first section discusses police legitimacy with regards to a wide range of international literature, exploring how legitimate policing is distinct from authoritarian and deterrence-based approaches to policing. Policing by Consent and the components of Procedural Justice are outlined to show how they can, or perhaps should influence police behaviour in order to build legitimacy with the public. The second section discusses the police and self-legitimacy, and which factors promote police self-legitimacy. It demonstrates the salience of the second research question exploring how Authorised Firearms Officers (AFOs) interpret both organisational and self-legitimacy. This literature highlights the need for police-centric work and underlines the rationale for performing data collection about legitimacy from the perspective of police officers.

As highlighted in Chapter Three, there is a lack of recent, scholarly police firearms literature for Great Britain. Due to this paucity of research, we do not have an understanding of how the carrying of firearms by police connects to intangible issues such as that of police legitimacy. This chapter goes some way towards rectifying that. The third and final section outlines how police firearms use can be investigated using police legitimacy theory. This section identifies the need to understand the interactions between armed police officers and members of the public. Understanding this context will expand upon what little is known about how firearms may alter the ways in which officers can maintain their own sense of legitimacy.

4.1   Police Legitimacy

4.1.1   Overview

When discussing police legitimacy, it is essential to discuss 'the public'. Unfortunately, treating 'the public' as a single entity is becoming increasingly problematic (Mahoney, Newman and Barnett, 2010, p. 1). Instead the 'public' are diversifying and it has been suggested that multiple 'publics' appear around objects of concern or methods of communication (Marres, 2005 in Mahoney, Newman and Barnett, 2010, p. 3). It is then an epistemological conundrum whether to discuss 'a public' as if a single entity, which is straightforward, or whether it misrepresents the multiple 'publics' you are essentially speaking for (Mahoney, Newman and Barnett, 2010, p. 6). This thesis acknowledges that the public are not uniform and appreciates

there are a multitude of publics defined by characteristics such as race, ethnicity or gender. These arguably hard to reach groups are more likely to distrust police and the sight of police with firearms may not help to reassure them (Yesberg and Bradford, 2018, p. 4). As well, there will always be a section of the population who are anti-police, who will not legitimise policing or will only do so under unrealistic conditions. However, for the sake of ease within this thesis, the relationship between 'the police' and 'the public' will be discussed.

Contributions from classical socio-political literature define Legitimate Authority, or Legitimacy, as "the probability that certain commands from a given source will be obeyed"; Legitimate Authority is only granted once individuals have voluntarily provided their submission to the source of those commands (Weber, 1947, p. 324). In organised, bureaucratised societies it is governments who issue commands that must be obeyed by their citizens in the form of laws (Slapper and Kelly, 2011). It is then a core function of the police to ensure citizens comply with the law and that their directives are obeyed (Tyler, 1990; 2004, p. 84; Murphy, 2009, p. 190).

Beetham (1991) argues that institutions gain legitimacy from the populace not simply because they are seen as successfully performing the functions expected of them, but because the public regard the chosen institution as representing a desirable normative framework. To confer legitimacy onto an institution, the public must believe that they share values with that institution; in the case of the police this is the unspoken assumption that the police and policed share a similar moral position (Tyler, 1990, p. 4; Beetham, 1991; Hough et al., 2010, p. 205). In this context therefore, 'police legitimacy' means that the police are entitled to call upon the public's compliance in obeying the law (Murphy, 2009, p. 190). 'Police legitimacy' can explain why individuals obey the law and why they comply with the police and the directives they give (Tyler, 1990, p. 4; Skogan and Frydl, 2004, pp. 5-6).

According to Skogan and Frydl (2004, p.294) there are two major factors within the police's control that influence why people voluntarily obey the law. Firstly, when people believe the law is instrumentally enforced: the public believe that the lawmakers have the capacity to threaten and deliver sanctions in relation to the law (Skogan and Frydl, 2004, pp. 294-295). For example, the ability of the police to issue fines or arrest an individual who they witness breaking the law means the effects of the law are immediately felt. These sanctions rely on traditional notions of deterrence; the concept that if a citizen commits a crime they would be caught and they would be punished. The spectre of punishment would apparently prevent that person from reoffending as well as preventing any others from wanting to commit a similar

crime (McLaughlin, 2006, pp. 124-125). However, the effectiveness of deterrence as the main contributor to a sophisticated system of social regulation has been questioned by academia. This is particularly as the risk of being caught is deemed to be low overall and it is the certainty rather than the severity of punishment that appears to have the biggest influence on offending behaviour (Antunes and Hunt, 1973; Skogan and Frydl, 2004, p. 296).

The second factor within police control is when the public believe in the legitimacy of the authority enforcing the law, and this is most important when regarding the legitimacy of the police themselves (Skogan and Frydl, 2004, p. 296). For example, when the public trust that the police do the right thing, they are more likely to assist the police in their enquiries. The legitimacy of the police in the eyes of the public is considered one of the most important objectives in the policing of democratic countries (Bayley, 1977; Skogan and Frydl, 2004). Legitimacy has been associated with numerous co-operative behaviours including obeying the law and collaborating with the police, implicit within these findings is the ideal that a legitimate police service achieves its goals more effectively and more efficiently (Tyler and Huo, 2002; Myhill and Quinton, 2011; Jonathan-Zamir and Weisburd, 2013; Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary, 2016a). Compared to traditional deterrence methods, police achieve better results and expend fewer resources when the public perceives them to be legitimate (Thibaut and Walker, 1975; Tyler, 1990, pp. 1-4; Antrobus et al., 2015, pp. 152-153). Thus, given the value of legitimacy in providing voluntary submission and compliance, it raises the question of how such legitimising behaviour can be encouraged (Murphy, 2009, pp. 190-191).

Legitimate policing can reap many benefits; one of the benefits being a trusting relationship between the police and the public (Van Maanen, 1978). When the public trust the police, information regarding criminal activity and other related matters will likely be more forthcoming, and the public will follow instructions or assist the police even if they do not directly agree with what they are being told to do (Myhill and Quinton, 2011, pp. 2-3, 10; Van Maanen, 1978). According to Tyler (2004, p. 88) all of these behaviours will ultimately lead to self-regulatory behaviour where the presence of police is not always required to maintain order.

Legitimate beliefs prove more reliable in indicating if the public are going to obey the law than deterrence-based compliance (Tyler, 2004, p. 85). For example, in a hypothetical situation modelled on the example Waddington (1991, p. 4) provides at the beginning of *The Strong*

Arm of the Law: if a physically imposing individual is attempting to direct traffic after a road rage incident, it is only the intimidation and threat of force provided by their physicality that persuades other drivers to comply. In contrast, a police officer, no matter how small or unimposing they are, is likely to have their directives obeyed by traffic because they have a legitimately recognised authority. This is because the power of the officer is contextually consistent due to the legitimacy of the public invested in them, unlike the power of the physically imposing individual that could be challenged and overruled by someone stronger (Waddington, 1991, p. 4; Tyler, 2004, p. 85). Whilst the police do have powers to threaten or apply sanctions in order to regulate the public, in the longer term, it is more effective for police regulation to come from increased public support (Tyler and Huo, 2002; Murphy, Hinds and Fleming, 2008). It is notable that reliance on instrumental law enforcement undermines the legitimacy of police authority (Skogan and Frydl, 2004).

The police are able to promote public compliance and cooperation by using strategies that address and develop the perceived legitimacy of police: "The belief that the police are entitled to call upon the public to follow the law and help combat crime and that members of the public have an obligation to engage in cooperative behaviours" (Tyler, 2004, p. 87). It is interesting to note Tyler's (2004, p. 87) choice of the word "obligation", it stands out, as if co-operative behaviours are extracted unwillingly from the public. It raises the question whether it should be a word such as 'desire', as in a truly legitimate police-public relationship, co-operation should be willingly provided. Compared with traditional deterrence methods, legitimacy based approaches to policing are also easier to achieve and less costly; all that is required to improve positive perceptions of police legitimacy is to alter how the police interact with the public, an approach that often requires few additional resources (Meares, 2000; Antrobus et al., 2015, pp. 152-153).

Bottoms and Tankebe (2012, pp. 148-149) contrast the compliance given by the public in a democratic society against the type of obedience shown by prisoners who merely comply with given directives, for example when to sleep or eat within the prison regime. Bottoms and Tankebe (2012, p. 130, pp. 148-149; Harkin, 2015) argue the police must develop "truly legitimate obedient authority" over the public by developing their legitimacy lest they earn an obedience stemming from "mere dull compulsion". If the population are made to be compliant, the public will not reproduce the legitimacy of their authority. Slowly the authority's legitimacy will wear away and the public will deem them illegitimate until social change occurs (Bottoms and Tankebe, 2012, pp. 148-149).

4.1.2   Policing by Consent

Sparks (1994, p. 17) observed that legitimacy has what he termed a 'dialectical energy', meaning that its status is never secure, he also found that legitimacy cannot ever be 'completed', rather it must be constantly negotiated between its stakeholders. Similarly, Bottoms and Tankebe (2012, p. 129) argue that this reflects the 'dialogic' aspect of legitimacy; that legitimacy does not exist as a one-off transaction but rather as an ongoing dialogue between powerholders and their audience (Harkin, 2015). This type of exchange is often typified in British literature as 'policing by consent', the idea that the police operate with the full negotiated support of the public, as opposed to just having their authority recognised and obeyed (Reiner, 2009, pp. 52-54).

Reith (1956) argued that this approach is distinctive to Great Britain, and that the principle creates an approach to policing that is unique because it derives, almost exclusively, from public co-operation with the police. Members of the public should see 'themselves' as police officers and recognise police as merely 'citizens in uniform', contributing to a common good (Reith, 1956; Waldren, 2007). The principle is induced by the police and maintains for them the respect and affection of the public (Reith, 1956). Reith's (1956) writings reflect the period in which they were written, during a time where crime was perceived to be low and trust in the police perceived to be high. Works of this period are still relevant today as they often try to distil the qualities of excellence in British policing. The methods of policing by consent attempt to balance the police-public relationship, making it less about authority and more a 'constantly negotiated contract', where consent can be withdrawn by the public at large (Punch, 2011, p. 5). It should also be remembered that policing by consent does not refer to the consent of an individual; no specific individual can formally choose to withdraw their consent from either the police or a law at a convenient time (Home Office, 2012).

Consequently, the police have developed strategies to cultivate consent and legitimacy within their jurisdictions; Reiner (2009) identifies what he terms "the worldwide fashion for 'community policing'; in the last two decades as being the most obvious example". Community or Neighbourhood Policing Programmes are designed to make the police visible to the public and help develop a safe and orderly social environment (Innes, 2005). This is in contrast to traditional policing objectives where arresting criminals and answering calls for service – providing a visible 'response', are seen as the key objectives. Effective community policing relies on public support so police strategies that develop procedural justice can enhance citizen co-operation (Murphy, Hinds and Fleming, 2008, p. 139).

4.1.3 Procedural Justice

Police legitimacy is linked to the public's judgements about whether they perceive the actions taken by the police to be fair, and that they can understand why decisions have been made and actions taken, this is termed 'Procedural Justice' (Sunshine and Tyler, 2003, p. 514). Procedural justice implies that if the police are fair in their dealings with citizens then citizens will view their police as being more legitimate, in turn if the police use unfair procedures whilst exercising their authority it can lead to the public being dissatisfied and uncooperative (Sunshine and Tyler, 2003, p. 514).

Tyler (2004) specifies the following key aspects of procedural justice. Firstly, the police must provide the public they come into contact with the opportunity to explain their actions before police decisions are made; they must explain how those police decisions are being made and allow complaints to be made formally if the public disagree with the action taken by the police (Tyler, 2011 p. 260; Harkin, 2015). Secondly, the police must demonstrate that they make decisions in a neutral and objective way by providing evidence that officers treat everyone similarly. Finally, and most importantly, the police should also treat people with courtesy and respect during their encounters, otherwise the police risk distancing themselves from the public leading the public to not wish to co-operate (Tyler, 2011, p. 260). Using these in process-oriented strategies helps place procedural justice as the focus of any encounter with the public, this serves to improve and maintain the legitimacy of the police (Tyler, 2004, p. 84; Murphy, Hinds and Fleming, 2008, p. 140). If the public no longer wish to co-operate with the police, levels of police legitimacy will then fall.

Tyler (2004, p. 95) argues that the public are able to judge the encounters they have with the police at face value. However, the public may lack the proficiency to judge whether the actions taken or decisions made by authorities were reasonable or appropriate; they may not even be aware what the 'correct' outcome should have been (Tyler, 2004, p. 95). Therefore, not only should the decisions made by the police and other agencies be made clear to citizens, they also need to make the citizens feel that these decisions have been enacted out of true concern for well-being that fits with a process that was neutral and fair (Tyler, 2004, p. 95; Jonathan-Zamir and Weisburd, 2013, p. 22).

Procedural justice research has found that judgements about police legitimacy are based less on effective policing and fairly distributed police resources but predominantly the public's ideas on the legitimacy of the police (Sunshine and Tyler, 2003; Murphy, Hinds and Fleming, 2008, p. 151). Even under situations of intense police scrutiny such as when there are

heightened security threats, the role of procedural justice is never less important than police performance and remains the primary precursor of legitimacy (Jonathan-Zamir and Weisburd, 2013, p. 23). This is very important from a policing perspective because the police have far more control over how they treat the people they come into contact with compared to how much control they really have on affecting the crime rate (Harkin, 2015). This means that to improve public satisfaction the police should focus on increasing legitimacy-focussed incentives rather than prioritising efforts to decrease crime.

As a result of its dialogic nature, police legitimacy is constantly under review by both police and public (Bottoms and Tankebe, 2012, p. 129). Evidence from police studies research shows that the antecedents to Beetham's (1991) notions of legitimacy and the pursuit of procedural justice can be in contradiction, which leads to challenges of police legitimacy (Harkin, 2015, p. 601). The rule of law, peoples' beliefs and public consent are frequently in conflict with police decision-making and actions (Harkin, 2015, pp. 601-602). Bottoms and Tankebe (2012, p. 138) argue that complete and comprehensive enforcement of the law can fail to enhance police legitimacy, even though it is the primary responsibility of the police to perform law enforcement. It has been demonstrated that the practise of 'under-enforcing' the 'rules' is a common tactic of the police when trying to align closer to the beliefs of a community (Goldstein, 1960). This means when interacting with the public, police discretion allows the police to choose to prioritise improving their relationship with the community over attempting to lower the crime rate. For example, over-zealous 'stop-and-search' tactics can create tensions between youths and the police, so whilst considering the community's beliefs can mean not paying full deference to the 'rules', it often leads to better community relations in the long term (Bottoms and Tankebe, 2012, pp. 138–140; Flacks, 2018, pp. 366-369).

The conditions necessary to produce legitimacy have become an important focus of research (Jonathan-Zamir and Weisburd, 2013). Procedural justice considerations are one of the key precursors to legitimacy as shown in their separate elements demonstrated by Tyler (2004; see also Jonathan-Zamir and Weisburd, 2013). However, such concepts are not the only precursors to legitimacy that may be taken into account by the public. Weitzer and Tuch (2005) found in their own work that the existence of community policing initiatives in people's neighbourhoods helped to improve residents' opinion of the police even if they were not fully exhibiting the procedural justice ideals on which they were based. Anything that also contributed to a sense of safety in their own neighbourhood also improved residents' attitudes

to the police (Weitzer and Tuch, 2005). As described above, positive attitudes towards the police are a key component of maintaining and improving police legitimacy.

The perception of police misconduct was also identified as critical in assessing whether or not the public would grant legitimacy to their police (Weitzer and Tuch, 2005). Bayley (1995) argues that "nothing is more destructive of the standing of the police than corruption". He is supported by Bottoms and Tankebe (2012) who argued that any illegalities committed by the police would seriously undermine their legitimacy. If the police are corrupt or dishonest, if they breach legality or diverge from popular morality by paying no deference to consent, it has been demonstrated that the price the police pay is severely diminished legitimacy (Harkin, 2015, p.601). Linked to this the repeated exposure to media coverage of police misconduct and the influence of mass media can also lead to significantly reduced rates of police satisfaction (Weitzer and Tuch, 2005). Where there are significantly reduced rates of police satisfaction, the police will then struggle to maintain the co-operation of the public and may be seen as illegitimate (Weitzer and Tuch, 2005). This is particularly pertinent as critical incidents such as those involving the use of force tend to attract greater media scrutiny.

4.2   Police Beliefs and Self-Legitimacy
4.2.1   Background
The previous sections of this chapter have demonstrated how 'Police Legitimacy' is understood as a broad concept: discussing what the conditions are that are necessary for legitimacy to be reproduced and what the consequences of 'good' police legitimacy can be. However, there are still areas of legitimacy theory that are relatively unexplored (Tankebe, 2014, p. 3735). Punch (2011, p.5) notes legitimacy exists as a two-way conversation: there are the public's beliefs about police legitimacy but there are then also the beliefs of the police about their own legitimacy. Academic study has largely been fixed on legitimacy from the perspective of citizens (Tankebe, 2014, p.3735). Bottoms and Tankebe (2012, p. 151) argue that it is equally important to explore what they term police 'self-legitimacy'.

Self-legitimacy suggests that police officers should believe they occupy a morally acceptable position and their attendant roles are justifiable (Bottoms and Tankebe, 2012, p. 125). The powers that the police wield and the manner in which they exercise those powers should be both formally and morally correct (Tankebe, 2014, p. 3736). However, being merely legal is not sufficient, police officers should be able to meaningfully demonstrate that they serve a collective goal for the common good (Wrong, 1995, p. 51). Muir (1977) offers that a police officer, as a 'street-level bureaucrat', can be expected to occasionally act outside the written

rules to obtain a favourable outcome for all parties involved in a dispute. Police officers must demonstrate to the public that their power is not at odds with collective morals and does not solely exist to reproduce their power and ensure their position of superiority (Wrong, 1995, p. 51).

4.2.2   Factors that Promote Police Self-Legitimacy

Tankebe (2014, pp. 3737-3739) identifies four main ways in which Police self-legitimacy can be promoted among police officers: Engagement with Procedural Justice, Tensions within the Police Organisation, Effectiveness in Crime Prevention and Experience of Misconduct.

Engagement with Procedural Justice

Bottoms and Tankebe (2012) argue that self-legitimacy is an important part of the legitimacy-building dialogue that takes place between the police and the policed. The attitude and behaviour of police officers during police-public interactions can have far-reaching consequences for the image and reputation of their police service (Wingrave, 2011). Surveys of the general population identify consistent links between fair treatment and public support; this is particularly important because the police rely on public co-operation for nearly every task that they carry out (Bradford, 2014, p. 23). So, while senior police management control changes in operations and strategy, the manner of enforcement is directed by the individual officers of the organisation and has a direct impact on how the police are perceived (Lipsky, 1980; Wingrave, 2011).

The style of enforcement is often informed by the police officers' culture and sense of legitimacy. If the officer does not feel the organisation is achieving its objectives, they are less likely to use legitimacy-maintaining strategies such as procedural justice (Bradford, 2014). The actions a police officer takes during their interactions with the public can have lasting effects on whole communities; actions believed to be unfair or discriminatory can then undermine the legitimacy of the entire police organisation (Wingrave, 2011). Furthermore, the contradictions inherent in exerting coercive authority can amplify an 'us and them' mentality seen within police culture, consequently denigrating the public as essentially wasters of police time (Reiner, 2010; Myhill and Bradford, 2013, p. 343). Barbalet (2011, p. 87) argues that "feelings of confidence arise from acceptance and recognition in social relationships" therefore strategies such as procedural justice become important in helping to analyse officers' self-legitimacy, how confident they are that they are perceived as legitimate (Tankebe, 2014, p. 3737).

Tensions within the Police Organisation

The quasi-military structure of the police, organisational issues such as culture, targets and practices, potentially problematises the notion of police self-legitimacy. While individual officers have considerable discretion there is an ever-present and necessary element of command-and-control exerted upon them (Myhill and Bradford, 2013, p. 343). Whether it is patrol strategies for response units, beat patterns for community policing or the over-arching hierarchy present at critical incidents, officers are encouraged to develop considerable initiative to do what they feel is right at the micro-level, but may seldom have their voice heard in broader organisational decision-making (Myhill and Bradford, 2013, p. 343). Police officers may then reach a situation where they take their position in the police hierarchy for granted and offer 'blind obedience' to their police organisation (Bradford et al., 2014, p. 116). Kelman and Hamilton (1989) describe how this 'over'-identification with their organisation may serve to reduce an individual's criticism of the failings of their institution, and in turn help to remove an officer's sense of their own, individual self-legitimacy. This could lead them to carry out actions in the name of their institution that they would not normally condone or that they might have previously found morally wrong (Bradford et al, 2014, p. 116).

A similar point expressed differently comes from Cain's (1973) work with urban and rural policing in England. She found that, although motivated for different reasons, lower ranking officers from both areas wished to keep supervision remote (Cain, 1973). If supervision was remote, officers felt their discretionary choices were valued and they improved the relationships they had with their colleagues, on whom they relied for support, and they also improved the relationships they had with the public, on whom they relied for information (Cain, 1973). Therefore, any infringement of 'over-bearing' management could threaten the production of police self-legitimacy (Tankebe, 2014, p. 3738).

Tankebe's (2007) study of Ghanaian officers highlighted two more key issues in this area. Firstly, that the personal characteristics of officers, namely age, gender, length of service and ethnicity, were unconnected to self-legitimacy; the only characteristic associated was rank, with corporals and sergeants expressing greater confidence in legitimacy than inspectors or higher ranks (Tankebe, 2007; Tankebe, 2014, p. 3739). Secondly, he found that strained relationships with colleagues led to lower levels of expressed self-legitimacy (Tankebe, 2007).

Effectiveness in Crime Prevention

Tankebe (2014, p. 3739) states that it is reasonable to assume that if police feel that they, and the public, are safe and secure in their jurisdiction then self-legitimacy will increase. Similarly,

any negative perceptions may lead to doubt arising in the police's capability to keep order and therefore "begin to cast doubt on the moral validity of their continuous claims to the exclusive exercise of power" (Tankebe, 2014, p. 3739). Indeed, Myhill and Quinton (2011, p. 3) suggest that police should consider initially whether a chosen approach to neighbourhood management may enhance or undermine police legitimacy. For example, maintaining a focus purely on law enforcement might be beneficial to police cultural attitudes and therefore feelings of self-legitimacy but it may undermine general police legitimacy for the wider public (Myhill and Quinton, 2011, p. 3). Therefore, while perceptions that the police organisation as a whole are doing well in promoting safety and security, these perceptions should be supported by the public to have a strong influence on police self-legitimacy (Tankebe, 2014, p. 3739).

Experience of Misconduct
Tankebe (2014, p. 3739) argues that it is logical to assume that if officers experience or perceive misconduct within their organisation then that is important in influencing the level of self-legitimacy an officer feels. Whilst this is a reasonable assertion, and one that is 'common sense', there is no empirical evidence to support it. Tankebe (2014, p. 3739) argues that a display of open cynicism can be detrimental to officer self-legitimacy in the same way that public experiences and perceptions of corruption undermine institutional and political legitimacy. He supports this by a quote from Goldstein (1977, p. 199), reproduced below in full, but does not elaborate how such cynicism links to police misconduct, rather it simply outlines police disappointment in a flawed criminal justice system not leading to the desired outcomes:

> *an officer who sees the processing of hundreds of petty offenders through a city's minor courts cannot help but be struck by the futility of the procedure – the lack of justice, the lack of dignity, and the ineffectiveness of the criminal justice process…*

4.2.3   Empirical Evidence
Akoensi (2016, p. 247) notes that there have been few studies that have investigated police self-legitimacy, and power-holder legitimacy as a whole remains largely ignored. Where power-holder legitimacy is investigated, the focus normally is upon political elites, often over-looking the 'street-level bureaucrats' who are ironically the most available representatives of state, that remain in direct public contact 24 hours a day, and therefore, have the capability to exercise significant degrees of power on a daily basis (Punch, 2000, p. 322; Tankebe, 2014, p. 3736).

The work of Tankebe (2007) in Ghana was one of the first and most comprehensive accounts examining the connection between notions of organisational legitimacy with officers' conceptions of their own legitimacy. He found that fair treatment of officers by their supervisors and peers increased police confidence in their own legitimacy (Tankebe, 2007). Additionally, Tankebe and Mesko (2015) investigated police self-legitimacy in Slovenia. This research reinforced the idea that the police valued fair treatment by higher ranks and good relationships with their colleagues but also suggested that a sense of trust from the local community were key drivers of police self-legitimacy. Meanwhile, Akoenski's (2016, p. 258) own work took the principles of self-legitimacy in policing and applied them to prison officers in Ghana. His work was attempting to study self- and audience-legitimacy concurrently in an enclosed environment, essentially to see if the prisoners and prison officers constructed legitimacy in similar ways (Akoenski, 2016). He discovered that officers found their self-legitimacy underpinned through their legal status and insignia, whilst they built their perceived legitimacy through respect, close officer-prisoner relationships and professional competence (Akoenski, 2016). Akoenski notes that, even in a closed system, this difference between self- and audience-legitimacy contributes to an interrelated, heterogeneous interpretation of legitimacy.

In Britain, the work of Bradford has been the most comprehensive in its investigations of police self-legitimacy. For example, Myhill and Bradford (2013, pp. 111-112) found after surveying an English police force that perceptions of legitimacy within the police organisation were important in reinforcing police attitudes with regards to serving the public. Officers in community policing roles were also much more inclined to spend time on service-related requests and these requests were much more likely to improve police-public relations and therefore improve perceptions of police legitimacy (Myhill and Bradford, 2013, pp. 111-112).

Myhill and Bradford (2013, p. 343) also found that aspects of the policing role such as lack of time or the constant threat of danger can make officers feel disinclined to focus on 'process' elements of policing that entail respectful treatment of citizens. As previously mentioned, respectful treatment of citizens is important in procedural justice for the creation and maintenance of high levels of police legitimacy (Tyler, 2004, p. 84). Furthermore, the results from Bradford et al. (2014 p. 110) suggested that increased levels of trust in the police organisation encouraged police self-legitimacy as well as improving the police opinion of community policing efforts and their effects on public compliance. Further work by Bradford and Quinton (2014) also then identified officer cynicism and negative attitudes at work as contributing to reductions in police self-legitimacy.

Finally, the work of Jonathan-Zamir (see Jonathan-Zamir and Weisburd, 2013; Jonathan-Zamir and Harpaz, 2014) investigate the Israeli National Police finding that while police officers assumed it was their effectiveness that motivated public support, citizens were more concerned with aspects of procedural fairness and how they were being treated. This then suggests how there can be a gap between citizens' perceptions of police legitimacy and police officers' perceptions of their self-legitimacy (Akoensi, 2016, p. 258).

4.2.4   Importance

The salient implications of self-legitimacy for this research are that it affects the cultivation and reproduction of police legitimacy in the eyes of the public (Tankebe, 2014, p. 3740). Bottoms and Tankebe's (2012) key point regarding the two-way nature of legitimacy shows that the police, as powerholders, must be reflexive regarding their role in the dialogue of legitimacy and must be prepared to adapt or change subject to audience pressure. This means officers must take an active part in the generation of legitimacy, for both themselves and their organisation. Officers in sensitive positions, such as those equipped with firearms, must be conscious of the potential effects that their actions might cause.

4.3   Firearms in Legitimacy Theory Framework

The following section discusses how police legitimacy theories, including policing by consent and procedural justice may be jeopardised by having the police equipped with firearms. Police equipment can challenge the ideals of police as 'citizens in uniform'; in many jurisdictions police routinely carry a number of items, for example batons or incapacitating spray, that are not available to the general population (Waddington and Wright, 2007; Waddington et al., 2008). The availability of lethal weapons for police use, combined with the ability of police to use non-negotiable force can be seen to symbolise a clear disparity in the power between the police and the public (Waddington and Wright, 2007).

Due to the police's inherent relationship with the use of non-negotiable coercive force, the dialogic nature of police legitimacy means that the police use of force can potentially, overwhelmingly and inadvertently undermine the fragile state of police legitimacy (Reiner, 2009). This association with force can then "taint" the police occupation, whilst force is only to be used as a last resort, the police's capacity to carry out violence makes them "ambivalently feared and admired" (Bittner, 1970, pp. 6-7). Reiner (2009, p.52) believes that the idea of policing by consent is oxymoronic when compared to the police's inherent ability to use coercive force. The public give permission and support for the police to use coercive force on

the expectation that it will never be used against themselves specifically. Police studies highlight that police use of force is "highly corrosive" to the relationship between the police and the public, and the price they will pay for use of force or lack of deference to consent will be diminished legitimacy from the public (Jones, 2007, p. 183; Harkin, 2015). Reiner (2009) suggests this is something that no amount of public relations work can change.

As it originated within British policing, policing by consent traditionally refers to a relationship between the police and public where the police do not routinely carry a firearm. However, policing by consent is not only applicable to Great Britain: any policing system that shares a direct lineage to British policing principles, such as that found in New Zealand, also enjoys a history of cultivating policing by consent (Buttle, 2010, pp. 1-2). For countries where police have access to firearms on duty if they need to or are routinely armed, it is pertinent to assess whether the use of firearms impacts on officers' ability to police by consent.

It has been suggested that the police reliance on the 'threat' of the firearm could erode police legitimacy because the public are 'forced' to comply with police for fear of getting shot as opposed to explicitly consenting to the policing process (Bayley, 1977; Buttle, 2010). Sarre (1996) finds in Australia that policing with firearms changes the manner in which the police and the public interact: specifically, that it can alienate the public from the police and that the process of community policing is negatively affected by armed police. It has been argued in the New Zealand context that the equipping of police officers with firearms can threaten or negatively impact the police's ability to police by consent (Buttle, 2010; Bott, 2011). Hendy's (2012) research assesses the impact of routinely arming the police in the New Zealand context by performing a comparative study between the routinely armed Swedish Police and the firearms trained, but routinely unarmed, Norwegian Police. Hendy (2012) finds no evidence that the carrying of firearms alone affects the legitimacy of the Swedish Police; he therefore concludes that the carrying of firearms alone is unlikely to form a barrier to policing by consent in New Zealand. However, Hendy (2012, p. 85) hypothesised that routinely arming the police still presented risks to the police-public relationship, namely through an increase in police shootings, those either made in error or unlawful. Therefore, whilst the carrying of a firearm does not guarantee a loss of legitimacy, the equipping of police with firearms is still potentially damaging to police legitimacy (Sarre, 1996; Buttle, 2010; Bott, 2011; Hendy, 2012). This potentially damaging effect would be greatest for a routinely unarmed police service that suddenly become armed (Hendy, 2012).

It is in these countries with routinely unarmed police where the debate surrounding the carrying of firearms by police is strongest. An intrinsic part of police culture is the notion that danger is everywhere: the unpredictable nature of the police role means they can expect to face violence suddenly and from an unexpected source (Skolnick, 1966). Dutch officers often report feeling safer when they have a firearm readily available on their hip (Punch, 2011, p. 71). It then becomes a compelling reason to provide, or at least offer, police any, and all, forms of protection they might desire to mitigate the risks they face on duty (Hendy, 2012, p. 14). However, Bott (2011) contends that equipping police with firearms may actually make police *less* safe in situations with armed offenders. He suggests that arming the police with a firearm increases the officer's sense of duty and inflates their assessment of their capabilities in a firearms incident (Bott, 2011). This inflated sense of duty may then lead officers to take ill-advised confrontational action against an armed person, whereas previously the unarmed officer would have cordoned and contained the subject, whilst waiting for support from a specialist firearms team (Bott, 2011). Furthermore, Bott (2011) questions whether arming the police with a handgun will make the police any safer, they may quickly find themselves outgunned by criminals' more powerful weapons. Whilst Bott's writings do not contain the rigour of evidence-based analysis and reside mainly as knowledgeable opinion pieces, one can argue they represent the common fears of a community attempting to interpret changing events (Hendy, 2012, p. 24). They can be said to be valid to the point that they are indicative of public perceptions of the issue; this same facet is applicable to others work as well such as those of Buttle and Sarre (Hendy, 2012, p. 24).

Bayley (1977, p. 222) proposes that as long as police officers are afraid of getting shot "they will favour pre-emptive action." He defines pre-emptive action as actions that involve physical domination in encounters with the public occurring before any indication of threat is given (Bayley, 1977, p. 222). Sarre (1996) identifies concerns that, when armed, officers will prioritise a weapons-based approach as preferable when attempting to resolve conflict. Pre-emptive action is also a consequence of the raised anxiety in encounters between armed police and public where the police fear getting shot or shooting by mistake (McKenzie and Gallagher, 1989, p. 156). For this reason, the presence of guns "adds a real but incalculable amount of emotion to any police-citizen encounter" (Bayley, 1977, p. 222; McKenzie and Gallagher, 1989, p. 156). This emotion and amplified feelings of risk, on both the police and public's behalf can then potentially increase the alienation between police and public threatening to delegitimise police who carry firearms. It worth noting that the contemporary anecdotal evidence from Buttle and Bott support and build on the older evidential studies from Bayley and Sarre. It

further suggests that a modern, evidence-based studies approach is needed to test the continued relevance of these issues. In the British policing context, it is especially necessary to have evidence gathered 'at home' instead of inferences drawn from other policing systems that may not share the relevant similarities.

The uniformed and armed police officer is a dramatic example of power, and the use of armed police for non-enforcement activities is less legitimate and less acceptable than the use of unarmed police, who are seen as better at mediation (Bayley, 1977, p. 222; McKenzie and Gallagher, 1989, p. 156). Bayley (1977, p. 222) argues that it is as if "the gun on the hip is a visible reminder that the police have other things to do, that non-enforcement activities are a distraction from their main purposes". He concludes that in societies with strict gun control, like Great Britain, it is then preferable for unarmed police to perform the majority of tasks not involving enforcement to improve police legitimacy and reduce the tension between police and public (Bayley, 1977, p. 222; McKenzie and Gallagher, 1989, p. 156).

According to Punch (2011, p. 25), "Police violence, and especially the police use of firearms, touches a highly sensitive nerve in Britain". Writing in the aftermath of the European airport terrorist attacks in 1985, McKenzie and Gallagher (1989, pp. 143-144) identify a dilemma within British policing with regards to the public's attitude towards the police use of firearms. There is a strong desire for a "highly visible" response to growing threats such as terrorism, to satisfy the public that the police have something better than a baton to protect the populace with (McKenzie and Gallagher, 1989, pp. 143-144). The commentary of McKenzie and Gallagher was prompted by the fact that 1986 saw the Metropolitan Police deploy overtly armed officers at London's airports for the first time (Waldren, 2007). However, Greenwood (1984, cited in McKenzie and Gallagher, 1989, p. 144) argues that with the selection and dissemination of information about trained firearms 'specialists' comes the deterioration of police-public relations with the notion that the police could now be more dangerous to the public than the terrorists themselves (McKenzie and Gallagher, 1989, pp. 143-144; Punch, 2011). McKenzie and Gallagher (1989, p. 144) claim the British police have made "ineffectual attempts" to maintain the tradition of a routinely unarmed police service and also appear to provide a professional response to armed individuals whether criminal or terrorist in origin. McKenzie and Gallagher (1989, p. 144) also state they feel the British police have failed to pacify the public by ensuring that the police maintain routinely unarmed but also having sufficient armed officers to protect them. With such a broad mandate they accept that it is difficult to balance all three responsibilities (McKenzie and Gallagher, 1989, pp. 143-144). Although this source is relatively dated, there have been no more recent attempts to

investigate these issues further, again highlighting the necessity of a modern investigation of the subject matter.

Waddington (interviewed in Hendy, 2012, pp. 42-43) concluded that the public do not wish to see the public's ideas of 'heavy-handedness' particularly in relation to physical restraint, nor do they like the sense of unfairness seen when multiple officers tackle a single offender. As Waddington terms it, it can create a 'yuck factor'. For example, whilst it may be proportional in the spectrum of the use of force for two police officers to physically grapple with an offender whilst attempting to apply handcuffs, to the casual observer it can look disproportionate and therefore appear as unfair, unprofessional and personal (Hendy, 2012, pp. 42-43).

This kind of public distaste can also be applied to the police use of firearms in Britain. In Hendy's interview, Waddington comments on a video clip questioning the public's distaste at an offender being kicked by an armed officer. In the clip, an officer holding a carbine attempts to subdue a suspect, leading to the officer kicking the suspect in the legs to make him lie flat on the ground. The officer kicks the subject because they have to keep both hands on their weapon to keep control of it, therefore the officer cannot make contact with the subject with anything other than his feet. Unfortunately, it is unlikely that the public would know the officer must keep both of their hands on their firearm, and so kicking a passively resisting individual may seem excessive and uncalled for. However, the point Waddington raises is that the public were not specifically opposed to the officer, with a firearm, pointing it at someone; it was actually the kick that created the 'yuck factor' in this circumstance (Hendy, 2012, pp. 42-43). So while some officers having firearms may not be overtly disliked by the public, the behaviour and actions armed officers take in conjunction with their possession of a firearm are put under greater scrutiny as they are more likely to contribute towards this 'yuck factor' (Hendy, 2012, pp. 42-43). It may be that it is the way in which armed police are utilised in England and Wales that generates the distaste from the public rather than the fact they carry firearms. This perception may then damage the legitimacy of the police as a whole.

Since firearms deployments frequently do not develop in a manner conducive to invoking the key components of legitimacy, firearms officers in Britain may face a 'crisis of legitimacy'. For example, there is a need for participants to assess if the decisions made towards them are fair (Tyler, 2004, p. 88); few individuals that have firearms pointed at them by police officers may regard the decision as 'fair'. The deployment of armed officers may seem provocative, whether they are required to or not, and the numbers firearms often deploy in can be seen as 'unfair'

with regards the 'yuck factor' as outlined by Waddington above. There is also a need for the participant to feel they have been treated with dignity and respect (Tyler, 2004, p. 94), something that being confronted with armed officers in a high-risk situation may not fulfil. However, this is something the image-making of armed policing is attempting to mollify, by portraying firearms officers as being more approachable and just another part of the police organisation, but this has not always been a success with the media often accusing the police of trivialising the threat (Northumbria Police, 2016; Simpson, 2016).

In a direct confrontation with armed officers, it may be difficult for a participant to feel they had a 'voice' to articulate their side of the argument or to challenge any outcome in line with procedural justice (Tyler, 2004, p. 92). However, in Great Britain there has been increasing emphasis on firearms officers' communication skills. These skills are designed to help firearms officers form a bond with potentially vulnerable suspects and to keep the scene under control until more advanced police negotiators can arrive. In this way it is allows the suspect to voice their side without escalating the situation. It is also important for the participant to regard the police as giving legitimate and realistic directives (Tankebe, 2012 p. 126). In relation to a direct confrontation by armed officers, the individual may have little choice whether to comply with the directives given by armed officers, but it could be decided after-the-fact whether officers did the 'right' thing. Post-Incident Procedures can debrief officers and Post-Arrest Procedures could inform the suspect of why the decisions were made.

Police legitimacy is not granted in blanket terms to the police as a whole but is earned variably and over time by different groups within the police (Harkin, 2015). Community policing officers frequently hold the highest levels of legitimacy. Harkin (2015) found that unarmed officers assigned to response duty were awarded less legitimacy than their community-based peers. Bottoms and Tankebe (2012, p. 129) conceptualise that legitimacy can address multiple audiences simultaneously and Harkin (2015) would add that it can also be addressed from multiple sources as legitimacy is held unequally among separate groups in the police organisation. In England and Wales, firearms officers can often be identified separately from their colleagues due to the equipment they carry or the vehicles they drive (Waddington et al., 2008, p 121).This makes it more difficult for firearms officers to be perceived as legitimate in England and Wales as they cannot rely on the legitimacy of their colleagues to sustain them.

There is little that exists linking self-legitimacy to the use of force or the use of firearms specifically. Muir's work (1977, p. 145), whilst written without self-legitimacy in mind, demonstrates that officers who strongly identified with the law enforcement aspect of policing

were more aggressive and less empathetic when it came to interpreting citizen behaviour, thus leading to a greater use of force. Tankebe (2014, p. 3740) builds upon this, alleging that self-legitimacy theories can help explore why officers choose to react to certain contexts in certain ways and therefore why some officers may be more willing to use deadly force. Archer (2003, p. 139) extends this, stating officers are only human and that individual factors, such as perceived self-legitimacy, lead officers to evaluate circumstances differently and take different courses of action. Bottoms and Tankebe (2012, pp. 127- 134) argue that developed self-legitimacy should give an officer a self-awareness of how they use their powers, including the use of force.

Chapter Summary

The opening section of this chapter explored the theories of police legitimacy and procedural justice. It showed that police legitimacy is desirable as it can lead to more effective policing and that legitimising behaviours by the police should be encouraged for that reason. The second part of the chapter examined the lesser known material on police self-legitimacy. It demonstrated the importance of police opinions of their own legitimacy in showing that police officers that do not feel legitimate will not effectively reproduce police legitimacy. There is also debate whether a lack of self-legitimacy can lead to an increase in an officer's use of deadly force. Key aspects that are important to an officer maintaining self-legitimacy were shown to be their engagement with procedural justice matters, how they relate to the structure and organisation of the police, how effective they feel at preventing crime and what their experience of misconduct is. These factors were also demonstrated in reference to empirical studies from Ghana, England and Israel.

This chapter has laid the groundwork for answering the second research question by making connections between police legitimacy material and literature on the police use of firearms. This knowledge is essential for understanding the forthcoming contributions of the data from Chapters Seven and Eight. The final section of this chapter established that the origins of the police role have an inherent relationship with the use of force and this is problematic as the use of force may undermine established police legitimacy. Firearms remain a potent reminder of the police's ability to use force, and the arming of police officers with firearms, whether routine or occasional, can be interpreted as a threat. This threat then encompasses a more authoritative style of policing that may override attempts to police by consent. When police carry firearms they are more likely to take pre-emptive action, that is physically dominating actions even when no threat is apparent, this is down to their underlying fear of being injured

when facing the public (Bayley, 1977, p. 222). When pre-emptive action is taken in police-public encounters, members of the public may also unconsciously fear being shot by the police: this adds potential surges of emotion to any police-citizen exchange when the officer is carrying a firearm (Bayley, 1977, p. 222). This may serve to alienate the police from the public, and this can threaten police legitimacy.

The following chapter commences the investigation into firearms officers' interactions with the public. Using the fieldwork and interview data, it outlines the circumstances in which armed officers come into contact with members of the public. It addresses the first research question by describing and explaining the administration of ARVs and how armed police perform routine duties. This knowledge provides the groundwork for later chapters that address the second research question and fills in existing gaps in the literature surrounding what occurs when armed police meet the public.

5   All About ARVs – An Experience of Firearms Policing in Great Britain

Introduction

The methodology chapter provided the context for the methods and how the fieldwork was conducted. This chapter provides additional frames of reference to expand the academic discourse about armed policing in Great Britain. A substantial amount of the data presented here, descriptive or otherwise, is not currently available in the public domain.

The chapter draws on the fieldwork data to explore what tasks Authorised Firearms Officers (AFOs) crewing Armed Response Vehicles (ARVs) perform on duty. Both the demographics of the AFOs and their motivations for joining the armed response unit are explored. Finally, AFOs' familiarity with firearms is discussed. The discussion section extracts the most challenging aspects of their role to answer the first research question. This chapter has little explicit discussion of legitimacy theory, rather, drawing on self-legitimacy where it connects to challenging aspects of police culture.

5.1   Administration and Equipment

The ARV officers of both police services did not have any form of pre-shift briefing from their supervisors. Instead, as demonstrated by AFO2 on my first shift, officers had the independence to review the information available to them. This means officers could set their own task priorities for the upcoming shift when not dealing with emergency calls. The office environment at the operational bases allowed the AFOs to check in with the duty sergeant and their colleagues. Prior to the start of their patrols, AFOs would kit up, talk to their senior officers and check their e-mails. Another invaluable source of information came through informal networks as AFOs kept up to date with colleagues from other teams or areas they had a connection with, which might provide them further intelligence. Many AFOs I accompanied used this intelligence to compile a list of persons or vehicles to be on the lookout for in the area they were about to patrol.

ARVs are a force-wide asset, and the locations that crews patrol day to day are always changing. While AFOs tended to patrol areas they were familiar with from past postings, the forces did not have a practice of tying particular officers to particular areas. This was perhaps because the forces were conscious that there may come a time where they do not have flexibility to give every AFO the choice of where they police. When coming on shift with the AFOs, I noticed that Police Service 2 officers spent much longer in the operational base before

heading out. In contrast, almost every time I met up with Police Service 1 AFOs, they wrapped up what they were doing and we headed straight out to the cars, as if they were waiting for me to arrive.

Each AFO carries the issued Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) for an officer of their force: a retractable baton (ASP), incapacitating spray, handcuffs and a personal radio on general force channels. The body armour they wear differs from that of their unarmed colleagues in that it is a soft armoured plate carrier with load-carrying capabilities. This armour can be further strengthened by inserting hardened ceramic plates for when additional ballistic protection is required. Some AFOs keep the ceramic plates in all the time, whereas others only put them in when they think is necessary due to the bulk and weight they add. On the front and rear of the vest each AFO wore a patch with the words 'POLICE' and 'ARV'.

As befits their role, each officer also carries a second personal radio set to the firearms frequencies, a TASER[1] with spare cartridges and a Glock 17 semi-automatic handgun in a drop-leg holster. As identified in Chapter Two, the AFOs have a 'standing authority' to carry their handguns at all times whether dealing with a firearms deployment or not. This is common for ARV crews in Great Britain but not universal. The holster is attached to their belt and around the thigh on the AFO's dominant side, it holds the handgun roughly half-way down the thigh within easy reach. These holsters are preferred by ARV officers as they are in a vehicle-based role and the holster is less obstructive when driving than a belt-mounted hip holster. The purpose of the sidearm is in case the officers need to self-deploy to protect themselves, a member of the public or their vehicle. The officer's TASER is then carried in a holster on either their belt or vest. The TASER must be carried on the officer's non-dominant side accessible by using a 'cross-draw'. This is to build muscle memory so that the officer does not accidentally draw their sidearm when reaching for a TASER or vice versa. The officer's other PPE, such as their baton or incapacitating spray, are mounted on their vest and/or belt depending on their personal preference.

The vehicle carries a variety of additional equipment including the primary weapon of the ARV teams, the carbine. These carbines are carried along with additional ammunition and a 'loading bag'[2], Attenuating Energy Projectiles (AEPs) with an AEP Launcher and ballistic shields

---

[1] At the time of the fieldwork, this was an X26 TASER. Both services have since trained and deployed officers with the X2 TASER.

[2] A Kevlar-lined bullet resistant bag where the muzzle of a police firearm can be pointed when it is being loaded. It also has an ancillary function of being able to transport seized firearms that are not able to be made safe.

in two sizes. The carbines are only removed from the car in specific instances: either when the AFOs are on a firearms deployment or when the AFOs are in a specific area with a standing authority to carry the carbines. The most obvious example of an area with a standing authority for carbines would be the airport.

Finally, the cars also carry an advanced first aid kit including defibrillator and oxygen, stop sticks[3] for supporting roads policing, Method Of Entry (MOE) equipment consisting of an Enforcer door ram and a Halligan[4] bar as well as two three-foot long public order batons that may be necessary when providing TASER support. Finally, there is also a mobile phone, fixed radio and portable radio dedicated to the car as well as various other mundane, non-role specific items including the officers' personal kit bags, hi-vis jackets and torches. If this leaves you wondering how they managed to go "three-up" or, for the novel experience, cram a civilian researcher in the back, I can tell you it was not always the most comfortable ride! A number of officers suggested that I was lucky I had decided to accompany them when they had recently updated their fleet to the larger BMW X5 4x4s as the previous Volvo estate cars were not conducive to having three occupants!

5.2 Doing ARV Work

5.2.1 Calls Attended

According to Police Service 1 and Police Service 2, their ARV officers have the following role and responsibilities[5].

> ARVs provide a first tier response to an 'Initial' firearms incident or any incident where the threat is such that a firearms response may be required, this includes a less lethal capability and officers are regularly deployed to incidents where bladed weapons are reported (in an armed or unarmed capacity).
> ARV officers provide wider support to local policing and other specialist departments. When not engaged in armed operations our secondary roles are:
> - Assistance at local policing incidents
> - Level 2 tasking [6]
> - Arrests of outstanding suspects
> - Assisting with armed protection operations
> - High Visibility Patrol

---

[3] Stop Sticks are a single use, self-contained tyre-deflation device to be deployed ahead of a suspect vehicle during a pursuit.
[4] A multipurpose tool consisting of a claw, adze blade and tapered pick, which is useful in quickly breaching many types of locked doors
[5] These details were provided via personal communication with senior officers in each force.
[6] Level 2 Tasking involves the deployment of officers to spontaneous or pre-planned public order/public safety events as a resource to enable an effective policing response and act, where needed, in a mutual aid capacity.

Due to the level of threat, harm and risk of firearms incidents, the ARVs are strategically placed in accordance with demand profiles (both geographic and population) and response times are carefully managed.

To investigate how that information translated into the types of incidents ARV crews were attending, I recorded the emergency response calls we attended (i.e. with the use of blue lights and sirens). I did this because they provided a distinct event which could be easily recorded. They started when the radio call was received, and the blue lights switched on, and they ended when we left the scene. I originally attempted to try and record the non-emergency tasking as well, but they were frequently too indistinct as one task often drifted into another as the ARV crew drove around the force area. In addition, it was common for more than one 'non-emergency' task to take place at any one time, particularly when the locations were convenient. For example, we could be driving to a police station to do some paperwork but as it was in the same town that had a suspicious vehicle spotted in it we might drive via the back streets to see if we could find the vehicle en route. Whereas whilst on emergency responses the officers had a single focus and thus the type of incident was easier to record. Arguably, the emergency responses most concisely reflect what the public might perceive the role of the police (and thus ARV crews) is, for those instances when the public need urgent help or intervention. These incidents are captured in Graph 5.1 below:
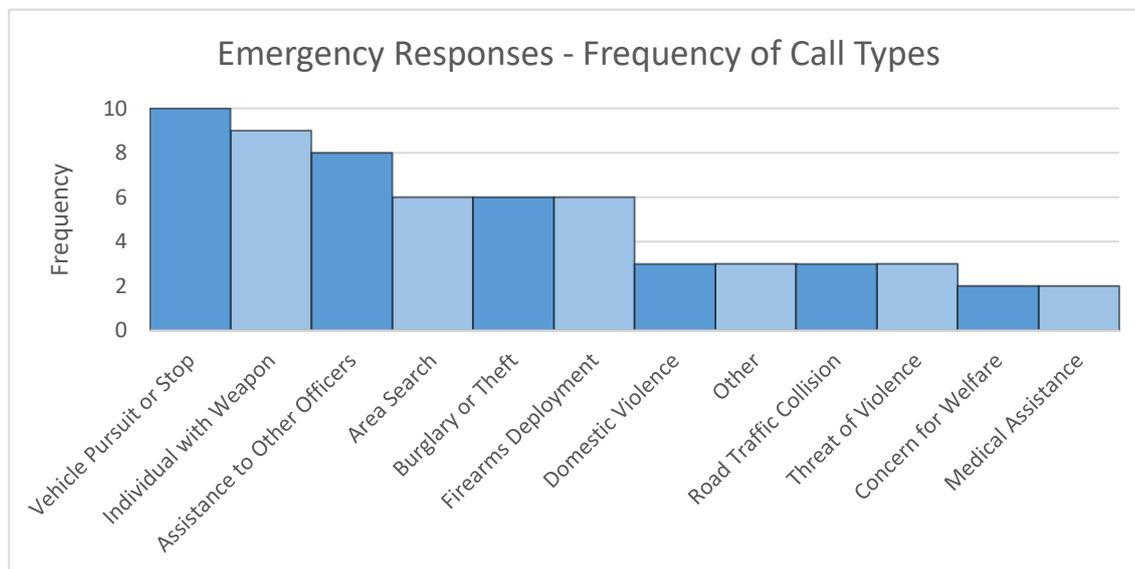
Figure 5.1 Frequency and type of emergency calls attended

There are further details on the call types in Table 5.1 below. The calls are categorised by the specific information relayed to the ARV unit I was with as to why the unit should attend. For example, a traffic officer had stopped a vehicle but requested more officers to assist as there were several occupants in it that he was unable to control. Therefore, this was recorded as

'Assistance to Other Officers' as opposed to a 'Vehicle Stop'. AFOs are considered as attending a 'Firearms Deployment' when they are "required to conduct a specific task during which the possession of a firearm, with appropriate authorisation, is a required element" (College of Policing, 2013). The specifics of the Firearms Deployments given and the Individual with Weapon calls attended can be seen in Chapter Six.

EMERGENCY CALL	DESCRIPTION	#
Area Search	Where the presence of the ARV crew was required as an additional unit to help search for persons or vehicles, whether in the ARV or on foot.	6
Assistance to Other Officers	When the ARV was tasked to a call at the request of officers on-scene requiring additional officers for assistance.	8
Burglary or Theft	When the ARV was tasked to a call relating to a Burglary or Theft of property.	6
Concern for Welfare (MOE)	When the ARV was specifically tasked with a Concern for Welfare due to their capacity to use MOE equipment.	2
Domestic Violence	When the ARV was responding to a believed Domestic Violence situation.	3
Firearms Deployment	When the ARV was specifically requested due to the granting of a Firearms Deployment in relation to an incident.	6
Individual with Weapon	When the ARV was tasked with priority to a call due to the believed presence of an individual with a weapon. However, these calls did not make the threshold of a Firearms Deployment and therefore had other resources tasked as well (usually TASER Officers).	9
Medical Assistance	When the ARV was tasked to a call to support the ambulance service due to the advanced medical training and equipment that the AFOs have access to.	2
Other	Any other calls the ARV attended that do not fit the other categories.	3
Road Traffic Collision	Where the ARV was tasked with assisting at a Road Traffic Collision.	3
Threat of Violence	Where the ARV was requested due to the potential but increased threat of violence offered by persons at the scene.	3
Vehicle Pursuit or Stop	Where the ARV either pulls over a vehicle they witness or are tasked with joining a vehicle pursuit or stopping a particular vehicle.	10
Total Number of Emergency Calls Attended During Fieldwork		**61**

Table 5.1 Emergency call descriptions

As there were only three instances that warranted the 'Other' category, I describe them individually to illustrate the esoteric nature of many police calls. In one call a suspected inebriated individual was throwing himself in front of traffic. In another, individuals were seen throwing rubble onto the railway line. The final call we attended was 'unknown', by the time we arrived, whatever it was had been resolved by other officers and we went on our way none the wiser. The most common single incident attended by the ARVs I accompanied were vehicle stops or pursuits; most ARV officers are trained as Advanced Pursuit drivers.

As I transcribed the field notes from my observations, I categorised the calls according to whether they were 'general policing' tasks that could be carried out by any other police officers on duty or whether they were for 'ARV-only'. I found this binary system left too much uncovered and so I introduced a third category for 'ARV- prioritised' calls. These were calls where ARV crews were either particularly tasked by the control room or, conversely, calls that the ARV crews were particularly listening out for as they knew it would make use of their specialist skills or equipment. The make-up of these categories is shown in the table below:

CATEGORY	COMPRISES	TOTALS
'General Policing' Calls	Area Search Assistance to Other Officers Burglary or Theft Domestic Violence Other Road Traffic Collision Vehicle Pursuit or Stop	39
'ARV-prioritised' Calls	Concern for Welfare (MOE) Individual with Weapon Threat of Violence	14
'ARV-only' Calls	Firearms Deployment Medical Assistance	8
Total Number of Emergency Calls Attended During Fieldwork		**61**

Table 5.2 Filtered call descriptions

This categorisation reinforces the essential point frequently repeated by senior officers, that the *firearms* officer is a *police* officer first and foremost (Bennett, 2016). This also correlated with how the AFOs saw themselves, as police officers who support response policing and that by doing so, were able to contribute more to the police organisation:

> **AFO1**: *Yeah, I think ultimately our, yes 85%, if not more of what we do is normal day-to-day policing but we still need to be in a position to be able to respond should we need to, really, so where possible we try not to get tucked up with an incident which may involve us staying with someone for a long period of time because if that person can't be left and an incident comes in for which we need to leave to that's when it'll be left open slightly.*

> **AFO7**: *First and foremost, our main role is to respond to armed incidents, however, there's certain parts of the country where there's going to be more armed incidents than other parts of the country, we live in a very nice part of the country, so we are, there are requirements for us, however, it's not 24/7, we have to do something else, otherwise it's very long days... people want value for money for everything, don't they? So, we are support for local officers as well as respond to firearms incidents. But you can't quantify everything that we do, because, we could arrest 15 people in a week and show that we're really busy or we could go to a load of jobs and do a load of research*

to try and track down the most serious offenders and then other people from another department may get the result at the end of it as a result of the work that we've done because we cover the whole county, but there's no measurement for that work that's taken place. If that makes sense?

However, even in that regard, they were keen to make the distinction between ARVs and other response policing resources. I noted during a discussion with AFO6 and AFO7 that they felt "The difference between ARV and other police is that we can do what they can do, but they can't do what we can do"[7]. Some AFOs indicated that whilst they are supposed to support regular policing, it is not something that they feel they are available to do often, that their tasking means they are often only a source of initial help.

> **AFO19**: *Yeah, 'cos we have, we're transitory, we, generally we arrive, deal with the problem then bugger off again, we don't have any sort of long term, protracted contact with anyone to, it's a bit like sort of fire engine policing isn't it?*
> **AFO20**: *Yeah, sticking plaster.*
> **AFO19**: *We put the fire out, or put a plaster on it then you bugger off, people sometimes don't even realise you've been and gone.*
> **Me**: *OK.*
> **AFO19**: *I don't think that's actually part of our role anyway, like AFO20 says, we, we augment what local are doing, but, it's not really our bag.*

This need to remain 'available' means that AFOs take care to avoid what they perceive as 'rubbish jobs' that they may become bogged down in:

> 17:37   We receive a call as to whether we can attend a broken-down lorry positioned awkwardly on a roundabout.
> AFO17 replies that unfortunately being in an unmarked vehicle and carrying no cones or signs means we are unlikely to improve the situation. AFO17 turns to me and says he is so glad they don't carry cones or signs as it gets them out of so much traffic shit. I ask if all other units do [carry cones and signs], he says all response and obviously traffic do.[8]

> 15:36   On scene for a broken-down car.
> Causing havoc in the afternoon traffic, the AFOs try to close the road and divert traffic round the green but it does not work particularly well. With no additional cones or signs people just ignore the one sign used and the blue lights. That said, the AFOs are not particularly pro-active in ensuring the traffic is controlled, instead waiting for [Response] to turn up and then passing it on.[9]

---

[7] Fieldnotes 4
[8] Fieldnotes 10
[9] Fieldnotes 18

20:36   Two Priority Calls[10] come in, looks like we're going to ignore both of them.[11]

This selective attitude towards jobs earns them a reputation among their unarmed colleagues that they are only interested in 'exciting' jobs and have forgotten how to perform some of the basic tasks:

12:02   Back in the car the officers state that this is where a little animosity can be built up between local officers and ARVs. The first two units on scene were ARVs, so locals would still have had to attend. The ARV officers have to be clear on their role, they can't be tied up and some people resent ARVs because of that, it is seen that they get all the fun but none of the paperwork/responsibility. A balance has to be achieved, ARVs have to be able to respond.
AFO7: You just have to not be an arsehole about it[12]

08:30   **AFO25:** A lot of people think we should do more than what we do now, but we can't be tied up in custody or with missing persons. We do as much as we can and help out.[13]

18:43   **AFO27**: That's ARV for you: they complain we don't do any work then they don't let us do any. They want the glory.
AFO28: We offered to help, that's all you can do.[14]

The older ARV officers talked in particular about how the role of the AFO and the ARV had changed throughout their career. He said how there did not used to be any dedicated ARVs, instead officers would carry out a 'normal' policing function, such as roads policing. They would then be extracted from that role when an incident requiring firearms occurred. Due to this 'cross-posting' of officers, firearms officers did not have the same level of training or equipment as the current ARV officers have now.

AFO7: *Alright, yeah, sure, so when I started it was 2005, and sort of before that, we weren't a dedicated unit, we went to a dedicated unit in 2008, prior to that, ARV was seen mainly as a containment sort of role, there'd be a spontaneous incident ARVs would be deployed, usually, the firearms was a secondary role as opposed to the primary role. So in* [police service]*, and in a lot of other forces, it was a mixture of roads policing and officers that used to carry a gun, if there was a firearms job, you'd leave your roads policing job and you'd be deployed as a firearms officer so it was, from that point of view, and you weren't trained as highly as we are now. We* [didn't] *have the equipment that we have now.*

---

[10] Priority Calls are calls that require an urgent police response to prevent loss of life, serious injury, use of violence, serious damage to property or the escape of an offender.
[11] Fieldnotes 21
[12] Fieldnotes 4
[13] FIeldnotes 13
[14] Fieldnotes 16

Due to this lack of training, there was a limited role that these armed officers could perform. Instead of the proactive role that the current ARVs fulfil, the AFOs were used to contain a suspect until a Specialist Firearms Officer (SFO) team could get to the scene.

> **AFO7**: *So it was just literally ARVs deployed to put a containment on a premise, then if that premise needed to be searched or anything like that, then a Team would be called out, means an SFO team, or it would be, and they would carry out the building search, the building tactic.*

This was changed significantly by the introduction of Counter-Terrorist Specialist Firearms Officers (CTSFOs) and the decline of SFOs. ARV officers have been upskilled to take a more proactive role within the British firearms policing paradigm. There has been an appreciation that ARVs have to be the first line of defence against armed threats. This is reflected in how ARV equipment has changed.

> **AFO7**: *However, these days, certainly now it's gone to the CTSFOs, and they have national requirements, we've taken a lot more roles in relation to emergency entry, pre-planned firearms jobs, the role has changed and I have no doubt that in 10 years' time it will have changed even more. Mainly around the tactics it's changed, and the amount of different tactics we can carry out, years ago people said we'd never have distraction devices* [stun grenades]*, that would have been unheard of, they only used to have a carbine or a handgun, certainly in* [police service]*, initially it was just a carbine, so it's changed for the better to make it safer for us, safer for the public.*

Finally, as some of those changes are starting to filter into everyday policing:

> **AFO7**: *You know, the introduction of TASER so, years ago, someone comes at you, you wouldn't have the less-lethal options available, certainly TASER that's been the last 10-12 years for AFOs, so, yeah.*

As well as how that has reflected international events and austerity:

> **AFO19**: *The Chief Constable doesn't get as much value out of ARV as they would an equal spend on* [Response]*.* [A proactive policing unit] *are gone, but* [they] *can't shift ARV, not after the Bataclan.*

Another recent addition to their role has been the involvement of AFOs in reassurance policing exercises as a counter-terrorism strategy. Furthermore, occasionally ARV officers were expected to provide an ancillary work force assist with armed protection operations in their

force areas. The experiences of the AFOs and their opinions on interacting with the public in such circumstances are explored in detail in Chapter Seven.

5.2.2   Boredom

There is a significant amount of down time experienced by AFOs in the ARVs. During this time a myriad of non-emergency tasks are carried out but these are normally outweighed by the large sections of time, particularly when waiting for something else to occur or in the small hours of the morning, where there is *nothing* to do. This boredom is exacerbated by the necessity for the AFOs to stay with their vehicles and not drift too far from major towns or roads lest they need to redeploy quickly. Boredom in police work is an over-looked aspect of research which tends to focus on the culturally important aspects of excitement (Phillips, 2015, p. 581). Whilst with the ARV crews, the large amount of down-time was frequently the butt of several jokes:

> **AFO8**: What should we do now? Waste fuel?
> **AFO9**: Go and fight crime, and the fear of![15]

In particular, one AFO rationalised the aimless patrolling by arguing that as you cannot measure the preventative power of your actions, if you cannot think of a better excuse, then you are simply preventing crime![16] Similar to other police ethnographies (see Waddington, 1999c, pp. 1-3), I spent many hours with AFOs waiting for something to happen or looking for something to do (or preventing crime!) Any number of ad-hoc rationalisations were provided by the AFOs for why this particular shift was unexpectedly quiet:

> **AFO14**: Wednesdays are a bit rubbish, no night-time economy.[17]

> **AFO22**: It's quiet because PC Rain is out [i.e. it's raining].[18]

> **AFO37**: It's usually quiet all across the force or not. It's rarely quiet in just one area.[19]

To some degree, AFOs then rationalise their boredom or inactivity by reassuring themselves that whatever they are doing, it cannot be as boring as 'some other' officers have it, most notably Aviation policing:

---

[15] Fieldnotes 5
[16] Fieldnotes 5
[17] Fieldnotes 8
[18] Fieldnotes 12
[19] Fieldnotes 22

AFO26 remarks how it must be boring being in the Aviation Command[20] with the Met [Metropolitan Police], they must just have 'normal' policing stuff – baggage lost, thefts etc. He's done jobs there before and their armoury is very different as there's obviously so many officers going in and out swapping guns over.[21]

This lack of activity then makes the AFOs keen for excitement, in particular for a firearms call where they might get to use their specialist skills and equipment:

AFOs 6 & 7: We want to go to firearms jobs. If everyone's having a really safe day, we have a boring day at work. If we have a fun day, someone's having a shit day. If there was no crime, this job would be boring.[22]

AFO13: Let's have a nice big gun job[23]

While these quotes may sound callous, particularly when removed from the light-hearted context from which they were said, they do reflect an intrinsic part of ARV Culture surrounding the desire for action or dangerous jobs (Reiner, 2000). ARV crews have a tremendous potential for 'excitement' or 'action', which is why the job is held in high regard. However, this is contrasted by the same, long sections of boredom intrinsic to the shift-based nature of the police role (Waddington, 1999c, pp. 1-4; Phillips, 2016). Once this dichotomy became apparent, it was then interesting for me to explore the motivations of AFOs for joining the unit. More often than not, we had the time to discuss it at length.

5.3   Talking to AFOs
5.3.1   Demographics and Motivations of the ARV Teams
The following section provides a basic profile of the types of person who are crewing ARVs. The section specifically addresses the AFOs' motivations for becoming a firearms officer. One of the reasons why becoming an AFO was seen as desirable was the idea that it was one of the most challenging roles available in policing. This challenge presents itself both physically with tests of fitness and fine motor skills, but also mentally with assessments of communication and decision-making. A number of officers discussed the difficulties that they had encountered or witnessed during the initial firearms training course:

---

[20] Special Operations Aviation Policing is a division of the Metropolitan Police Service solely responsible for policing London Heathrow and London City airports. The vast majority of the unit are AFOs as befits their security and counter-terrorism role.
[21] Fieldnotes 14
[22] Fieldnotes 4
[23] Fieldnotes 8

AFO13: *First day of my course: 15 started, I was the only one left at the 9-week mark.*

AFO19: *Of the new intake on the initial firearms course, it's not a piece of cake, 5 walked out. For a course where they do what's necessary, you need the right attitude coming in.*

AFO38: *Being on firearms is a big responsibility. The course after me, there was a shoot/no shoot scenario which they discussed the implications of after an officer was deemed to get it wrong. Several people then removed themselves from the course after this, deciding it was a decision they didn't want to have to make.*

AFOs also noted that with the constant refresher courses, it was challenging to remain an AFO as well as to become one in the first place. The challenges of continuing to be an AFO were couched in the language of independence and responsibility:

AFO22: *I've done this twice, when I first came to firearms it was having met some of the people having worked on firearms they were all very competent and confident officers, and it is, it's the most challenging and… probably the most responsible side of policing, because, we drive around with guns attached to us and most things in policing you are directed and you are very, but the ultimate decision to pull the trigger is yours, and it's probably the ultimate challenge as well, and I like challenging myself.*

AFO38: *It was always my goal in the police, to do firearms, like AFO37 said, it's already more challenging, it's a very challenging role with regards to policing, anyway, what kind of brought me to do it was I saw it as, the standards are a lot higher, for me, personally, I feel, there's a higher level of professionalism as well, that's expected, and yeah, I kind of see it as, it's almost like a different standard of policing, as well, you've got to be, the top of your game, you've got to be one of the best officers on your local area to be able to get onto firearms in the first place, and I kind of saw it as, I wanted to, work with other really good officers and be one of the best officers that I could be, as well, to be fair, and I think doing firearms policing, yeah, you've got to be at the top of your game, and that's where I wanted to be, to be fair, I saw it as a challenge, that's why I wanted to do it.*

As a whole, police culture can be "cliquish and insular", meaning that it is not uncommon for different departments within the police to display distinct combinations of the key aspects of police culture (Chan, 1996; Wood, Fleming and Marks, 2008). This narrative around challenge and responsibility hinted at a distinct 'ARV Culture' amongst the AFOs. For one officer in particular, the lack of female representation added to the challenges of becoming and maintaining their status as an AFO:

AFO21: *I suppose the challenge of the role, it's quite underrepresented by females so, I suppose that attracted me, in a weird sort of roundabout way, it's something I've always wanted to do because it's one of the most challenging things you can do, so I was kind of was attracted to that. Yeah I guess it's that, that's the main thing, and the*

fact that it's probably the remaining role where you are, you can be pro-active and, you know, get sort of stuck in and involved in sort of high value sort of crime and, you know the sort of the sorts of things we all joined to do, really.

However, being one of the few female AFOs proved to be rewarding in its own way, particularly when that AFO interacted with female members of the public.

> **AFO21**: *…but yeah, if anything, I find, and I don't know if it's because I'm a female and there's only two of us presently serving because the other two are off on maternity, whether people, they sort of like that because it's an unusual sight, and so, I do get people coming up to me, particularly women saying, 'Oh well done, it's nice to see a female officer with the boys', sort of thing so no, I don't find it at all, and a lot of the time, a lot of people don't realise I'm carrying* [a gun], *so...*

A male officer offered his opinion on how the 'ARV Culture' may be inadvertently dissuading people from joining, especially women. The only way he felt to change that was to increase diversity, however not at the expense of equal opportunities. I noted the following conversation:

> **AFO17**: ARV canteen culture is backwards and old. But the professional culture is massively far forward. There is a willingness to change and experiment. People take care of their own kit and cars. This is compared to [Response].
> **Me**: What would change the canteen culture?
> **AFO17**: More women and more, younger officers. When I joined in 2016, I was the only person on the team under 40, a large portion of them were ex-military. The only females were gay or of a disposition that was less than feminine, they only served to reproduce the masculine culture.[24]

Most of the AFOs I interviewed had worked in 'front-line' policing roles such as Response before joining firearms. In line with the discussion about the challenge that armed response work provides, a few officers saw it as an opportunity to continue their career in 'front-line' or 'response' policing:

> **AFO1**: *Very similar, it's something you sort of work towards, if you like, whilst being on area, being reactive, and if you want to stay in uniform, you are very frontline, if not more frontline than most, when a firearms deployment comes in because it's obviously only us that can deal with it.*

> **AFO26**: *Yeah, it's a, it is a good question. I like, I like response policing, and I've always liked response policing, it's what I've done, more or less from Day 1 of my career, I've always had an interest in firearms, I guess, in terms of the, the sort of technical side of it, but, I think fundamentally, I like, the idea of, I like the idea of having the capability and, the specialism to do the, what can be a demanding job… I like striving to do a job*

---

[24] Fieldnotes 10

well, and, to me, if you like response policing, and you can cope with the aspects and the additional kind of mental pressures of firearms work, I think it's the, it's something to strive to and, yeah, I tried to do it for a long time, and didn't get through a few selection processes, but, carried on wanting it, I guess, and eventually got it.

This keeps the AFOs in touch with the "street cop culture" and what they consider 'real' police work (Reuss-Iani, 1983; Reiner, 2000). Combining the desire to remain front-line with the extra equipment, training or skills available to AFOs made the job more appealing with officers. The role allowed them to carry out the job they were already doing but they were now better prepared for all eventualities:

> **AFO1**: *…so yeah, we're very privileged in the department that we work on, and that if the job is, you know, slightly more dangerous… with the equipment we have and the training that we have, following a 10-week firearm course enables us to utilise our skills, and help area and help our colleagues really.*

> **AFO9**: *…well, after I went to uni I joined the police, and it was always something I'd be interested in because of the range of stuff that they can do, so on response, you would go to a job and if it developed into a firearms job you would see them come in and use their extra skills and training and equipment in order to resolve to do it, and there's nothing they can't go to, it will always be resolved by someone within the firearms world, so it's not like it can be handed on to like the army, it would always be stopped with firearms, so that was something I wanted to get into to actually have the kit and the training to do anything, in theory and, you would, on response, you would become aware of a firearms job at the very tail end of it and you would go in and carry out the investigation and you'd think what have they been up to in that time?*

Feeling better prepared improves how effective AFOs think they are at detecting and preventing crime, these feelings can then validate the AFOs' sense of self-legitimacy (Tankebe, 2014, p 3739). However, overwhelmingly, officers insisted during the conversations that they perceived firearms to be the 'best job'. Whilst some responses were more flippant about the reasons why they considered it the best, aspects of managerial trust and the permission to make difficult decisions both featured strongly:

> **AFO12**: *Several reason really, it's considered one of the more elite departments and roles within the police, so you always strive to do the best you can in your career and it's an ambitious thing to do so I've always wanted to do it from that respect.*

> **AFO17**: *I'll say very much the same in terms of dealing with 'proper criminals' and proper, the big jobs, I think it's always, when you say it, now that I'm in ARV it sounds self-aggrandising, but it is what I always thought, you join the police and one of the first impressions you get is that ARV are the best, they are kind of, in terms of, front-line response policing, they are the elite, that's the impression you get when you first join and that's why, you kind of, that's why I wanted to join 'cos if you, kind of, response policing is the core and the most important and the most... the best bit of*

policing really 'cos you deal with the most crucial and most urgent matters which is really what the police is about, and the ARV are the best at that and... best training, best kit, best crew-mates, best cars, best jobs, you get to choose what you go to.

AFO23: *What did make me choose? It was something I always wanted to do, actually. It is, in my view, probably one of the best jobs in the force, you get a lot of freedom which I've learnt, to go everywhere, and you get to do a lot of the best stuff, deal with the worst people, probably one of the main things.*

AFO27: *…and like AFO28 says, you become involved in the bigger, the better jobs so if there's a major incident, takes place, chances are, that, we'll be part of that because of the world that we live in within the firearms, say, for example, if there was, there's a fatal shooting, then firearms will get involved in that and, for me, being part of bigger investigations is what I like.*

AFO11: *It's the best job in the force, where else do you get to drive round and eat Haribo!?*

Tankebe (2007) and Tankebe and Mesko (2015) highlight that fair treatment by higher ranks and good relationships with colleagues are key drivers of police self-legitimacy. This demonstrates that the AFO role can be legitimacy affirming for officers. If the AFOs feel valued and more able to make critical decisions, this then has the potential to reinforce the AFOs' sense of mission (Reiner, 2000). This improved sense of mission, the trust of their supervisors and the greater potential for excitement within the role may contribute to any sense of 'elitism' among ARV crews. During my conversations with the AFOs, I noticed that a lot of the answers were very similar. Indeed, when I present quotes within these fieldwork sections, they are merely illustrative not exhaustive, and I could support most with multiple other examples. I was not alone in recognising these similarities:

AFO37: *But I think we touched on it earlier on, our mentality, you've said it as well, we're all probably cut from the same cloth, we've all got the same kind of mentality, we've all got the same kind of ideas about what we, levels of, probably experience but also regards to, um, I don't know, teamwork as well I suppose and work ethic.*

I also noted in the following discussion:

18:53   When they went for their Psych evaluations, AFO30 said the psychologist said she could look at all the officers and instantly tell which ones were AFOs. AFO30 and AFO29 both agreed that their evaluations had got them spot on, how they think, how they work, how they feel emotionally etc. Is there any confirmation bias in this though?[25]

---

[25] Fieldnotes 17

The aforementioned opinion of firearms being the 'best job' was connected to a sentiment that now they were on the firearms unit, being an AFO was something that they had always been interested in doing. It appears that nobody ends up in firearms by accident and a lot of people joining the police have it as their ultimate goal:

>**AFO30**: *It was what I wanted to do from joining the job really, just wanted to get, experience normal policing and then, eventually join firearms, it's just an aspiration from the beginning really. What about you AFO29?*
>**AFO29**: *Yeah, I'm pretty much similar, both shown an interest right from the start, but like AFO30, I took my time, got my experience, joined, just 'cos the nature of jobs that you get involved in, and it's quite a challenging role so.*

>**AFO35**: *It's the job when I joined the police, it was the job I always wanted to do, so, yeah. No other reason for that really, it's just the one that I always fancied doing, the role I always wanted to do. I, pressed on, and did what I needed to do to become a firearms officer.*

>**AFO38**: *It was always my goal in the police, to do firearms.*

However, while most of these officers had 'joining firearms' as their goal, very few of them were interested in or familiar with firearms in of themselves.

5.3.2 Familiarity with Firearms

Great Britain has some of the strictest gun laws in the world which means the majority of members of the public in England have scant, if any, experience with firearms (Alpers et al., 2013; Library of Congress, 2015). There is currently no research as to whether those that become firearms officers have any prior experience with firearms and, if they do, what form this takes. Therefore, one of the interview questions I asked was, 'Had you handled a firearm prior to joining the police'? I used the word 'handled' loosely to allow the participant to fill in the details. There are several circumstances in which individuals may have handled firearms but never had the opportunity or the will to shoot with them.

Table 5.3 below shows what experience, if any, the AFOs had with firearms before joining the police. For the purposes of the tally, *Familial or Personal* includes examples where officers have either handled firearms a small number of times in the company of family or friends, as well as the rare instances where the AFO is a certificate-holder and owns their own shotguns or firearms. *Military* includes any involvement with any structured military organisation that would have included any element of marksmanship or weapon-handling. For the majority of AFOs this was through a Cadet Force or Officer-Training Corps when they were at school or university as opposed to a previous career in the Armed Forces, though this was present as

well. *Military & Familial or Personal* includes AFOs whose answers implied both had an equally important role. The code *None* indicates AFOs who stated they had never handled a firearm prior to joining the police. *Unknown* covers two types of cases: for two AFOs, the question was not asked, as the interview was cut short or did not take place due to a developing firearms incident. For three AFOs, the answer they gave did not specifically address their personal experience of weapon handling: it was either too vague or actually linked to another question.

	MALE (34)	FEMALE (4)	TOTAL (38)
FAMILIAL OR PERSONAL	3	3	6
MILITARY	11	1	12
MILITARY & FAMILIAL OR PERSONAL	3	0	3
NONE	12	0	12
UNKNOWN	5	0	5
TOTAL (UNIQUE)	34	4	38

Table 5.3 AFOs - Gender and experience with firearms

Only one officer said that their desire to join armed response had anything to do with their previous personal experience with firearms:

> **AFO7**: *I don't know actually. I've been round guns all my life really...I had shotguns when I was younger, air rifles when I was younger, wasn't interested in CID or anything like that, and you get to sort of deal with, you know, really serious criminals, but actually catch them, as opposed to investigate everything, I'm not really an investigator I'm more of a catch them doing it or something similar to that really. More an operations person than an office-y person.*

Similarly, others had come directly from the military where they identified similar structures in the police and opportunities to use related skills regarding weapons handling and teamwork when it came to specialising:

> **AFO8**: *For me it was a natural progression before I joined, the police, I was a soldier, so from the age of, so I did a little bit with cadets and stuff but I'd fired sort of rifles and stuff and owned an air rifle at some point, so I joined the army then so I was more than happy with carrying firearms, obviously a slightly different role and a slightly different purpose and then, had enough of the army, so I joined the police, and then it was just a natural progression really, after my probation then I did four years doing 'normal' policing shall we say and it was just, like, something I was interested in and well, while not a gun nut as such, in terms of in my private life, I've always been around guns, I sort of understand how they work, I wouldn't say I'm an expert marksman by any stretch of the imagination but I certainly am proficient enough to pass the stuff I've got to do this, it was just like a natural progression really*

> **AFO19**: *…and like AFO20, I've got a military background, and the, and it wasn't a difficult jump if you know what I mean, it's less of a difficult jump if you've got that sort of a background.*

> **AFO31**: *For myself, I'm former military, trained in weapons with the military, and have carried weapons routinely in the military in the RAF Police, so for me, it was, it was a, kind of, natural next step after joining the police.*

Interestingly many officers made it clear that it was *not* the firearms that attracted them to the role, rather it was other, normally 'tactical', considerations:

> **AFO3**: *Yeah, yeah... but, erm, yeah, no, I think it was just the overall package, not particularly the gun side of it, just everything about what the department did.*

> **AFO6**: *Very similar reasons really, I'm, I see myself as a uniform officer, not interested in investigations or traffic, and I like the tactical side of it, I'm not massively interested in guns, erm* [indistinct] *not massively interested in guns, per se, I enjoy the training and everything else, but I enjoy the tactics and the, spontaneous, dealing with spontaneous challenges of incidences is probably my best thing...*

> **AFO34**: *Nothing, at all. No, guns don't, guns have never really interested me, even now it just, I do it at work and that's it. I've never had any real interest in firearms…*

One might expect traffic officers to have an interest in cars and motorbikes, or perhaps mounted officers to have some experience and affinity with horses. Instead, perhaps due to the controversial nature of firearms, it is taboo for the AFOs to see them as anything other than a clinical tool that is part of their job.

This was particularly evident during a 'Make Safe' procedure at a city police station in Police Service 2's area. A Make Safe procedure is where a firearm has been recovered by the police from a member of the public and needs to be checked to ensure that the weapon is in a safe condition for transport, storage or examination. Make Safes encompass a wide range of both legal and illegal firearms. Make Safes can come from a weapon found by a member of the public who has found a weapon, it could have been a weapon that is voluntarily surrendered or it could have been seized as part of an investigation. As firearms specialists, AFOs are most frequently tasked with Make Safes and ARVs are in a prime position, when not on an emergency call, to drive between various police stations to assess anything that has been seized. Over the course of my fieldwork I observed many Make Safes including rifles, shotguns, air weapons, non-functioning replicas and in one case, a bag full of rubber prop guns apparently used for martial arts training.

In this particular instance, the weapons recovered and tagged to make safe were a 12-gauge pump-action shotgun and a .22 calibre bolt-action rifle[26]. I was accompanying two AFOs: AFO24 who had only qualified in the last six months and AFO25 who had been an AFO several years. AFO25 handled the weapons but asked AFO24 for their commentary on what they were looking for to ascertain whether these weapons were real or not, and whether they could be made safe. AFO24 confessed that they were unsure, other than their service weapons, the officer had never handled a firearm before. Whilst AFOs are supposed to receive at least a day's training on making safe weapons (G2 on the NPFTC - Make Safe a Recovered Firearm) AFO24 stated that theirs had been cut short for unforeseen reasons and not picked back up on later in the course. This struck me as odd, that when required to Make Safe two of the most common legally held weapons you are likely to encounter in Britain, this AFO, a de-facto firearms specialist by nature of their posting, was unable to carry out a necessary function. Anything AFOs are unable to clear is referred to the Force Armourer, which is useful for obscure pieces, but the lack of practical experience among AFOs may prevent firearms officers from performing part of their role properly. To some degree this may lead to a self-fulfilling prophecy because Great Britain has restrictive guns laws, few people know about guns; hence less people come into contact with guns because of the restrictive laws. This was suggested to me when discussing Make Safes with a different AFO who confessed that in their opinion, it was often that the public tended to be alarmist when it came to objects that resembled firearms:

> **AFO32**: There is a lot of stuff that doesn't need to come to the police – cork guns, spud guns, rubber guns, plastic water pistols, BB guns in their boxes saying they're BB guns – it'd be far easier to smash them into pieces with a hammer than turn them into the police.[27]

If the public are alarmist, then the AFOs are inclined to err on the side of caution in the absence of the technical knowledge required to make a judgement call on whether an item even needs to be made safe. If AFOs understood several different types of weapons and their workings, they could help reduce the number of weapons referred to the Force Armourer and reassure the public.

---

[26] Fieldnotes 13
[27] Fieldnotes 18

5.4 Discussion

5.4.1 Role

The changing nature of the ARV role has reflected the first criticisms Kraska (1999; 2001; 2007) made against Police Paramilitary Units (PPUs) in the US regarding their intended functions. Whilst both PPUs and AFOs were originally intended as a response to the most critical circumstances, they are both expensive resources to have on stand-by indefinitely. Kraska (1999; 2001) identified in the US that PPUs started being used for more routine tasks; and in Britain ARV crews are increasingly being used to support routine policing tasks, Pannett (2015), a former police officer gave an overview of this increase a few years ago on the Huffington Post's Blog. Indeed, there was widespread concern when ARV officers in Scotland started to support routine policing as opposed to staying on standby (Hamilton, 2017; Foote and Cook, 2019). However, in Britain there is no suggestion that this has led to a corresponding increase in police violence as Kraska (1999; 2001; 2007) claims has occurred in the US. Figure 5.2 below uses fatal police shootings in England and Wales as a proxy for police violence and demonstrates their completely random distribution. ARVs proliferated in the early 1990s and have undergone many changes over the course of their use from designated for only firearms to the current 'armed area car' model used by several police services (Waldren, 2007). Any changes to ARVs being used for routine policing duties have had no correlation to police shootings. If we consider that the statistics for 2017 are anomalous as four individuals were shot dead during the commission of terrorist attacks that had caused fatalities, three of whom were shot dead during a single incident.
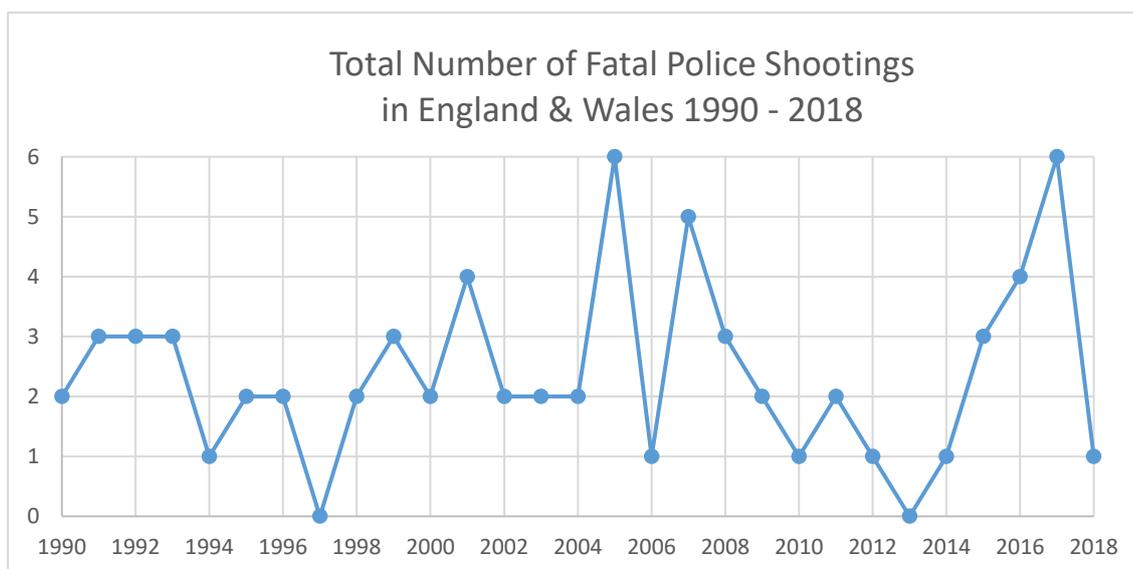
Figure 5.2 Fatal shootings by police in England and Wales March 1990 - March 2018

Aspects of the way in which the ARV role has changed verify to some degree Green and Ward's (2004, p. 80) concerns that high policing measures initially introduced for countering terrorism get modified and potentially become absorbed into routine policing practices. Aspects of the previous SFO role have now been given to ARV crews. For example, distraction devices and training for emergency entry or pre-planned firearms operations. Meanwhile the new CTSFO role has been introduced to take care of higher-level tasks. The other obvious example would be TASERs, which were introduced for AFOs in 2003 but were shortly afterwards made available to Specially Trained Officers (STO) and are now potentially being rolled out to all officers in forces that can demonstrate operational need (BBC News, 2018). Whilst the TASER is not a tool specifically designed to counter terrorists, the idea pervades that TASER should be an adjunct to firearms operations (Dymond, 2018, pp. 13-16; Sousa, Ready and Ault, 2010; Ariel et al., 2019, p. 281). To what extent that narrative is changing, with the idea of TASER being a routinely issued piece of equipment, is yet to be measured (Dymond, 2019, pp. 14-15).

5.4.2 'When the Public Need Help They Call the Police, When the Police Need Help they Call the ARV[28]' – ARV Culture

The classic elements of police culture: authority, danger and pressure (Skolnick, 1975) are all prevalent in the world of police firearms and are particularly noticeable when the ARV officers discuss what it is they enjoy about the role. From Reiner's (2000) perspective the key aspects of mission, action, cynicism and solidarity are particularly evident. Innes (2003) argues that in order to understand the values of detective culture, one must understand that CID and the detective role continue to represent 'real police work', that is – "crime fighting and thief-taking". AFOs are the uniform equivalent in that regard, which is what makes their culture unique. Through the desire for action and excitement, AFOs talk about being on the ARV as 'real police work' as it enables them to engage in 'crime-focussed' activities. What makes the ARV culture distinct from CID culture is that the derision travels in both directions. AFOs are equally of dismissive of the CID detectives whose whole career is tied up 'behind a desk' and not participating in 'action-oriented' policing such as carrying guns or chasing cars.

Innes (2003, p.13) and Bacon (2016, p.10) identify how CID's work in plain clothes, operates as a form of 'negative identity' whereby the status of 'detective' is reinforced away from the perceived mechanistic operational style of uniform policing. While AFOs still wear a uniform, an element of their elitism may be reinforced by the differences between it and the uniform of

---

[28] Fieldnotes 11 – A common 'motto' among police tactical units; its first use is usually attributed to the New York Police Department's Emergency Service Unit.

their patrol colleagues. AFOs seldom wear hi-vis and parts of their uniforms are manufactured by higher cost, military-spec brands. They carry more equipment on their person including the prominent yellow TASER on the chest and the sidearm that sits on their thigh. The five-pointed star is the national symbol for armed policing and it appears on their vehicles. Some officers also choose to wear patches with the star on their body armour, just in case anyone was in any doubt.

Fassin's (2013) ethnography of anti-crime squads in French *banlieues* also finds that police work is interspersed with large periods of repetitive inactivity. Only a small proportion of what police do is in anyway connected to the cultural images that may have attracted officers to the job in the first place. Instead, the time is spent patrolling quiet streets, dealing with other tasks, and can be summed up by the word "boredom" (Fassin, 2013, pp. 65-68). The boredom experienced by AFOs is indicative of both ARV culture but also police culture as a whole (Rowe and Rowe, 2019). It demonstrates that scholarly research around police culture's findings surrounding action and excitement are still as relevant today as they were in the 1970s. This research suggests that the effects of this boredom are magnified for AFOs. The officers are victims of a self-fulfilling prophecy. Officers seek to join the ARV because they view it as having a high potential for attending 'decent' or exciting jobs. On balance this seems to be correct, the evidence from the 'Calls Attended' section demonstrates when ARV officers attend a call it has a high chance of involving threat, risk or harm. However, this contrasts with the fact that the AFOs spend long periods of time waiting for these calls to happen, even not attending tasks that could keep them busy in case such an incident occurs. Therefore, over the course of a shift, AFOs go through dramatic peaks and troughs of excitement levels as their interest waxes and wanes regarding the tasking they are given. This is an aspect that might be worthy of further psychological study. A previous study by Barton, Vrij and Bull (2000) explored the effects of high adrenaline from fast emergency driving on British AFOs' decision-making abilities in a confrontational scenario, yet there was no contrast or appreciation of whether a sudden shift between long periods of monotony and intense excitement might further impact those decisions.

The exploration of boredom provides a window into ARV culture in that certain comments, such as "Let's have a nice big gun job" seem callous at first hearing but, upon further analysis, is indicative of an underlying frustration with the two extremes of the role. This is then further complicated by the AFOs' frustration on their actual tasking which is explored in more detail in Chapter Six.

The AFOs who discussed their personalities and results from personality tests commented on how similar they all were. This raises questions about whether AFOs really are heavily pre-selected to be the 'right' sort of individual or whether, perhaps, they are a product of their training. Personality tests are often controversial, and whilst their purpose is to produce objective measures there are many subjective aspects regarding their construction and interpretation as a Home Office White Paper finds (Great Britain. Home Office, 1992b, p. iii). For firearms officers, job descriptions play an important role in defining appropriate and inappropriate attributes based on the practical nature of the tasks to be carried out on duty (Great Britain. Home Office, 1992b, p. iv). The White Paper (1992, pp. iii-iv) stresses the importance of taking great care with the results of personality tests. It argues that they should be discussed and verified with the candidates to ensure that temporary factors such as fatigue or stress have not potentially clouded the results.

Finally, the lack of firearms experience among AFOs in Britain does not validate Kraska's (1999, p. 142) original argument that it is the "seductive power of paramilitary subculture" in the form of "techno-warrior garb [and] heavy weaponry" that makes joining such a specialised unit popular. Whilst accessing the firearms unit was challenging, I did not feel it was a result of a culture of secrecy and isolation that served to emphasise the violence of police culture in the development of a 'warrior fantasy' (Gibson, 1994; Belur, 2014, p. 3746). It would appear that the paramilitary trappings of the British ARV role (i.e. access to firearms) do not turn AFOs into "trained killers" akin to a "military special operations unit" as Kraska (1996; 1999) believes can occur in the US. This is perhaps because all British AFOs come from a routine policing background and must continue to do routine policing tasks. This grounding in front line policing, alongside a demonstratable lack of interest in firearms, really does make British AFOs simply "police officers with access to firearms".

Gender
This thesis is not about gendered policing; other authors investigate the representation of women in specialist policing departments in a far more comprehensive manner (see Cain, 2011). However, given the existing literature (Brown and Sargeant, 1995; Westmarland, 2001b; Cain, 2011), I was expecting to find gender issues in the firearms unit more prevalent than they were. We know that women in policing do not ordinarily get roles in specialist departments and a large part of that is the fact they are outnumbered in general police strength by two to one (Cain, 2011; Home Office, 2019a). The female officers I encountered were always treated with respect by their male colleagues (or at least as much respect as they showed their male colleagues!) and the only thing that suggested gender was an issue in the department was the

lack of contact with female AFOs. I came into direct research contact with 38 separate AFOs and only four of them were female. I also met a significant number of other AFOs in crew rooms, police stations, during informal meetups or at police armouries and none of them were female. The only female AFOs I saw during the whole of my fieldwork period were the ones I was crewed with.

Contrary to what Westmarland (2001b) found, none of the female officers I spoke to allowed themselves to be spoken for by their male colleagues. However, AFO21's experience when interacting with female members of the public ("Oh well done, it's nice to see a female officer with the boys") did still reinforce the idea that women in these units are unique, a woman in a man's world. Unlike Westmarland's (2001b, p. 147, emphasis added) identification of the issue: "'No, no, not at all. Jill fits in with everyone else – *she's just like one of the lads*'", it seems that comment is now more noticeable from external, as opposed to internal, sources.

Brown and Sargent (1995, p. 13) found that female officers are more likely to be put off from applying to firearms units because of deeply embedded aspects of police organisational culture distinct to the elitism of firearms units. In my experience what was perhaps initially routed in sexism has now become something of a self-fulfilling prophecy. Westmarland's (2001b, p. 150) hypothesis is correct in that it appears male officers within special units constantly have their masculinity reinforced by the environment in which they exist and interact. As the comments from AFO17 demonstrate, there are not enough women to interrupt that cycle of reinforcement, therefore the cycle continues and for women on the outside, it then becomes less attractive to want to apply for that unit in particular.

Chapter Summary

This chapter has explored the contexts in which AFOs come into contact with members of the public. While not dealing with any interactions specifically, it states to the academic community that firearms officers should no longer be considered completely separate from their unarmed colleagues. The 'armed area car' model, by its definition puts AFOs in contact with the public in a variety of settings. Whilst less frequently than unarmed officers, AFOs are still attending 'routine' incidents, such as burglaries, and interacting with the public. The ARV role is varied, and AFOs attend a very wide range of incidents befitting their status as a permanently roving unit that "cannot be tied down" for too long. This role is perhaps at odds with the public's perception that being an armed officer is solely about fighting terrorists. Further to this, their increase in use as a preventative or reassurance measures at places like

airports means that they are also representing their force and themselves at more public contact driven events than ever before.

ARV officers state that they enjoy the challenge of a firearms officer role. Overwhelmingly AFOs are white and male. There is also a suggestion that they are all culturally and psychologically similar, whether this is the result of psychometric testing would warrant further investigation. As a result of these demographics, certain aspects of cop culture are highlighted on the ARV evidencing a particular ARV sub-culture. There remains a lack of gender balance within the ARV unit, and some officers think changing that will improve the ARV culture. Regardless, because of their extended training and the trust of their supervisors, AFOs have a sense of elitism unique to ARV culture when compared to other officers.

This sense of elitism contributes to one of the key challenges faced by AFOs. Their anticipation of excitement is heightened by their membership of a specialist unit but exciting calls are infrequent and this leaves AFOs struggling with the boredom that lingers between tasks. Another challenge faced by AFOs is the relationship identified between officers and the firearms that they carry. If AFOs had a more developed understanding of firearms, they may be able to perform their function as de facto firearms experts better.

6   The Police Organisation and Firearms Deployments

Introduction

This chapter builds on the previous chapter by investigating the conditions and circumstances for the granting of a firearms deployment. It also describes how firearms deployments affect Armed Response Vehicle (ARV) crews in practice to illuminate the issue of conflicting cultures within police services. This chapter outlines the conflicts that exist between Authorised Firearms Officers (AFOs) and control room staff relating to how firearms deployments are given and implemented alongside the issues that arise from cross-border firearms operations. These conflicts are yet another unexplored challenge that are faced by AFOs when performing the ARV role. The discussion of these challenges here contributes to answering the first research question of this thesis.

According to the College of Policing (2013), AFOs are considered as being on a 'Firearms Deployment' when they are "required to conduct a specific task during which the possession of a firearm, with appropriate authorisation, is a required element." For a deployment to be granted to AFOs, a number of criteria must be met. These criteria are explored fully in section 6.1.1.

This thesis uses the term 'Firearms Deployment' as it is officially recognised by the College of Policing with a given definition. Within both police services, the term 'Arming Authority' is used interchangeably to mean when AFOs have received authorisation from the Force Control Room (FCR) to undertake a firearms deployment. AFOs also colloquially refer to a firearms deployment as a "Level" that can be "given" or "received". These terms appear within the interview answers and fieldnotes, where relevant they are highlighted to show that they are interchangeable with the term 'Firearms Deployment'.

When I negotiated access for my research, I told the police that I was not overly concerned that I would not be allowed to accompany them on firearms deployments as I was expecting to be focussing mainly on the "every-day" aspects of armed policing. At the time this was true, but on reflection what I did not consider was the 'grey area' between the mundane and the life-threatening. This is a space where the circumstances in which firearms deployments are authorised and the debates they initiate with ARV crews are worthy of investigation in of themselves. The following chapter provides some insight into this.

6.1　Firearms Deployments in Theory

6.1.1　How a Firearms Deployment is Authorised

The Force Incident Manager (FIM) is the officer in charge of the FCR. The FIM's main task is to assess the calls that the call handlers flag for their attention. The FIM is a trained Tactical Firearms Commander (TFC) who has the authority to grant a firearms deployment to AFOs and is initially in charge of any firearms operation. Additionally, the FIM has authority over a wide range of other incidents including vehicle pursuits, hazardous material calls and multi-agency incidents. The FIM also has a responsibility to ensure that 999 emergency calls are answered in a timely manner and they would also have a list of the missing persons in the force area. One AFO described the FIM to me as the Chief Constable's 'authority personified'; FIMs must be cognisant of everything that is taking place in the force area.

Potential firearm deployments originate from a number of sources. For example, a call may come via the 999 system or a radio communication from a police officer that 'obviously' requires a firearms response and is therefore sent directly to the FIM. Alternatively, there could be a 'developing' occurrence that is referred to the FIM by other control room staff as the incident progresses. The FIM decides if the circumstances of the call meet the criteria outlined by the College of Policing's (2013) Authorised Professional Practice (APP) for the deployment of armed officers:

The deployment of AFOs should only be authorised in the following circumstances:
- *where the officer authorising the deployment has reason to suppose that officers may have to protect themselves or others from a person who:*
    - *is in possession of, or has immediate access to, a firearm or other potentially lethal weapon, or*
    - *is otherwise so dangerous that the deployment of armed officers is considered to be appropriate, or*
- *as an operational contingency in a specific operation (based on the threat assessment), or*
- *for the destruction of animals which are dangerous or are suffering unnecessarily.*

These criteria contain conditional elements that are open to interpretation. Namely whether the authorising officer has "reason to suppose" that the description provided could qualify an item as a "potentially lethal weapon" or establish when an individual could be considered "otherwise so dangerous". Discussing these criteria with AFOs, it became apparent that they believe it can be difficult to teach or define "otherwise so dangerous" and this can lead to conflicting opinions on an incident:

AFO27: APP and arming criteria: "Otherwise so dangerous", that's self-interpreted. ARV officers with their experience will say one thing. Bosses [senior officers] that don't necessarily have as much faith in the officers as we do in our ability and training might then pick the wrong way to resolve something. It then becomes difficult, you can get failings in command. You can fail to protect the public or bring an offender to justice.[1]

AFOs 13 & 14: It's hard for us to educate the public about "otherwise so dangerous" We are our own worst enemy… Damned if you do and damned if you don't and all that.[2]

To aid these interpretations, the FIM assesses the potential risks posed to the public, the offender, unarmed officers and armed officers and grades them on a scale of Low, Medium or High. These grades are informed by the Critical Incident training FIMs undertake to become a TFC and there is little public information on how these grades are set or by whom. In addition to assessing the risk, the FIM decides which resources they wish to attend or calls to assess which units are free. The FIM can then seek an Operational Firearms Commander (OFC), ideally one who can be present at the scene, and the FIM is obliged to seek the advice of a Tactical Advisor (TacAd) should they feel it is necessary. The FIM needs to outline the tactics available to the AFOs and the justification for them, as well as seeking relevant additional resources where required (Firearms Support Dogs[3], Counter-Terrorist Specialist Firearms Officers, air support for example). This information is provided on the firearms radio channel to all attending ARV crews. Once this is in place, the FIM contacts the Strategic Firearms Commander (SFC) to ratify the authorising of a firearms deployment. The FIM then continues to monitor the situation or passes it off to another suitably qualified individual to monitor. Whoever is monitoring the incident ensures that additional resources are provided if necessary, that tactics are updated to reflect the circumstances and that the deployment is rescinded at an appropriate time. It is important to note that most FIMs will have never been a firearms officer, while TacAds and OFCs must be currently serving AFOs. Thus, the TacAd's and OFC's purpose is to support the FIM's decision making with their practical knowledge and experience. However, the TacAd and the OFC cannot override the FIM's decision.

Outside of these criteria, AFOs may encounter circumstances where they believe the criteria to deploy armed officers is met, but that seeking authorisation to deploy would lead to an unacceptable delay that may risk public or police safety. In these circumstances, AFOs can self-deploy to take necessary and appropriate action. After self-deploying, the officers must

---

[1] Fieldnotes 16
[2] Fieldnotes 8
[3] Police dogs and their handlers must qualify as 'Firearms Support Dogs' (FSDs) to operate as a less-lethal contingency in firearms operations.

communicate with a TFC so that they can review the decision-making and determine whether continued armed deployment is appropriate.

Regardless of the circumstances in which a firearms deployment or self-deployment occurs, the criteria to issue a firearms deployment is open to interpretation. However, whilst this means there can be a low threshold for a firearms deployment this can then be offset by the very stringent, and personal decision that AFOs must take if they choose to open fire:

> **AFO11**: The threshold to arm is actually quite low, all you need is "Reason to suppose". That is counteracted by the threshold to shoot someone is very high – you need a concrete, honestly held belief.[4]

This disparate strategy is reflected in the police use of firearms statistics by the Home Office which demonstrate that there are several thousand firearms deployments authorised per year and only a very small number of occasions where police open fire. Over the last decade there has been an average of 17 225 police firearms operations per year, with an average of only six police firearms discharges per year (Home Office, 2019b).

6.1.2   The Actual Use of a Firearm and Honestly Held Beliefs
According to the College of Policing's (2018) APP, a police officer will be deemed to have used a firearm or a less lethal weapon if the weapon is:

- *pointed or aimed at another person*
- *fired at another person*
- *discharged in any other operational circumstances, including an unintentional discharge.*

To perform the first two actions, the officer must make sure they are undertaken in line with guidance (College of Policing, 2018) on the reasonable use of force:

> *When police are required to use force to achieve a lawful objective (e.g. making a lawful arrest, acting in self-defence or protecting others) all force used must be reasonable in the circumstances.*
> *If the force used is not reasonable and proportionate, the officer is open to criminal or misconduct proceedings. It may also constitute a violation of the human rights of the person against whom the force was used.*

---

[4] Fieldnotes 7

The College of Policing (2018) acknowledges that there are subjective elements to using 'reasonable force' and assessing it given the circumstances, and the only way they can do that is in reference to what the officer honestly believes at that time. Therefore:

> *This is so even if their belief is mistaken. Whether the degree of force used in the circumstances (as the person believed them to be) was actually reasonable will, however, be assessed objectively by the courts.*
> *The degree of force used by a person will not be regarded as having been reasonable if it was disproportionate in the circumstances.*

The College of Policing (2018) strictly emphasises the role of individual responsibility and accountability for the use of force decisions all police officers take:

> *Each AFO is individually responsible and accountable for their decisions and actions, nothing can absolve them from such responsibility and accountability. This includes decisions to refrain from using force as well as any decisive action taken, including the use of force, the use of a firearm and the use of a less lethal weapon.*
> *AFOs are answerable, ultimately, to the law in the courts. They must be in a position to justify their decisions and actions based on their honestly held belief as to the circumstances that existed at the time, and their professional and legal responsibilities.*

AFOs are solely responsible for their decision to open fire, they cannot be instructed to shoot nor can they absolve responsibility onto a commander. This accountability mechanism is a key aspect of British police firearms policy that sets it apart from other European nations (Punch, 2011, pp. 1-4). It is this issue of accountability that leads to concern from some officers that if they did pull the trigger they would be 'hung out to dry', as the police organisation is not obligated to help defend them (Hudson, 2016; Hughes, 2016).

6.2   Firearms Deployments in Practice

6.2.1   The Process of 'Arming Up'

ARV officers do not keep all their weapons and equipment on their person during a shift. Upon receiving instructions for a firearms deployment, the AFOs access the boot of the ARV. If driving, the officers must therefore find a suitable location to pull over and carry out this process. Once the vehicle is stationary, each officer retrieves from the safe in the boot their primary weapon (a carbine) and load it using the ballistic bag provided. The officers will load the weapon with a magazine and retrieve additional magazines, placing them inside magazine pouches on their load-bearing equipment. The non-driving AFO will then also retrieve, if desired or deemed necessary, the Attenuating Energy Projectile (AEP) Launcher and its ammunition. The AEP rounds are kept on a designated drop-leg pouch, which is worn on the

other leg to the holster containing the officers' sidearm. The AEP Launcher is then slung across the officer, leaving their hands on the primary weapon in the first instance. If necessary, both officers will retrieve ballistic helmets and move their Body-Worn Video camera to the helmet mount.

Once both officers have retrieved their equipment, they will need to shut and lock the safe and return to the vehicle to continue driving to the scene of the emergency. The process of arming up is relatively quick, indeed probably quicker than it has taken to explain the process in writing, but it does take *an amount* of time, and there often is a tension between the FCR and the ARV officers as the FCR sometimes assumes that it is an instant process or one that can be done whilst on the move.

6.2.2 Experiencing Firearms Deployments

This section describes the six instances where firearms deployments were granted to the officers that I accompanied. This section also covers the three instances where I was able to hear a firearms deployment be granted to officers elsewhere in the force area on duty at the same time. These descriptions serve to illuminate rarely discussed police policy in action.

Of the six instances where a firearms deployment was granted to the officers I accompanied, the first happened on my second shift. We had just arrived at a police station where the AFOs had been planning on completing some paperwork. As they settled down at desks, a request for ARVs was read over the air and details of a firearms deployment given. I was told to stay where I was and the officers headed out to the ARV. Unfortunately, this meant I could no longer hear the designated firearms channel but I was able to hear the radios of other officers in the office so I could gather a sense of the incident. A male had allegedly pointed a shotgun at a female, believed to be his ex-partner, and damaged some property including her car. The complainant had then driven away and the suspect had followed her. She was advised by the FCR to drive to a nearby police station whilst two ARVs moved to escort her car and potentially intercept the suspect's vehicle. She reached the police station before the ARVs reached her and, once it became apparent the suspect was not following her, the ARVs were tasked with an Area Search. At this point, the officers whose radios I had been listening to left the room and I was without information until the AFOs returned.

When they returned, the AFOs were accompanied by another ARV crew. They told me how additional ARVs had been called to the area for an armed area search. The crew I had been with saw the suspect vehicle a couple of times but had not been able to catch up to it. A little

while later the AFOs passed an individual that seemed suspicious, as they rounded the corner the AFOs found the suspect's car abandoned. They turned the ARV round and approached the suspicious individual with weapons drawn. He had the suspect vehicle's keys in his pockets, no shotgun was found but a length of scaffold pole was found in the boot of the car, it is possible that was mistaken for a firearm, particularly if deliberately pointed as if a firearm. The AFOs admitted that he was completely shocked to be challenged by armed police, I noted that he probably did not think he had committed an offence warranting armed police if only a scaffold pole was found at the scene[5].

Two of the other firearms deployments I experienced were ones where I was only able to hear the immediate details available to the officers. The first of these was right at the end of a shift in a Police Service 2 city and we were heading back to the operational base. Details came over the air that a vehicle with a marker regarding a recent murder in a neighbouring force had triggered Automatic Number Plate Recognition cameras on the motorways and the vehicle was likely to head onto a motorway taking it into Police Service 2's area. A firearms deployment was given and ARVs called in to search for, and perform a stop on, the vehicle. This was the first time I had been out with a crew when a firearms deployment was granted to them and it was a good opportunity to see how AFOs reacted to such a call; also, how literally the AFOs were going to interpret the instructions to drop me off! They decided they would quickly proceed back to the operational base, drop me off and use the opportunity to arm up before heading up the motorway. Unfortunately, I was completely unable to take any notes during the short journey back due to the increase in speed and (controlled) aggression from our driver, including a slightly too close (for me anyway!) encounter with a National Express coach. The mood is heightened in the ARV when a firearms deployment is authorised and while I listened out for how the firearms deployment procedure was given over the radio, I was unable to record any meaningful amount of detail.

Similarly, barely halfway through another fieldwork session the ARV I was in received a message about a man who had been seen making threats whilst carrying a handgun, our ARV was tasked to attend. I was quickly driven to the nearest police station whilst the ARV crew kitted up and headed out. This incident cut my observations short and made it quite difficult for me to get back home. The incident was called in at about 23:00, which was too late for any public transport to get me back to my car. There was also a complete lack of available units, armed or otherwise, because of this on-going incident and it was not until 01:30 that I was

---

[5] Fieldnotes 2

able to be picked up by another police unit on their routine patrol as there were no ARVs available to get me. These officers dropped me at another police station where I was met by the duty ARV sergeant who took me back to the ARV base at about 02:30.

I had another experience later in my fieldwork where a firearms deployment cut my data collection session short. I had only been out with the officers for about two hours when I was dropped off by the AFOs at a set of services so quickly that I left my data recorder in the ARV. I was soon picked up by another ARV but it became apparent that something serious was occurring. The new ARV crew was not in a mood for talking and basically told me I was being taken straight back to the operational base and that I could call it a night there. On the way back I heard a little more context over the firearms channel. A neighbouring force had called for urgent assistance requesting as many additional ARVs as available from surrounding forces with Police Service 2 among many others all providing multiple cars to assist. Barely four hours had elapsed between the start and end of the fieldwork for that day, making it the shortest observation session during my research.

By chance I was crewed with one of the same AFOs again on a shift a couple of weeks later and so heard more about the incident that had occurred. Also, by that point, some details were available in the national media due to the severity of the incident. I learned on review there had been a double murder committed by an individual with a .22 calibre semi-automatic rifle. When I was reunited with the AFO who had attended, he told me the offender was chased from the scene by local armed officers before they lost contact with him in the darkness. The police force whose area it took place in then implemented Operation Plato fearing an active shooter situation was about to develop. Operation Plato is part of the inter-operability procedures for armed mutual aid that appeals for urgent armed support from both neighbouring forces as well as national assets including the National Police Air Service (NPAS) and the CTSFO network. The firearms deployment on that night had resulted in a 100-mile blue light run for the Police Service 2 AFOs and when they arrived the suspect had been cornered on the beach by armed officers. In this AFO's opinion, it had sounded like the suspect was looking for a provoked shooting, but the armed officers were able to subdue him with a TASER. As they made progress towards the incident, the radio channels had been busy so even though they were the first responding ARV from Police Service 2 going into an unknown area, the AFOs had little idea of what was happening. Apparently, these sorts of communication problems for cross-border operations, particularly critical incidents, are not uncommon. The AFO said they then revert to their basic tactics and it becomes simply a case of getting on-scene, getting kitted and independently performing an armed search.

The most frustrating firearms deployment I experienced was when the AFOs I was accompanying had arranged for me to go and meet the FIM on duty that night to talk about their role in the deployment of armed officers. We had been sat with the FIM for about 15 minutes when a live video feed of CCTV was flagged up for their attention. On the feed one could clearly see a young male holding a machete down by his side. Also seen clearly are several members of the public staring or phones in hand as several simultaneous 999 calls were taken by the FCR. As we were nearby, the AFOs I was with suggested to the FIM that they would be willing to head out to that incident to support any other responding officers. The FIM confirmed that would be a good idea and so we rushed down the stairs to the car park. As we reached the ARV, the call was upgraded to a firearms deployment.

Frustratingly, this left me in the car park as the AFOs armed up and then rushed off. If I had known it was going to become a firearms deployment I would have asked to stay with the FIM to observe how this situation was managed as opposed to accompanying the AFOs hoping that it would just be like the other 'individual with weapon' calls I had previously attended. The next problem arose in that I had no way to get back into the police building (at this point it is 23:15) and nothing that would really 'prove' who I am to any police officer that finds me sat in the secure compound behind their police station and control room. I had the foresight to grab my 'POLICE OBSERVER' vest and my notebook with my business cards out of the car and was able to use those to blag my way back into the canteen. It is unfortunate that with this research I found that if you tell someone, particularly a police officer, you are doing observational research with the ARVs then they inherently do not believe you as it has never been done before! Due to the locality of this call and its relatively straightforward nature I did not have to wait long for my ARV crew to return, and they were back with me in 40 minutes. Two ARVs had been tasked to the call and the suspect had been quickly tracked down after he mistakenly jumped out in front of a traffic police unit!

The final and most illuminating firearms deployment during my fieldwork was the one I managed to observe almost until its resolution. At approximately 00:27 a call went over the firearms channel for the closest Police Service 2 ARV to move towards a rendezvous point (RVP) designated by a neighbouring force as they had reports of a male seen with a handgun in a nearby town. The neighbouring force had two of their own ARVs en-route but were unsure of when they would arrive. They wanted to have a third ARV arrive on-scene as it would allow them to carry out more advanced tactics once they reached the address. I was given the choice

by the AFOs whether to be ditched out the ARV now in somewhere familiar and be collected later, or whether to accompany them to the RVP in case it all blows over, as they assured me these sorts of calls are likely to do. Knowing the opportunistic nature of research, I chose to stay in the car. As we headed towards the RVP through the back roads of the county, I realised we were as close as you can get to the middle of nowhere. At this point the call was then upgraded to a firearms deployment (I noted this in my fieldnotes alongside the exclamation "Eeeep!"[6]). I found myself stuck somewhere I was not supposed to be, in an ARV that is making rapid progress towards a job with permission to deploy with firearms. However, the AFOs could not just drop me off straight away as that would constitute leaving me in 'the middle of nowhere' which was contrary to their instructions about my safety and making sure I could at least make my way home.

Although this was not ideal, there was an unexpected benefit as I could hear first-hand the radio traffic associated with a firearms deployment as well as the problems with cross-county operations. The AFOs made repeated calls over the firearms channel that they were a Police Service 2 ARV moving towards the incident and that they had received neither a briefing nor a tactics recommendation. The neighbouring force's FIM was not forthcoming with information. Just as we arrived into the neighbouring force area a briefing was given stating that a firearms deployment had been given due to the perceived risk of the offender carrying a viable firearm. The FIM stated they believed that the risk to the Public was 'Medium', the risk to unarmed officers was deemed 'Low' as armed officers were responding, the risk to armed officers was 'Low' due to their tactics, training and equipment and finally the risk to the offender was considered 'Medium'. No recommended tactics were given but the AFOs were advised that the individual had moved out of a property into a wooded area and armed officers were to conduct an area search supported by the police helicopter. As we arrived into the town there was a police car blocking a road with its blue lights on, so I was left with a pair of local officers as the ARV went off to find the suspect.

I had a good conversation with the local officers (who asked all the usual questions about my PhD and about how unusual it was for civilians to accompany the ARV etc.) As we heard the police helicopter go overhead, I received some more details about the incident. Two unarmed officers had knocked on the door of a property looking for an individual. This individual had answered the door and when seeing it was the police, they had retrieved a handgun and pointed it at the officers. True to the police culture of action and excitement, the officers I was

---

[6] Fieldnotes 17

standing with told me they were disappointed that they had not been the ones to go looking for that individual and had the gun pointed at them. However, they conceded that at least they had made it to the scene as when their colleagues had pressed their emergency buttons on their radio shouting "GUN! GUN! GUN!" it sounded like half the force had dropped everything and headed over to help, many of whom were cancelled before they even arrived. After a short while the Police Service 2 ARV returned to pick me up. The male had been sighted by the local force's ARV officers and had been promptly arrested in some woodland. The reason they had called up the Police Service 2 ARV was they wanted to do a house search which requires six AFOs at the scene, but in the end the other officers decided it was not necessary.

The three situations where I was able to also hear a firearms deployment given to other ARV crews on duty at the same time were also informative. The first was an incidence of 'humane dispatch'. 'Humane dispatch' is the shooting of a wild or domestic animal by armed police to prevent further suffering. It is normally given to animals that have been involved in Road Traffic Collisions (RTCs) and other accidents or are in danger of causing harm. I was surprised not to hear reports of humane dispatch more often over the air as I had assumed it would be a relatively routine occurrence for armed officers operating in rural counties. Armed officers should be used as a last resort for humane dispatch and other sources, such as vets, should be contacted in the first instance. Perhaps the rural locations of some of the fieldwork meant that there are a higher number of vets or other appropriately qualified personnel that take the pressure of the police. However, with most animals being struck by vehicles at night, the police can become the de facto call out service for such a task. For the dispatch in question the firearms deployment was given and the animal dispatched. It later transpired it had taken the officer several bullets to accomplish the task and so, as one had come to expect of the ARV culture, the unfortunate AFO that had pulled the trigger became the subject of several jokes between the officers over their personal radios.

The second was a complex case and it was beneficial to hear through all its stages. One of the great disadvantages of being tasked to a firearms deployment is that, when everything kicks up a notch, it makes it difficult to take notes as the ARV goes to high speed and the AFOs are trying to find the nearest place to dump me! At approximately 20:14 a call had come in from an ex-police officer who had seen a rifle lying uncovered in a parked car. The caller stated they were reasonably familiar with firearms and pretty sure it was not an air weapon. The FIM took charge of the call and stated that an armed search should commence and a compliant stop carried out should the vehicle be sighted. Two other ARVs were tasked with the call. AFO13

turned to me and said that a 'compliant stop' is not a valid tactic, it is a 'hoped' outcome; the tactic should be an 'armed enquiry'. The FIM proceeded to outline the briefing in that there is no reason to suspect there were any Emotional or Mental Disturbance issues at play here, that this was likely to be a viable firearm but due to the circumstances and the tactics to be deployed, the risks to the public, the suspects, unarmed and armed officers were all considered 'Low'. The objective of the AFOs is to minimise risk to the public and prevent the commission of offences. The FIM tells the officers the legal framework they have for the use of force and reminds them that they have less-lethal options available. At the end they state that the officers should be using a covert approach for an armed enquiry. The OFC then started trying to find an available Firearms Support Dog to assist in case the suspect vehicle fled. The FIM reiterated that as they are assuming it is a viable firearm, the deployment of armed officers is justified as there is a need to protect police officers and the public. The TacAd also spoke up and confirmed he was satisfied with the tactics.

AFO13 turned to me and said, while it is good that the FIM rationalises their decision-making as the TFC in this situation, why do we (the AFOs) need to hear it?[7] AFO13 would much prefer that the relevant AFOs are just given the tactics, locations and Intel on the job otherwise there is a significant amount of unnecessary radio traffic. He questions whether it is the fact that all the radio traffic is recorded, and if so, does it form part of the command chain covering their back? If that is the case, then the officers have plenty of opportunities to record their justifications in the incident log or similar. At 20:34, twenty minutes after the call from the member of the public, the SFC ratifies the firearms deployment confirming that they believe it was given appropriately and that the officers can continue under direction of the TFC and OFC. This was the only time I heard the SFC's contribution to a firearms deployment.

Finally, firearms deployments are not permanent or inflexible when authorised. The third call where I heard a firearms deployment was from a construction site where the workers reported they were being shot at by an unknown weapon. Whilst the AFOs suspected that it was likely to be an air weapon, I noted the following in my field notes when the FIM reviewed the call:

> 14:10 **FIM**: I am unable to preclude that it is anything other than air rifle as we have limited information. The caller has no experience with firearms and therefore I believe the arming criteria is met.
> The risk to victim, caller, public in vicinity, armed and unarmed police is LOW.
> The purpose is to locate the individual, the firearm and further intelligence.
> Armed enquiry at that location after discussion with the caller.[8]

---

[7] Fieldnotes 8
[8] Fieldnotes 19

Three ARVs were tasked from elsewhere to deal with the call. As they made progress towards the incident the FCR got back in touch with the caller to ascertain more details. A few minutes later the FIM contacted the firearms channel again:

> 14:21 **FIM**: Other men on the building site, there are 40-50 people there, a number have firearms or air weapon experience, they are 100% certain it is not a firearm and is an air rifle. Therefore, I am rescinding the arming authority [firearms deployment].[9]

AFOs would go on to question how somebody detached from the scene could instruct officers to investigate without permission to use carbines or firearms tactics, at a risk to their own safety. This characterises the cultural clash between AFOs and the FCR: to what extent should the testimony of a member of the public alone be sufficient to assuage the FIM's previous concerns?

6.2.3 The Feeling that Firearms Deployments are not Given Appropriately

About an hour after the incident on the construction site, when discussing the fact the firearms deployment had been rescinded on the basis that it was an air rifle, AFO11 said to me:

> 15:15 **AFO11**: It's still deadly though, isn't it? There was a murder by an air rifle in [town] but not that long ago.[10]

This was not the only instance where the officers I accompanied were reticent or annoyed about a decision made by the FIM regarding the deployment of armed officers. There were several incidents we heard over the radio, such as the following:

> 12:57 Over the radio we hear the FIM relaying reports of two kids seen at school with a handgun, [the FIM] authorises a conventional [unarmed] response much to the surprise of the two ARV officers.[11]

> 19:33 Bus job in [town], male seen with a weapon, conventional response sent. I ask AFO13 if he disagrees.
> **AFO13**: "Not that I disagree, but it needs more context. The FIM ends up talking themselves out of it." [i.e. convinced themselves not to authorise a firearms deployment][12]

---

[9] Fieldnotes 19
[10] Fieldnotes 19
[11] Fieldnotes 3
[12] Fieldnotes 8

14:20   To other units, from FIM: "It's only a knife, therefore conventional response required, TASER if needed"[13]

This also was reflected in my personal experience when I attended a number of calls involving individuals with weapons, Table 6.1 below outlines the weapons-based calls that I attended with the ARV crews:

	REPORT	INDIVIDUAL FOUND?	WEAPON PRESENT?	RESULT
1	Student smashing up a classroom with a hammer	YES	YES	Arrested at scene.
2	Drunk male wielding a bottle in a supermarket	NO	NO	Suspect had been moved on by security before arrival
3	Males fighting/home invasion with a knife or shard of broken glass	YES	NO	Arrested at scene. Broken glass and knife were incidental
4	Man seen with a sword in the street	NO	NO	Area search carried out, no sign of suspect.
5	Man seen with a sword in the street	NO	NO	Area search carried out, no sign of suspect.
6	Individual with a knife threatening self-harm	YES	YES	Stood down on arrival, dealt with by other units.
7	Individual with a knife threatening to commit murder	YES	UNKNOWN	Stood down en route to call, dealt with by other units.
8	Man seen with a 10cm knife in the street	YES	YES	Arrested at scene.
9	Man seen holding a knife arguing with his girlfriend	NO	NO	Area search carried out, no sign of suspect.

Table 6.1 Weapons-based incidents not granted a firearms deployment

One of the firearms deployments I witnessed involved a call from a member of the public reporting a man seen in the street with a sword or machete. This met the criteria of a firearms deployment as the individual was deemed to have access to a 'potentially lethal weapon'. However, Table 6.1 demonstrates that the description alone is not sufficient for a firearms deployment to be authorised, and the FIM has to interpret the call criteria and deploy the resources they think are appropriate. Incidents *Four* and *Five* in the table above both had almost exactly the same call description of a man seen in the street with a sword, but neither of those calls had a firearms deployment authorised.

---

[13] Fieldnotes 22

As identified in Section 6.1.1, the criteria to issue a firearms deployment is open to interpretation and this is necessary to avoid the wasting of resources. For example, it might be excessive to give a firearms deployment for incident *Two* in table 6.1 where a drunk individual was refusing to leave a supermarket whilst holding a bottle, even though it could technically qualify as an 'individual with weapon'. However, some AFOs believe that this then leads to inconsistencies as the interpretation of an incident is variable depending on the FIM on duty for that shift:

> **AFO11:** We [AFOs] constantly fight for consistency across our TFCs [FIMs] but it is difficult when so much of it hinges on individual interpretation.[14]

> **AFO13**: There's so much discrepancy between FIMs. There are two who are great and will give a level [firearms deployment] for anything, there's some that will go out of their way to try and avoid giving a level.[15]

> **AFO27**: Not all Inspectors [FIMs] will give deployments. There are some who will categorically not deploy ARVs if they can justify it. We don't want to be constantly on at them as it gives us a bad reputation, if it seems like we're always on at them to "let us get the guns out".[16]

> **AFO27**: *... however, I think there could be some criticism in relation to some Force Control Room Inspectors* [FIMs] *not having any trust in either the officers or training that is delivered, because, they don't want to deploy to certain incidents that are, and should be, clear cut firearms deployment incidents, if that makes sense?*

These inconsistencies lead to conflict between the ARV officers who feel their practical experience with firearms and weapons-based incidents should be more valuable than the FIM's training in determining deployments. For example, one AFO told me the story of a man who was known to carry a knife, had a history of self-harming and had made threats to harm attending officers. The police knew where the individual was and the FIM was going to send a conventional response. At this point the AFOs felt they had to interrupt and say that given the intelligence, firearms officers should be going instead. The FIM then issued a firearms deployment on their recommendation[17]. If the AFOs had not decided to contradict the FIM, unarmed officers may have needlessly been placed in danger. It is not surprising that other officers echoed this sentiment:

---

[14] Fieldnotes 7
[15] Fieldnotes 8
[16] Fieldnotes 16
[17] Fieldnotes 16

AFO19: We should be tasked better.[18]

AFO27: Firearms is new, in its current form, not used to its full potential... At the moment there's lots of head-banging as we conflict.[19]

The feeling they are being tasked poorly comes from the expectations the AFOs had about their role, expectations derived from their training. There was often a disconnect where some AFOs felt that they were being over-trained as the National Police Firearms Curriculum (NPFTC) contains a lot of material for dealing with individuals armed with bladed or blunt-trauma weapons, but they are not being tasked in a firearms capacity to deal with those sort of incidents:

AFO13: There seems to be a reluctance to give a level [firearms deployment] for bladed articles, in our training we are always told "Action beats reaction".[20]

AFO22: *We don't get deployed to those, we're not being used for those jobs, and we go in a local capacity to a job where if we follow our training, we will be pointing guns at people, so, it's almost the other way round, we are training well above and beyond what we are being asked to do.*

This training includes working in pairs or groups of officers to deploy multiple tactical options simultaneously with the contingency of firearms if a lethal threat is presented. However, when on a TASER deployment, they are only authorised to use TASER but may self-deploy their sidearm if they deem it meets the arming criteria. This means when granted a firearms deployment, the AFOs are given multiple methods and sufficient support to bring about a number of resolutions:

11:29   AFO8 and AFO9 discuss the idea that TASER officers shouldn't be routinely used as a resolution to incidents where offenders have bladed articles – they should necessitate an ARV response because of the range of tools they have.[21]

Me: So do you think that should have been a deployment?
AFO27: No but... yeah, if it had extended much longer. When we get a deployment it's not just about the carbines it authorises us better protection, less-lethal options and tactics.

---

[18] Fieldnotes 11
[19] Fieldnotes 16
[20] Fieldnotes 8
[21] Fieldnotes 5

Whereas [Response] don't have that training/awareness that when there's weapons involved there is a Gold standard. We [ARVs] are happy to sit it out for a couple of hours for a mental health issue.

…They don't understand that they shouldn't just send us as 'guns', that we can bring so many alternate resolutions.[22]

By contrast, during a TASER deployment, AFOs are constrained by the capability of the TASER alone. The AFOs cannot choose to self-deploy in advance, the act of self-arming must be reactionary. The AFOs were keen to highlight the fact that TASERs are not an infallible option. For example, AFO26 told me about a situation where TASER Trained Officers (TTOs) were sent instead of an ARV against a man with a Chainsaw:

AFO26: I argued this was an incorrect Use of Force and argued that ARV be sent, I was successful. Don't get me wrong, TASER is a wonderful option but we rely on TASER too much. It only works 70% of the time, so you don't want to bet on that 30%. On a call involving any weapons it needs to be backed by something else. Will we ever understand TASER – that it needs backing up by something else, a Plan B.[23]

The limitations of TASER were also echoed by other officers:

AFO13: The problem is knife/axe/machete/whatever calls, if they've got [motorcycle] leathers, a TTO won't be able to deal with it.[24]

Since TASERs are not infallible and AFOs are entitled to self-deploy in such circumstances, one might assume that this would happen regularly when AFOs are tasked on TASER deployments. However, from anecdotal evidence this is not happening, ARVs tasked as a TASER resource do not end up drawing sidearms, even if they were entitled to do so. AFOs are going out of their way to avoid using NPFTC tactics because they do not have the authority to use the full range of tactics that they would like to. However, the behaviour of relying only on TASER contributes to a self-fulfilling prophecy where TASERs are prioritised; firearms deployments are then not authorised so that ARVs are only sent to support TASER officers:

AFO5: *... I think the trouble comes when we've seen it recently, where they're starting to send TASER equipped officers to incidents where I'd consider that we'd need an armed presence, and it's almost like, TASER authority is given just to cover themselves even though it's not really appropriate, so almost where a job meets the arming criteria, because there's only a knife mentioned straight away they'll just issue you TASER authority.*

---

[22] Fieldnotes 16
[23] Fieldnotes 15
[24] Fieldnotes 8

> **AFO26**: I have a Plan B, an unarmed officer doesn't. TASER alone is not the right weapon for this. [25]

AFOs also wanted to stress that it was not just the use of firearms that comes with a firearms deployment, it is about targeting calls with the best equipped, most appropriately skilled officers. This includes the fact that officers must be granted a firearms deployment to use the AEP Launcher but AFOs feel it would be useful outside of firearms deployments:

> **AFO8:** I wish there was a level of deployment for the Baton Gun [AEP Launcher] only as it currently resides within an arming authority [firearms deployment].[26]

> **AFO13**: Anything that might need an AEP should get a level, but they don't see it like that.
> What's their agenda? What's the reluctance? They're not pulling the trigger. They're not saying go and shoot this person.
> …
> Someone with a knife won't get [carbines], they will get AEPs.
> If they rush you, AFOs will then have to resort to their sidearms, whereas if they had been given a level [firearms deployment] they could have used the AEP. By not giving a level they are actually increasing the risk of a shooting.[27]

Some AFOs consider the AEP Launcher an "old" or "out-dated" piece of equipment, but they still find it "fit for purpose" and would only seek to replace it with something that would perform the same function:

> **AFO36**: *Some of it's, I think, might be becoming a bit out-dated, so, like…the Baton Gun* [AEP Launcher], *the less-lethal option, there are other things out there that might cost us a lot more than it's costing us at the minute but would be better for the job.*

> **AFO38**: *I think our Less-lethal options, probably, they need to be updated, if I'm honest with you, the weapon system we're using at the moment the AEP Launcher is old technology if I'm honest with you, it was put out in the 60s and 70s for mass disorder and I think the newer technologies need to be considered and implemented, if I'm honest, but with regards to our kit, I think that again, that the kit we've got is OK for what we do.*
> *…*
> **AFO37**: *…like AFO38 said really, the baton gun could probably be updated but, it's probably fit for purpose for what we do, the amount of times we actually use it, so yeah, I think we're OK.*

AFOs feel it is hard to dispel the myth that firearms deployments lead to a resolution involving lethal weapons. With the AEP Launcher tied up in a firearms deployment, it is being used less

---

[25] Fieldnotes 15
[26] Fieldnotes 5
[27] Fieldnotes 8

than the AFOs would like and AFOs feel it could be used to bring a safe resolution to an incident. If the AFOs believe that the FCR would rather task less-lethal weapons, such as TASER, to weapons incidents to avoid a potential shooting, it seems counter-intuitive that the AEP Launcher is suffering from reduced use by being contained within a firearms deployment.

6.3   Discussion

ARV Crews frequently disagree with the FIM regarding the granting of a firearms deployment. This disagreement occurs because the arming criteria are open to interpretation. Whilst this nuance is necessary, AFOs feel that if there is any mention of a weapon that could be lethal, then that meets the arming criteria and consequently a firearms deployment should be given. In the AFOs' opinions this includes bladed weapons, blunt-trauma weapons and air weapons. Tankebe's (2014) work outlines how tensions within the police organisation can be detrimental to officer self-legitimacy. If AFOs see themselves as in conflict with the FCR and the FIM's decision-making, that they do not feel firearms deployments are being given consistently or appropriately, they may feel their opinions are not valued in the police organisation.

In other words, AFOs' sense of self-legitimacy is being challenged by the fact that they are in conflict with the command and control aspects of the policing organisation (Myhill and Bradford, 2012, p. 343). However, this conflict does not lead to blind obedience from the AFOs nor does it create the ability of the FCR to make illegitimate moves on behalf of the organisation, contrary to what Bradford et al. (2014) suggest. Instead the AFOs take it upon themselves, perhaps out of obligation to their self-legitimacy and ARV culture, to tell the FIM where disparities exist or where they feel they are being inappropriately tasked. Whilst they do not feel they can change the structured way in which command and control is coordinated, they do feel the obligation to challenge individual decisions when necessary. This is perhaps supported by the fact that the OFCs and TacAds remain AFOs, despite being part of the command structure for a firearms deployment. This may mean they are likely to support the ARV crews' judgements over and above the 'detached' judgements of the FIM.

Inconsistent tasking by the FIMs also makes AFOs feel that their unarmed colleagues are not being appropriately protected. AFOs are too often being used to just to 'plug the gaps' where TASER authorities are issued instead of firearms. This is exacerbated when TTOs are sent without ARV support to a weapons-based incident. All AFOs have been unarmed officers, and a number of them have been TTOs, so they know how vulnerable an officer can be without appropriate firearms coverage. AFOs are rightfully concerned about the deployment of TTOs to

weapons-based incidents, particularly as TASER is not an infallible tool and TTOs do not have a suitable second tactical option. As identified, TTOs perhaps overemphasise the potential effectiveness of their TASER (Dymond, 2019, pp. 10-15). In contrast, it appears AFOs conform to Belur's (2014, pp. 3750-3751) assessment that armed police do not want to place all their trust in a piece of equipment that has a high failure rate and requires the officer to be uncomfortably close to the suspect.

When ARVs are tasked to bladed weapon calls as a TASER resource, the AFOs argue they would be justified if they wished to self-deploy firearms. This is reinforced by the fact that the NPFTC contains a lot of material for AFOs on dealing with individuals armed with bladed or blunt trauma weapons. However, this leaves two key questions. Firstly, if the AFOs would be entitled to self-deploy whilst on scene, why does it appear in most cases that they do not self-deploy? The second issue is whether police services are not fully engaging with their responsibility to issue a firearms deployment when a lethal weapon is involved. Why are FIMs not issuing a firearms deployment for the call so the ARV crew can be better prepared upon arrival? This reinforces to some extent the feeling among AFOs that senior management would rather see police officers injured than a member of the public shot.

The AEP Launcher, which AFOs feel is a useful piece of equipment, could potentially be used as an intermediary step. It is a less-lethal piece of equipment that has a high success rate and can be used at longer range than the TASER or incapacitating spray. In terms of maintaining distance from a threat, AFOs felt the AEP Launcher was the most suitable solution but it is currently only able to be deployed within a firearms deployment. Perhaps FIMs should either grant more firearms deployments so the AEP Launcher can be considered by AFOs as a tactical option; or the AEP Launcher should be removed from the criteria of a firearms deployment, potentially having its own deployment criteria like TASER has. If the AEP was able to be given as a deployment in of itself, it may alleviate some of the pressure that AFOs feel when firearms deployments are, or are not, given.

The context of the AEP in the British context should be remembered. The AEP is based on the 'Plastic Baton Round (PBR) used during The Troubles in Northern Ireland. The inappropriate use of PBRs caused several deaths in Northern Ireland, including the deaths of children (Rogers, 2003, p. 196). The potential impact on legitimacy of the AEP has not been explored outside of Northern Ireland yet its use in firearms operations so far has been relatively uncontroversial (Orbons, 2011; Payne-James, Rivers and Green, 2014). Much more information is needed about the existing use of the AEP Launcher to enable an informed decision about its

use. The recent requirement to record all uses of force by police in England and Wales should help to improve these currently unknown statistics about the AEP Launcher.

Chapter Summary

This chapter has explored the criteria for the granting of a firearms deployment as outlined by the College of Policing. It examined how the criteria are open to interpretation to allow for deployments to be made in pursuit of officer safety. However, AFOs find this ambiguity leads to inconsistencies between FIMs and can lead to tension between the FCR and ARV crews when disagreements occur. This was reflected in my personal experience of firearms deployments where there was often little connection between the calls surrounding weapons that had a firearms deployment granted and calls where ARVs were tasked as a supporting resource.

This, in turn, contributes to a feeling from AFOs that firearms deployments are not always given appropriately. Such decisions run the risk of injuring unarmed officers or members of the public if they delay in giving a deployment. Whilst AFOs' sense of self-legitimacy is challenged by this conflict, it does not lead to AFOs blindly following orders; where possible ARV crews challenge the FCR's perception of an incoming call. Ultimately, AFOs strive to be recognised as having additional skills and equipment available within a firearms deployment, and it is not just their capacity to bring guns that may help resolve a situation.

7 Armed Police – Public Interactions and Legitimacy

Introduction

This chapter outlines armed police-public interactions as well as Authorised Firearms Officers' (AFOs') assessments of the police-public relationship. This chapter begins by using a typology to explore whether members of the public had an observable reaction to noticing that the officers were carrying firearms. While the material presented here draws some connection between the findings and existing literature on the public's legitimation of armed police, the focus is instead on the AFO's construction of self-legitimacy. The chapter outlines officers' thoughts and interpretations of the public interactions to see if officers perceive their sense of self-legitimacy is affected by carrying firearms. The chapter discusses whether AFOs consider themselves approachable by members of the public and how the ARV role may potentially interfere with Community Policing efforts.

7.1 Typology

7.1.1 Creation of a Typology

Whilst analysing the data, I created a typology to explore the circumstances in which AFOs were coming into contact with members of the public and to look at what the attitudes of those members of the public were. I determined four separate categories which I have described as Antagonist, Assistance, Expected or Unexpected:

- *Antagonist* relates to the situations where an individual is in direct conflict with the AFOs. The most likely circumstance was that the individual was the focus of the call being attended.

- *Assistance* reflects individuals who have called police or were seeking assistance from them. In these circumstances they expected to see a police officer but did not necessarily expect them to be armed.

- *Expected* circumstances were where I determined a member of the public would reasonably expect to see armed police. For the purpose of this study the most notable Expected circumstance was where the officers were deployed at the airport.

- *Unexpected* circumstances encompassed all other scenarios, where members of the public had no expectation of seeing a police officer and therefore no expectation of interacting with armed police. This included supermarkets, petrol stations, cafes etc. or performing routine policing duties that were otherwise in full view of the public such as door-knocking for witnesses or making an arrest in a public place.

I wanted to create links between the various circumstances in which members of the public were coming into contact with the AFOs and consider whether the fact they were carrying a firearm had an obvious impact on the immediate interaction that took place. A few AFOs believed that members of the public *do* notice something different about AFOs compared to other members of the police service. However, most AFOs stated the public rarely identified that they are carrying a firearm and many people mistake the holstered pistol for a TASER:

> **AFO26**: *I think most of the time people don't even register it, I think that unless you know what you're actually looking at, one police uniform looks very much like another, a lot of people, the number of people that point at a, a holstered sidearm and say 'Is that a TASER?', erm just goes to show, honestly, how, how little people really think or care about it…*

> **AFO31**: *Most people think what we're carrying on our hips is a TASER, or some form of stun gun…they're really surprised some of them, some people are really surprised when you, when you tell them you are an armed officer, um...*

> **AFO35**: [Chuckles] *Yeah, you'd be surprised, most people don't see the firearm, because it's black, and it's strapped to your leg, so they don't really see it, some people will and they'll ask if it's a TASER or they'll ask questions about it, they'll find it interesting… we get it when we pop in and get a coffee or something from the petrol station, people come up and ask and have a chat with you, um, but like I say, most people don't even realise it's there.*

A further point that is worth highlighting here is the potential for exposure to the fact that officers are carrying firearms. For example, one officer stated that in his experience:

> **AFO11**: You can be in someone's house a long time for them to notice you have a gun. They will clock it eventually.[1]

Systematic observational research in Great Britain suggests that most police-public contacts are fleeting and last less than a minute (Giacomantonio et al., 2014, pp. 17-19). Members of the public are seldom given the opportunity to notice the officers are armed. Furthermore, AFOs are most recognisably armed when carrying carbines but, as established in Chapter Five, this only occurs in certain circumstances. This means that in most of their interactions with the public, the AFOs are carrying a signficantly smaller weapon, holstered on their thigh.

I recorded in my fieldnotes (see Table 5.1) whether I felt members of the public noticed that the officers present were carrying firearms. I was curious to see whether there was a visible or

---

verbal reaction to the prescence of firearms officers. While members of the public may have had non-visible reactions, the aim was not to comprehensively understand individual opinions of armed police, but rather to see if officers were encountering a repeated, negative reaction to their prescence. Such negative reactions could have been examples of the public's amplified feelings of risk as suggested by Bayley (1977, p. 222) or evidence of greater scrutiny as suggested by Waddington's 'yuck factor' (Hendy, 2012, pp. 42-43).

EXPERIENCED	NOTICED	DID NOT NOTICE
1 : Antagonist	9	3
2 : Assistance	1	5
3 : Expected	2	0
4 : Unexpected	10	13
TOTAL	22	21

Table 7.1 Were police firearms noticed in the police-public interactions witnessed?

Similarly, I recorded the circumstances in which AFOs discussed situations they had been involved with in the past (see Table 5.2). These were particularly relevant as officers drew upon their recent experiences of Operation Foot. Operation Foot was a reassurance policing exercise and counter-terrorism strategy that took place between 2017 and 2018 where overtly armed officers were deployed on foot to venues and events that were likely to attract a large crowd. AFOs used Operation Foot to highlight some of the positive interactions they had with the public when they were obviously armed. Taking this into account, the typology was slightly expanded with an Operation Foot sub-category under Unexpected.

To assess whether the public noticed, I only recorded the fact if the AFOs explicitly told me in the course of the conversation that the member of the public had either commented on their weaponry or had seemed oblivious through the course of their business. Whilst Table 7.2 is not definitive, being based upon AFOs' recollections during the conversations we had, it is indicative of the way in which AFOs have experienced public reactions to their presence and armaments.

DISCUSSED	NOTICED	DID NOT NOTICE
1 : Antagonist	3	1
2 : Assistance	2	4
3 : Expected	2	1
4 : Unexpected	22	15
Operation Foot	11	1
TOTAL	40	22

Table 7.2 Were police firearms noticed in the police-public interactions discussed?

Upon examination of those tables, in terms of both my personal experience and the experiences the AFOs recounted to me in the period under review, there was a 62% chance that members of the public would notice that the police officers they were interacting with were carrying firearms, regardless of the circumstances of their contact. I was surprised that the percentage was so high considering the general feeling that I had built up over the research from the AFOs that the public very rarely noticed the firearms. Even if the instances where the police officers are carrying carbines are removed from the tables, which would be the 'Expected' and 'Operation Foot' categories, it remains a 55% chance that members of the public *will* notice that the officers are armed. I would have expected a much wider disparity between the instances when the officers are very visibly carrying a carbine in their hands and all other instances where the firearm is holstered on their leg. This would be simply due to the visibility of the firearm. One officer even pointed out how the sidearms tend to blend in, given the 'black on black' nature of their equipment:

> **AFO8:** *Depends on if they even notice the gun in the first place.*
> **AFO9:** *Yeah, true, I'm wearing all black, so it might have blended in.*
> **AFO8:** *To whether they approach you or not … All the people that don't approach you, it's hard to notice all those who haven't approached you, so you can really only go after ones that have approached you, but yeah, certainly a couple for like, I say, without wanting to demean whatever it was, a menial-type police task, yeah they certainly haven't had any issues running up when I'm walking round carrying a carbine.*
> **AFO9:** *I've been doing this a lot less time than AFO8, I see no difference to the way people have come up to me before and now, it doesn't feel any different I still have lots of...*
> **AFO8:** *But again, you can't measure whether or not, you don't ask anybody afterwards, oh, did you know I had a gun?*

The issue of visibility surrounding police firearms can lead to confusion as demonstrated in Yesberg, Bradford and Dawson's (2019) study. Their work consisted of an experimental study designed to investigate public reactions to armed police. In that study Yesberg, Bradford and Dawson (2019, p. 14) stated that officers carrying carbines is the "form of armed policing most commonly seen in public in the UK". Considering that they include "the UK", and thus, the routinely armed Police Service of Northern Ireland, one must dispute this and state that

officers only carrying *sidearms* are the most commonly seen in public. Whether officers are carrying firearms is *noticed* is perhaps the more pertinent point. In their study, participants were shown a series of images of armed and unarmed officers, and were asked to make judgements about the officer(s) in each image to decide if they found them: Friendly, Approachable, Respectful, Trustworthy or Aggressive. Overall, the study found that people had a less positive response to an image of an officer with a firearm than one without, but that response was unlikely to influence an individual's trust in the police as a whole.

However, Yesberg, Bradford and Dawson (2019, p. 14) admitted that for the images of 'armed police' shown, they chose to solely show pictures of firearms officers carrying carbines. Upon reviewing their photographic prompts, it was discovered that they had mistakenly included an AFO carrying a sidearm, using him as an example of an 'unarmed' officer. This perhaps highlights how covert the holstered sidearm is, as those directing a study of armed police failed to notice one. However, there are broader implications for the findings of their study as a whole. If a weapon is not noticed, whether by a member of the public or an academic, to what extent can it threaten police legitimacy? If Yesberg, Bradford and Dawson (2019) are able to isolate their results for that image, it would be interesting and worthwhile to know whether he was rated 'positively' as per an unarmed officer, or 'negatively' as per an armed officer, or something else altogether.

7.1.2 Antagonist

In both my personal experience and in the experiences recounted by the AFOs I spoke to, it was more common for an individual in direct opposition with the police to notice the officers were armed. Indeed, one officer stated:

> **AFO20**: Criminals will notice you're armed, they're the first to notice, and they will act differently.[2]

One officer noticed a similar phenomenon when he joined the Armed Response Vehicle (ARV) team and provided a measure of explanation to this change in behaviour:

> **AFO17**: When I first came to ARV, I noticed a difference when you do turn up to a violent incident. Other than those who are drunk and don't notice or those who are hard men who want to fight so don't care, so those who are I suppose 'rationally violent' will change. And it's not just the gun, there's two of us in big gear, who turn up in a big car, we are generally more athletic. People become less aggressive, less cocky,

---

[2] Fieldnotes 11

[Response] like it when we show. Professional crooks also know enough about policing to know not to fuck with us.[3]

Their crew-mate added:

> **AFO18**: They know we're not scared to use TASER. There's a reluctance among those on shift as it's at the highest end of their Use of Force continuum, for us it's one of our lowest. Although we don't get in as many 'fights' that might need our other less-lethal [weapons].[4]

I witnessed an instance of this behaviour change when we were deployed to a Priority Call about two males fighting; possibly as the result of a home invasion where it was reported a knife was involved. As soon as we arrived on-scene, the suspect, who had been collared by Response officers as he tried to leave, looked at the AFOs as they arrived and said: "Oh my God! You're armed! I didn't think it needed that!"[5]

My experiences of both witnessing these exchanges between antagonists and the police, and hearing AFOs recount their previous police-public contacts, suggests that antagonists tend to notice police firearms because they are 'sizing up' the police. Antagonists want to know that if their police contact leads to a physical confrontation, whether it is a confrontation they can win or not. Paradoxically, this also means that whilst they were more likely to notice the police firearms, it often led to increased levels of compliance among antagonists. As part of the 'sizing up' process, the offender realises that the officers have the overt capacity to threaten or use lethal force to secure compliance, so they tend to back down.

However, there were a few noticeable incidents where the identification of firearms or other weapons on an officer's person led to an increase in resistance from the subject. In one case, the AFOs were supporting a local officer who had pulled a vehicle over and needed help checking over the occupants. Unfortunately, the local officers had stopped the vehicle in the housing estate where its occupants lived, and it quickly became a public spectacle. I noted the following:

> 20:45 A local Sergeant has pulled over a vehicle containing two occupants who smell of cannabis, he wants to test the driver to see if he's under the influence. Unfortunately, they have ended up parked right outside their block of flats and a significant number of friends and neighbours have joined this now public spectacle. The Sergeant, feeling a little threatened, has asked for help.

---

[3] Fieldnotes 10
[4] Fieldnotes 10
[5] Fieldnotes 8

> ...
> Racist comments are voiced towards AFO28 calling him a "Coconut".
> He [AFO28] later says they hate black cops and particularly hate black armed cops. He's got a gun, he drives a nice car and he gets paid to do it, so he becomes something of an envious target for these jealous, young, black men.
> ...
> It takes about 15 minutes for the members of the public to realise AFO28 and AFO27 are armed. They start making comments about them being "Black Muslim terrorists" that need to be shot that's why there's armed police here.[6]

In this case, the offenders were already shouting abuse, including racist abuse at the AFOs. Clearly it was their existing relationship with police that was problematic, and it was not specifically the presence of the firearm that escalated this encounter.

In the second instance, the offender, who was a 15-year-old male, made threats towards the officers (and anyone else who was listening) detailing what he would do to try and provoke a specific response. Considering the AFOs and I had been with the offender for nearly two hours at this point and he was cuffed in the holding cell of the custody suite, as well as being significantly smaller than the two AFOs, it did not deter him. I noted:

> ~11:30 Lots of back and forth between the pupil and the officers, he makes lots of threats against them.
> "What fucking weapons have you got to beat up 14/15-year olds with?"
> ...
> "Gotta lot of fucking tools to hurt people"
> He tries to escape the handcuffs, when the officer pushes him back into his seat he retorts: "What you gonna do, Tase me?"[7]

Of the four instances detailed here where antagonists did not notice the officers were armed, two of these occurred (one discussed and one experienced) when officers were sat in police vehicles. The individuals clearly recognised the AFOs as 'police' and wished to air their grievance with them, even if it was something they had no control over. The AFOs never left their vehicles during these encounters, there was no obvious indication that the members of the public knew the officers were armed and they did not comment on it.

In the other two instances, one was a very short encounter involving two individuals, both foreign nationals, who had been drinking heavily. They were polite and apologetic throughout the encounter and did not appear to notice they were interacting with armed officers. This leaves the final instance as an outlier. The ARV crew had been requested to attend to help a

---

[6] Fieldnotes 16
[7] Fieldnotes 10

proactive policing unit with an arrest warrant for a weapons-based offence. Upon arrival, the suspect was placed in handcuffs and the AFOs stayed with him whilst the other officers searched the room. During the search, a BB gun[8] was recovered and the AFOs 'made it safe'. The AFOs spent a significant amount of time with the suspect who remained silent throughout and barely gave the AFOs a second glance.

The data suggests that those in opposition to the police are more likely to notice the AFOs are carrying firearms as part of a 'sizing up' process but this eventually tended to lead to more co-operation. Interestingly, it was never discussed or experienced whether antagonists 'sizing up' process changes if the antagonist themselves are armed. Whilst in a couple of instances during the fieldwork weapons were seized, they were not being wielded, so there is insufficient data here to present any form of conclusion. It would take the accompanying of AFOs to firearms deployments to gather this data in full. Regardless, it is difficult to accurately separate the effects of the weapon from the effects of the AFOs. There is further evidence here in support of Yesberg, Bradford and Dawson (2019, pp.21-22) to suggest that members of the public may assess armed officers based upon their existing attitudes towards the police, the mere fact a police officer is carrying a firearm may not alter that opinion.

7.1.3   Assistance

The reverse may be true of those who are victims of crime, or those who turn to police for assistance in an emergency. These individuals were least likely, based on my observations, to notice that the officer they are turning to for help is carrying a firearm. Several AFOs separately offered similar theories on this matter in response to different interview questions:

> **AFO22**: *We spoke earlier about, they don't see, us, as individuals, they see us, we are, we turn up in a white car with yellow and blue squares down the side with 'Police' written on the side, people who need assistance don't care who gets out, they don't care whether you're, what your ethnic origin is, they don't care what your gender is, they don't care how tall you are, they don't care, anything else, but you are a police officer to give them help. The people who then start complaining, um, you do get occasionally, you know, 'It's unnecessary! Why've you brought a gun?' and all the rest of it, either because you can speak to them and say 'I'm a police officer, I'm here to help', and that's it, the majority of times, they don't even know, um...*

> **AFO24**: *I think if there's an emergency they'll just go to anyone.*

> **AFO34**: *If you go to, the way I see it, is there, if you go to an incident, and they're the victim, they love you, you know.*

---

[8] An air weapon capable of discharging a small plastic or metal pellet.

This was corroborated by my direct experience at the scene of many difficult incidents. When armed officers arrived at the scene to make enquiries, they were not given a second glance, whether at a burglary where the homeowner returned shortly afterwards, or at the scene of a fatal cardiac arrest where a group of construction workers had just lost a colleague.

However, I was surprised that even when the presence of officers carrying a firearm might have been taken to be a good thing, that it was not noticed by members of the public. For example, an incident I noted occurring where, by coincidence, the first two units on scene were both ARVs. In this instance, a call from a distressed female potentially facing violence from an unknown intruder led to four burly, armed men arriving promptly at her address. The sudden arrival of multiple armed officers could have been interpreted positively, as if the police were treating the threat of violence against a lone female as warranting such a response. Instead, the fact they were armed and appeared quickly was not noticed:

> 11:41   Priority call to an address with a suspected burglary in progress, the address has a marker for the occupant having a baseball bat. It's a direct response from a 999 call from a distressed female who is locked in her bathroom stating that she can hear "somebody in the address".
> We arrive on scene, officers search the house and there is no sign of anybody else in the address. The doors are unlocked, and it is revealed there is a long running feud between this address and the address next door.
> …
> 12:02   In terms of the public, they didn't notice that the four officers that ran into their house were armed. According to AFO7 they just see a face in a uniform, they're too wrapped up in their own bubble to notice or care; they are just looking for help when they need it.[9]

The only instance I experienced where someone calling the police for assistance noticed the officers had firearms was in relation to a Priority Call at a school involving a pupil smashing up a classroom with a hammer. This incident was particularly notable as the officers were requested to *disarm* prior to entering the premises. I noted the following occurred:

---

[9] Fieldnotes 4

> 11:29   Priority call to a school where a student is smashing up a classroom with a hammer.
> Concern from control about sending armed officers to a school but they are the only available unit, so it requested that the officers remove their sidearms before entering. This is a very rare occurrence.
> …
> As we arrive a member of staff comes out to meet us, the officers start to disarm and ask her about the situation saying it is important, she notices the guns and makes a comment along the lines of "Well it's important that they are locked away too!", it was in jest and not a targeted comment against the officers. As a deputy head of a pupil referral unit she appreciates the help of the police when necessary.
> The officers grab extra equipment taking a shield each and AFO8 takes a 3ft baton. Both officers retain their TASERs, ASPs and incapacitating spray.[10]

Arguably then, in the situations that most matter, when a member of the public is turning to a police officer for assistance, the presence of a firearm is unlikely to make any difference to the officer or the encounter being perceived as legitimate. I did not have any experience of it across my fieldwork and only one AFO could think of a single moment in their entire career where carrying a firearm had caused any issues with a member of the public when they were trying to render assistance:

> **AFO14**: *You know, I had a job a while back with a lady and she was going through a tough time and I spent 10 minutes talking her down and calming her down and she'd just sort of started complying, was sat on the bed, and at that point she then noticed the gun and then hit the roof again, 'Oh my God! You've got a gun!' and just started like screaming and almost tearing the place apart again, and it's just then having to start all over and getting that rapport back no matter, you know, we got on absolutely fine for that first 10 minutes and the rapport was there and it was going really well until she saw the gun, and just completely flipped again, it's yeah…*

7.1.4 Expected

There were some occasions where members of the public might expect to see armed officers. One such location, an airport, meant that it could not be discounted. The only other times I could identify that a member of the public might expect to see armed officers would be during an armed operation that is either being widely reported or they are connected to in some way:

> **AFO13**: *…I think the vast majority of the public, kind of understand that we need firearms officers, but don't really want to see them…they expect to see them, it's not a shock at an airport, is it? You go through Heathrow Airport, members of the public, everybody's sort of accepting of the fact you're going to have armed police there, aren't you? I wonder whether they actually look at them as police officers or just armed security, for the airport.*

---

[10] Fieldnotes 5

The airport is a site where you would expect members of the public would anticipate seeing armed police, the act of spotting armed officers is also made easier in this space. Whilst on general patrol, the AFOs I accompanied always carried a handgun in a drop-leg holster on their thigh. However, at the airport, there is a 'Standing Authority' for armed officers to carry their carbines in addition to the handgun, something that normally would only be authorised on a dedicated firearms deployment. This means the officers very visibly have a firearm held in their hands, in addition to the one holstered on their thigh. One AFO believed that perhaps the public were over-exposed to officers at such locations:

> **AFO15**: *Airports are the most common context, see us there all the time and think nothing of it, people probably think we are security or something. If the public don't notice us what's their perception?*

Testing that in practice, upon arrival at the airport I noted:

10:40	What is immediately obvious is once the officers have retrieved the carbines from the car and walked into the airport, a number of individuals stare straight at them, the airport staff recognise the officers and they have a bit of a chat. It appears to be a positive policing presence, with the potential to build legitimacy.
	People generally give the officers a wide berth, certain members of airport staff make a point of getting as close as possible.
	The context of the airport is probably most familiar to most members of the public in terms of seeing armed police.
	A pair of Portuguese tourists stop the officers for a chat, make a joke in passing about not robbing any banks, there's curiosity and novelty to seeing armed British officers. They are smiling throughout the encounter. For most people they only have the media of armed police in mind, pictures from the news, and few people seem to want to interact to challenge that.
	One officer says there's a tacit recognition from the public that this is out of the ordinary; they know why you're here.
	The male demographic tends to give furtive glances, looking hard when the officers are not facing them, they seem to have unasked questions about the officers' kit. Groups of lads always stare and poke each other regardless of what the officers are doing.
	Once they've been there for a while, nobody looks again.
10:52	A flight from Amsterdam lands. As they come out of Arrivals many people stare at the officers on the way past.
	One of the last people off the plane, an older lady, which one of the officers refers to as from "That demographic" makes a comment to the officers about "It's a bit much, isn't it?", she then does a complete 180 in the course of the conversation with the officers because at the end she says she doesn't know what all the fuss is about and that all officers should be carrying a firearm.
	A young lad looks one of the officers up and down until he [the officer] looks back.

To me, this initially appeared as an almost paradoxical finding, in that when members of the public might reasonably expect to see armed officers, they pay them the closest attention. However, upon reflection, the context of the airport is important. Not only are the officers carrying carbines, which make them obvious, but also, at an airport people have the opportunity to stare. While it might be a novelty to see armed officers on the streets, people are often busy, whereas at the airport they have the opportunity to actually take note of what is happening around them. AFOs therefore have a lot more contact with the public in a much shorter space of time. Because members of the public have time, they are more willing to actually engage the officers in a conversation. More unprompted conversations were had with the public at the airport than at any other point in the research.

7.1.5   Unexpected

The results in *unexpected* circumstances are less clear, perhaps due to the random nature of police work itself. In my experience, during the *unexpected* encounters, it is more likely that members of the public would not notice the officers are armed. Perhaps because they are not expecting to see armed police, they do not look. When the firearm is noticed, the officers tell me that there are quite often a series of misunderstandings centred around what the public know about firearms, how they are used by police and even what the police do in general!

> **AFO5**: *Firearms terms, a lot of people don't even know that we have a firearms capability in this country, we walk round with sidearms and someone will notice we're carrying a gun and their instant reaction is to 'Oh my God, what's happening? We didn't know you were round all the time.' That sort of reaction.*

> **AFO17**: *I think, I mean like today, I've already had two people, both old men come up to me and go 'Oh you've got a gun, I didn't think policemen here had guns', and that's just in the space of the eight hours I've been on duty and that happens fairly regularly, it tends to be always in BP garages, I guess it's just people shop in the M&S [supermarket].*

> **AFO15**: *…it's not something that's glaringly obvious, they may think, 'Ooh, they look a bit different' because we've got so much on our vests and all that type of thing, erm, and then halfway through the conversation, or the incident they'll say, 'Oh my God, is that, are you carrying a gun? Is that a real?' The classic is, 'Is that a real gun?'*
> **AFO26**: *'Is it loaded?' That sort of thing.*
> **AFO15**: *Well, I say 'Yes', they'll say, 'Is it loaded?', we'll say 'Yes', and then that'll be it, and then they'll probably have a think about it but they won't, they don't, they don't*

---

react any different, or I haven't experienced anyone reacting any differently to it, other than that initial, 'Oh my goodness, is that a gun?'. Yeah.

AFO38: All the usual questions: There's not bullets in there, is there? They're not real bullets though are they? They would bounce off? Is that a real gun? Is it loaded? It's nice to have that innocent/blasé approach.[12]

This was cemented in my experience by a conversation I overhead as we queued for food between an AFO and a Member of the Public (MoP):

MoP: Can I ask you a question I'm not sure you can answer?
AFO11: Err, yeah sure…
MoP: Is there a clip [magazine] in your piece [gun]?
AFO11: Errr, haha, yes, it's loaded.[13]

This encounter confirms Yesberg and Bradford's (2018, p. 3) postulation that, in relation to armed police, the public operate in a "low information environment". Most members of the British public occupy a social context where even the sight of an armed officer is rare, and therefore will have questions about their deployment and use (Yesberg and Bradford, 2018, p. 3). This curiosity is reinforced by AFOs reporting that members of the public assume 'something' is happening when they see armed police and want to know what's 'going on':

AFO3: *I think again that varies depending on what sort of situation you're in, a lot, I think, approach us more, because they're curious and they can't help themselves but they want to know why you're in their area, why you're carrying a firearm, what's going on, a lot of people are nosy and I do think that people will approach us, a lot of people go 'Ooooh, what's that all about?' and want us to then, they almost want a response from us by their comments.*

Operation Foot
The exception to the *unexpected* findings, and hence why it has been coded separately, is the discussion I had with the AFOs about their role in the Operation Foot patrols undertaken in the wake of the 2017 London and Manchester terrorist attacks. During these patrols, officers identified that most people they interacted with knew they were armed and came to talk to them because of it. These Operation Foot patrols probably benefitted from the visibility of armed officers being increased as, much like at the airport, on these patrols officers had standing authority to deploy with carbines as well as handguns. When recounting their

---

[12] Fieldnotes 22
[13] Fieldnotes 7

experiences of Operation Foot, most AFOs identified it as a positive experience, which went against their expectations:

> **AFO13**: *If you were to walk foot patrol through* [city] *before Christmas, if you were just walking around, as a, like a Neighbourhood Officer, you probably won't get spoken to, you'll get a few Hellos, whereas when we were doing Op Foot patrols, people were stopping us and actually engaging in conversation, you know, kids wanted, people wanted photographs with you, kids wanted photographs with you, you know, I know it's because it's different, it's not normal, but, you know to a degree I, you know, a lot of people are very, you know, very sort of pro other people, there were a few people that said actually that's quite shocking, the fact that, not necessarily the fact we're carrying a firearm, but actually the situation has got so bad that we have to, or that it's been deemed we have to.*

> **AFO35**: *If you look at last year when we had the Critical* [terrorism] *grading, and we were routinely armed with the long-arms* [Operation Foot], *which you would think is a lot more, oppressive, you know, a lot more threatening, a lot more aggressive, but the number of people that came up to ask to have photographs with us was just unreal, you'd go to* [shopping district] *or* [town] *shopping centre, and, we'd have families, you know, coming up wanting to have their photograph taken with us, and, you know, kids coming over to get their photograph taken with their parents, all sorts of things, so it, it had probably the opposite effect, we had more people came to talk to us than did before because they saw these armed police officers and wanted to come and chat about it.*

However, the idea of armed police operating in a "low information environment" still applied to the Operation Foot patrols (Yesberg and Bradford, 2018):

> **AFO33**: It surprised me, how little some people pay attention to the news, what's going on. 'Why are you here with guns?' 'We're just reassuring the public given current events.' 'Oh, why, what's happening?'[14]

7.2   Do Firearms Officers Consider Themselves Approachable?

In attempting to explore this issue further, one of the interview questions I asked was:

> *When carrying a firearm, do you feel the public have the same willingness to approach you for assistance?*

Implicit within this question is my assumption that people are generally willing to approach unarmed police officers; and that before they became armed, the AFOs were used to being approached by members of the public. This expectation must have continued when they became an AFO. Also implicit, to some extent, is the idea that the public may notice they are

---

[14] Fieldnotes 20

carrying a firearm. The answers to this question were broken down in analysis into four responses within the theme.

The first node recognised that some AFOs felt that being seen carrying a firearm potentially improved peoples' willingness to approach as it became a talking point for members of the public.

> **Me**: *So, when carrying a firearm, do you feel the public have the same willingness to approach you for assistance.*
> **AFO20**: *Absolutely.*
> **AFO19**: *Yeah, absolutely.*
> **AFO20**: *They'll, in my experience, they're more likely come and talk to me because I've got a gun, than if I was just standing there unarmed. They like to come and share their experiences of policing, of maybe contact they've had with the police whether they've been firearms or otherwise, they like to come and talk to you because you are carrying a gun.*
> **Me**: *OK.*
> **AFO20**: *And get photos.*
> [Laughter]
> **AFO20**: *And tourists do it as well, don't they? Tourists love it.*
> **AFO19**: *Yeah.*

> **Me**: *OK. When carrying a firearm, do you feel the public have the same willingness to approach you for assistance?*
> **AFO21**: *Yeah, I think so, I haven't had, if anything I've had more people approach me and, certainly with that's been going on with the… terrorist activity, certainly during that time we'd have people coming up to us, shaking our hands and thanking us and you felt guilty 'cos really, the true officers are the ones that are in front of us, the ones that are day-in day-out on patrol dealing with, you know, with all the jobs that get thrown at them and, you know, rarely having a lunch break type thing as they're so busy.*

> **AFO30**: *So yeah, I find more, people are more willing to talk to me and approach me, whereas before, they, you're just a copper, you know, so, um.*
> **Me**: *So they use it as a conversation starter?*
> **AFO30**: *Yeah, yeah, they usually, if you've got, when we were going through the high threat levels and we were actually carrying our carbines, loads of people would talk to us, and were actually quite friendly and supporting us and even saying 'Oh, we'll buy you a coffee' and all the rest of it, I've never had that, in 13 years, I've never had such support you know, from the public, um, I've been shouted out and abused, but...*
> [Laughter]
> **AFO30**: *... I've never had 'Ah, thanks very much' and pat on the back and all that sort of stuff, I've never had that.*

Another group stated that they felt that becoming an AFO had made little difference. Whether armed or unarmed, they felt members of the public were always willing to approach them:

AFO9: *But erm, yeah, I see no difference, but maybe, there'd been a difference but I wouldn't know, I personally haven't seen a difference in demographic of people coming up to me, still get kiddies coming up wanting to wear my hat.*

AFO33: *I've certainly never had any experience of people being put-off asking for assistance just because we're Armed Response Officers.*

Me: *So when carrying a firearm, do you feel the public have the same willingness to approach you for assistance?*
AFO37: *I, it's a difficult one to answer because we're not, we aren't, sort of out and about in the public domain as much as the boys and girls who don't carry a firearm, erm, yes we're driving about and we drive about a lot but we've got a lot more time to drive about and be sort of more pro-active and go and target certain people so, if they stop us in our vehicles, they don't know that we've got firearms, that we're a Firearms Unit, so, in terms of, we don't do sort of foot patrols, so people don't really get the opportunity to approach us, I don't think, it's, I've not really had that experience yet, apart from a couple of times walking when we did the sort of patrols of the shopping centres after Christmas and that but, err, no, I don't think it puts people off talking to you.*

However, several other AFOs suggested that this was not automatic, and the requirement for ARV officers to perform several roles meant that their public interactions were highly context dependent:

AFO1: *I mean, I think you would need to put that into context because generally when we're carrying a firearm, we're obviously at a firearms incident, a deployment, we're not there to sort of talk to the public.*
Me: *Yeah.*
AFO1: *And we're obviously there to do a job, when the threat level changed and we were doing our patrols around the sort of higher threat areas, then yes, then we were welcoming selfie, photos, etc. because that's good PR, and it's good to integrate with members of the public....*

AFO25: *I agree, I think the times that, it does happen quite, quite often, you'll be on a deployment dealing with something fully armed, you're obviously armed, but it depends on the person that's approaching you, if they want an 'in' to find out what's going on, they come up with another reason to speak to you, when in actual fact they just wanna know, what's going on, but in general terms just walking round when we're doing Op Foot, it's all about very positive, maybe inquisitive as to why, and the odd photo, but they don't say 'I'd like to check on my crime report', 'Can I make a report of a theft of a handbag', they don't generally do that, I don't think that's because they're intimidated, I think it's because they've looked at us and thought: "Your priority probably isn't my issue right now".*

Only one officer felt members of the public were less willing to approach them because of the firearm. However, in style it links with the concerns raised above about context being important, and that in an emergency, they may turn to anybody in a uniform:

> **AFO24**: *Again, having come from the unarmed police to the armed police, I'd say, for assistance - no, because they don't want to bother you, they, I feel, that they feel that we're here for a special reason, so I never really now get asked about crimes, about parking or about general issues that people would come up and ask us for, I think if there's an emergency they'll just go to anyone, but, if I'm on the street they want to ask questions about what you're doing, what you're carrying, they don't want to ask you, they seem to not want to bother you about stuff. As an unarmed officer, I never got that, it was just about 'I've got a problem, can you sort it out?' 'I've got this, I've got that, I've got this, I've got that', so, yeah, um, I don't think they do.*

However, AFO24 suggests that there is perhaps some difference in the way that members of the public interact with AFOs. When deployed on duties such as Operation Foot, the AFOs feel they are approachable. This connects with the suggestions made in section 7.1.1 that even if they do not explicitly notice the firearms, members of the public can and do notice differences between AFOs and other police officers. AFO24 and AFO25 say that they feel members of the public do not approach armed police for 'normal' police matters. The public do not discuss thefts or parking issues with AFOs, something they perhaps expected would continue from their experiences as unarmed officers. AFO24 also points out that if the public do see the firearm, there sometimes comes with it an assumption that the AFO is more experienced or more senior than the unarmed officers. Other AFOs echoed this:

> **AFO6**: *And sometimes at jobs, you will find they'll gravitate towards you, so you go to a job and you've got on with local officers and sometimes they will just clock the different uniform and immediately assume you're the one to talk to.*
> **AFO7**: *We're not senior, or, you know...*
> **AFO6**: *No, not in any way.*
> **AFO7**: *...in any way we're not senior to, you know, any other role. Errm...*
> **AFO6**: *We have slightly different tools.*
> **AFO7**: *It's just a different, just a different role, but, I think the public see... I don't know...*
> **AFO6**: *I think they expect a, a slightly different level whether that's true or not, I would say, you know, there's plenty of officers locally that are, perfectly capable of being firearms officers...*

> **AFO26**: *I think there is a possibly, and I might be imagining this, but I think there might be a public perception that if you're armed police, you must know what you're doing, and I think that must be a bit of a sweeping statement, and I, it's not that I believe that I am any more capable at basic policing than a lot of unarmed police officers, but to the public, they probably, in the same way that they automatically assume that a Detective is senior, they're not, it's just a different specialisation, so I think they perhaps, will approach you because they 'Well, he must know what he's about, they've given him a gun', and I dunno, that may be a bit of a jump on my part, but that's...*
> **AFO15**: *No, no, I think it's the same, you turn up in the big X5.*
> **AFO26**: *Yeah.*

> **AFO15**: *You've got the gun on your hip or your leg or wherever, and they, people automatically see, that person is not in that position because they're new to the role, new to the job, you've got a certain amount of...*
> **AFO26**: *Yeah, they, they must have a degree of experience.*

> **AFO27**: *You could do quite a study on the effect of the cars that arrive on scene. It doesn't matter if the officers are male or female, or old or new, whoever turns up in the flashier car will get a better perception and will be treated more senior. We have that advantage with the X5s.[15]*

The fact that being an AFO is considered an 'elite' position (see Chapter Five) and the ARV has a distinct culture that surrounds it; it is interesting that certain AFOs seek to distance themselves from a characteristic that appears to attract officers to the AFO position.

Overall, this data suggests that the public can identify groups within the police in a way that can afford officers different amounts of legitimacy (Harkin, 2015). The idea that members of the public may not be willing to discuss minor issues with them but will still approach them to discuss their role, equipment or their presence. However, it also suggests that armed officers interact with the public in the same manner as they would if they were unarmed, leading to a slightly 'unbalanced' relationship. This increases the evidence that the public do notice AFOs and treat them differently, but not necessarily negatively.

7.3   The ARV and Community Policing

7.3.1   Regional Organisation

As established in Chapter Two, the ARVs in both police services follow the 'armed area car' model and are therefore each assigned a specific geographic area to cover for the duration of their shift. However, which geographic area they police changes, with officers potentially covering many different areas within one set of shifts. AFOs identified that this constant switching of areas between duties meant they lacked the same intimate connection with a particular area that they did when they were unarmed response officers.

> **AFO35**: *Yeah, I mean, from my point of view of being regionalised and one day working [town], one day working [town], whatever, one day in [city], you're not going to build up any sort of, meaningful community relationship with any sort, any sort of community, purely because, you know, you know, your neighbourhood officers, they're, they work in a particular area, they know the people and that's how they build up that relationship by seeing those people on a regular, and, as I say, breaking down walls, breaking down barriers, whatever you want, however you want to term it, it's very difficult when you're not working somewhere very often to do that.*

---

[15] Fieldnotes 16

This lack of local knowledge and its potentially critical impact reinforced in the aftermath of the first firearms deployment that occurred during my fieldwork. As covered in Section 6.2.2 my ARV crew had gone to deal with a man making threats to kill his ex-partner. Once the incident was resolved I noted:

> 11:15 AFO4 and AFO3 were slightly disappointed because apparently this man is a known local issue, and if they had been local officers instead of ARV they would probably have recognised him the first time they drove past him making it sufficient grounds for a stop, just one of the issues of being a regionally organised AFO.[16]

I had not previously considered that this aspect of the ARV role may have an impact on the way in which AFOs interact with the public. Therefore, it entered my interview question guide after my fourth set of observations as an emergent requirement:

> *Do you think the non-localised way in which, AFOs and particularly ARVs are organised, means that it is difficult for you to build links with communities?*

A further impact of this geographical impairment was that the AFOs were separated from interacting with the same communities regularly, but also there were distinct aspects of the ARV role that stood in the way of building meaningful community relations. These aspects included that AFOs had to stay with their vehicles as well as their fear of what the public's perception might be if they started behaving in a more obvious manner:

> **AFO4**: *It's about getting the opportunity to build that relationship because well it isn't a case of we can just get out on foot and go and chat to the community 'cos it would be quite, I don't know, I don't think they'd be expecting that, I couldn't just walk into that Caribbean Cuisine place there and introduce myself and be like 'Hello', 'cos, the next, tomorrow I'll be in* [city] *or something, and then I'll be in* [town]*.*

> **AFO35**: *They will remember the fact they saw a firearms officer, and he was polite, he was friendly, he was talkative, he was, you know, he was, um, you know, clued up on everything, if you like, um, and they'll remember that and they'll go 'Oh yeah, he was great, I'll definitely go and talk to them again', but from a point of view of, 'Oh, that guy AFO35', that's impossible just because you're not there and our job role, a lot of the times is, for example, sitting in the car and driving round and doing work to support the local area, um, as opposed to being out on foot, which, people might see that as a little bit too much, if we were out on foot all the time, for no particular reason.*

---

[16] Fieldnotes 2

So AFOs feel that they do not have the opportunities to persistently build legitimacy or engage with procedural justice. They also feel that if they were to create their own opportunities, by deliberately patrolling areas on foot, it may suggest to members of the public something was "going on", as identified in 7.1.5. To remedy this, officers took what opportunities they could to interact with members of the public in a positive manner – over the course of the fieldwork officers waved at children[17] and put the blue lights on for them[18] (where appropriate to do so) and interacted with supermarket security[19] to allay their concerns among other things.

7.3.2   Community Resolutions

At the other end of the spectrum, one aspect that had escaped my notice until I started the fieldwork was the ways in which the police organisation does not distinguish between their regular officers and AFOs. This was particularly highlighted by the fact that on several occasions AFOs expressed their frustration to me about perceived requirements for them, as 'front-line' officers, to issue one Community Resolution a month.[20]

A Community Resolution is an action taken for a minor, usually first-time offence, often used for juvenile offenders. Examples include repairing damage or writing a letter of apology instead of paying a fine. It aims to divert the offender from being criminalised by the criminal justice system, provide greater satisfaction to victims and prevent the offender from reoffending (ACPO, 2012). The AFOs I accompanied frequently derided them as unsuitable for the sorts of calls they usually attend:

> 19:24   The AFOs talk about the 'ridiculousness' of the current Community Resolution target (each officer in the force has to get one a month) but they're not really suitable for ARV work, they're for shoplifting and the like, so while response guys might get many it's unlikely AFOs will.
> …
> There's enough Priority Calls to deal with as it is. Is it proportionate for 2 AFOs to turn up to a 15-year-old girl who is a first time shoplifter in Boots?
> …
> We're getting abused about the CommRes [Community Resolution] so we end up trying to balance not going vs the work we should be doing – ANPR work, door-knocking etc.[21]

---

[17] Fieldnotes 3, Fieldnotes, 12 and Fieldnotes 13.

[18] Recorded occurring during Interview 5.

[19] Fieldnotes 15

[20] In exploring this issue, I have been informed by personal communication with senior officers that neither service sets targets for community resolutions. There then seems to be a disconnect between what the services' requirements are and what the AFOs perceive them to be.

[21] Fieldnotes 11

An example of this occurred during my fieldwork. The AFOs responded to a call from shop security who had detained some suspected shoplifters. One of the shoplifters was accused of becoming violent and swinging his crutches at the security guards. The call was accepted by the ARV crew at 14:50 and we arrived on-scene at 14:55[22]. The reasons our ARV decided to attend was because of how close we were to the call, the potential for violence and the possibility of getting a Community Resolution out of it. I noted the following:

> 14:55   The young man and his friends had been caught by store staff trying to steal from the shop, as he was caught at the door a pair of £50 shorts were removed from his trousers. The chap was on crutches having had a skin graft on his foot. The shoplifter was alleging the shop staff had assaulted him, including stamping on his wounded foot.
> …
> A lot of debate ensues about whether to nick him or whether to summons him or try and get a Community Resolution out of it (it transpires they can't as he has been given one before for the same offence). The accused is picking at the wound on his foot essentially trying to make them call an ambulance, assumedly thinking that if he gets taken away in an ambulance he won't have to face the consequences of his actions…
> Eventually they summons him for shoplifting, search him (uncovering a stolen bag under his jacket – at this point he admitted the offence) and escort him from the store.

Despite arriving at 14:55, we did not leave the scene until 16:05[23]. After over an hour on the scene, the two AFOs summarised the experience in the following way:

> **AFO15**: I was pretty tired of his excessive theatrics.
> **AFO26**: People commit crime, I know that, so if you get caught, man up and admit it, it makes everything so much simpler.
> You know your first question [Why did you become a firearms officer]? This is not what I joined ARV for![24]

More than this, the fact AFOs carry firearms and are obliged to balance the different aspects of their role means it also can have adverse unintended consequences:

> **AFO24**: The current drive for Community Resolutions, I had one to do and the fact we were armed made it worse, it was the hardest one I've done. It just made it a little more difficult, a little more pressured, they wanted to know why it took two of us, then they opened up a bit, started moaning a bit more, it was hard work. Two minutes after we left, we got a deployment. Lucky it was minutes after otherwise it would have

---

[22] Fieldnotes 15
[23] Fieldnotes 15
[24] Fieldnotes 15

caused a hell of a lot more grief it we'd had to knock it on the head and leave halfway through.[25]

Such an interruption would have had a potentially delegitimising effect for the AFOs and the police. The purpose of a Community Resolution is for the police to demonstrate that they have time for an offender and divert them from the Criminal Justice System. If during the meeting the AFOs are called away, the police fail to adequately demonstrate that can meet the offender's needs.

7.4   Discussion

The typology outlined in this chapter provides a structure to understand the interactions armed officers have with the public. It raises questions about the granting of legitimacy to armed police. As outlined in Chapter Four, police legitimacy is not granted in blanket terms to the police but is earned variably by different groups within the police (Harkin, 2015). For this to occur, members of the public would have to be able to recognise different groups within the police. To recognise AFOs, I had assumed, and the AFOs themselves had assumed, that this recognition relied on the public noticing the officers' firearms. However, more research is needed to assess comprehensively how accurately the public recognise firearms.

The inclusion of the incorrect image within Yesberg, Bradford and Dawson (2019, p. 14) indicates the authors' sample treated an image of an officer armed with a handgun as "unarmed". This aligns with how the AFOs in my study felt that the public rarely noticed that they were carrying firearms, and therefore that members of the public rarely recognise them as distinct from 'other police'. Yet my findings suggested that at least some members of the public do recognise that the officers are armed, even when AFOs are only equipped with a sidearm. So, while the AFOs may feel that they blend in, it is possible that members of the public recognise armed police officers for what they are: police officers first, and firearms officers second.

The discussion of 'noticeability' is an important contribution to the legitimacy debate as recent work on armed policing (Yesberg and Bradford 2018; Yesberg, Bradford and Dawson, 2019) has focussed on the carrying of carbines by police as an obvious indicator to the public that officers are armed. The issue with this focus is that officers only carry carbines on certain duties, and thus any findings relating to public opinion towards officers carrying carbines lacks application to the discussion of the routine arming of police. There is no suggestion that routine arming of

---

[25] Fieldnotes 13

police in Great Britain would lead to more police carrying carbines. The National Police Chief's Council (NPCC, 2017) stated that routine arming "would not reflect these images" and would instead "comprise officers in traditional uniform, overtly armed with a handgun". The routine arming debate is explored in more detail in Chapter Eight, but my findings suggest that, not only do the public notice armed officers more than first anticipated, but that the carrying of handguns by police is likely not delegitimising in, and of itself.

Furthermore, while reliant on the legitimacy of policing, firearms officers are able to generate their own legitimacy from the public. This was most evident when members of the public encountered AFOs when they did not expect to. Even in circumstances where members of the public are not seeking assistance or expecting to encounter armed police, these findings partly support Hendy's (2012) findings from Sweden that merely carrying firearms does not threaten police officer legitimacy. Even in a particularly firearms-sensitive society such as Britain, where armed police are still a novelty and represent a small amount of police strength, they still interact with the public in similar ways to unarmed police. I found no evidence in 2018 Britain that would support Sarre's (1996) original findings in the Australian context, that policing with firearms changes the way the police and the public interact. More specifically, that it alienates the public from the police and that the process of community policing is negatively affected by armed police. This is not to say that firearms have no impact on the process of community policing but where the effects of community policing are reduced for armed officers in Britain, it is more likely due to the organisation of the ARV role than it is due to their carrying of firearms. Furthermore, my findings do not support the assertions made by Buttle (2010) and Bott (2011) in the New Zealand context that policing by consent is undermined by officers carrying firearms. There seems to be no evidence I encountered that would support the idea that armed police erode policing by consent, even if AFOs appear to derive their legitimacy differently.

The AFOs recounting their experiences of the Operation Foot patrols were particularly illuminating. The NPCC (2017) has acknowledged that context is paramount for these operations because "the sight of heavily armed police officers may not always reassure people". The data suggests the deployment of armed officers for Operation Foot patrols were reassuring and illustrative of the points raised by Jonathan-Zamir (2014): the focus of police on counter-terrorism measures during times of acute security threats can be positively received by the public as they witness the police taking the threat seriously. It suggests that to a certain extent, the legitimacy of firearms officers in Britain is 'incident-driven'. Legitimacy can be

derived through public engagement in the aftermath of a critical incident where firearms officers were instrumental. The Operation Foot patrols also satisfy McKenzie and Gallagher's (1989) requirement for the police to be delivering a "highly visible" response to the growing threat of terrorism to satisfy public support for the police. So whilst McKenzie and Gallagher (1989, p. 144) were critical of the attempts of the British police to balance remaining unarmed with being armed enough to reassure the public, my research suggests that the modern British public are not as concerned about such matters at present as we might have anticipated. This perhaps indicates that levels of support for firearms officers among the public may be far higher than the officers themselves perceive. If the levels of public support for routine armament are as high as demonstrated in Chapter Three, then one might assume that support from the British public for *some* officers to be armed must be higher still.

This does not remove concerns surrounding the existence of a 'yuck factor'. My data suggests that the 'yuck factor' is not caused by officers merely carrying firearms or having armed officers carry out routine policing tasks. However, I did not experience any firearms deployments or have the opportunity to see the public's reaction when AFOs were carrying out a high-profile firearms task. My hypothesis would be that it is the use of armed police in live circumstances that can potentially lead to the generation of a 'yuck factor'. This is because the high stakes of firearms deployments mean that visually they may appear 'heavy-handed' as Waddington intimates (Hendy, 2015). For example, on a firearms deployment, multiple ARVs will be tasked leading to several AFOs attending, outnumbering any suspects. These AFOs are deployed with additional equipment, such as carbines, ballistic helmets and shields, and behave in a 'pre-emptive' and dominant manner (Bayley, 1977).

The only time I identified elements of the 'yuck factor' was when dealing with the 15-year-old boy at the school. Even though he was acting violently and in possession of a weapon, he was, perhaps not consciously, goading the AFOs by explicitly how disproportionate it may appear to the outside observer. There were multiple AFOs dealing with a young offender, in a school environment with significant, additional equipment present including shields and TASER. Therefore, like all police officers, AFOs retain the potential to generate a 'yuck factor', but this is more likely to be witnessed on a firearms deployment than generated by their mere presence. The small number of firearms deployments compared to the number of 'routine' tasks that ARVs undertake suggest that AFOs are not automatically generating a 'yuck factor'.

There is an evident organisational tension for the AFOs in both police services in that they feel being organised regionally impairs their ability to engage meaningfully with the public on a day

to day basis. To build strong community links, the AFOs feel it is beneficial to police the same areas in and out to become familiar with it and its inhabitants. The ARVs are a force-wide resource and the officers are inevitably policing geographically different areas day to day. This means that while some officers felt they were 'known' as the ARV – that their cars, their kit and, to some extent, their policing methods, were recognised, they did not have that intimate connection to any community in particular. Some officers said what an advantage it was that they occasionally policed the areas where they had been an unarmed officer and so benefitted from their prior knowledge of suspects and locations. However, the AFOs also noted that no longer being on those neighbourhood or beat teams meant they did not get the localised updates that the AFOs had considered essential to their previous role. If the AFOs wished to go looking for someone or something they often relied on local officers to provide them with information when needed.

In terms of legitimacy, it is interesting to note that the officers felt this lack of connection to communities, particularly after highlighting how positive their experiences had been during the Operation Foot patrols. Being on foot, and visibly armed among the community had helped the AFOs feel valued and as if they were making a difference. One officer had reservations about exposing armed police to the public in that way too often, arguing it might decrease the positive effect. Others felt that being trapped in their cars all day as a regional resource was detrimental to their legitimacy because it reduced their opportunities to interact with the public and therefore build legitimacy. These findings support those of Myhill and Bradford (2013) and Harkin (2015) in that officers in a reactive role are going to have lower levels of both public legitimacy and self-legitimacy than those tied to a particular community. This is because those tied to a specific community are able to know their area, its populace and spend time on service-related requests that have a greater potential to improve police legitimacy (Myhill and Bradford, 2013, pp. 111-112).

Chapter Summary

As discussed in Chapter Four, it is theorised that police officers who carry firearms have a perceived loss or lack of legitimacy, as the firearm is symbolic of the use of lethal and coercive force. My experience of real-life interactions between the public and armed police in order to answer the second research question of this thesis, has found no evidence of a visceral public reaction as suggested in the literature. Therefore, if we are to believe that the carrying of firearms by police is inherently delegitimising, further empirical evidence is needed.

This research suggests that the public do notice the police are armed in a variety of circumstances. This perception is surprising considering that the AFOs think people rarely notice they are carrying firearms. Particularly when the public are not expecting to see armed police, they still notice the police are armed about half the time but, at least in my research, it does not seem to negatively affect the interactions they have. Regardless of the circumstances in which members of the public notice officers are armed, it does not necessarily correspond to a decrease in legitimacy.

When there are members of the public in opposition with the police, they are the most likely to notice that the AFO is carrying a firearm. This is potentially because they are sizing up the officers as part of a 'fight or flight' response. When seeking assistance, members of the public do not notice or care whether the officers are armed, they are instead seeing the police symbolically, as the welcome providers of assistance. When expecting to see armed police who are obviously armed, for example at an airport, the curiosity of the public is intensified, as they are given the opportunity to stare discreetly and inquire. The Operation Foot patrols were a special case where the public felt the reassuring effect of armed police in a state of heightened security threats. In the opinions of the AFOs I spoke to, carrying firearms does not significantly influence the public's willingness to approach armed police. This was particularly the case around Operation Foot even if it potentially changed the matters that members of the public wished to discuss with them. Furthermore, occasions such as the Operation Foot patrols provide an opportunity for AFOs to generate legitimacy in their own way, through encouraging interactions between AFOs and members of the public.

Finally, the ARV role is perceived by AFOs as impairing their ability to carry out Community Policing effectively. This is because ARVs are regionally organised, which inhibits the AFOs' ability to interact with the public in potential legitimacy-generating or legitimacy-enhancing community encounters. AFOs perceive that they are to keep up with targets for community resolutions and these targets do not appear compatible with the intricacies of the ARV role. This leads to frustration among the ARV crews and means AFOs sometimes miss opportunities to perform legitimacy-building tasks and activities.

8   The Routine Arming Debate

Introduction

This chapter discusses the emergent material surrounding the Authorised Firearms Officers' (AFOs') engagement with the Routine Arming Debate. Whilst not included in the original scope of the project, the fieldwork for this thesis was carried out in the wake of a terrorist attack when routine arming of police in England and Wales was high on the media agenda. The Police Federation of England and Wales (PFEW) took this opportunity to survey police officers to garner police opinions on the matter. This chapter provides a contribution to the continuing debate. It includes a discussion of AFOs' reasons for supporting or opposing the routine arming of all police officers with firearms. This section demonstrates the unique standpoint of AFOs when compared to the results of routine arming surveys as seen in Chapter 3. Linked to the discussion of routine armament is a more general discussion of AFOs' opinions of their safety on duty, exploring which aspects of their work as an AFO make them feel safe.

8.1   The Routine Arming Debate

8.1.1   Context and the 2017 Routine Arming Survey

The National Police Chief's Council (NPCC, 2017) acknowledges "the debate on routine arming resurfaces periodically". As discussed in Chapter Three, there are a variety of opinions when it comes to whether the police should be armed (Punch, 2011, p. 70). The use of armed police in Great Britain is often associated with the "militaristic" images of police officers with handguns, carbines, protective equipment and balaclavas (NPCC, 2017). However, while some believe this to be the most common form of armed policing (Yesberg, Bradford and Dawson, 2019), perhaps it is simply the most noticeable (see Chapter Seven). When discussing routine arming, these are the images that come to mind for the public even though would not reflect the reality of a routinely armed British police service. The NPCC states that routine arming would comprise of "officers in traditional uniform, overtly armed with a handgun." The NPCC (2017) also emphasises that the routine arming of all police officers in Great Britain would not replace Armed Response Vehicles (ARVs) or Counter-Terrorist Specialist Firearms Officers (CTSFOs). Instead, routinely armed officers would be trained to protect themselves and the public before a dedicated firearm response could be organised (NPCC, 2017).

Waldren (1994) argues that surveys concerning the routine armament of police always resurge in relation to external factors, for example, the murder of police officers, when either a sense of outrage may be able to influence the results. Ingleton (1997) considers the arming of the British police as 'The Great Debate' and discusses how, as fear of violent crime escalates, it

may be necessary for police to carry arms. Squires and Kennison (2010, p. 109) also suggest that routine arming is "The most important decision for the future of policing – since last year", demonstrating that since 1995, the Police Federation of England and Wales (PFEW) has balloted its membership intermittently under the guise of police safety. The PFEW is the statutory staff association for police officers up to the rank of Chief Inspector in England and Wales. Legislation prohibits the police from joining trade unions and the PFEW functions as a 'union equivalent' based on a good faith arrangement with the serving government. The PFEW has a minor role in supporting the small number of officers that volunteer to carry firearms. Its aim is that armed officers can feel confident in their training and abilities to take appropriate action with a firearm when necessary (PFEW, 2019). The PFEW argues that the Independent Office for Police Conduct treats firearms officers as "suspects rather than witnesses" and so emphasises its ability to assist AFOs through post-incident procedures.

In summer 2017, the PFEW released a survey to assess the opinions of its membership on the routine arming of the police in England and Wales. The responses were used to inform future PFEW policy; the last PFEW firearms survey took place in 2006 (PFEW, 2017). The survey consisted of 18 questions, nine of which were demographic. The other nine involved officers answering questions around officer safety including when they had to patrol alone and what equipment they had access to; what their personal opinions were on the issue, their use of firearms and what they anticipated might be the result should more police carry firearms. Due to its large sample (32, 366 respondents), the survey is the most comprehensive and rigorous in the standards applied to the analysis of the data (PFEW, 2017).

However, the survey is not without its problems. As identified in Chapter Three, some of the wording of the survey is loose, leading to different interpretations of the data. In particular, the phrase "armed as and when necessary" implies an endorsement of a more liberal policy of police armament the one currently operated (Squires and Kennison, 2010, p. 113). Secondly, and key for this chapter, is the fact that AFOs are dealt with in an illogical manner. In the demographic data at the beginning of the survey, it asks "From the list of roles given below, please select the one which best describes the duties you perform in a typical working week." Within these roles, there is no option specific to firearms policing, instead AFOs would interpret their overall role and choose the most appropriate. It is logical to assume that most ARV crews would select 'Response' as their role, but it is not guaranteed. Moreover, AFOs perform a several other functions away from the ARV role and could be entitled to choose 'Roads Policing', 'Operational Support', 'National Policing' or 'Other' depending on the specifics of their daily tasks. The survey attempts to clarify by subsequently asking "Are you

currently an Authorised Firearms Officer?" The results of the survey do not separately cover the opinions of those who answered they were a current AFO.

8.1.2 Awareness of the Recent Survey

Given the recent surveys carried out by the PFEW to ascertain police support for routine arming I asked the AFOs what they thought of the PFEW's stance on routine arming, perhaps expecting already armed officers to provide a new perspective on an old debate. One answer that particularly stood out was the thoughts of one officer who believed that the PFEW should not really have a say in the matter:

> **AFO8**: *In terms of the Federation, I don't really see how they've got a say in the matter, to be fair, the current thing at the moment, they can't force us to carry guns, if at any time I decide, nah, I'm not doing it, they can't make me. I could go back now and say 'I can't be bothered to carry any more', and* [indistinct] *my ticket.*

Two officers suggested that survey methods and the statistics that they produce are not always the most reliable pieces of data:

> **AFO4**: *Erm, just jumping back to that stat thing quickly...the Federation obviously put that out to ask people, only a handful of people will actually fill that in, like not everyone fills in that survey, because I don't think I've been asked, and the people that will fill it in might be very like pro-gun, they want to be armed...*
> **AFO5**: *Or have a strong opinion of it, yes or no.*
> **AFO4**: *Yeah.*
> **AFO5**: *Whereas people who are kind of down the middle.*
> **AFO4**: *Yeah, people in departments like CID and stuff wouldn't even look at a questionnaire like that, they'd just ignore it.*

> **Me**: *OK. Do you have any opinions on the Police Federation's, sort of, stance on routine arming?*
> **AFO6**: *Er, ye-no-ye... I've been quite cynical about these things, I don't know where their member support comes from for such, when they've had previous surveys, it's not been overwhelmingly supportive of that, I don't quite know what their agenda is, if that makes sense? Because I don't think speaking to officers that there is a general drive that they've felt that that's what they'd want.*
> **Me**: *Anything to add AFO7?*
> **AFO7**: *Really, I think surveys are … depending on how you word a survey depends on the results you can get.*

> **AFO9**: *Do you know, I don't suppose you know the actual figure that said 'Yes'?*
> **Me**: *So, 34% said yes, and 52% said they would be 'Willing to' if it came in. So about a third said 'Yes, we actively want this', and about half said, 'OK, if it came in we'd be willing to'.*
> **AFO9**: *Right.*
> …

> **AFO9**: *I think a lot of people express desire to join firearms but then don't necessarily follow it through.*
> **Me**: *Yeah.*
> **AFO9**: *People always think, 'Ooh, I'd like a go at that' or 'I'd quite like to do that role for a period of time' but then don't actually put the application in, so perhaps, my thoughts are, when they are asked 'Would you like to carry a firearm?', they've said, 'Well, yeah, yeah, I wouldn't mind' but then that same person wouldn't actually apply for the role.*

> **AFO13**: *I think the Federation, to a degree, will say what the troops think they want them to say, um, I think it would be a bold move for the Federation to say 'Well, we don't think we should be routinely armed', they'll do various surveys and things like that, you know, without knowing what results or what statistics they may or may not have to hand but um…*

However, the most common response I received was a complete lack of knowledge from the majority of AFOs asked about the PFEW's stance on routine arming. To elicit some of the answers above I had to provide the officers with information regarding when the survey was released, for what purpose, who was surveyed and what the results were. This was despite the fact it had been national news at the time (MacGregor, 2017; Sky News, 2017). The apparent disconnect between the PFEW and the AFOs led me to drop this question after my eighth interview because I was concerned that by providing some AFOs more information on the survey than others I was potentially biasing their responses. In retrospect, I wish I had kept the question so I could appreciate the true breadth of AFOs who had no idea what the PFEW's stance on routine arming was. There was no shortage of observations. For example:

> **Me**: *OK, what do you think of the Police Federation's attitude to routine arming?*
> **AFO1**: *I have to be honest, I'm not too au fait with that if, um....*
> **AFO2**: *What? Are they pro it?*

> **Me**: *What do you think of the Police Federation's attitude towards routine arming?*
> **AFO9**: *What's their current stance, are they calling for it, are they?*

> **Me**: *What do you think of the Police Federation's stance on routine arming? If you are aware of it...?*
> **AFO11**: *No, I'd say I don't know what it is.*
> **AFO12**: *Yeah, you'd have to let us know what it is.*

8.1.3   Limited Support for Routine Arming

When I first asked the question 'Do you think the police in England and Wales should be routinely armed?' I expected a fair balance between for and against, given the survey results demonstrating a 55% favouring of arming all police to some extent (PFEW, 2017). However, overwhelmingly, the AFOs that I spoke to were against the routine arming of all police in England and Wales. Of the 36 AFOs asked the question, only four provided a response

suggesting any form of endorsement for the routine arming of all police officers. Even in this context, this endorsement had significant caveats.

> **AFO26:** *I'm quite, I'm quite conflicted about it now, I think before I did firearms work, I would probably, as an unarmed police officer, have said yes, I think perhaps in an ideal world, if everyone was happy with the idea, then, perhaps yes, routine arming would be a good thing.*

There was an expectation from one officer that for everyone to be routinely armed there must be an expectation of that possibility made explicit to them upon recruitment:

> **AFO19:** *In an ideal world, yes **but**, to echo what he says, is if we did… a significant portion of the force would have to be laid off or found other jobs, because, like he says, we don't select for those qualities at the moment, if you want the entire force to be selec- to be carrying firearms, you need to be selecting people from the outset with those qualities, so like AFO20 said, it's, it's got to be some sort of date by which they say 'Right, from now, anybody coming in the expectation is that you will', but as we stand at the moment, I think we should be but it's not technically achievable.*

There was also a desire that any officer wishing to carry a firearm would have to meet the same standard that existing ARV officers attain:

> **AFO15:** *I actually think, that, we should have, I think that response officers should have a choice as to whether they want to be or they're not, and I, and for those that want to, the standard, I believe, should be the same standard as what it is for ARV.*

One officer accepted that, for a number of reasons, the training and qualification standards might have to be lower as is seen in many European countries such as the Netherlands (see Chapter Three) (Punch, 2011, p. 70). However, the officer argued there would have to be clear, specific limits to their operating procedure. Over the course of the day, they provided the following two comments:

> **AFO32:** If they can make the standard, why not? But these are decisions for the higher ups. Costs – not only the initial costs but the costs of requalification. Even if they're not trained in tactics – where do they stop?
> If the subject goes into a house? If so, then what's it for, a man with a machete in the street? Just becoming part of a tiered approach?[1]

> **AFO32:** *As I said to you earlier, I don't have an issue with it as long as they meet the required standards and that, that training can be given and they have limitations as to where they can go because, as you've said, with the, with a lot of the European models, you've got officers that are routinely armed, however they do have to hit that standard*

albeit that standard is lower than the standard that we operate at, but as I said to you earlier, with those standards, they've, they can't, they're only limited to, for example, like self-defence, they wouldn't be able to resolve a situation, they wouldn't be able to go into buildings, do vehicle tactics, none of that would be able to be trained and maintained, as AFO31 said, with the cost element, and the staffing, it just wouldn't be possible, but I don't have a massive issue, as long as they make the standards and as long as they can reclassify, then that's, that's a risk, but that's a government risk, isn't it? That's something for the... the training has to be managed, the costs have to, to be managed but yeah, for me, as long as they have their role within the organisation, I don't see it as a massive problem.

The standard of training could remain the same as that for ARV officers or lowered to account for greater numbers of police officers becoming firearms trained. Either one may have a substantial impact on the existing police budget and workforce.

8.1.4   The Potential Impact of Routine Arming on the Current Police Workforce

Concerns about whether the current police workforce could adapt to routinely carrying firearms were key to those AFOs who opposed routine arming. Again, the idea that the current level of training is the minimum standard was frequently used by those arguing against routine arming:

AFO3: *Not everyone, no. I think there's a place for it, because, obviously, I'm doing it, and I know there's a need for it, but not everybody would want to be and I don't think everybody should be, the course is quite hard and I don't think everybody would pass that course, I don't think we should lower the standards in order to get everybody trained in order to pass that course.*

Me: *OK, in your opinion, should the police be routinely armed, in this country?*
AFO5: *I don't believe personally they should be, no. It's difficult enough to keep enough of us at a level to be at a minimum standard, so, we go on firearms training and you'll see different skill levels on the department, and you'll see people dipping off the bottom at different times and* [indistinct] *like you see initial firearms courses go through, and the attrition rate on firearms courses is really high, over 50% on most courses so, routinely arming those people, who can't meet a minimum standard of firearms policing at the moment would just be dangerous, in my eyes.*
Me: *So, do you think the standards as they are set at the minute, there's no compromise, you couldn't lower them, you couldn't alter them so they were.*
AFO5: *So I think they're already at a level where they're already quite low… but I'd say they're sort of at a level where they need to be… So the harder to get on so the standards were higher. I think recent years where they've been increasing armed numbers already, there's been a lowering of standards to a level where, it is sort of at the minimum standard at the moment, I believe.*

AFO38: *…it's a really strenuous, stringent process to get into firearms, many people have tried to get into it, many people have failed, and I think the system does work, the bulk majority of the time, it does work, and the right officers get to carry these firearms, and I think, you don't want to drop those standards, to be fair, in relation to it*

because it is quite a, a massive responsibility, to be fair, so with regards to your question do I think they should be routinely armed? Obviously, we are routinely armed in our role but I don't think that should be rolled out to every single front-line police officer.

Alongside the suggestion that training standards should not be lowered was another widely discussed proposition. Many AFOs stated that, regardless of the amount of training offered, there were individuals within the police that they felt would not be capable of, nor should be trusted with, handling or carrying a firearm:

AFO8: *I think there are some people that aren't suitable to be firearms officers, I'm guessing if we went down that road, certainly, maybe just like [indistinct] have a personal issue sidearm, for instance, I'm guessing the standards required would probably be reduced somewhat, there are some people in the police that I wouldn't trust with a can of CS let alone with a firearm.*

AFO13: *…um, I've seen, you know, I've seen people that can't master basic handcuff techniques and the thought of them carrying a firearm terrifies me…*

AFO18: *I've seen police officers I don't trust with a pen, let alone PAVA or CS as it is here, and then alone escalating that to a firearm, some people, just don't have the mental capacity to make intelligent use of force decisions when they're under stress and under pressure, and I think there is a reason that there is rigorous training and selection process to weed out the people that can make those sorts of decisions under stress`, I think there are probably many more suitable candidates than we have who are actually armed throughout the police but I definitely think it would be a bad idea to routinely arm.*

Me: *In your opinion, should the police of England and Wales be routinely armed?*
AFO30: *Er, what, for every officer?*
Me: *For every officer.*
AFO30: *No. No.*
AFO29: *I agree, no.*
Me: *Why so?*
AFO29: *Because...*
AFO30: *Some of the people we work with!*
AFO29: *Exactly!*

AFO31: *I would say, not, the reason I say not is because some personnel that are in the police can't fire a CS cartridge in a straight line, or a PAVA in a straight line…*

AFO33: *I don't know how it would work, either, in terms of, if you look at forces abroad where that forms part of their, sort of, Pass or Fail to becoming a police officer, so their weapon-handling, their shooting and stuff, if you fail that but pass everything else, you don't become a police officer, whereas, I don't know how that would then work, with, if suddenly everyone had to go through firearms training, what happens for people that fail it? Do they then lose their job? Or do we go down the routes of well everyone's*

*routinely armed from these people that don't pass weapon-handling stuff so then,
we're not routinely armed, so yeah, I think there's just too many things to go wrong,
personally.*

Me: *OK. In your opinion, should the police of England and Wales be routinely armed?*
AFO37: *Oooh, controversial. I...er*
AFO38: *I err, I...*
AFO37: [Chuckles] *I don't really want to say, but if we're sure it's anonymous! Erm,
there are many coppers who you wouldn't want to see hold a gun, and some of those
would probably want to hold a gun, that's the issue…*

AFOs' experiences of their colleagues using other pieces of equipment (mostly handcuffs and

incapacitating sprays, but also pens!) seem to be a predominant indicator of the lack of trust

the AFOs would place in their current colleagues should they become routinely armed.

However, AFO33 raises the question of should an officer fail to qualify for a firearm, what then

happens with their career?

Aside from the fact that the AFOs do not think all their currently unarmed colleagues are

capable or should be trusted to carry a firearm, many AFOs stated that they felt a large

number of their colleagues would not want to carry a firearm:

AFO5: *There's a lot of people who won't want to be armed either.*
AFO4: *There's a lot of people that, they're talking about* [police services] *have just
agreed to it, I think, saying that they're happy to routinely give everyone a TASER.*
Me: *Yeah.*
AFO4: *And, there's a lot of people who don't even like that. So people don't want to
carry firearms, people don't want the risks that go with it, and it's the easiest way to
lose your job, quite frankly, people don't want that risk every day.*
Me: *OK.*
AFO4: *So if people aren't going to want to hold a TASER then they're not going to want
to hold a firearm.*

***AFO8**: Could they turn round and say, right OK, we've made the decision,* [police
service] *are now going to be, everyone's going to be routinely armed, I'm guessing,
what would they do then when people say 'No, I'm not doing that', would they sack
them? Say well it's now role requirement for front-line officers to carry a gun* [laughs],
we're under strength as it is! People would leave in their droves, I think.

AFO30: *And a lot of people wouldn't want, those people know, and wouldn't want a
firearm either, again whether it's just pressure or decision making or whatever it is,
they haven't joined the job to carry a firearm and if, um, spoken to a lot of them and
they said if it ever becomes compulsory, they'd leave. Correct?*
AFO29: *Yeah, because they come from different walks of life and stuff, some people
join police to get into neighbourhood policing and help out people with slow-time stuff,
get involved in quite depth with these families, and like AFO30 said, a lot of them don't*

want that responsibility as well, having gun to, and making those split second decisions.

AFO30: *Because once you do shoot someone, it's, you know, you and your family really do go through the mill, so um, it's having confidence that your mate or whoever, would actually take that shot if you absolutely needed to, and if those officers didn't actually want to carry a gun in the first place, they may not take that shot.*

Due to the number of officers that might not wish to carry firearms, the AFOs suggested that the organisation might lose other skills because of it:

AFO4: *You wouldn't get like a house, and say, there's like, 10 builders in there, different builders have different specialties, don't they? One person's doing electrics, one person's doing like the plumbing, some people can do all of it but in the police, I think it's the same, one person's good at firearms, one person's good at, something else, so there's someone else that's really good in interviews, like I'm not that good in interviews, so I couldn't do that, so there's space for everyone in the police service and I don't think it should be a case that everyone is routinely armed.*
Me: *And you think that routinely arming may screen out people with these specialist skills...*
AFO4: *Yeah.*

AFO14: *The level of training that's required and the continuous training to keep your skills up is **not** sustainable to routinely arm every police officer in the country, it's not practical and the training would drop off and it'd be dangerous, and the police officers they're recruiting now, um, they're taking a lot more and are trying to promote more graduates and stuff to do it, and pushing the more intellectual side of things, which is great for the detective side of things and all that, but they start as uniformed officers, and, it takes, it's different skills, it's different mind-sets, it's different types of people and someone who might be absolutely cracking at doing an in-depth investigation, may not be as good or as comfortable, just being a 'on the street' police officer, and if you're giving them a gun, for one, they not even want it, and two, it just, it's not going to be compatible with their mind-set and their abilities so yeah, for me, it's just not being able to continue the training to make everybody safe all the time and different types of people, some people won't want it and some people should never have it. So that's...*

Firearms are perceived by police officers as items of 'risk', alongside other weapons such as TASER. However, if police officers are more willing to leave the organisation than accept the greater risk of carrying firearms, it is possible that the police will start to only attract applicants with a narrower set of skills than those that applied before. This emphasises a concern that officers who fail the training, or in this case refuse to carry firearms, would have to either be made redundant or have special dispensations made.

8.1.5   Social and Financial Costs of Routine Arming

As well as effects on the police organisation, the AFOs also considered the potential impact on the public and police budgets. A few officers stated that they felt it might change the nature of

British policing. There was a recognition that the British psyche generally is resistant to change and that the consent granted to police is still partly based on their eschewal of arms:

> **AFO12**: *For me, it's the training, I mean, the tradition is, it's good that the British police aren't armed and we should be proud of that, I appreciate everything, well, not everything, but cultures are changing, there's more threat to the public in the UK, but I don't feel the necessity at this point that we all need to be routinely armed with firearms.*

> **AFO22**: *No, I think, we need more ready access so, for example, the Paris attacks they put 60 or 80 thousand troops on the streets of France who are all armed, erm, we couldn't do something similar, so I think there is, whilst arming everybody would change the face of British policing beyond all recognition, I personally don't think that would be a positive.*

> **AFO35**: *Yeah, I mean, to routinely arm every police officer would go completely away from what police has always been about in this country and the way we police. So, I, I don't think it's necessary really, I think we deal with things as we need to.*

> **AFO38**: *I, yeah, I agree with AFO37, I don't think, I think our policing model is quite unique in the world, um, and other people like it, I think we've mentioned it previously, that, you know, if you feel like you've always got to carry a fir-, everyone who goes, as in, the entire police force has to carry a firearm on a routinely basis something's kind of gone wrong a bit in your society.*

The answers suggest the AFOs are either unaware of the public survey results or do not believe the surveys reflect reality. As identified earlier, some AFOs are also sceptical of survey methods. That aside, AFOs seem to believe that the essence of British policing revolved around unarmed officers. For others, it was the financial cost of implementing routine armament that made it a less likely option:

> **AFO20**: [Police] *officers and guns – politicians always talk about policing by consent. Politicians don't want to pay to arm the police.*

> **AFO25**: *Putting more ARVs in every city would be a lot less money than routine arming.*

8.1.6   Do AFOs Feel Routine Arming Is Necessary?

During the interviews, AFOs could not actually identify a singular, specific need for routine arming. They felt that, as ARV officers, they were struggling for firearms deployments anyway, with lapses of boredom between the occasional exciting job. On reflection, as I reviewed the data, this sentiment highlighted a potential misunderstanding of the question. The routine armament of police in Great Britain is unlikely to lead to the removal of the ARV system or the use of response officers for firearms deployments (NPCC, 2017). Even if the AFOs felt that the

routine arming of police could improve officer safety at a spontaneous incident, they felt it would not increase the tactical capacity of the British police. Either because there are not enough deployments currently to justify increasing that tactical capacity or the fact that routine arming with a handgun might not contribute to increased tactical options:

> **AFO8**: *I don't think there's actually a need for it, and even in the event of a terrorist incident, erm, you know, while a sidearm may be handy and would give you a few more options, I don't think it would be achievable to go and take on a terrorist armed with an assault weapon, I mean, if you're talking just vehicle attacks, erm, weapon, bladed-weapon type stuff to occur, which, yeah OK, it may work but I don't think it's the be all and end all…*

> **AFO27**: *And from my perspective, very similar to what AFO28 was just saying, that, there isn't, there isn't enough work for us, I don't feel personally, so I don't believe there's enough work to routinely arm every police officer…*

> **AFO33**: *…and I don't think there's a need, for it, to be perfectly honest, I mean, we could go months at the moment without firearms deployments so I don't think there's a need, with the country as a whole to be routinely armed.*

I asked whether they felt their service needed more armed officers. A few officers felt that in order to improve response times, there should be more armed police available:

> **AFO17**: *My answer is almost exactly the same, I don't think, we need more officers in terms of being able to deal with the jobs, it's just the response times* [that we need more armed officers for]

> **AFO20**: *In the current climate - yes, because we need to be able to respond to things like that happened in Paris and that have happened in London, I think we got away quite lightly with things so far, if something like Paris happens over here we'll be stuffed, so there needs to be a way... to, what we would call contain a situation.*

One officer felt that it was lack of numbers when a serious incident occurred that was the issue:

> **AFO26**: *I, yeah, I think so, I...there is a vast...there is vast amount of time that we are not dealing with firearms incidents because there aren't that many, however, when there is one, and certainly when it's a serious one, there are hardly any of us to deal with it, and I think realistically, you need more.*

Others contrasted this with the fact that they cover the area as well as expected and firearms deployments remain rare:

AFO4: *Errm, at the moment, for me, no, because, I don't know, I've come on to the department at a time where it's probably at its quietest in years, I imagine, so since I've been on there I've had like hardly any jobs, we've been to like loads, we've had deployments and stuff and obviously the terrorism level, it was raised to Critical at one point so it was like a busy time for us, but with regards to actual gun jobs, they're few and far between, so as long as you've got the coverage in the different areas you're fine.*

AFO11: *No, I agree, I think we don't need any more, I think we have the number that we do more in recognition of the large geographical area that we have to cover than the volume of work that we need to address, and I think that is achieved with what we put out at the moment.*

Me: *OK, do you feel your service needs more firearms officers?*
AFO32: *For me? No, because, as I said to you, again, earlier, that, I, where we are across the force, I don't think our response times are that bad, to get boots on the ground initially, um, so, as, as we were saying, you've got cars in* [Town], *you've got cars in* [City], *and they can respond to those jobs and be in areas, within the response times that we currently want so, I don't think we need any more.*

One officer said that they were lucky, as other specialists in the police service could back-fill:

AFO5: *I think in* [our police service] *we're very lucky in that we've got multiple units that can all carry guns, so because we've got ARVs, we've got* [protection officers]*, we've got Specialist Firearms Officers, we've got who do like Urban Surveillance and things like that, they can all be armed, they can all carry MP5s, for a big incident which would require a lot of officers,* [our police service] *have got resources they can pull in, and do those multiple roles. I think if you speak to more rural areas that haven't got such specialisms, I think they'd say they need more people.*
Me: *Because if something went pear-shaped, they would struggle to...*
AFO5: *For the larger incidents, yeah. But people have their numbers set where they can cover day to day, and then the contingency of a larger thing happening in a lot of forces would just be 'We need help, we need to get other forces in to help us'. But* [our police service] *having all those different specialisms, I think they cope quite well, and the structure they've got in place is really good.*

Some of those saying that no more AFOs were needed suggested that the recent armed uplift has improved the situation:

Me: *Do you feel,* [police service] *needs more armed officers?*
AFO6: *No*
AFO7: *Nah, I think, with the uplift we've had recently, we've got a good mixture for the area we cover, it's... I think the uplift has been sufficient to be honest.*
AFO6: *I would agree, I think with the uplift we have enough, sufficient at this time, in the current climate.*

Me: *OK, um, do you feel your service needs more armed police?*

AFO12: *Um, again based on the terror threat, we've reached our uplift levels at the moment, so, so long as we've got sufficient police to respond to an incident should it occur then that's fine, so at the moment, the powers that be have decided on the numbers and we've reached, so at the moment, no I don't think we do need more armed police because there are quite a lot of them around, certainly in [police service].*

Some officers could not decide:

AFO34: *To be honest, I think, it would be nice to have the team to expand just a little bit more, but I don't think there's a call for it, if, if, if we were run off our feet then of course I reckon we should have more police officers, um, but, I, it's not come to that, and I don't think, I don't think there's a need for it, I think probably an extra, another 10 or so, but, even then that's just as a contingency, so I, I don't, as an ARV, I don't, I think we've got enough, I don't think there's a need for it at the moment.*

8.2 AFOs Opinions of Safety

One of the emergent discussions from the routine arming material was that a few AFOs used it as an opportunity to discuss their sense of safety. When these conversations arose, I always tried to inquire further. I wanted to identify what aspects of their role made them feel safe or unsafe, and whether becoming an AFO had improved their sense of safety. The AFOs I spoke to identified three key aspects as contributing to their sense of safety whilst on duty. When talking about their perceived current level of safety whilst crewing the ARV, they often talked about how unsafe they had felt in the past whilst working in other departments. Surprisingly the least discussed aspect of safety was the extra kit and equipment, including firearms, which the AFOs had access to:

Me: *Yeah, OK, and finally, do you feel safe, on duty?*
AFO28: *Er, I feel safer as a firearms officer.*
Me: *Do you just feel safe, in general?*
AFO28: *Erm, safer than when I was a normal police officer, obviously there's risks in the job, they you will accept, but the risks as a firearms officer, I think are reduced, because you've obviously got, you've got more range of tools to use, so, I can defend myself against lethal force, from a firearm or from a knife, whereas before, when I didn't have that firearm, potentially, I can't, I've got a TASER, I've got a ASP but that's all very close-range stuff, which isn't 100% effective, um, and then plus the parameters around our deployment means that we're protected, because we're not just chucked out willy-nilly, so those risk assessments are done to make sure we are as safe as possible.*

AFO27: *Do I feel safer in general? I don't feel unsafe as a police officer, in general, now that I carry a gun I'm probably a little bit more protected, it's probably the best way to put it.*

AFO36: *Yeah, err, I'm much the same, as far as physically safe, yeah, I feel safe, I feel I've got the kit and equipment...*

AFO35: *Ah, you've got me too!*
AFO36: *Yeah, I've got **a massive** crewmate as well.*
[Laughter]
AFO36: *Got the kit and equipment to do what we need to do.*

The quote above illustrates the second, and the most common aspect of officer safety that the AFOs felt they had on the ARV. The fact that they always had back up with them, that they were always double-crewed[2], had much more of an influence on how safe they felt currently, in comparison with how unsafe they had felt in the past:

Me: *Yeah, OK. Um, and finally then, do you feel safe?*
AFO34: *In what sense, is that?*
Me: *On-duty, do you feel, I suppose, physically, safe?*
AFO34: *I do... as an ARV officer, and crewed with a crew-mate, you do feel safe, you do feel protective, you know, but if you go out and deal with a situation, you know, I do as an ARV officer, as a Response Officer, no, not at all.*
Me: *Oh, OK.*
AFO34: *Yeah, but, as I say, as an Armed Response officer, I do, I suppose, you know, I don't thi-, I haven't got into that situation where I think, shit, it's really going to go moody here, you know, it's probably because my little AFO33 is looking after us [pats AFO33 on the thigh].*
[Laughter]
AFO34: *Erm, no, because I think on the ARV, you're trained to look after each other, you're trained to look after a team, you know, and I'm not saying that's the case for on Shift, because that's the same there as well, but you're single-crewed nearly all the time on shift, and that's where I think the problem comes, on an armed response you're always double-crewed.*

AFO28: *We'll never get crewed on our own.*
AFO27: *... we're never crewed on our own, so you've always got that back-up, that support, um, and you're not necessarily going to be put in those positions where you're going to be exposed to, the violence that, patrol officers are going to be exposed to, however, on the flip-side of that, local patrol officers aren't getting sent to firearms... or shouldn't be getting sent to firearms incidents where they're asked to deal with it so then, to a smaller degree it counter-balances that*

AFO15: *There's been, so not the firearms side of things, but when I said I was a beat officer, I worked literally on the edge of the county, so the border with [police service] and there were times then where I was the only officer for SNT, Safer Neighbourhood Teams, and there has been times where I've been to a job, literally on the border, and I know, I knew, that the closest person was like a 40 minute drive away, and I wouldn't say I was scared, or unsafe but I would say that there was a very high awareness that my backup was a very long way away and that comes down to just being, as long as you're aware of that, and you can conduct yourself in a way that isn't going to provoke people, sometimes that can be completely unavoidable, you get there and there could be those 1%ers that do want to cause you harm, and thankfully that's never happened*

---

[2] 'Double-crewing' is the colloquial term for a police vehicle staffed with two officers. With austerity, 'single crewing' i.e. patrolling alone, is becoming the norm for many officers. Unlike other units, national policy dictates an ARV *must* be crewed by two AFOs minimum.

when I've been away from people but I can see that people that work in the rurals and work on their own, potentially if you ask them, um, you may get a different answer from them.

AFO26: *Frankly, even in urban areas now, the amount of single-crewing and the lack of resourcing, it is quite conceivable you could be out on your own, out on a limb, dealing with a problem that historically you may have been double crewed with or had back-up round the corner, times are changing, one of the few departments that is pretty much always double-crewed is us, because we have to be because of the nature of the job.*

AFO15: *Hmmm, I think over the last five years, the decline of, the amount of officers has been really quite high, we've lost so many, that people in those rural areas probably will feel quite vulnerable.*

The final aspect of the ARV role that made officers feel safe was the training they had undertaken or skills they had developed as part of becoming an AFO:

Me: *OK, and has that sense of security increased now that you have access to firearms?*

AFO29: *No, the training I've had, having done the course, has allowed me to be more confident.*

Me: *OK.*

AFO29: *You just sort of, you're better at reading situations, you're more comfortable dealing with stuff because you've kind of, are able to sort of recognise stuff a lot sooner and all that kind of stuff.*

AFO30: *So it's not about fighting all the time, 'because you have got, you know, your sidearm on you, and loaded, and…*

AFO29: *You don't want to fight.*

AFO30: *Yeah, you don't want to be getting into those situations all the time, so it just adds another element on so you've got to risk assess that, and the level of them, and their skill set, and if it's not safe, then sometimes you will back-off, you'll contain it, you'll negotiate with them a bit more, it just gives you a few more skills that you're not expected to do as a front-line copper, you're just meant to get in there and nick 'em, you know?*

AFO29: *It's the comms* [communication skills], *isn't it? You've really got to be on point with your comms, because they look at them as a threat as much as them, I think the fact you carry weapons, they probably think, they regard you as a higher threat so if they're gonna go they're gonna go at you a lot harder than they would if you didn't. So, yeah, I' more confident because of the training I've had, um, the jobs you got to you are sort of more, you're more able to sort of communicate better with others, um, so it's not about what you have on you, it's about how you risk assess and how you manage it.*

AFO34: *Yeah, I mean, at the end of the day, you're a policeman, whether I've got firearms on me, whether I've got any, baton or CS, you're biggest weapon is your communication, you know, so, I don't think it matters if you've got any firearms or any weapons or anything, at the end of the day, if you can talk somebody down then it's brilliant, so, it depends on how you come across.*

8.3 Discussion

The discussion of the routine arming debate is included here to explore the opinions of ARV officers on this controversial issue. While not specifically related to the concerns surrounding police legitimacy, routine armament does have the potential to affect the legitimacy of the police. Furthermore, whenever the discussion of police firearms was raised in my interviews and fieldwork conversations, the routine arming debate often became the de facto discussion. This is what AFOs wished to discuss and its potential impact on their role needs to be addressed by the police organisation because it is a continuing concern for them.

It is also important to highlight here how few AFOs were familiar with the PFEW's stance on the issue. Also, where AFOs were aware of the PFEW's stance, the comments made by AFOs rarely reflected the PFEW's statements. One aspect that arose in passing was the AFOs' potential engagement with the Police Firearms Officers' Association (PFOA). PFOA was created to support all those involved in firearms operations and their families (PFOA, 2019). For a modest fee per month firearms and TASER trained officers can join and benefit from access to tailored news and events, as well as PFOA's network of counsellors, therapists and behaviour specialists for post-incident management (PFOA, 2019). The College of Policing (2019) Post-Deployment Authorised Professional Practice identifies PFOA as offering "valuable additional support and appropriate services to relevant officers and their families". My results speculatively indicate that perhaps AFOs engage more with PFOA due to the tailored nature of its support than with the PFEW. PFOA does not have a stance on routine arming and does not hold it as one of their key priorities, unlike the Officer Safety priority for PFEW, which includes the proposals of TASER for all officers and/or routine arming.

The concerns AFOs raised about the routine arming can be considered in two categories. The first category suggests cynical concerns that are potentially a result of police culture and ARV culture. A key aspect of ARV culture is the sense of elitism amongst the AFOs. This is most obvious where AFOs felt that the current level of training should remain as the minimum standard. At face value, it appears logical, particularly from a safety point of view. However, it also perhaps reflects a lack of understanding around the purpose of routine arming. It is unlikely that ARVs would be replaced by the routine arming of the police; instead, the purpose of all officers carrying a firearm would be to improve their capacity for self-defence. Whilst AFOs may see the current level of training as the minimum standard, this could reflect their desire for more training to be made available to them or the fact the AFOs' do not wish to devalue their existing achievements. In other words, if they have gone through so much to carry a firearm, why should someone else go through less?

Furthermore, if the training was to stay the same, the AFOs felt that not every other officer would be capable of passing the training required to carry firearms or, more pointedly, there are a large number of officers who should not be trusted with the equipment they have, let alone be given training to carry a firearm. As shown in Chapter Five, the AFOs' opinions of their own training were that it was challenging; a number of AFOs stated that only a fraction of those that entered the course passed. To some degree, there may be an element of professional pride that dictates how AFOs feel about the current training standards. This may encourage the feeling that their other colleagues would not be capable of carrying firearms. As well as this, the feeling that their other colleagues would not want to carry firearms, also goes some way towards reinforcing the AFOs' position as superior. AFOs have achieved in a way that others would or could not. These feelings are not necessarily detrimental to the AFOs because for effective reproduction of self-legitimacy, officers should feel effective and secure in their position. However, one must be careful because if such feelings turn to cynicism or doubt, they may undermine the creation of self-legitimacy for the AFOs (Bottoms and Tankebe, 2012, p. 125; Bradford and Quinton, 2014).

The other category encompasses more pragmatic concerns for the policing organisation. If officers are unwilling to carry firearms, then potential recruits might not wish to become police officers either. Additionally, those within the police service may wish to resign if compelled to carry a firearm. In both cases, the police organisation narrows the selection of skills it can draw upon, as those with skills other than handling firearms may not join or be motivated to leave.

The AFOs that raised concerns that routine arming would change the nature of British Policing seemed conscious of the political touchstone that comprises debates surrounding policing by consent. While we cannot ignore the evidence displayed in Chapter Three that shows the public frequently have a greater appetite for routine arming than the public do, it must be remembered that the police use of firearms is still considered a highly sensitive subject in Britain (Punch, 2011, p. 25; cf. Simpson, 2016). However, the AFOs' answers do suggest that tradition can cloud logical judgement, the idea that things have always been done this way and therefore must be 'the right way'. I agree with Punch (2011, p. 72 and p. 119) and think intrinsic to this discussion of tradition is the fact that the routine arming of police would likely be irreversible.

Sentiments that routine arming is not required also tie in with AFOs' opinions of their personal safety. The officers that do not feel routine arming is required tend to argue that there are not enough firearms deployments to justify every officer carrying a gun. As well, ARV officers emphasise that they feel secure because they have improved communication skills, improved tactical options including TASER and that they are always double crewed. AFOs do not feel that the firearms they now carry remedy the issues they had about feeling unsafe in the past. It is noteworthy that the AFOs highlighted improved communication skills as the most important, having the potential to de-escalate encounters so that no weapons, lethal or less lethal are required. It is possible the desire to carry a firearm, as reflected in the PFEW's survey, is a proxy for a feeling of security that currently unarmed officers feel has dwindled under cuts and austerity. The officers may feel that if they must work single-crewed, then they need instrumental power of a firearm to regain their feeling of safety. If feelings of safety among police do not improve then there may be increasing pressure from officers for the routine armament of British police.

Chapter Summary

The AFOs sampled are unanimous in their opinion against the routine arming of officers. This is an important finding considering that all AFOs have a background in Response policing and it is Response officers who polled as the most supportive of routine arming in the 2017 PFEW survey. The results of the AFOs in relation to the routine arming debate are significant because they have been unheard until now. Until now, we did not know what AFOs thought and it may have been expected that they would have a far more balanced collective viewpoint considering the recent results of routine arming surveys. They overwhelmingly listed pragmatic concerns about routine arming to support their views against it.

Finally, AFOs feel safe because they are always double-crewed as opposed to being on their own potentially without support, carrying a firearm does not directly contribute to their feelings of safety. This then has interesting connotations for the routine arming debate and the discussion on officer safety generally.

9   Conclusion

This thesis was based on 219 hours of ethnographic material gathered whilst on duty in Armed Response Vehicles (ARVs), as well as 18 semi-structured interviews with ARV crews. This research has explored the experiences of Authorised Firearms Officers (AFOs) crewing ARVs and investigated their interactions with members of the public. It examined the challenges faced by those performing the AFO role as well as how AFOs interpret both organisational and self-legitimacy.

The research finds there are a number of challenges faced by AFOs in the course of their duties. These include balancing the different aspects of the ARV role and the conflict that arises between AFOs and the Force Control Room (FCR) surrounding the granting of a firearms deployment. The findings also highlight how AFOs do not seem to suffer from reductions in self-legitimacy when they interact with members of the public in Great Britain. The AFOs' ability to generate further legitimacy is challenged by the dual nature of the ARV role. However, AFOs are able to build legitimacy in different ways, particularly in the aftermath of a critical incident. This concluding chapter summarises the research context, the key contributions of the research and suggests the implications for policy, practice and further research.

9.1   Research Context

When Peel created the Metropolitan Police in 1829, his ideal was of an unarmed service that was distinct from the military of the day (Waldren, 2007). It was feared that if the police were as heavily armed as the military, the public would not consent to their presence and would resist attempts at public order. Although military resemblance is not a concern of today's police, there remains a fear from the police that the British public would not consent to routinely armed officers (Waddington, 1991). The continuation of Britain's 'unarmed exceptionalism' means that firearms remain the preserve of specially trained units, which generally remain out of the public eye. This puts Britain at odds with most other countries around the world, where all officers are trained to use and have access to firearms. Whether the British police should be routinely armed is often debated, but so far, has been difficult to research.

Chapter Three highlighted how little research has been done about the police use of firearms in Great Britain, and the rest of the world, due to the difficulties in accessing the field. It compiled various sources to examine the relevance of both paramilitary policing and police

culture literature to the carrying of firearms by police. It showed how out of date much of the knowledge on police firearms use is in Great Britain, and demonstrates how that literature builds an impression of a 'macho' culture fixated on 'warrior fantasies', 'techno-garb [and] heavy weaponry' (Gibson, 1994; Kraska, 1999, p. 142; Westmarland, 2001b). The chapter also explored how the counter-terrorism narrative is the primary driver for the conversation surrounding the demand for armed police in Great Britain. This counter-terrorism narrative is promoted ahead of the personal safety narrative despite the latter being covered by numerous Police Federation surveys (Squires and Kennison, 2010, p. 111; PFEW, 2017). Finally, the less-lethal alternatives of TASER and the Attenuating Energy Projectile (AEP) Launcher were explored outlining the increased appetite for the routine issue of TASER and the fact that the AEP's use within firearms operations, as opposed to public order scenarios, remains little understood. The chapter demonstrated the necessity for exploratory and explanatory work to fill the existing gaps in academic knowledge. It is these issues that prompted the creation of the first research question: 'What challenges are faced by Authorised Firearms Officers in a modern, British police service?'

Chapter Four highlighted that due to this lack of police firearms literature there is even less known about how police firearms use relates to less tangible notions such as that of police legitimacy. The chapter outlined the core theories of police legitimacy theory such as procedural justice and policing by consent. It also explored self-legitimacy material that highlighted how officers can maintain self-legitimacy, and therefore reproduce organisational legitimacy, by engaging with procedural justice and knowing their position in the police hierarchy is secure (Bottoms and Tankebe, 2012; Tankebe, 2014, p. 3738). Finally, Chapter Four linked elements of police legitimacy and self-legitimacy to aspects of police firearms literature. It highlighted how the carrying of a firearm remains a potent reminder of the police's inherent ability to use force and therefore can be interpreted by members of the public as a threat that may override principles of policing by consent. This chapter demonstrated the need for not only a systematic literature review but also first-hand, primary data accounts that address the connections between police firearms use and notions of police legitimacy. These issues defined the second research question: 'How do Authorised Firearms Officers interpret both organisational and self-legitimacy?'

I answered the research questions by providing the first contemporary account of the routine duties of AFOs. I argued in the methodology in Chapter Two why ethnography was the most suitable methodology for this research. Ethnography illuminates a world recognisable to the police but never experienced before by academia: in this case the routine duties of ARVs

(Rowe, 2017). I chose a 'Hit and Run' approach, supported by semi-structured interviews, to fit around police requirements and achieve the 'thick description' necessary for ethnographic research (Geertz, 1973; 2000; Denscombe, 2007; Moskos, 2009; Rhodes, 2011; 2014b). Whilst ethnography is rewarding for the researcher, when adopting this type of research, one potentially encounters significant access and ethics issues (Punch, 1989; Brown, 1996; Brookman, 1999; McGovern, 2008). As the summaries of the literature review alluded to, police firearms is a difficult to access area of study and I knew that it would be challenging to enter this research field. I was met with enthusiasm and courtesy by all the organisations and individuals I encountered. I am grateful to Police Service 1 and Police Service 2 for allowing me to undertake this research and for the trust placed in me. I hope through their positive example that other researchers and other police services are encouraged to foster collaborative partnerships to further police firearms research.

9.2   Research Question 1: What Challenges are faced by Authorised Firearms Officers in a Modern, British Police Service?

This thesis is the first ethnographic account of AFOs that reports how officers experience the demands of the ARV role, as well as the calls they respond to and the boredom that lingers in between. Chapter Five emphasises the fact that ARV crews perform a multitude of duties. This means that AFOs encounter the public more frequently than many people realise (Yesberg and Bradford, 2018). By investigating these routine duties, I highlight how only discussing armed policing within certain contexts, such as counter-terrorism, is unhelpful for the debate. In almost every police service around the country, AFOs carrying sidearms regularly interact with members of the public at any number of routine policing calls.

The data collected here demonstrates that AFOs have their own distinct culture within police culture, confirming research that police culture is not monolithic (Chan, 1996; Reiner, 2010). This ARV culture is action and excitement oriented, more so than regular police culture. Boredom is an intrinsic part of the police role but AFOs appear to suffer intensified feelings of boredom (Waddington, 1999c, pp. 1-4; Fassin, 2013; Phillips, 2016; Rowe and Rowe, 2019). Their identity as specialists for critical situations fuels AFOs' desire for 'good' jobs and therefore their patience is stretched because such 'exciting' incidents are infrequent. Whilst outwardly masculine and placing value on traditionally masculine facets (e.g. physical fitness), the ARV culture is more progressive than the 'firearms unit' culture of the 1990s demonstrated by Westmarland (2001b) and other non-academic sources (Collins, 1997; 1999; Gray, 2000, Hailwood, 2005; Long, 2016).

Finally, there seems to be a prevailing lack of practical firearms experience among AFOs. It seems the AFOs position as de facto firearms specialists does not extend beyond their familiarity with their service weapons in most cases. Whilst all AFOs do not need to be trained to the standard of an armourer, it would appear that the training offered at the time of writing (G2 – Make Safe a Recovered Firearm) is not comprehensive enough. It also appears to be overlooked or side-lined during the already long and complicated training process. Whilst the data finds individuals with a military background are over-represented among AFOs, it is no substitute for all AFOs having a general awareness surrounding weapons functionality and handling for Make Safes.

Chapter Six highlights the fact that ARV crews believe that firearms deployments are not always given appropriately by the FCR or Force Incident Manager (FIM). The data demonstrates that the relationship between the FCR and the ARV crews can be seen as a prime example of Tankebe's (2014) concept of tension within a police organisation; the type of tension that can threaten police self-legitimacy. Both entities slightly misunderstand the other's role and wish the other understood their point of view more. This tension is amplified when considering the FIM's role in firearms deployments where AFOs feel their relevant experience is overshadowed by someone's rank. ARV crews feel that the FCR are inherently over-cautious about the potential public discomfort caused by the deployment of armed officers and therefore potentially risk officer safety by refusing to grant firearms deployments when ARV crews would like them to be given.

The existence of this tension suggests there are implications for the training of the FIMs, and the FCR more generally, regarding the way that firearms deployments are given and managed. In particular, AFOs felt that TASER equipped officers were being used as a substitute to ARV crews for dangerous incidents to prevent the deployment of armed officers. Some AFOs highlighted that these sorts of scenarios are potentially more likely to lead to a police shooting. If AFOs assist using only a TASER when a firearms deployment has not been given, the AFOs would be entitled to self-deploy their sidearm should their TASERs fail or the circumstances escalate. Disagreements between the AFOs and the FCR most frequently occur when an ARV is being sent to calls involving bladed articles, blunt trauma weapons and suspected air weapons. This is because the phrases that allow the granting of a firearms deployment are open to interpretation. Whilst a degree of discretion is necessary, the openness of "a potentially lethal weapon" or "otherwise so dangerous" leads to differing points of view. At what point is a weapon potentially lethal? This disagreement comes to a head when ARV officers perceive their first-hand, 'on-the-ground' experience as overruled by the detached, overly rational

procedure from senior officers. If this tension is allowed to continue, then AFOs risk a reduced ability to maintain self-legitimacy (Tankebe, 2014).

Connected to the FCR conflicts are issues of policy regarding the AEP Launcher and the future of less-lethal technology within British policing. This thesis finds that the AFOs believe the AEP Launcher remains an under-utilised piece of equipment whose purpose remains misunderstood. AFOs feel the tactical value of the AEP Launcher is partly lost by having its use contained within firearms deployments. There is scope either to move the AEP Launcher outside of firearms deployments alongside TASER or to introduce an intermediary step where additional equipment, such as AEPs or other Specialist Munitions, could be used short of a full firearms deployment. This decision should be reassured by the fact that AFOs carry a handgun and can self-deploy at any of these such incidents should the need arise. Furthermore, whilst some AFOs consider the AEP Launcher as "out-dated", they are keen to keep a weapon with the AEP Launcher's functionality. If the AEP Launcher is to be replaced, we must consider how its replacement might function and whether it could also have tactical use outside of a given firearms deployment. However, the replacement of the AEP Launcher itself with an alternate less-lethal technology may further legitimise its use considering the negative connotations the AEP Launcher has to the use of Plastic Baton Rounds (PBRs) during the Troubles in Northern Ireland (Rogers, 2003, p. 196).

To summarise, the key challenges faced by AFOs are the amplified feelings of boredom that are inherent to their role, the lack of specialist firearms knowledge among many AFOs and the conflict between ARV crews and the FCR or FIM surrounding the granting of a firearms deployment.

9.3   Research Question 2: How do Authorised Firearms Officers Interpret both Organisational and Self-Legitimacy?

This thesis also contributes to the small amount of existing research on police firearms and armed police interactions with the public. It also provides a model for the interactions armed officers have with members of the public. This typology provides data that supports Hendy's (2012) findings from Sweden and does not support the assertions made by Buttle (2010) and Bott (2011) in the New Zealand context. It does not find evidence to support the idea that armed police erode policing by consent, even if AFOs appear to derive their legitimacy differently. The typology also supports evidence to suggest that the public's assessment of armed police is largely made upon their existing attitudes towards police, and police carrying a firearm may not alter that (Yesberg, Bradford and Dawson, 2019, pp. 21-22).

Even in a firearms-sensitive society such as Great Britain, where armed police are a novelty and represent a small amount of policing strength, they still interact with the public in similar ways to unarmed officers. Indeed, structured interactions between AFOs and members of the public may enhance legitimacy. For example, the Operation Foot patrols, and the use of armed police as a reassurance measure in general, satisfy McKenzie and Gallagher's (1989) requirement for the police to be delivering a "highly visible" response to the growing threat of terrorism. These findings also support those of Yesberg, Bradford and Dawson (2019, pp. 25-26) who propose that even if the British public dislike seeing armed officers with carbines, extra deployments of armed police will do little to change public opinion for better or worse.

The data collected for this thesis suggests the possibility of exploring public policy regarding the deployment of AFOs as a public reassurance or crime deterrence measure, particularly in a counter-terrorism context. The AFOs interviewed reported high levels of satisfaction from both the police officers who undertook it and the public that they came into contact with during the Operation Foot patrols. If further research confirmed that firearms officers could walk around a certain area with no adverse effect on legitimacy, then this would be beneficial for the ARV role. Increased opportunities to interact would be beneficial for AFO self-legitimacy and may involve legitimising interactions with members of the public. Finally, patrolling more on foot would also reduce boredom, as ARV crews currently spend a lot of time sat in their vehicles waiting to respond to calls.

This thesis also finds no evidence to support Sarre's (1996) findings from Australia that policing with firearms changes the manner in which the police and the public interact, by alienating the public from the police and negatively affecting the process of community policing. While the benefits of community policing for the police and the public alike are reduced for armed officers in Great Britain, this seems more likely due to the organisation of the ARV role, than it is to their carrying of firearms. Being part of any primarily reactive police unit can lead to lower levels of public legitimacy and self-legitimacy among those officers (Myhill and Bradford, 2013; Harkin, 2015). This effect occurs whether the officers are armed or unarmed and is not connected to the carrying of firearms by AFOs.

The data also suggests that the regional way in which ARVs are organised means AFOs feel their ability to meaningfully connect with the public is impaired because they are not attached to a particular geographic area. Whilst the recommendations made in section 9.2 may go some way to address this, there are also implications for police policy in that ARV deployment

patterns could be modified to highlight the benefits of connecting AFOs to particular areas. There seem to be informal arrangements in certain teams: officers who were familiar with particular areas prior to joining the firearms unit are prioritised to continue to police those areas. This is particularly important when considering how AFOs perceive they have targets for community resolutions or arrests but feel these targets are incompatible with their role. The police services should take care to ensure that messages regarding the tasks they wish ARV crews to fulfil are being communicated clearly through supervisors to ensure there is no confusion. If a structured redeployment of AFOs saw officers attached to a particular geographic area, then these targets may be more achievable.

Finally, Chapter Eight of the thesis provides a unique look into the existing routine arming debate making use of contemporary statistics. It is the first piece of research specifically targeting AFOs for their opinions on police armament and finds that AFOs almost completely oppose the routine issue of firearms to police. Instead, for their sense of safety, firearms officers place an emphasis on other factors that are intrinsic to the ARV role such as improved communication skills, carrying TASER and never having to patrol alone. This has implications for the deployment of all officers, armed or unarmed. It could even be suggested that the most recent desire for routine armament may be interpreting firearms as a proxy for feeling safe currently unavailable to unarmed officers. Providing unarmed officers access to the factors that make AFOs feel safe may allow them to feel safer without routine arming.

To summarise, AFOs do not perceive that their legitimacy is diminished by carrying a firearm, but their ability to generate legitimacy is reduced by other aspects of the role such as their broad geographical deployment. This geographical dispersion also affects the AFOs' ability to carry out community policing tasks. When discussing legitimacy of armed police, a big concern that arises for AFOs is the routine arming debate. AFOs do not support routine arming but identify a range of officer safety measures intrinsic to the AFO role that could be extended to unarmed officers.

9.4   Implications for Further Research

Despite the significant data contained in this thesis throwing light on the role and demographics of firearms officers, there was a clear lack of diversity amongst AFOs. Whilst I had expected to find gender issues more discussed than they were, the fact remains that I came into contact with very few female or BME AFOs. This suggests there is scope to build on my findings and those of Westmarland (2001b) and Cain (2011) to research barriers to entry

for both female and BME officers into specialist units. Further research could investigate in more depth the motivations and prior firearms experience of those currently considering becoming an AFO.

As part of a broader understanding of organisational tension within the police, there is potential to explore in depth the relationship between the FIM and ARV Crews regarding the authorising of firearms deployments. Research could further investigate the factors that underpin AFOs' sense of self-legitimacy that leads to the conflicts that occur as identified in this thesis. The research could take into account the training of both parties. For example, to what extent is advice from Tactical Advisors (TacAds) or Operational Firearms Commanders (OFCs) acted upon, and which incidents lead to more, or less, conflict?

Whilst this research was successful at achieving 'deep' immersion in the site of study by using Hit and Run Ethnography, further study could seek to obtain a greater breadth to the data by using a different methodology. For example, one could create a quantitative data set that charts a large number of interactions between AFOs and members of the public. Such a methodology could employ the typology established in this thesis to robustly assess the disposition of members of the public when encountering armed police. This could be furthered by charting elements of legitimacy-building techniques or aspects of procedural justice employed by AFOs during these interactions. If possible, these could include reactions to armed police from members of the public and suspects at firearms deployments.

In addition, research could be conducted into the specific use of the AEP Launchers. Similar to the work that Dymond (2018) has done with TASER, and alongside the new national reporting standards for the use of force, a deep dive could investigate the circumstances of AEP use within and outside of firearms deployments. Such work could identify a replacement or additional extended range less-lethal projectile weapons that could support either regular or armed policing in England and Wales. The use of distraction devices by ARV crews could also be included in this remit as well, particularly as they are likely to be absent from the national reporting standards for the use of force.

Finally, an investigation that identifies factors that contribute to, or detract from, feelings of safety on duty for both armed and unarmed officers would help illuminate why certain officers feel routine arming is necessary. As part of this investigation, it would also be beneficial to make an independent assessment, away from the context of a terrorist attack, of public opinion on the routine armament of police officers in England with either firearms or TASER.

This could be coupled with an improvement of the Police Federation's surveys on routinely arming officers to help elicit responses from existing AFOs. It could also be designed with more care to remove ambiguities from the existing question set.

9.5   Concluding Remarks

There is a great deal of scope to explore the field of police firearms, particularly in the unarmed (England, Wales and Scotland; the Republic of Ireland) and semi-armed (New Zealand; Iceland; Norway) countries. The data from this project could be used as the starting point to examine many aspects of the AFO role; for example, to explore AFOs' opinions of leadership or AFOs' interactions with other departments within the police. The methods of policing with firearms in Britain continue to adapt at a rapid pace; research that is dynamic and embedded within the site of study is necessary to keep abreast of potential impacts on police policy, police legitimacy and policing by consent.

Reference List

Akoensi, T. (2016) 'Perceptions of Self-Legitimacy and Audience Legitimacy Among Prison Officers in Ghana' *International Journal of Comparative and Applied Criminal Justice* 40(3) pp. 245-261 [Online] Available at: https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/01924036.2016.1165712 (Accessed: 11th October 2018).

Alpers, P., Wilson, M., Rossetti, A. and Salinas, D. (2013) *United Kingdom — Gun Facts, Figures and the Law* [Online] Available at: https://www.gunpolicy.org/firearms/region/united-kingdom (Accessed: 31st May 2019).

Alshenqeeti, H. (2014) 'Interviewing as a Data Collection Method: A Critical Review' *English Linguistics Research* 3(1) pp. 39-45 [Online] Available at: http://www.sciedu.ca/journal/index.php/elr/article/view/4081/2608 (Accessed: 11th October 2018).

Antrobus, E., Bradford, B., Murphy, K. and Sargeant, E. (2015) 'Community Norms, Procedural Justice, and the Public's Perceptions of Police Legitimacy' *Journal of Contemporary Criminal Justice* 31(2) pp. 151-170 [Online] Available at: http://journals.sagepub.com/doi/abs/10.1177/1043986214568840 (Accessed: 11th October 2018).

Antunes, G. and Hunt, A. L. (1973) 'The Impact of Certainty and Severity of Punishment on Levels of Crime in American States: An Extended Analysis' *Journal of Criminal Law and Criminology* 64(4) pp. 486-493 [Online] Available at: https://www.jstor.org/stable/1142449?seq=1#page_scan_tab_contents (Accessed: 11th October 2018).

Apter, J. (2019) 'Good to see this from @NorthantsChief…' *Twitter* 20th June Available at: https://twitter.com/PFEW_Chair/status/1141959770145992704 (Accessed: 25th June 2019).

Ariel, B., Lawes, D., Weinborn, C., Henry, R., Chen, K. and Sabo, H. B. (2019) 'The "Less-Than-Lethal Weapons Effect" – Introducing TASERs to Routine Police Operations in England and Wales' *Criminal Justice and Behavious* 46(2) pp. 280-300 [Online] Available at: https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/pdf/10.1177/0093854818812918 (Accessed: 17th June 2019).

Archer, M. S. (2003) *Structure, Agency and the Internal Conversation* Cambridge University Press: Cambridge

Association of Chief Police Officers (2012) *Guidelines on the use of Community Resolutions (CR) Incorporating Restorative Justice (RJ)* [Online] Available at: http://library.college.police.uk/docs/appref/Community-Resolutions-Incorporating-RJ-Final-Aug-2012-2.pdf (Accessed: 12th January 2020).

Association of Chief Police Officers (2013) 'Item 5: REVIEW OF CURRENT WORK PROGRAMMES: Firearms Interoperability: Direction of Travel/Secretariat Update: High Risk Tactical Advisory Group (HRTAG): CTSFO Network – National Resource' *Minutes of the ACPO Armed Police Working Group 24th January 2013* Association of Chief Police Officers, London

Atkinson, P. and Hammersley, M. (1994) 'Ethnography and Participant Observation' in Denzin, N. and Lincoln, Y. (eds.) *Handbook of Qualitative Research* 1st edn. Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications Ltd. pp. 248-261

Bacon, M. (2016) *Taking Care of Business: Police Detectives, Drug Law Enforcement and Proactive Investigation* Oxford: Oxford University Press

Barbalet, J. (2011) 'Emotions Beyond Regulation: Backgrounded Emotions in Science and Trust' *Emotion Review* 3(1) pp. 36-43 [Online] Available at: http://journals.sagepub.com/doi/10.1177/1754073910380968 (Accessed: 11th October 2018).

Barton, J., Vrij, A. and Bull, R. (2000) 'High Speed Driving: Police Use of Lethal Force During Simulated Incidents' *Legal and Criminological Psychology,* 5(1) pp. 107-121 [Online] Available at: https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/abs/10.1348/135532500168010 (Accessed: 31st May 2019).

Bayley, D. (1977) *Police and Society* London: Sage

Bayley, D. (1995) 'A Foreign Policy for Democratic Policing' *Policing and Society* 5(2) pp. 79–94 [Online] Available at: https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/10439463.1995.9964713 (Accessed: 11th October 2018).

BBC News (2013) 'Man Dies After Police Use TASER in Manchester' *BBC News* 11th July [Online] Available at: https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-23265905 (Accessed: 9th January 2019).

BBC News (2018) 'TASERs for all Hampshire Police Officers with 'Operational Need'' 31st January *BBC* News [Online] Available at: https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-hampshire-42894075 (Accessed: 31st May 2019).

Beetham, D. (1991) *The Legitimation of Power* Basingstoke: Palgrave-MacMillan

Belur, J. (2014) 'Police Use of Firearms' in Bruinsma, G. and Weisburd, D. (eds.) *Encyclopaedia of Crime and Criminal Justice Wiley Online Library* [Online] pp. 3742-3753 Available at: https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/book/10.1002/9781118517383 (Accessed: 11th October 2018).

Bennett, K. (2016) 'Armed Police Deployed to Stamp Out Burglaries' 1st November *Oldham Evening Chronicle* [Online] Available at: https://www.oldham-chronicle.co.uk/news-features/8/news-headlines/100482/armed-police-deployed-to-stamp-out-burglaries (Accessed: 31st May 2019)

Birchley, E. (2018) 'Met Police Wants More Female Firearm Officers to Address Gender Imbalance' *Sky News* 10th November [Online] Available at: https://news.sky.com/story/met-police-wants-more-female-firearm-officers-to-address-gender-imbalance-11549828 (Accessed: 21st May 2019)

Bittner, E. (1970) *The Functions of the Police in Modern Society* Rockville: National Institute of Mental Health

Bittner, E. (1985) 'Capacity to Use Force as the Core of the Police Role' in Elliston, F. A. and Feldberg, M. (eds.) *Moral Issues in Police Work* Totowa: Rowman & Allanheld

Bittner, E. (2005) 'Florence Nightingale in Pursuit of Willie Sutton' in Newburn, T. (ed.) *Policing: Key Readings* Cullompton: Willan

Blaxter, L., Hughes, C. and Tight, M. (2010) *How to Research* 4th edn. Maidenhead: Open University Press

Bleetman, A., Steyn, R. and Lee, C. (2004) 'Introduction of the Taser into British Policing. Implications for UK Emergency Departments: An Overview of Electronic Weaponry' *Emergency Medicine Journal* 21(2) pp. 136-140 [Online] Available at: https://emj.bmj.com/content/21/2/136 (Accessed: 11th October 2018).

Boswell, J. and Corbett, J. (2015a) 'Embracing Impressionism: Revealing the Brush Strokes of Interpretive Research' *Critical Policy Studies* 9(2) pp. 216-225 [Online] Available at: https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/19460171.2014.971039 (Accessed: 11th October 2018).

Boswell, J. and Corbett, J. (2015b) 'Who Are We Trying to Impress? Reflection on Navigating Political Science, Ethnography and Interpretation' *Journal of Organizational Ethnography* 4(2) [Online] Available at: https://www.emeraldinsight.com/doi/full/10.1108/JOE-08-2014-0030 (Accessed: 11th October 2018).

Boswell, J., Corbett, J., Dommett, K, Jennings, W., Flinders, M., Rhodes, R. A. W. and Wood, M. (2018) 'State of the Field: What Can Political Ethnography Tell Us About Anti-Politics and Democratic Disaffection?' *European Journal of Political Research* 57(1) pp. 1-16 [Online] Available at: https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/epdf/10.1111/1475-6765.12270 (Accessed: 11th October 2018).

Bott, M. (2011) 'The Police Arms Race – More Guns Equals More People Killed' *Michael Bott's Notebook* 6th April 2011 Available at: http://michaelbott.blogspot.com/2011/04/police-arms-race-more-guns-equals-more.html (Accessed: 11th October 2018).

Bottoms, A. and Tankebe, J. (2012) 'Beyond Procedural Justice: A Dialogic Approach to Legitimacy in Criminal Justice' *Journal of Criminal Law and Criminology* 102(1) pp. 119–170 [Online] Available at: https://heinonline.org/HOL/Page?handle=hein.journals/jclc102&div=8&id=&page=&collection=journals (Accessed: 11th October 2018).

Boyatzis, R. E. (1998) *Transforming Qualitative Information: Thematic Analysis and Code Development* London: Sage Publications

Bradford, B. (2014) 'Policing and Social Identity: Procedural Justice, Inclusion and Cooperation Between Police and Public' *Policing and Society* 24(1) pp. 22-43 [Online] Available at: http://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/10439463.2012.724068 (Accessed: 11th October 2018).

Bradford, B. and Quinton, P. (2014) 'Self-Legitimacy, Police Culture and Support for Democratic Policing in and English Constabulary' *The British Journal of Criminology* 54(6) pp. 1023-1046 [Online] Available at: https://academic.oup.com/bjc/article/54/6/1023/394753 (Accessed: 5th July 2019).

Bradford, B., Quinton, P., Myhil, A. and Porter, G. (2014) 'Why Do 'the Law' Comply? Procedural Justice, Group Identification and Officer Motivation in Police Organizations' *European Journal of Criminology* 11(1) pp. 110-131 [Online] Available at: http://journals.sagepub.com/doi/pdf/10.1177/1477370813491898 (Accessed: 11th October 2018).

Braun, V. and Clark, V. (2006) 'Using Thematic Analysis in Psychology' *Qualitative Research in Psychology* 3(2) pp. 77-101 [Online] Available at: https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1191/1478088706qp063oa (Accessed: 11th October 2018).

Brookman, F. (1999) 'Accessing and Analysing Police Murder Files' in Brookman, F., Noaks, L. and Wincup, E. (eds.) *Qualitative Research in Criminology* Aldershot: Ashgate Publishing Ltd. pp. 46-61

Brown, J. (1996) 'Police Research: Some Critical Issues' in Leishman, F., Loveday, B. and Savage, S. P. (eds.) *Cores Issues in Policing* New York: Longman Publishing pp. 177-190

Brown, J. and Sargent, S. (1995) 'Police Women and Firearms in the British Police Service' *Police Studies* 18(2) pp. 1-16 [Online] Available at: https://heinonline.org/HOL/Page?handle=hein.journals/polic18&div=16&g_sent=1&casa_token=&collection=journals# (Accessed: 11th October 2018).

Bryman, A. (2008) *Social Research Methods* 3rd edn. Oxford: Oxford University Press

Bryman, A. (2012) *Social Research Methods* 4th edn. Oxford: Oxford University Press

Buttle, J. (2010) 'The Case Against Arming the New Zealand Police' [Online] Available at: http://www.academia.edu/395156/The_Case_Against_Arming_The_New_Zealand_Police (Accessed: 11th October 2018).

Cain, D. (2011) *Gender within a Specialist Police Department – An Examination of the Cultural Dynamics of a Firearms Unit* PhD Thesis University of Portsmouth [Online] Available at: https://researchportal.port.ac.uk/portal/en/theses/gender-within-a-specialist-police-department(75998bda-eb53-4c31-a3a6-f9e726f7f436).html (Accessed: 21st May 2019)

Cain, M. (1973) *Society and the Policeman's Role* London: Routledge

Chan, J. (1996) 'Changing Police Culture' *The British Journal of Criminology* 36(1) pp. 109-134 [Online] Available at: https://academic.oup.com/bjc/article/36/1/109/606112 (Accessed: 11th October 2018).

Channel News Asia (2019) 'New Zealand Disarms Police as Threat Level Lowered' *Channel News Asia* 17th April [Online] Available at: https://www.channelnewsasia.com/news/world/new-zealand-disarms-police-as-terror-threat-level-lowered-11452706 (Accessed: 21st May 2019).

Clark-Darby, O. (2015) *An Examination of Firearms Officers in Training* Unpublished MSc Thesis. University of Southampton.

Coady, T., James, S., Miller, S. and O'Keefe, M. (2000*) Violence and Police Culture* Melbourne: Melbourne University Press

Cockcroft, T. (2013) *Police Culture: Themes and Concepts* London: Routledge Publishing

College of Policing (2013) *Armed Policing: Deployment of AFOs* [Online] Available at: https://www.app.college.police.uk/app-content/armed-policing/use-of-force-firearms-and-less-lethal-weapons/deployment-of-afos/ (Accessed: 31st May 2019).

College of Policing (2018) *Armed Policing: Use of Force, Firearms and Less Lethal Weapons* [Online] Available at: https://www.app.college.police.uk/app-content/armed-policing/use-of-force-firearms-and-less-lethal-weapons/ (Accessed: 27th June 2019).

College of Policing (2019) *Armed Policing: Post-Deployment* [Online] Available at: https://www.app.college.police.uk/app-content/armed-policing/post-deployment/ (Accessed: 5th July 2019).

Collins, S. (1997) *The Good Guys Wear Black* London: Century

Collins, S. (1999) *The Glory Boys* London: Arrow Books Ltd.

Croft, E.B. (1985) *Police Use of Force: An Empirical Analysis* PhD Thesis State University of New York at Albany, New York

deMunck, V. and Sobo, E. (1998) *Using Methods in the Field: A Practical Introduction and Casebook* Thousand Oaks: AltaMira Press.

den Heyer, G. (2012) 'Mayberry Revisited: A Review of the Influence of Police Paramilitary Units on Policing' *Policing and Society* 24(3) pp. 346-361 [Online] Available at: http://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/10439463.2013.784304 (Accessed: 11th October 2018).

Denscombe, M. (2007) *The Good Research Guide for Small-Scale Social Research Projects ProQuest Ebook Central* [Online] Available at: http://site.ebrary.com/lib/soton/detail.action?docID=10441962 (Accessed: 11th October 2018).

Denzin, N. and Lincoln, Y. (2000) *Handbook of Qualitative Research* 2nd edn. Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications Ltd.

DeWalt, K. and DeWalt, B. (2002) *Participant Observation: A Guide for Fieldworker*s Walnut Creek: AltaMira Press.

DeWalt, K., (1998). 'Participant Observation' in Bernard, H. (ed.) *Handbook of Methods in Cultural Anthropology* pp. 251-293 Walnut Creek: AltaMira Press.

Dodge, J., Ospina, S., and Foldy, E. (2005) 'Integrating Rigor and Relevance in Public Administration Scholarship: The Contribution of Narrative Inquiry' *Public Administration Review* 65(3) pp. 286-300 [Online] Available at: http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/j.1540-6210.2005.00454.x/full (Accessed: 11th October 2018).

Dymond, A. (2018) '"TASER, TASER!" Exploring Factors Associated with Police use of TASER in England and Wales' *Policing and Society* pp. 1-16 [Online] Available at: https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/10439463.2018.1551392 (Accessed: 17th June 2019).

Dymond, A. (2019) [Forthcoming] 'Towards a Socio-Technical Understanding of Discretion: A Case Study of Taser and Police Use of Force' *Policing & Society* pp. 1-25

Education and Home Affairs Scrutiny Panel (2010) *Introduction of TASERs in Jersey* [Online] Available at: https://statesassembly.gov.je/scrutinyreports/2012/report%20-%20introduction%20of%20tasers%20in%20jersey%20-%209%20july%202012.pdf (Accessed: 11th October 2018).

Erlandson, D., Harris, E., Skipper, B. and Allen, S. (1993) *Doing Naturalistic Inquiry: A Guide to Methods* Newbury Park: Sage

Fassin, D. (2013) *Enforcing Order: An Ethnography of Urban Policing* Cambridge: Polity Press

Flacks, S. (2018) 'The Stop and Search of Minors: A "Vital Police Tool"?' *Criminology & Criminal Justice* 18(3) pp. 364-384 [Online] Available at: https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/pdf/10.1177/1748895817720485 (Accessed: 20th June 2019).

Fleming, J. (2010) 'Learning to Work Together: Police and Academics' *Policing: A Journal of Policy and Practice* 4(2) pp. 139-145 [Online] Available at: https://academic.oup.com/policing/article/4/2/139/1516353 (Accessed: 11th October 2018).

Fleming, J. (2011) 'Qualitative Encounters in Policing Research' in Bartels, L. and Richards, K. eds. *Qualitative Criminology: Stories from the Field* Arndale: Hawkins Press pp. 13-24

Fleming, J. (2018) 'How Do the Police Respond to Evidence-Based Policing?' in Rhodes, R. A. W. (ed.) *Narrative Policy Analysis: Cases in Decentred Policy* Basingstoke: Palgrave-MacMillan pp. 221-240

Foote, C. and Cook, J. (2019) 'Armed Police Sent to 5,000 Routine Incidents' 7th May *BBC News* [Online] Available at: https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-scotland-48140508 (Accessed: 31st May 2019).

Foster, J. and Bailey, S. (2010) 'Joining Forces: Maximizing Ways of Making a Difference in Policing' *Policing: A Journal of Policy and Practice* 4(2) pp. 95-103 [Online] Available at: https://academic.oup.com/policing/article/4/2/95/1519300 (Accessed: 11th October 2018).

Fox, J.C. and Lundman, R.J. (1974) 'Problems and Strategies in Gaining Research Access in Police Organisations' *Criminology* 12(1) pp. 52-69 [Online] Available at: https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/abs/10.1111/j.1745-9125.1974.tb00620.x (Accessed: 31st August 2018).

Geertz, C. (1973) 'Thick Description: Toward and Interpretive Theory of Culture' in Geertz, C. (ed.) *The Interpretation of Cultures: Selected Essays* London: Fontana pp. 3-32

Geertz, C. (2000) *Available Light: Anthropological Reflections on Philosophical Topics* Princeton: Princeton University Press.

Giacomantonio, C., Bradford, B., Davies, M. and Martin, R. (2014) *Making and Breaking Barriers* [Online] Available at: https://www.rand.org/content/dam/rand/pubs/research_reports/RR800/RR830z1/RAND_RR830z1.pdf (Accessed: 11th October 2018).

Gibson, J. (1994) *Warrior Dreams: Paramilitary Culture in Post-Vietnam America* United States: Hill and Wang

Goldstein, H. (1977*) Policing a Free Society*. Cambridge: Ballinger

Goldstein, J. (1960) 'Police Discretion Not to Invoke the Criminal Process: Low-Visibility Decisions in the Administration of Justice' *Yale Law Journal* 69(4) pp. 401–437 [Online] Available at: https://digitalcommons.law.yale.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=3417&context=fss_papers (Accessed: 11th October 2018).

Gould, R. W. and Waldren, M. J. (1986) *London's Armed Police* London: Arms and Armour Press

Gray, R. (2000) *Armed Response: Inside SO19 – Scotland Yard's Elite Armed Response Unit* London: Virgin Publishing Ltd.

Gray, R. (2007) 'Easier to Use for WPC's, the Ladies' Firearms' *The Telegraph* 4th March [Online] Available at: http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/uknews/1544497/Easier-to-use-for-WPcs-the-ladies-firearms.html (Accessed: 21st May 2019)

Great Britain. Home Office Research and Planning Unit (1992a) *The Management and Dployment of Police Armed Response Vehicles* (Paper 67) [Online] Available at: http://library.college.police.uk/docs/horpu/rup067.pdf? (Accessed: 31st August 2019).

Great Britain. Home Office Research and Planning Unit (1992b) *Using Psychometric Personality Tests in the Selection of Firearms Officers* (Paper 68) [Online] Available at: http://library.college.police.uk/docs/horpu/rup068.pdf (Accessed: 31st May 2019).

Green, P. and Ward, T. (2004) *State Crime: Governments, Violence and Corruption ProQuest Ebook Central* [Online] Available at: https://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/soton-ebooks/reader.action?docID=3386268&query=# (Accessed: 11th October 2018).

Hailwood, A. (2005) *Gun Law: Fighting Britain's Deadliest Gangs: Inside an Elite Police Firearms Unit* Reading: Milo Books Ltd.

Hamilton, L. (2017) 'Armed Cops Set to be Called Out to 'Routine Matters' in Dundee' 14th December *Evening Telegraph* [Online] Available at: https://www.eveningtelegraph.co.uk/fp/armed-cops-set-called-routine-matters-dundee/ (Accessed: 31st May 2019).

Harkin, D. (2015) 'Police Legitimacy, Ideology and Qualitative Methods: A Critique of Procedural Justice Theory' *Criminology & Criminal Justice* 15(5) pp. 594-612 [Online] Available at: http://journals.sagepub.com/doi/abs/10.1177/1748895815580397 (Accessed: 11th October 2018).

Hawkins, G. and Ward, P. (1970) 'Armed and Disarmed Police: Police Firearms Policy and Levels of Violence' *Journal of Research in Crime and Delinquency* 7(2) pp. 188–197

Hendy, B. (2012) *The Strategic Impact of Routine Arming the New Zealand Police* MSS Thesis University of Wellington [Online] Available at: https://www.researchgate.net/publication/262255026 (Accessed: 11th October 2018).

HMIC – Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary (2015) *PEEL: Police Legitimacy 2015: A National Overview* [Online] Available at: https://www.justiceinspectorates.gov.uk/hmic/publications/peel-police-legitimacy-2015/ (Accessed: 11th October 2018).

HMIC – Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary (2016a) *PEEL: Police Legitimacy 2016: A National Overview* [Online] Available at: https://www.justiceinspectorates.gov.uk/hmic/publications/peel-police-legitimacy-2016/ (Accessed: 11th October 2018).

HMIC – Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary (2016b) *North Wales PEEL 2016* [Online] Available at: https://www.justiceinspectorates.gov.uk/hmicfrs/peel-assessments/peel-2016/north-wales/effectiveness/ (Accessed: 11th October 2018).

HMIC – Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary (2016c) *Staffordshire PEEL 2016* [Online] Available at: https://www.justiceinspectorates.gov.uk/hmicfrs/peel-assessments/peel-2016/staffordshire/effectiveness/ (Accessed: 11th October 2018).

HMIC – Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary (2016d) *Essex PEEL 2016* [Online] Available at: https://www.justiceinspectorates.gov.uk/hmicfrs/peel-assessments/peel-2016/essex/effectiveness/ (Accessed: 11th October 2018).

HMIC – Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary (2016e) *Merseyside PEEL 2016* [Online] Available at:https://www.justiceinspectorates.gov.uk/hmicfrs/peel-assessments/peel-2016/merseyside/effectiveness/ (Accessed: 11th October 2018).

Holstein, J and Gubrium, J. (1995) *The Active Interview* London: Sage Publications

Home Office (2012) *Policing by Consent* [Online] Available at: https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/policing-by-consent (Accessed: 11th October 2018).

Home Office (2013) *Surveillance Camera Code of* Practice [Online] Available at: https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/204775/Surveillance_Camera_Code_of_Practice_WEB.pdf (Accessed: 11th October 2018).

Home Office (2019a) *Police Workforce, England and Wales: 31 March 2019* [Online] Available at: https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/police-workforce-england-and-wales-31-march-2019 (Accessed: 1st August 2019).

Home Office (2019b) *Police Use of Firearms Statistics, England and Wales: April 2018 to March 2019* [Online] Available at: https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/police-use-of-firearms-statistics-england-and-wales-april-2018-to-march-2019 (Accessed: 1st August 2019).

Hough, M., Jackson, J., Bradford, B., Myhill, A. and Quinton, P. (2010) 'Procedural Justice, Trust, and Institutional Legitimacy' *Policing* 4(3) pp. 203-210 [Online] Available at: https://academic.oup.com/policing/issue/4/3 (Accessed: 11th October 2018).

Howell, J. (1972) *Hard Living on Clay Street: Portraits of Blue Collar Families* Prospect Heights: Waveland Press Inc.

Hudson, N. (2015) *Force 'Capable' of Tracking Paris-Style Attackers but Doubts Exist Over 'Capacity'* [Online] Available at: https://www.policeprofessional.com/news/forces-capable-of-tracking-paris-style-attackers-but-doubts-exist-over-capacity/ (Accessed: 8th October 2018)

Hudson, N. (2016) *Anti-Terror Recruitment: Stop Hounding and Start Protecting Firearms' Officers* [Online] Available at: https://www.policeprofessional.com/news/anti-terror-recruitment-stop-hounding-and-start-protecting-firearms%c2%92-officers/ (Accessed: 31st August 2019).

Hughes, L. (2016) 'Theresa May's Pledge to Deploy Armed Officers Risks Being Undermined as Many Fear Being Hounded for Shooting Suspects' 27th March [Online] Available at: https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2016/03/27/theresa-mays-pledge-to-deploy-armed-officers-risks-being-undermi/ (Accessed: 31st August 2019).

Hughes, J. and Sharrock, W. (1997) *The Philosophy of Social Research* 3rd edn. Harlow: Pearson Education Malaysia

Ingleton, R. (1997) *Arming the British Police: The Great Debate* London: Frank Cass and Co. Ltd.

Innes, M. (2003) *Investigating Murder: Detective Work and the Police Response to Criminal Homicide* Oxford: Oxford University Press

Innes, M. (2005) 'Why 'Soft' Policing is Hard: On the Curious Development of Reassurance Policing, How it Became Neighbourhood Policing and What This Signifies About the Politics of Police Reform' *Journal of Community & Applied Social Psychology* 15(3) pp. 156-169 [Online] Available at: http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1002/casp.818/abstract (Accessed: 11th October 2018).

INQUEST (2019) *Fatal Police Shootings* [Online] Available at: https://www.inquest.org.uk/fatal-police-shootings (Accessed: 31st May 2019)

IPCC - Independent Police Complaints Commission (2007) *Stockwell One: Investigation into the Shooting of Jean-Charles de Menezes on Stockwell Underground Station on 22 July 2005* London: IPCC [Online] Available at: http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20100908153517/http://www.ipcc.gov.uk/index/resources/evidence_reports/investigation_reports/the_stockwell_investigation/reports_stockwell.htm (Accessed: 11th October 2018).

Ipsos MORI (2016) *Seven in Ten People Believe it's Acceptable for Officers to Carry a TASER* Available at: https://www.ipsos.com/ipsos-mori/en-uk/seven-ten-people-believe-its-acceptable-officers-carry-taser (Accessed: 11th October 2018).

ITV (2015) *Do You Think British Police Officers Should Be Armed?* Available at: http://www.itv.com/thismorning/do-you-think-british-police-officers-should-be-armed (Accessed: 11th October 2018).

Jefferson, T. (1990) *The Case Against Paramilitary Policing* Milton Keynes: Open University Press

Jefferson, T. (1993) 'Pondering Paramilitarism: A Question of Standpoints?' *British Journal of Criminology* 33(3) pp. 373-381 [Online] Available at: https://www.jstor.org/stable/23637801?seq=1#page_scan_tab_contents (Accessed: 11th October 2018).

Jonathan-Zamir, T. (2014) 'Policing Terrorism and Legitimacy' in Bruinsma, G. and Weisburd, D. eds. *Encyclopaedia of Crime and Criminal Justice Wiley Online Library* [Online] pp. 3804-3814 Available at: https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/book/10.1002/9781118517383 (Accessed: 11th October 2018).

Jonathan-Zamir, T. and Harpaz, A. (2014) 'Police Understanding of the Foundations of Their Legitimacy in the Eyes of the Public: The Case of Commanding Officers in the Israel National Police' *The British Journal of Criminology* 54(3) pp. 469-489 [Online] Available at: https://academic.oup.com/bjc/article/54/3/469/341017 (Accessed: 11th October 2018).

Jonathan-Zamir, T. and Weisburd, D. (2013) 'The Effects of Security Threats on Antecedents of Police Legitimacy' *Journal of Research in Crime and Delinquency* 50(1) pp. 3-32 [Online] Available at: http://journals.sagepub.com/doi/abs/10.1177/0022427811418002 (Accessed: 11th October 2018).

Jones R (2007) 'The Architecture of Policing: Towards a New Theoretical Model of the Role of Constraint-Based Compliance in Policing' in Smith, D. and Henry, A. (eds.) *Transformations of Policing*. Aldershot: Ashgate.

JOU_ArmedPolice (2018a) 'Currently on an armed deployment…' *Twitter* 1st September Available at: https://twitter.com/JOU_ArmedPolice/status/1035809826926981120 (Accessed: 7th September 2019).

JOU_ArmedPolice (2018b) 'At a loose end today?' *Twitter* 18th August Available at: https://twitter.com/JOU_ArmedPolice/status/1030726448645124096 (Accessed: 7th September 2019).

JOU_ArmedPolice (2019) 'C/I Baillie: It's dark outside here's one we made earlier' *Twitter* 21st February Available at: https://twitter.com/JOU_ArmedPolice/status/1098666082657857536 (Accessed: 7th September 2019).

Kappeler, V and Kraska, P. (2013) 'Normalising Police Militarisation, Living in Denial' *Policing and Society* 25(3) pp. 268-275 [Online] Available at: https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/10439463.2013.864655 (Accessed: 11th October 2018).

Kelly, J. (2012) 'Why British Police Don't Have Guns' *BBC News* 19th September [Online] Available at: https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/magazine-19641398 (Accessed: 11th October 2018).

Kelman, H. C. and Hamilton, V. L. (1989) *Crimes of Obedience* London: Yale University Press

Killick, A. (2018) 'What Do UK Citizens Understand About Austerity?' in Rhodes, R. A. W. ed *Narrative Policy Analysis: Cases in Decentred Policy* Basingstoke: Palgrave-MacMillan pp. 241-266

Klockars, C. (1985) *The Idea of Police* Beverly Hills: Sage Publications

Knutsson, J. and Strype, J. 'Police Use of Firearms in Norway and Sweden: The Significance of Gun Availability' *Policing and Society* 13(4) pp. 429-439 [Online] Available at: https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/1043946032000105381 (Accessed: 21st May 2019).

Kraska, P. (1996) 'Enjoying Militarism: Political/Personal Dilemmas in Studying U.S. Police Paramilitary Units' *Justice Quarterly* 13(3) pp. 405-429 [Online] Available at: https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/07418829600093031 (Accessed: 11th October 2018).

Kraska, P. (1999) 'Questioning the Militarization of U.S. Police: Critical versus Advocacy Scholarship' *Policing and Society* 9(2) pp. 141-155 [Online] Available at: https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/10439463.1999.9964809 (Accessed: 11th October 2018).

Kraska, P. (2001) *Militarizing the American Criminal Justice System: Changing the Roles of the Armed Forces and the Police* Boston: North-Eastern University Press

Kraska, P. (2007) 'Militarization and Policing – Its Relevance to 21st Century Police' *Policing* 1(4) pp. 501-513 [Online] Available at: https://academic.oup.com/policing/article/1/4/501/1440981 (Accessed: 11th October 2018).

Kronman, A. (1983) *Max Weber*. London: Edward Arnold Publishers

Lee, R. M. (1993) *Doing Research on Sensitive Topics* London: Sage Publications

Lersch, K., Bazley, T., Mieczkowski, T. and Childs, K. (2008) 'Police Use of Force and Neighbourhood Characteristics: An Examination of Structural Disadvantage, Crime, and Resistance' *Policing and Society* 18(3) pp. 282-300 [Online] Available at: https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/pdf/10.1080/10439460802091690?needAccess=true (Accessed: 11th October 2018).

Library of Congress (2015) *Firearms-Control Legislation and Policy: Great Britain* [Online] Available at: https://www.loc.gov/law/help/firearms-control/greatbritain.php (Accessed: 31st May 2019)

Lipsky, M. (1980) *Street-Level Bureaucracy: Dilemmas of the Individual in Public Services* New York: Russell Sage Foundation

Long, T. (2016) *Lethal Force: My Life as the Met's Most Controversial Marksman* London: Ebury Press

Ludwig, A., Norton, M. and McLean, I. (2017) *Measuring Police Effectiveness* [Online] Available at: https://www.nuffield.ox.ac.uk/media/1976/2017-02-measuring-police-effectiveness.pdf (Accessed: 9th January 2019).

MacGregor, L. (2017) '"Would You Like To Carry a Gun?" British Police Asked' 9th January *RT News* [Online] Available at: https://www.rt.com/uk/373060-police-guns-terrorism-survey/ (Accessed: 5th July 2019).

Mahoney, N., Newman, J. and Barnett, C. (2010) *Rethinking the Public: Innovations in Research, Theory and Politics* Bristol: The Police Press

Marshall, C. and Rossman, G. (1995) *Designing Qualitative Research* Newbury Park, CA: Sage

Mason, J. (1996) *Qualitative Researching* London: Sage Publications

McBride, M. (2002) 'Taking Up Arms' *Police Review* 6th December pp. 20-1

McCulloch, J. (2000) 'Keeping the Peace and Making War: The Police and the Military – Rhetoric and Reality' in Coady, T., James, S., Miller, S. and O'Keefe, M. (eds.) *Violence and Police Culture*. Melbourne: Melbourne University Press pp 182–204

McGovern, A. (2008) *Policing Media: Controlling Representations of the New South Wales Police Force* Thesis University of Western Sydney

McKenzie, I. K. and Gallagher, G. P. (1989) *Behind the Uniform: Policing in Britain and America* Hemel Hempstead: St Martin's Press

McLaughlin, E. (2006) 'Deterrence' in McLaughlin, E. and Muncie, J. eds. (2006) *The Sage Dictionary of Criminology* 2nd edn. London: Sage pp. 124-126

Meares, T. L. (2000) 'Norms, Legitimacy and Law Enforcement' *Yale Law School Legal Scholarly Repository* [Online] Available at: http://digitalcommons.law.yale.edu/fss_papers/515/?utm_source=digitalcommons.law.yale.edu%2Ffss_papers%2F515&utm_medium=PDF&utm_campaign=PDFCoverPages (Accessed: 11th October 2018)

Mercer, D. (2019) 'Every UK police officer will have Taser to tackle rise in violence, chief constable predicts' *Sky News* 22nd June [Online] Available at: https://news.sky.com/story/every-uk-police-officer-will-have-taser-to-tackle-rise-in-violence-chief-constable-predicts-11746396 (Accessed: 25th June 2019).

Metropolitan Police (2019) *Use of Force Dataset* [Online] Available at: https://data.london.gov.uk/dataset/use-of-force (Accessed: 31st August).

Moskos, P. (2009) *Cop in the Hood* Princeton: Princeton University Press

Muir, W. K. (1977) *Police: Streetcorner Politicians* University of Chicago Press, Chicago

Murphy (2009) 'Legitimacy' in Wakefield, A. and Fleming, J. (eds.) *The Sage Dictionary of Policing* London: Sage pp. 190-192

Murphy, K., Hinds, L. and Fleming, J. (2008) 'Encouraging Public Cooperation and Support for Police' *Policing and Society* 18(2) pp. 136-155 [Online] Available at: http://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/10439460802008660 (Accessed: 11th October 2018).

Mutsaers, P. (2014) 'An Ethnographic Study of the Policing of Internal Borders in the Netherlands. Synergies between Criminology and Anthropology' *The British Journal of Criminology* 54(5): 831-848 [Online] Available at: https://academic.oup.com/bjc/article/54/5/831/358479/An-Ethnographic-Study-of-the-Policing-of-Internal (Accessed: 11th October 2018).

Myhill, A. and Bradford, B. (2013) 'Overcoming Cop Culture? Organizational Justice and Police Officers' Attitudes Toward the Public' *Policing: An International Journal of Police Strategies & Management* 36(2) pp. 338 – 356 [Online] Available at: http://www.emeraldinsight.com/doi/full/10.1108/13639511311329732 (Accessed: 11th October 2018).

Myhill, A. and Quinton, P. (2011) *It's a Fair Cop? Police Legitimacy, Public Cooperation, and Crime Reduction* [Online] Available at: http://whatworks.college.police.uk/Research/Documents/Fair_cop_Full_Report.pdf (Accessed: 11th October 2018).

New Zealand Herald (2019) 'Police to be Armed as Country's Threat Level Remains High' *New Zealand Herald* 19th March [Online] Available at: https://www.nzherald.co.nz/christchurch-mosque-attack/news/article.cfm?c_id=1504671&objectid=12214241 (Accessed: 16th April 2019).

Norges Offentlige Utredninger (2017) *Politi og bevæpning: Legalitet, nødvendighet, forholdsmessighet og ansvarlighet* [Online] Available at: https://www.regjeringen.no/no/dokumenter/nou-2017-9/id2545750/ (Accessed: 11th October 2018).

Northern Ireland Office (2001) *Patten Report Recommendations 69 and 70 Relating to Public Order Equipment: A Paper Prepared by the Steering Group Led by the Northern Ireland Office Phase One Report* Belfast: Northern Ireland Office

Northumbria Police (2016) 'Photos' *Facebook* 9th December Available at: https://www.facebook.com/northumbriapolice/photos/a.384561501308.165727.2614504130 8/10154189370701309/?type=3&theater (Accessed: 21st May 2019).

NPCC – National Police Chiefs' Council (2017) 'Agenda Item: 6 The Arming of Police Officers Debate' *Minutes of the Chief Constable's Council 12th July 2017* National Police Chief's Council, London

O'Reilly, K. (2012) *Ethnographic Methods* London: Routledge

Olsen, F. Z. (2008) *The Use of Police Firearms in Denmark*

Orbons, S. (2011) 'Non-Lethal Weapons: Peace Enablers or Troublesome Force? Assessing the Role of CS and Baton Rounds in the Northern Ireland Conflict' *Small Wars & Insurgencies* 22(3) pp. 467-494 [Online] Available at:

https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/09592318.2011.581494 (Accessed: 27th June 2019).

Orde, H. (2012) 'The British Public Would Not Trust or Accept Armed Police' *The Guardian* 20th September [Online] Available at:
https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2012/sep/20/british-public-not-trust-armed-police (Accessed: 11th October 2018).

Ospina, S., and Dodge, J. (2005) 'It's About Time: Catching Method up to Meaning – The Usefulness of Narrative Inquiry in Public Administration Research' *Public Administration Review* 65(2) pp. 143-157 [Online] Available at:
http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/j.1540-6210.2005.00440.x/full (Accessed: 11th October 2018).

Pannett, M. (2015) 'Armed Police' *HuffPostUK The Blog* 9th February Available at:
https://www.huffingtonpost.co.uk/mike-pannett/armed-police_b_6644144.html?guccounter=1&guce_referrer=aHR0cHM6Ly93d3cuZ29vZ2xlLmNvbS8&guce_referrer_sig=AQAAAFbXD49DZNZH6QJ3WcyRWHc5i8xKMDGE-vEEp8spAOIh_GGh4oSlYW-71ULlaVEmRUH8zkBqwYO3Y9btj_K77VWUYcmL00Q7ZMufDhKW4wC7zZgtJKPJw7m3zyKb2QON5LGbtth1LfL8KsAFJUjmp2mFxRwfCVezTpdaVye9Vjmd (Accessed: 31st May 2019).

Pate, A.M. and Fridell, L.A. (1993) *Police Use of Force: Official Reports, Citizen Complaints, and Legal Consequences* Washington: Police Foundation

Payne-James, J. J., Rivers, E. and Green, P. (2014) 'Trends in Less-Lethal Use of Force Techniques by Police Services Within England and Wales: 2007-2011 *Forensic Science, Medicine and Pathology* 10(1) pp. 50-55 [Online] Available at:
https://link.springer.com/article/10.1007/s12024-013-9492-9 (Accessed: 11th October 2018).

PFEW – Police Federation of England and Wales (2017) *Increased Support for Routine Arming* Available at: http://www.polfed.org/newsroom/4954.aspx (Accessed: 11th October 2018).

PFEW – Police Federation of England and Wales (2019) *Firearms* [Online] Available at:
https://www.polfed.org/our-work/firearms/ (Accessed: 5th July 2019).

PFOA – Police Firearms Officer Association (2019) *Who Are We?* [Online] Available at:
https://www.pfoa.co.uk/about-us/who-are-we (Accessed: 5th July 2019).

Phelps, J. (2010) 'Lessons in Developing Democratic Police From Post-Second World War Successes' International *Journal of Comparative and Applied Criminal Justice* 34(1) pp. 119–137 [Online] Available at: https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/01924036.2010.9678820 (Accessed: 11th October 2018).

Phillips, S. W. (2016) 'Police Discretion and Boredom: What Officers Do When There is Nothing to Do' *Journal of Contemporary Ethnography* 45(5) pp. 580 - 601 [Online] Available at:
https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/full/10.1177/0891241615587385 (Accessed: 31st May 2019).

Punch, M. (1979) *Policing the Inner City: A Study of Amsterdam's Warmoesstraat* London: MacMillan

Punch, M. (1989) 'Researching Police Deviance: A Personal Encounter with the Limitations and Liabilities of Field-work' *The British Journal of Sociology* 40(2) [Online] Available at:

https://www.jstor.org/stable/590268?seq=1#metadata_info_tab_contents (Accessed: 11th October 2018).

Punch, M. (1993) 'Observation and the Police: The Research Experience' in Hammersley, M. (ed.) *Social Research: Philosophy, Politics and Practice* London: Sage Publications pp. 181-199

Punch, M. (2000) 'Police Corruption and its Prevention' *European Journal on Criminal Policy and Research* 8(3) pp. 301-324 [Online] Available at: https://link.springer.com/article/10.1023/A:1008777013115 (Accessed: 11th October 2018).

Punch, M. (2011) *Shoot to Kill: Police Accountability, Firearms and Fatal Force* Bristol: Policy Press

Punch, M., Crawshaw, R. and Markham, G. (2016) 'Democratic Principles and Police Fatal Force: Avoidance of Debate, Unresolved Accountability and Human Rights' *International Journal of Law, Crime and Justice* 46(1) pp. 2-12 [Online] Available at: https://www.sciencedirect.com/journal/international-journal-of-law-crime-and-justice/vol/46 (Accessed: 11th October 2018).

Quinney, R. (1970) *The Social Reality of Crime* Boston: Little, Brown

Reiner, R. (1978) *The Blue-Coated Worker* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press

Reiner, R. (2000) *The Politics of the Police* 3rd edn. Oxford: Oxford University Press

Reiner, R. (2009) 'Consent' in Wakefield, A. and Fleming, J. (eds.) (2009) *The Sage Dictionary of Policing* London: Sage pp. 52-55

Reiner, R. (2010) *The Politics of the Police* 4th edn. Oxford: Oxford University Press

Reiner, R. (2019) *The Politics of the Police* 5th edn. Oxford: Oxford University Press

Reiner, R. and Newburn, T. (2007) 'Police Research' in King, R.D. and Wincup, E. (eds.) *Doing Research on Crime and Justice* 2nd edn. New York: Oxford University Press pp. 343-374

Reith, C. (1956) *A New Study of Police History* Edinburgh: Oliver & Boyd

Reuss-Iani, E. (1983) 'Street Cops and Management Cops - The Two Cultures of Policing' in Punch, M. (1983) *Control in the Police Organization* pp. 251-274 Cambridge: MIT Press

Rhodes, R. A. W. (2011) *Everyday Life in British Government* Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Rhodes, R. A. W. (2014a) 'Genre Blurring' and Public Administration: What Can We Learn from Ethnography?' *Australian Journal of Public Administration* 73(3) pp. 317-330 [Online] Available at: https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/abs/10.1111/1467-8500.12085 (Accessed: 11th October 2018).

Rhodes, R. A. W. (2014b) 'Ethnography and Narratives in Policy Analysis' in Bevir, M. and Rhodes, R. A. W. (eds.) *The Routledge Handbook of Interpretive Political Science* Abingdon: Routledge, pp. 171-185

Rhodes, R. A. W. (2018) 'What Is Decentred Analysis?' in Rhodes, R. A. W. (ed.) *Narrative Policy Analysis: Cases in Decentred Policy* Basingstoke: Palgrave-MacMillan pp. 1-22

Rogers, M. (2003) 'Police Force! An Examination of the Use of Force, Firearms and Less-Lethal Weapons by British Police' *The Police Journal* 76 pp. 189 – 203 [Online] Available at: http://journals.sagepub.com/doi/abs/10.1350/pojo.76.3.189.19443 (Accessed: 11th October 2018).

Rowe, M. (2017) *Police Work is Complicated So Policing Research Should Be Too* Available at: https://policinginsight.com/opinion/police-work-complicated-policing-research/ (Accessed: 11th October 2018).

Rowe, M. and Rowe, M. (2019) 'Move Along. Nothing to See Here' *Policing Ethnography: The Role of Narrative in Researching and Writing About Policing* Northumbria University, Newcastle upon Tyne 24-25th January

Sarre, R. (1996) 'The Public, the Police and Australian Gun Policy' *Australian Journal of Forensic Sciences* 28(1) pp. 7-14 [Online] Available at: https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/00450619609411338?journalCode=tajf20 (Accessed: 11th October 2018).

Schensul, S. L., Schensul, J. J. and LeCompte, M. D. (1999) *Essential Ethnographic Methods: Observations, Interviews and Questionnaire* London: Alta Mira

Schmuck, R. (1997) *Practical Action Research for Change* Arlington Heights: Skylight Training and Publishing

Schwartz-Shea, P. and Yanow, D. (2012) *Interpretive Research Design ProQuest Ebook Central* [Online] Available at: https://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/soton-ebooks/reader.action?docID=957663&query (Accessed: 11th October 2018).

Sherman, L. W. (1980) 'Perspectives on Police and Violence' *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 452(1) pp. 1-12 [Online] Available at: http://journals.sagepub.com/doi/pdf/10.1177/000271628045200101 (Accessed: 11th October 2018).

Simpson, F. (2016) 'Outrage as Police Officers Armed with Huge Guns Pose with Children at Christmas Market' *London Evening Standard* 12th December [Online] Available at: https://www.standard.co.uk/news/uk/outrage-as-police-officers-armed-with-huge-weapons-pose-with-children-at-christmas-market-a3417856.html (Accessed: 21st May 2015).

Skogan, W. and Frydl, K. (2004) *Fairness and Effectiveness in Policing: The Evidence ProQuest Ebook Central* [Online] Available at: http://site.ebrary.com/lib/soton/docDetail.action?docID=10055594 (Accessed: 11th October 2018).

Skolnick, J. H. (1966) *Justice without Trial: Law Enforcement in Democratic Society* New York: John Wiley & Sons

Skolnick, J. H. (1975) *Justice without Trial: Law Enforcement in Democratic Society* 2nd edn. New York: Wiley & Sons

Sky News (2017) 'Police to be Consulted on Being Routinely Armed' 9th January *Sky News* [Online] Available at: https://news.sky.com/story/police-to-be-consulted-on-being-routinely-armed-10722700 (Accessed: 5th July 2019).

Slapper, G. and Kelly, D. (2011) *Law: The Basics* London: Routledge

Smith, S. (2013) *Stop! Armed Police! Inside the Met's Firearms Unit* London: Robert Hale Limited

Sousa, W., Ready, J. and Ault, M. (2010) 'The Impact of TASERs on Police Use-of-Force Decisions: Findings from a Randomized Field-Training Experiment' *Journal of Experimental*

Criminology 6(1) pp. 35-55 [Online] Available at:
https://link.springer.com/content/pdf/10.1007%2Fs11292-010-9089-1.pdf (Accessed: 25th
June 2019).

Sparks, R. (1994) 'Can Prisons Be Legitimate? Penal Politics, Privatization, and the Timeliness of
an Old Idea' *British Journal of Criminology* 34(5) pp. 14–28 [Online] Available at:
https://www.jstor.org/stable/23638185?seq=1#page_scan_tab_contents (Accessed: 11th
October).

Squires, P. and Kennison, P. (2010) *Shooting to Kill? Policing, Firearms and Armed Response*
Chichester: Wiley-Blackwell

Stanko, B. (2007) 'From Academia to Policy Making: Changing Police Responses to Violence
Against Women' *Theoretical Criminology* 11(2) pp. 209-220 [Online] Available at:
http://journals.sagepub.com/doi/10.1177/1362480607075848 (Accessed: 11th October 2018).

Summers, D. and Kuhns, J. (2010) 'Currently Available Less-Than-Lethal Alternatives and
Emerging Technologies for the Future in: Kuhns, J. and Knutsson, J. (eds.) *Police Use of Force: A
Global Perspective* Santa Barabara: Praeger pp 188–198

Sunderland Echo (2017) 'Snap Poll Finds 75% Want British Police Routinely Armed' *Sunderland
Echo* 6th June [Online] Available at: https://www.sunderlandecho.com/news/crime/snap-poll-
finds-75-want-british-police-routinely-armed-1-8580212 (Accessed: 11th October 2018).

Sunshine, J. and Tyler, T. (2003) 'The Role of Procedural Justice and Legitimacy in Shaping
Public Support for Policing' *Law and Society Review* 37(3) pp. 513–548 [Online] Available at:
https://www.jstor.org/stable/1555077?seq=1#page_scan_tab_contents (Accessed: 11th
October 2018).

Tankebe, J. (2007) *Policing and Legitimacy in a Postcolonial Democracy: A Theoretical and
Empirical Study of Ghana* Thesis University of Cambridge [Online] Available at:
https://www.repository.cam.ac.uk/handle/1810/252082 (Accessed: 11th October 2018).

Tankebe, J. (2014) 'Police and Self-Legitimacy' in Bruinsma, G. and Weisburd, D. (eds.)
Encyclopaedia of Crime and Criminal Justice Wiley Online Library [Online] pp. 3735-3742
Available at: https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/book/10.1002/9781118517383 (Accessed:
11th October 2018).

Tankebe, J., & Mesko, G. (2015) 'Police Self-Legitimacy, Use of Force, and Pro-Organizational
Behaviour in Slovenia' In Mesko, G. & Tankebe, J. (eds.) T*rust and Legitimacy in Criminal Justice*
London: Springer (pp. 261–277).

Taylor, A. (1993) *Women Drug Users: An Ethnography of a Female Injecting Community*
Oxford: Oxford University Press

Thibaut, J. W. and Walker, L. (1975) *Procedural Justice: A Psychological Analysis* New York:
Wiley

Treadwell, J. (2013) *Criminology: The Essentials* 2nd edn. London: Sage Publications

Tyler, T. (1990) *Why Do People Obey The Law?* New Haven: Yale University Press

Tyler, T. (2004) 'Enhancing Police Legitimacy' *Annals of the American Academy of Political and
Social Science* 593(1) pp. 84-99 *JSTOR* [Online] Available at:
http://www.jstor.org/stable/4127668 (Accessed: 11th October 2018).

Tyler, T. (2011) 'Trust and legitimacy: Policing in the USA and Europe' *European Journal of Criminology* 8(4) pp. 254–266 [Online] Available at: http://journals.sagepub.com/doi/abs/10.1177/1477370811411462 (Accessed: 11th October 2018).

Tyler, T., and Huo, Y. (2002) *Trust in the Law*. New York: Russell Sage.

U.S. Department of Homeland Security (2008) *Active Shooter: How to Respond* [Online] Available at: https://www.dhs.gov/xlibrary/assets/active_shooter_booklet.pdf (Accessed: 18th July 2019).

Uusi Suomi (2016) 'Suomen poliisi ampui 122 kertaa 10 vuodessa – 7 ihmistä kuollut poliisin ampumaan luotiin' *Uusi Suomi* 6th October [Online] Available at: https://www.uusisuomi.fi/kotimaa/205499-suomen-poliisi-ampui-122-kertaa-10-vuodessa-7-ihmista-kuollut-poliisin-ampumaan (Accessed: 21st May 2019).

Van Maanen, J. (1978) 'The Asshole' in Manning, P. and Van Maanen, J. *Policing: A View From the Street* London: Random House pp. 307-328

Van Maanen, J. (1988) *Tales of the Field: On Writing Ethnography* Chicago: University of Chicago Press

Van Oosbree, G. (2018) 'ATLAS Establishes Permanent Support Office at EuroPol HQ' *Dutch Defense Press* 10th October [Online] Available at: https://www.dutchdefencepress.com/atlas-establishes-permanent-support-office-at-europol-hq/ (Accessed: 16th July 2019.

Waddington, P. A. J. (1991) *The Strong Arm of the Law* Oxford: Clarendon Press

Waddington, P. A. J. (1993) 'The Case Against Paramilitary Policing Considered' *British Journal of Criminology* 33(3) pp. 353-373 [Online] Available at: https://academic.oup.com/bjc/article/33/3/353/386581 (Accessed: 11th October 2018).

Waddington, P. A. J. (1999a) 'Swatting Police Paramilitarism: A Comment on Kraska and Paulsen *Policing and Society* 9(2) pp. 125-140 [Online] Available at: http://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/10439463.1999.9964808 (Accessed: 11th October 2018).

Waddington, P. A. J. (1999b) 'Police (Canteen) Subculture – An Appreciation' *The British Journal of Criminology* 39(2) [Online] Available at: https://academic.oup.com/bjc/article/39/2/287/363353 (Accessed: 11th October: 2018).

Waddington, P. A. J. (1999c) *Policing Citizens* London: UCL Press

Waddington, P. A. J. (2001) 'A Necessary Evil' *Police Review* 27th January pp. 15-16

Waddington, P. A. J. and Hamilton, M. (1997) 'The Importance of the Powerful: Recent British Police Weapons Policy' *Sociology* 31(1) pp. 91-109 [Online] Available at: http://soc.sagepub.com/content/31/1/91.full.pdf+html (Accessed: 11th October 2018).

Waddington, P. A. J. and Wright, M. (2007) 'Police Use of Force, Firearms and Riot–Control' in Newburn, T. (ed.) *Handbook of Policing* 2nd edn. Collumpton: Willan

Waddington, P. A. J., Adang, O., Baker, D., Birkbeck, C., Feltes, T. Gabaldón, L. G., Machado, E. P. and Stenning, P. (2008) 'Singing the Same Tune? International Continuities and Discontinuities in How Police Talk About Using Force' *Crime, Law and Social Change* 52(2) pp.

111-138 [Online] Available at: https://link.springer.com/article/10.1007/s10611-008-9176-7 (Accessed: 11th October 2018).

Waldren, M. (1994) 'Arming the Police' *Criminal Justice Matters* No. 17 p. 11 [Online] Available at: https://www.crimeandjustice.org.uk/publications/cjm/article/arming-police (Accessed: 5th July 2019).

Waldren, M. (2007) *Armed Police: The Police Use of Firearms Since 1945* Stroud: Sutton Publishing

Weber, M. (1947) *The Theory of Social and Economic Organisation* New York: Free Press

Weinfass, I. (2017) 'Call for Routine Arming Rejected as Eroding Policing by Consent' *Police Oracle* 5th September [Online] Available at: https://www.policeoracle.com/news/police_it_and_technology/2017/Sep/05/Call-for-routine-arming-rejected-as-eroding-policing-by-consent_95694.html (Accessed: 11th October 2018).

Weitzer, R. and Tuch, S. A. (2005) 'Determinants of Public Satisfaction with the Police' *Police Quarterly* 8(3) pp. 279-297 [Online] Available at: http://journals.sagepub.com/doi/abs/10.1177/1098611104271106 (Accessed: 11th October 2018).

West Yorkshire Police Federation (2017) *West Yorkshire Police Federation TASER and Firearm Survey Results* Available at: https://wypf.polfed.org/2017/08/16/west-yorkshire-police-federation-taser-firearms-survey-results/ (Accessed: 11th October 2018).

Westmarland, L. (2001a) 'Blowing the whistle on police violence' *British Journal of Criminology* 41(3) pp. 523-535 [Online] Available at: https://academic.oup.com/bjc/article/41/3/523/436871/Blowing-the-Whistle-on-Police-Violence-Gender (Accessed: 11th October 2018).

Westmarland, L. (2001b) *Gender and Policing: Sex, Power and Police Culture* Cullompton: Willan

Whitelam, P. (2017) 'People Are Not Ready to Accept Armed Police as the Norm' *Lincolnshire Live* 31st May Available at: https://www.lincolnshirelive.co.uk/news/lincoln-news/people-not-ready-accept-armed-82920 (Accessed: 11th October 2018).

Wiles, R., Crow, G., Heath, S. and Charles, V. (2006) *Anonymity and Confidentiality* [Online] Available at: http://eprints.ncrm.ac.uk/423/1/0206_anonymity%2520and%2520confidentiality.pdf (Accessed: 11th October 2018).

Wilson, J. Q. (1978) *Varieties on Police Behavior* Cambridge: Harvard University Press

Wingrave, J. (2011) *Reflection in Policing: A Study of How Student Constables in the Metropolitan Police Conceptualise Reflection* Thesis University of Portsmouth [Online] Available at: https://researchportal.port.ac.uk/portal/en/theses/reflection-in-policing(ba027c19-964a-4a5c-ab77-bb485d7613b7).html (Accessed: 11th October 2018).

Wood, J., Fleming, J. and Marks, M. (2008). 'Building the Capacity of Police Change Agents: The Nexus Policing Project' *Policing and Society* 18(1) pp. 78–94 [Online] Available at: https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/10439460701718583 (Accessed: 11th October 2018).

Wrong, D. (1995) *Power: Its Forms, Bases and Uses* Transaction Publishers: London

Wulff, H. 2002. 'Yo-Yo Fieldwork: Mobility and Time in a Multi-Local Study of Dance in Ireland', *Anthropological Journal of European Cultures* 11(1) pp. 117–136 [Online] Available at: https://www.jstor.org/stable/43234897?read-now=1&refreqid=excelsior%3Afb2fd4a014119165edd2f016c2a019b3&seq=1#page_scan_tab_contents (Accessed: 11th October 2018).

Yanow, D. (2014) 'Interpretive Analysis and Comparative Research' in Engeli, I. and Ruthmayr, C. (eds.) *Comparative Policy Studies: Conceptual and Methodological Challenges* Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, pp. 131-159.

Yesberg, J. and Bradford, B. (2018) 'Affect and Trust as Predictors of Public Support for Armed Police: Evidence from London' pp. 1-19 *Policing and Society* [Online] Available at: https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/10439463.2018.1488847 (Accessed: 11th October 2018).

Yesberg, J., Bradford, B. and Dawson, P. (2019) [Forthcoming] 'An Experimental Study of Responses to Armed Police in Great Britain' *Journal of Experimental Criminology* pp. 1-39