

Emotional labour and burnout among police officers

Hopkins, Benjamin; Dowell, David; Flitton, Joe

DOI:

[10.1108/PIJPSM-12-2022-0154](https://doi.org/10.1108/PIJPSM-12-2022-0154)

License:

Creative Commons: Attribution-NonCommercial (CC BY-NC)

Document Version

Peer reviewed version

Citation for published version (Harvard):

Hopkins, B, Dowell, D & Flitton, J 2023, 'Emotional labour and burnout among police officers', *Policing*.
<https://doi.org/10.1108/PIJPSM-12-2022-0154>

[Link to publication on Research at Birmingham portal](#)

General rights

Unless a licence is specified above, all rights (including copyright and moral rights) in this document are retained by the authors and/or the copyright holders. The express permission of the copyright holder must be obtained for any use of this material other than for purposes permitted by law.

- Users may freely distribute the URL that is used to identify this publication.
- Users may download and/or print one copy of the publication from the University of Birmingham research portal for the purpose of private study or non-commercial research.
- User may use extracts from the document in line with the concept of 'fair dealing' under the Copyright, Designs and Patents Act 1988 (?)
- Users may not further distribute the material nor use it for the purposes of commercial gain.

Where a licence is displayed above, please note the terms and conditions of the licence govern your use of this document.

When citing, please reference the published version.

Take down policy

While the University of Birmingham exercises care and attention in making items available there are rare occasions when an item has been uploaded in error or has been deemed to be commercially or otherwise sensitive.

If you believe that this is the case for this document, please contact UBIRA@lists.bham.ac.uk providing details and we will remove access to the work immediately and investigate.

Emotional Labour and Burnout among Police Officers

Introduction

In the United Kingdom, the number of full-time equivalent police officers has fallen from 172,000 in 2010 to a low of 150,000 across the period 2017-2019. This figure has then been steadily rising to 164,000 in 2022 (Clark, 2022). Lumsden & Black (2017) argue that these reduced numbers as a result of austerity measures have an impact on well-being in officers. They clearly state that “negative aspects of police work including stress and burnout have been amplified in recent years as police in England undergo austerity cuts which include reduced budgets, staffing and resources” (2017:606). Recent statistical evidence also supports this assertion; in 2022, 3.3% of all police officers were on long term absence, with more than half of this owing to sickness including mental health related illness, and 6.0% of officers left the various forces around the UK (Home Office, 2022). Within this context, we address the issue of police burnout and performance of emotional labour with the view to identifying potential heterogeneity amongst police officers, and discuss possible coping strategies. Using quantitative analysis of surveys completed by 330 serving officers in the UK, we propose three identifiable categories of police officers with regards to burnout and emotional labour. Research access to police officers is notoriously rare in the United Kingdom (see, for example, the small scale study of emotional intelligence by McDowall et al., 2020), and thus the research access and continuing engagement with the police is a key strength of this study.

Current Literature

Emotional Labour

Some 40 years after publication, Hochschild's *The Managed Heart* (1983) continues to serve as the seminal work for the majority of contemporary study of emotional labour. Though academics such as Goffman (1959) argued that the 'invisible hand' of norms of behaviour are both actively and passively placed upon employees, Hochschild was one of the first to conceptualise the issue and move emotion from the realm of psychologists and into the field of management. Hochschild's study observed the role of air hostesses and debt collectors, two groups that may seem to be polar opposites in terms of customer interaction, but which Hochschild identified as sharing some key characteristics in how they perform their role. Both groups are required to present an external image and express emotions as part of their work; presenting emotions that they may not feel at that time. An air hostess may have to smile at a rude customer at whom they would rather shout. A debt collector may have to express anger or frustration at an indebted person with whom they can empathise. Hochschild identified this interaction with the term *Emotional Labour*. Some 35 years later, Lumsden and Black (2017) clearly articulate the relevance of this concept for investigating workers in the police force as a result of the mismatch between expectations of police and public, and the need to control and manage emotion.

Emotional labour has numerous conceptualisations; however, in general it is understood to consist of three components – surface acting, deep acting, and variety (Brotheridge & Lee, 2003). In order for workers to meet the demands of the organisation, they can react in two different ways – 'to feel or to feign' (Hochschild, 1983). The first component, Surface

Acting, is where the individual displays an emotion that they do not feel. Such behaviour results in a natural schism between the actor and the performance; the worker is performing the action without making attempts to accept the value behind it. Conversely, Deep Acting involves the worker trying to internalise required rules in an attempt to bring their own personal emotions and values into line with the behaviours and values required by the organisation. Whereas surface acting can be characterised by statements such as *I resist expressing my true feelings*, deep acting can be expressed by statements such as *I really try to feel the emotions I have to show as part of my job* (Brotheridge & Lee, 2003). Variety, which is the final component, can be understood by a statement such as *I display many different types of emotion* (Brotheridge & Lee, 2003).

Recent empirical studies include the work of Jordan et al. (2018) and Ward & McMurray (2015), who argue that there has been a neglect of the negative or antipathetic (Korczynski, 2002) forms of emotional labour as displayed by those, for example, in the security industry. Many forms of public service work would include those who experience work that can be considered to be “emotionally disturbing, wearing, deeply upsetting” (McMurray & Ward, 2015: 2; also Morabito et al., 2020). Indeed, Ward & McMurray (2015) include work on police officers, include a harrowing example of how an officer must deal with sudden death. Further work by Ward et al. (2019) develop this analysis by including aspects of gender, and also the particular case of workers such as police officers who work on the boundary of safety and danger. This danger can be both physical (De Camargo, 2022; Ward et al., 2019), but also can be dangerous to individual mental well-being (Phythian et al., 2021)

Emotional labour has been used as a concept to investigate public service work (Ward et al., 2019), and in particular that of the police (van Gelderen et al., 2016). This is particularly important in the context of ‘just policing’, where eliciting consent amongst members of the public will require management of emotions (Sahin, 2017). Kyprianides et al. (2022:504) state that “Police officer commitment to the notion of policing by consent, and democratic modes of policing, lies at the heart of the British policing model”. Within this context, Lumsden & Black (2017) note the need for police officers to incorporate both positive and negative forms of emotional labour – being both “‘nicer than nice’ and ‘tougher than tough’” (2017: 611). However, emotional labour in the police remains an under-studied area (Schaible, 2018; Britton & Knight, 2021), including in support functions (Adams & Mastracci, 2020; Simpson, 2021; van Steden et al., 2022). ‘Emotional dirty work’ is, nonetheless, necessary for the functioning of society (McMurray & Ward, 2014), and thus an area that should be investigated in the context of public service work under austerity (Hopkins & Simms, 2020). This leads to our first research question – *How do police officers perform emotional labour in the UK context?*

Burnout

Related to emotional labour, we now turn to investigate the conceptualisation of Burnout. The growth of burnout as an identified theory arguably began with the work of Maslach & Jackson (1984), whose study looked at emotional arousal and how it was managed on an individual level. However, whilst academics have struggled to form a unified model for Emotional Labour, the work of Maslach and others in the formation of Maslach’s Burnout Index (MBI) and its relevant conceptualisation has been generally adopted. Maslach et al.’s

(2001) model of burnout consists of three over-arching factors, the first of which is *Emotional Exhaustion*, or the individual stress dimension of burnout, where the individual lacks the resources to deal with additional emotional strains. The second factor is *Depersonalisation*; this can be seen as the interpersonal dimension, where the individual begins to lose their idealism and can become cynical and detached from their colleagues, family and customers. Finally, a reduced *Sense of Personal Accomplishment* is the self-evaluating dimension where the individual no longer feels competent in their ability to perform their role.

Overall well-being of police officers has become of increasing concern, particularly physical well-being during the Covid-19 pandemic (De Camargo, 2022) and during times of austerity (Hesketh et al., 2015). Regard to mental well-being has also increased, including factors such as stress (Phythian et al., 2021) and burnout (Adams & Mastracci, 2019). Indeed, there has been some attempt to examine how police officers experience both emotional labour and burnout, mainly in the form of small scale qualitative studies (Lennie et al., 2021; van Gelderen et al., 2017). Although some quantitative studies have been undertaken, these have been in the very different contexts of South Korea (Kwak et al., 2018) and in particular the United States (Schaible and Six, 2016). This leads to our second research question – *How do police officers experience burnout in the UK context?*

The Links between Emotional Labour and Burnout

The aim of this paper is not to infer cause and effect between emotional labour and burnout as this is a co-relational design. However, some previous studies have attempted to find links

between the two constructs. Brotheridge & Lee's (2003) Emotional Labour Scale (ELS) attempts to empirically measure the level of emotional labour within a person's role, and also how the elements within their concept react with external factors. However, studies considering a more developed view of Emotional Labour and its interaction with Burnout are limited in number. The most noteworthy is the work of Brotheridge & Grandey (2002), where a cross section of workers in entirely different areas of work ranging from physical labourers (with roles that required low levels of emotional labour) and human service and sales workers (on the other end of the scale) were surveyed. This survey was based on a combination of Brotheridge & Lee's (2003) Emotional Labour Scale and Maslach et al.'s (2001) Burnout Inventory. Interestingly, the roles identified as requiring greater levels of emotional labour were not significantly associated with burnout when compared to other roles, but did score significantly comparatively high in depersonalisation. The most surprising finding was that the workers who were more involved in Emotional Labour actually showed greater signs of a positive Sense of Personal Accomplishment (the inverse of Burnout); meaning workers performing Emotional Labour may experience benefits of doing so alongside the potential for negative consequences.

Assumptions of heterogeneity

Brotheridge & Grandey's (2002) study of different occupation types shows the importance of considering heterogeneity amongst workers when studying emotional labour. Importantly, even amongst job types as studied by Brotheridge & Grandey (2002), we may find that different groups within a particular sector or occupation experience emotional labour and burnout in different ways. Looking at the sectoral or occupational level can be problematic,

with some researchers arguing that an occupation is largely homogeneous, while others argue that there is a great deal of heterogeneity amongst occupations (Baron & Bielby, 1980). For example, in the case of research into the work of police officers, sometimes no distinction is made at all (e.g. Wolter et al., 2018), with police officers considered as one homogeneous group. This is problematic as, demonstrating heterogeneity amongst police officers, McCarty (2013) finds gender differences, with female sergeants experiencing higher levels of emotional burnout than their male colleagues. Gender differences were also found by Richmond et al. (1998); furthermore, in this study on unhealthy police lifestyle factors, a lack of uniformity in responses to stress can also be seen in the propensity of different groups to, for example, consume alcohol excessively. Managerial action to combat these issues should also be considered (Farr-Wharton et al., 2020).

More sophisticated analysis of heterogeneity can be performed by identifying different ‘types’ of respondents, rather than simply establishing links with, for example, length of service or rank. An example of this approach is seen in the work of Morris et al. (2017) who, when investigating farmers, found that four distinct groups were present. As such, they did not suggest that their sample was homogeneous, but instead explored the sample for sub-groups which had a level of internal homogeneity. In order to create a typology of police officers, we use a similar approach in this study. By assuming heterogeneity rather than homogeneity in experiences of emotional labour and burnout, we develop a typology of officers by using latent variable regression. This leads to our final research question – *Are there differences in experience of performing emotional labour and experiencing burnout among police officers?*

Methodology

Several older studies in the area of emotional labour (including Brotheridge & Lee, 2003) and burnout (including Maslach, 2008) have utilised a quantitative approach, and this article follows this approach by using a survey. This compares to previous smaller scale contemporary qualitative studies of the police service, such as McDowall et al. (2020) and Ward et al. (2019).

Measures

The first section of the survey included nine questions based on the principles of the Emotional Labour Scale (ELS) (Brotheridge & Lee, 2003) covering the areas of Deep Acting, Surface Acting, and Variety. Each of these questions exists on a five point Likert scale ranging from (1) strongly disagree to (5) strongly agree, with a neutral option. The survey also contained a scale taken directly from Maslach's Burnout Index (Maslach et al., 1996; 2001). The emotional burnout construct is a six-item scale, measured on a six point scale. The participant is asked how strongly they 'experience a certain state of mind' and 'how often they experience that state of mind', from (1) never to (6) very strong. Additional items were also included, specifically: age, rank and length of tenure with the force. These are included as control items, based on previous studies. The items used from the ELS and MBI in the distributed survey can be found in Appendix 1. The design of the final questionnaire included a series of procedural controls designed to account for common method bias (see MacKenzie & Podsakoff, 2012).

As part of the access agreement, it was not permitted to ask the gender of the respondents. This was because the participating forces did not wish to have any potential differences highlighted in research findings; an interesting request in itself. As such, gender is not included in our analysis. This is recognised as a weakness in the analysis as gender has been noted as an important factor in previous work, such as McCarty (2013) and Ward et al. (2019). Data collection took place prior to the Covid-19 pandemic.

Sample

Four police districts agreed to participate in the study. Though each district covered a different geographical location with different resident demographics and slightly different policing focuses, they were all based in the same regional police department within the same city in the UK. The population sample available amounted to n=2017 officers. However, owing to staff extractions, operational commitments, sick leave and career breaks, the number was likely to be significantly less. In order to try and ensure that a representative cross section was taken from all units within a district, a holistic approach was taken where the entire sample of officers was offered the opportunity to participate. In total 450 questionnaires were received, although some questionnaires had not been completed or had substantive missing data, and as such were removed from the dataset. This left 330 officers who completed the questionnaire to an acceptable level. From the original population of 2017 this results in a response rate of around 16%. However, 330 officers remains a significant sample to analyse although, as noted above, one important weakness of the data set is that it does not include gender as a variable.

Analytical approach

Descriptive statistics are used to identify performance of emotional labour, and these are complemented with exploratory factor analysis and confirmatory factor analysis. Exploratory and confirmatory factor analysis allow the examination of the variables in the study, namely emotional labour and burnout, for validity. Exploratory factor analysis (EFA) can be used to assess the construct validity of scales (Hayton et al., 2004). EFA is used to reduce a number of variables (items) into a smaller set of latent constructs (Henson & Roberts, 2006). The construct validity is then further examined using confirmatory factor analysis. Confirmatory factor analysis is a theory driven confirmation technique, where items are used to observe a latent construct (Schreiber et al., 2006). Confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) can also be used to establish the validity of a scale (Segars & Grover, 1993), and can be used to establish unidimensionality (Gerbing & Anderson, 1988).

For further analysis, a finite mixture model (FMM) is applied, which is a form of latent variable regression, where specific classes or groups of respondents are identified, with the groups being drawn from differing distributions within the data (Masyn, 2013). As such, rather than using the assumption that all officers within the sample are the same, we are able to see if there are latent groups present in the sample, based on the regression estimates. A major concern for social science researchers is unobserved heterogeneity, and if left unidentified can provide misleading results (Jedidi et al., 1997). An FMM approach (or similar latent class procedures) overcomes this issue, allowing different classes to form.

Findings

In terms of positions held, 73.3% (n=242) of the sample held the rank of constable (national average =78.9%). 18.2% (n=60) were Sergeant or Acting Sergeant (national = 14.2%), 6.7% (n=22) Inspector or acting Inspector (national average=4.4%), and Chief Inspector or above comprised 1.8% (n=6) of the sample (national average 2.3%). When compare to the national averages in 2022 (Home Office, 2022) the sample differs slightly, and this would be as a result of including those who are acting in position, as opposed to the national figures which show actual rank. With regards to tenure, 53.3% (n=176) of the respondents had been in the force 10 years or less, while 76.1% had been in for 15 years or less. In terms of age, 66.1% of the respondents were under the age of 40, compared with a national average of 57.0% (Home Office, 2022), highlighting a lower average age in the sample.

In terms of emotional labour and burnout, the descriptive statistics are presented in Table 1. These data answer our first two research questions. Firstly, *How do police officers perform emotional labour in the UK context?* For Variety the mean was 2.784, for Deep Acting the mean was 2.768, and for Surface Acting the mean was 3.693. The means for each variable were slightly different to those from the research where the scales were drawn. Brotheridge & Lee (2003) reported means of 2.857, 2.800 and 2.89 respectively. The main difference seen here is surface acting, which is greater in this study. Our second research question is *How do police officers experience burnout in the UK context?* In answering this, we find that Burnout has a mean of 3.914, which is comparable to other studies.

Insert Table 1: Descriptive Results here

The first testing of the scales was Cronbach's Alpha, to assess the reliability of the scales used. Based on Gliem & Gliem (2003) two of the scales could be considered good, with a Cronbach's alpha > 0.80 for variety and burnout; one adequate, with deep acting >0.70; and one not performing well, with surface acting > 0.50. While the surface acting alpha is low, it remains acceptable for use. Next, EFA was used to understand the items and structure of the data. The rotated factor loadings can be seen in Appendix 1. The KMO = 0.782 and Bartlett's Test of Sphericity $P < 0.001$ indicate that the correlation amongst the data and the sample for the analysis are both adequate. A four factor structure was identified (identified through variance explained and eigenvalues), with all items loading correctly, indicating convergent validity. Next CFA was used to further establish validity (CFA loadings can be found in Appendix 1). Each of the constructs had an acceptable average variance extracted (>0.50), again indicating convergent validity. Discriminant validity was established with each construct using the Fornell and Larcker method (Fornell & Larcker, 1981), and is shown in Table 2. In addition to the *ex-ante* procedural controls for common method bias, Harman's one-factor test (Podsakoff & Organ, 1986) was performed *ex post* and, the factor analysis indicated that common method bias is not present.

Insert Table 2: Correlation, Squared Multiple Correlations Average Variance Extracted here

Having established the validity and reliability of the scales used, we now move on to utilise regression analysis. The regression uses FMM, using a person approach rather than a variable centric approach (Masyn, 2013). A standard regression model for each class was run,

with common independent and dependent variables. Initially a series of classes were estimated for the regression model (between two and seven) and, based on the Akaike information criteria (see Masyn, 2013), three classes was deemed to be the most satisfactory solution. This allows us to answer our third research question – *Are there differences in experience of performing emotional labour and experiencing burnout among police officers?* The three classes varied slightly in size, with class one having 36.2% of the sample, class two the smallest with 30.2%, and class three having 33.6% of the overall sample. We are also able to calculate the latent class means, which gives the mean for the class’s burnout. For class one the mean was 3.72, for class two the mean was 3.68, and for class three the mean was 4.26. As such, we can see that class three has the highest levels of burnout, while class one and two are both lower and similar to each other.

Insert Table 3: Regression Results by Class, Coefficient and Standard Errors here

The standout result is that surface acting impacts on all classes, and that in each class it is associated with increased levels of burnout. Taken in turn, for class one deep acting and surface acting both have significant ($p < 0.01$ and $p < 0.001$) and positive relationships with burnout. For class two, surface acting has a significant positive relationship ($p < 0.001$), as does tenure ($p < 0.001$). While only marginally significant, variety and deep acting have a negative relationship with burnout. All three variables of interest are significant in class three (variety and deep acting $p < 0.001$, surface acting $p < 0.05$). Variety and surface acting have a positive relationship, while deep acting has a negative relationship. A summary of the regression results can be found in Table 3.

Next, we can test if the effects of variables are significantly different across the three classes through equivalence testing of the coefficients. Deep acting is significant in both class one and class three, and the coefficient is significantly different ($p < 0.001$). Surface acting is significant and positive for all three classes. In class one and two surface acting is not significantly different ($p > 0.10$), between class one and three there is a significant difference in the coefficients ($p < 0.05$), and for classes two and three the coefficient is significantly different ($p < 0.01$).

Discussion

The results show that surface acting is an issue for all three classes. This indicates that all three classes are resisting feelings and hiding emotions at work. This surface acting is for all three classes having a negative effect, and it is associated with higher levels of burnout. In classes one and two, which contain 66.4% of the sample, this is the most significant issue. Deep acting is also concerning, despite its role as a coping mechanism for class three. Variety, while only significant for one class, is the item with the most significant impact for class three. By investigating these three classes in more detail, and showing how each factor affects them differently, we can create our typology of three different groups of officers. Respectively we name these Misaligned Values, Core, and Matching Values, and describe them in more detail below.

Class 1: Misaligned Values

This is the largest class, with a mean burnout of 3.72. Firstly, surface acting has a positive relationship with burnout for this group – the more surface acting that they perform, the greater the level of burnout. Secondly, deep acting also has a positive effect, meaning that the performance of deep acting is also associated with an increased level of burnout. What is very interesting for this group is that deep acting has a larger effect than surface acting. As such, it is perhaps this group that is the most concerning for the police force. Officers of this type make an attempt to both feign and feel the right emotions, but the discrepancy between their own core values and that of the police force means that their burnout level is increased. As such, it is unlikely that these officers will ever be fully aligned with the organisational values of the police force, a particular issue within the concept of ‘Just Policing’, and attempts to do so will increase burnout and potentially a desire to leave the service.

Class 2: Core

We term class 2 the Core group, as they sit between our Misaligned and Matching Values groups. This group is impacted by burnout, as all three groups are, but has the lowest mean for burnout. However, this is not substantially lower than class 1, with a mean of 3.68 as compared to 3.72. As with both of the other groups, surface acting is associated with an increased level of burnout. We would expect this as repeated attempts to feign emotion with end users of the police service will have a negative effect on wellbeing. Interestingly, for this group an increase in length of tenure is also associated with increased burnout. For this group both the performance of surface acting, and the length of time over which this is performed, is associated with increased burnout. For the police service, what this indicates is that the core group of officers will experience increases in burnout as a result of the nature of the job,

and this is exacerbated by length of tenure. Rather than helping these officers cope, this instead has long term negative effects on their wellbeing.

Class 3: Matching Values

As with the other two classes, the performance of surface acting is associated with increased burnout in this group. What is perhaps most interesting is that the performance of deep acting is actually associated with lower levels of burnout, in direct comparison to class 1. As such, we term this group Matching Values, as the alignment of their own core values with that of the police service will improve their wellbeing through the reduction in burnout. Additionally, as age increases, burnout decreases, although deep acting has a larger effect than ageing.

However, increases in both variety and surface acting see an increase in burnout for this group. The most important item for this group is variety. What we suggest is that this is a group of officers who care deeply about their role. Although their core values are more aligned with the organisation, and the experience that age brings also provides a coping mechanism, the repeated performance of surface acting, together with a variety of emotions that must be shown, is associated with a much higher level of burnout than for the other two groups. What will be a concern for the police force is that this group has the highest levels of burnout, at 4.26 as compared to 3.72 and 3.68. However, by identifying different groups of officers through this typology, it is possible to suggest different solutions to the problem of burnout through the recognition of the heterogeneity of officers and the need for a suite of approaches to wellbeing.

Re-engagement with Police Service

Following the statistical analysis of the data set and creation of the typology, the next step of our analysis was to re-engage with the police service. In this way, we were able to discuss our findings with officers at various ranks both to check that our analysis reflected their experiences as serving officers, and also to develop possible coping strategies for each type of officer that was identified. In addition to serving officers, we also discussed our findings with those who worked in services related to the police, in particular the Independent Office for Police Conduct, together with those who had left the service. These were recruited through personal networks, with an attempt to obtain representative views from different groups and those at different ranks. Respondents were sent a draft version of this typology, and data collection of feedback continued until saturation with no novel insights returned. One recurring theme with all those with whom we consulted was that surface acting was felt to be more salient owing to the increasingly transactional nature of police work.

For the misaligned values class, respondents reported that there was a potential for new recruits to have an idealised, perhaps naïve, view of the role of the police officer, and that this could be very different to the reality (Phythian et al., 2021). Respondents also highlighted issues in the recruitment and selection process, where new recruits had started with a very different view to what a front line officer's role would be as compared to the reality. In particular, respondents noted the often transactional nature between police and public, and in particular the lack of time for officers to respond in detail to those who were experiencing issues. This is in contrast to the best practice model of Just Policing, based upon a

consensual relationship rather than a transactional one. The example of burglaries was highlighted, with the reporting process meaning that frequently officers were unaware that a crime had been committed in their patrol areas as the victim was simply given a crime number by a central call centre. Addressing these issues in developing coping strategies would aid in retention of these officers – however, there was significant concern amongst both serving officers and associated functions that a failure to do this would negatively impact the ability of forces to re-recruit former officers in order to increase their numbers of front-line staff to pre-austerity levels.

For the matching values class, respondents noted that experienced officers in particular disliked the variety of ‘Detective Rotations’ where officers could be moved from a role in which they had a great deal of experience into new roles. This occurred as old roles were either streamlined as a result of efficiency drives, or indeed made redundant entirely. Respondents noted that those who had been in a specialism for a long period of time had often chosen this as it matched their own role expectations and, more importantly, their own personal values. A particular issue was that there were significant differences in the nature of these specialisms, and thus a shift from one to another could have a particularly strong impact on burnout. As such, it was felt that these sort of rotations should be reduced to improve wellbeing. This view was also voiced by those people who had left the service, and also to areas outside of front-line policing such as the IOPC. This had caused significant retention issues, which again could hamper a force’s ability to re-hire those who had left in order to return their staffing levels towards pre-austerity levels. A further theme highlighted by our respondents was that there was a feeling of continual change, particularly during the time of public sector austerity (Hopkins and Simms, 2020). There was acceptance that changes made to the structure of forces, together with changes in the tasks completed by officers may be for

better or worse, but overall they were tired of change and the increased variety of tasks. As such, a reduction in variety and an increased focus on specialisms as part of developing coping strategies could positively impact upon the wellbeing of this group.

Conclusions

Amongst police officers, together with other public service professions (Ward et al., 2020), individuals can become highly involved with both an organisation and the users of its services. However, the variety of emotions required for these occupations amongst those who identify with the values of the organisation may simply be too much, and lead to burnout. Consider the teacher who wants to support their pupils at the same time as disciplining them, or the doctor who has to provide urgent care while being mindful of the cost implications to the NHS. To this we can add the police officer who has to display a wide variety of emotions to the public; sternness with a football hooligan, sympathy with the family of a road traffic collision victim, patience with a lost tourist – being both “nicer than nice’ and ‘tougher than tough” (Lumsden & Black, 2017). Despite having fundamental values aligned with the organisation, the variety of emotions that must be displayed leads to a complex relationship with the end user (Kyprianides et al., 2022). This comes within a wider concern related to both physical wellbeing (De Camargo, 2022) and mental well-being including stress and burnout (Phytian et al., 2021) amongst workers who truly care about their role in society, and responsibilities to individuals.

This research took a unique approach in two ways. Firstly, we did not assume heterogeneity amongst police officers (see also Morris et al., 2017), but instead created a typology of three

different types of officers based upon our analysis. This allowed for an exploration as to how the alignment of the values of these officers with the police force impacted upon their wellbeing. Secondly, having developed this typology, we returned to engage with different police forces, not just those who completed the survey, but a variety of officers serving at different ranks. This allowed for confirmation of the accuracy of our typology, and also allowed for practical coping strategies to be suggested. Police officers perform emotional labour and experience burnout in different ways, and thus cannot be considered to be a homogeneous group.

References

- Adams, I. T. and Mastracci, S. H. (2020). 'Contrasting emotional labor and burnout in civilian and sworn law enforcement personnel.' *Policing: An International Journal*, 43 (2): 314-329.
- Ashforth, B. and Humphrey, R. (1993). 'Emotional labour in service roles: The influence of identity.' *Academy of Management Review*, 18(1), 88-115.
- Bolton, S. (2003). 'Multiple roles? Nurses as managers in the NHS.' *International Journal of Public Sector Management*, 16(2), 122-130.
- Britton, I. and Knight, L. (2021). "'Citizens in Policing': Exploring the role and impact of volunteering in law enforcement.' *Policing: A Journal of Policy and Practice*, 15 (4): 2047–2052.
- Brotheridge, C. and Grandey, A. (2002). 'Emotional labour and burnout: comparing two perspectives of "people work".' *Journal of Vocational Behaviour*, 60(1), 17-39.
- Brotheridge, C. and Lee, R. (2003). 'Development and validation of the emotional labour scale.' *Journal of Occupational and Organizational Psychology*, 76(3), 365-379.
- Clark, D. (2022). 'Number of police officers in the UK from 2003 to 2022.' Available at <https://www.statista.com/statistics/303963/uk-police-officer-numbers/>
- De Camargo, C. (2022). "'It's tough shit, basically, that you're all gonna get it': UK virus testing and police officer anxieties of contracting COVID-19'. *Policing and Society*, 32(1), 35-51.
- DiCicco-Bloom, B. and DiCicco-Bloom, B. (2019). 'Secondary emotional labor: supervisors withholding support and guidance in interdisciplinary group meetings in a community hospice program.' *Work and Occupations*, 46(3), 339-368.
- Drodge, E. & Murphy, S. (2002). 'Interrogating emotions in police leadership.' *Human Resource Development Review*, 1(4), 420-438.
- Ekman, P. (1989). 'The argument and evidence about universals in facial expressions of emotion.' In: Wagner, M. and Manstead, A. (eds). *Handbook of Social Psychophysiology*. Wiley.
- Farr-Wharton, B., Farr-Wharton, G., Brunetto, Y., Farr-Wharton, R., Xerri, M. and Shriberg, A. (2020) 'Social networks, problem-solving, managers: Police officers in Australia and the USA', *Policing: A Journal of Policy and Practice*, 14 (3): 778–791.
- Fornell, C. and Larcker, D. F. (1981). 'Evaluating structural equation models with unobservable variables and measurement error.' *Journal of Marketing Research*, 18(1), 39–50.
- Gerbing, D. W. and Anderson, J. C. (1988). 'An updated paradigm for scale development incorporating unidimensionality and its assessment.' *Journal of Marketing Research*, 25(2), 186–192.

Gliem, J. A. and Gliem, R. R. (2003). 'Calculating, interpreting, and reporting Cronbach's alpha reliability coefficient for Likert-type scales.' Midwest Research-to-Practice Conference in Adult, Continuing, and Community Education.

Goffman, E. (1959). *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life.* Doubleday.

Golembiewski, R. and Kim, B. (1989). 'Self-esteem and phases of burnout.' *Organization Development Journal*, 7(1), 51-58.

Hayton, J. C., Allen, D. G. and Scarpello, V. (2004). 'Factor retention decisions in exploratory factor analysis: a tutorial on parallel analysis.' *Organizational Research Methods*, 7(2), 191–205.

Henson, R. K. and Roberts, J. K. (2006). 'Use of exploratory factor analysis in published research: common errors and some comment on improved practice.' *Educational and Psychological Measurement*, 66(3), 393–416.

Hesketh, I., Cooper, C. L., & Ivy, J. (2015). 'Well-being, austerity and policing: Is it worth investing in resilience training?' *The Police Journal*, 88(3), 220–230.

Hochschild, A. (1983). *The Managed Heart.* University of California Press.

Hopkins, B. and Simms, M. (2020). 'The changing face of UK public sector policy'. in Keune, M., Mailand, M. and Martin, N. E. R. *Working under pressure: Employment, Job Quality and Labour Relations in Europe's Public Sector Since the Crisis.* Brussels: European Trade Union Institute.

Jedidi, K., Jagpal, H. S. and DeSarbo, W. S. (1997). 'Finite-mixture structural equation models for response-based segmentation and unobserved heterogeneity.' *Marketing Science*, 16(1), 39–59.

Jonker, C. (2012). 'Measures of emotion work: factor structure and group differences in a care-giving population in South Africa.' *Journal of WEI Business and Economics*, 1(1), 39-58.

Jordan, P., Ward, J. and McMurray, R. (2018). 'Dealing with the dead: life as a third-generation independent funeral director.' *Work, Employment and Society*, 33(4), 700-708.

Kwak, H., McNeeley, S., & Kim, S.-H. (2018). 'Emotional labor, role characteristics, and police officer burnout in South Korea: The mediating effect of emotional dissonance'. *Police Quarterly*, 21(2), 223–249.

Korczynski, M. (2002). *Human Resource Management in Service Work*. Palgrave: London.

Kyprianides, A., Bradford, B., Beale, M., Savigar-Shaw, L., Stott, C and Radburn, M. (2022). Policing the COVID-19 pandemic: police officer well-being and commitment to democratic modes of policing'. *Policing and Society*, 32(4): 504-521.

Leiter, M. and Maslach, C. (1988). 'The impact of interpersonal environment on burnout and organizational commitment.' *Journal of Organizational Behaviour*, 9(4), 297-308.

- Lennie, S.-J., Sutton, A. and Crozier, S. (2021). 'Psychodrama and emotional labour in the police: A mutually beneficial methodology for researchers and participants'. *Methods in Psychology*, 5: 1-9.
- Loo, R. (2004). 'A typology of burnout types among police managers.' *Policing: An International Journal of Police Strategies and Management*, 27(2), 156-165.
- Lumsden, K. and Black, A. (2017). 'Austerity policing, emotional labour and the boundaries of police work; An ethnography of a police force control room in England.' *The British Journal of Criminology*, 58(3), 606-623.
- MacKenzie, S. and Podsakoff, P. (2012). 'Common method bias in marketing: Causes, mechanisms, and procedural remedies.' *Journal of Retailing*, 88(4), 542-555.
- Mann, S. (1999). 'Emotion at work: to what extent are we expressing, suppressing, or faking it?' *European Journal of Work and Organizational Psychology*, 8(3), 347-369.
- Martin, S. (1999). 'Police force or police service? Gender and emotional labour.' *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, 561(1), 111-126.
- Maslach, C. and Jackson, S. (1984). 'Burnout in organizational settings.' *Applied Social Psychology Annual*. Sage.
- Maslach, C., Jackson, S. and Leiter, M. (1996). '*Maslach Burnout Inventory Manual*.' Consulting Psychologists Press.
- Maslach, C., Schaufeli, W. B. and Leiter M. P. (2001). 'Job burnout.' *Annual Review of Psychology*, 52(1), 397-422.
- Masyn, K. E. (2013). 'Latent Class Analysis and Finite Mixture Modeling.' *The Oxford Handbook of Quantitative Methods*. Oxford University Press.
- McCarty, W. P. (2013). 'Gender differences in burnout among municipal police sergeants.' *Policing: An International Journal of Police Strategies and Management*, 36(4), 803-818.
- McDowall, A., Brown, J. and Gamblin, D. (2020) 'Assessing emotional intelligence of graduate probationer Police Officers: A UK pilot study.' *Policing: A Journal of Policy and Practice*, 14 (1): 104–118.
- McMurray, R. and Ward, J. (2014). '“Why would you do that?”: defining emotional dirty work.' *Human Relations*, 67(9), 1123-1143.
- Morabito, M. S., Pattavina, A. and Williams, L. M. (2020). 'Vicarious trauma, secondary traumatic stress or burnout?: an exploratory study of the effects of investigating sexual assault cases on detectives.' *Policing: An International Journal*, 44 (1): 77-92.
- Morris, J. and Feldman, D. (1996). 'The dimensions, antecedents, and consequences of emotional labour.' *Academy of Management Review*, 21(4), 986-1010.
- Morris, W., Henley, A. and Dowell, D. (2017). 'Farm diversification, entrepreneurship and technology adoption: analysis of upland farmers in Wales.' *Journal of Rural Studies*, 53: 132-143.

- Naring, G., Briet, M. and Brouwers, A. (2006). 'Beyond demand-control: emotional labour and symptoms of burnout in teachers.' *Work and Stress*, 20(4), 303-315.
- Phythian, R., Birdsall, N., Kirby, S., Cooper, E., Posner, Z., & Boulton, L. (2021). 'Organisational and individual perspectives of police wellbeing in England and Wales'. *The Police Journal*, OnLine First.
- Podsakoff, P & Organ, D (1986). 'Self-reports in organizational research: Problems and prospects.' *Journal of Management*, 12(4), 531-544.
- Sahin, N., Braga, A. A., Apel, R., and Brunson, R. K. (2017). 'The impact of procedurally-just policing on citizen perceptions of police during traffic stops: The Adana randomized controlled trial'. *Journal of Quantitative Criminology*, 33: 701-726.
- Schaible, L. M. (2018). 'The impact of the police professional identity on burnout'. *Policing: An International Journal*, 41 (1); 129-143.
- Schaible, L. M. and Six, M. (2016). 'Emotional strategies of Police and their varying consequences for burnout'. *Police Quarterly*, 19(1), 3–31.
- Schaufeli, W., Leiter, M. and Maslach, C. (2009). 'Burnout: 35 years of research and practice.' *Career Development International*, 14(3), 204-220.
- Schaufeli, W. B., Maassen, G. H., Bakker, A. B. and Sixma, H. J. (2011). 'Stability and change in burnout: A 10-year follow-up study among primary care physicians.' *Journal of Occupational and Organizational Psychology*, 84(2), 248–267.
- Schreiber, J. B., Nora, A., Stage, F. K., Barlow, E. A. and King, J. (2006). 'Reporting structural equation modeling and confirmatory factor analysis results: a review.' *The Journal of Educational Research*, 99(6), 323–338.
- Segars, A. H. and Grover, V. (1993). 'Re-examining perceived ease of use and usefulness: a confirmatory factor analysis.' *MIS Quarterly*, 17(4), 517–525.
- Simpson, R. (2021) 'Calling the Police: Dispatchers as important interpreters and manufacturers of calls for service data.' *Policing: A Journal of Policy and Practice*, 15 (2): 1537–1545.
- van Gelderen, B. R., Konijn E. A. and Bakker, A. B. (2017). 'Emotional labor among police officers: a diary study relating strain, emotional labor, and service performance'. *The International Journal of Human Resource Management*, 28(6), 852-879.
- van Steden, R., Anholt, R., and Boelens, M. (2022) 'Intake and service staff: practices and challenges of a pivotal yet underexplored police occupation'. *Policing: A Journal of Policy and Practice*, OnLine First.
- Ward, J. and McMurray, R. (2015). *The Dark Side of Emotional Labour*. Routledge.
- Ward, J., McMurray, R., and Sutcliffe, S. (2020). 'Working at the edge: Emotional labour in the spectre of violence'. *Gender, Work & Organization*, 27(1), 82-97.

Table 1: Descriptive Results

	Mean	S/Deviation	S/Error	Cronbach's alpha	AVE
Variety	2.784	0.941	0.054	0.835	0.791
Deep acting	2.768	0.797	0.044	0.714	0.677
Surface acting	3.693	0.744	0.041	0.559	0.559
Burnout	3.914	1.015	0.059	0.868	0.747

(burnout scaled 1-6, never-very strong; variety/deep acting/surface acting scaled 1-5, strongly disagree-strongly agree)

(figure by authors)

Table 2: Correlation, Squared Multiple Correlations Average Variance Extracted

Construct	Variety	Deep acting	Surface Acting	Burnout
Variety	0.791			
	0.4044**			
Deep acting	(0.324)	0.677		
	0.1721**	0.1758***		
Surface Acting	(0.014)	(0.003)	0.583	
			0.2556**	
Burnout	0.057 (0.007)	0.033 (0.002)	(0.108)	0.747

(Notes: through diagonal – AVE, brackets - squared correlations, other - correlations) (**
 $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$)

(figure by authors)

Table 3: Regression Results by Class, Coefficient and Standard Errors

	Class 1	Class 2	Class 3
	Coef (SE)	Coef (SE)	Coef (SE)
Variety	-0.206 (0.178)	-0.298 (0.165)	0.541*** (0.079)
Deep acting	0.671** (0.213)	-0.284 (0.154)	-0.747*** (0.099)
Surface acting	0.495*** (0.155)	0.641*** (0.166)	0.184* (0.092)
Age	-0.456 (0.116)	0.032 (0.111)	-0.198** (0.0636)
Tenure	-0.048 (0.137)	0.472*** (0.107)	-0.014 (0.659)
Rank	0.063 (0.184)	-0.347 (0.744)	-0.099 (0.108)

(Notes: *** p<0.001, ** p<0.01, * p<0.05 (standard errors in parentheses))

(figure by authors)

Appendix

Appendix 1: EFA and CFA results

Items and constructs	Loadings	
	EFA	CFA
Burnout		
I feel burnt out from my work.	0.872	0.866
I feel used up at the end of a work day.	0.832	0.797
I feel I'm working too hard on my job.	0.811	0.752
I feel emotionally drained from my work.	0.795	0.753
I feel frustrated by my job.	0.744	0.693
I feel fatigued when I get up in the morning.	0.686	0.624
Variety		
I am required to display emotions when at work.	0.905	0.859
I am required to display a variety of emotions.	0.843	0.823
I am required to show strong emotions when at work.	0.755	0.700
Deep acting		
I really try to feel the emotions I have to show as part of my job.	0.833	0.660
I try to experience emotions that I must show.	0.755	0.507
I make an effort to actually feel the emotions that I need to display to others.	0.706	0.836
Surface acting		
I sometimes hide my true feelings about a situation.	0.846	0.689
I sometimes resist expressing my true feelings when at work.	0.779	0.763
I pretend to have emotions that I don't really have.	0.571	0.304

(figure by authors)